



strength

Family & Intercultural Resource Center

2013 Annual Report

Strong Families. Strong Community.

FIRC mission

FIRC promotes stable families.

FIRC values

- We believe that with the proper tools, people can succeed as individuals, parents, and community members
- We believe that strong families are the framework for strong communities
- We believe diversity makes for a richer community
- We believe parents are the first and most important teachers to their children

FIRC's impact

- Provide the most effective tools for families and individuals to succeed
- Self-sustainability for families and individuals living and working in Summit County
- Strengthen the bond between parents and children
- Culturally integrated community that is welcoming to all backgrounds

Strengthening Families

FIRC uses the Strengthening Families approach to optimize child development and help families gain stability.

By recognizing and appreciating families' strengths, we are able to give the support they need to become even stronger.



Meet Pierina and her son Christopher

A single mom working to give her son the best start to life possible. Together with FIRC's help, they are becoming sustainable, resilient and prepared to take on the next challenge.

Support

Respond to family crisis

Noticing family stress, listening, making referrals and providing access to needed resources, including financial help, housing support, mental health or substance abuse services, health care, and more, through formal and informal supports.

The FIRC Community Support team works to provide families with assistance during times of crisis. Studies show that when concrete support is available to get through a crisis, the ability to thrive from that event is much higher. Over 90 percent of FIRC's clients seeking rent/mortgage, utility or medical assistance have been laid off, had hours cut or recently lost their jobs.

Resort Community Challenges: Most of the work in Summit County is seasonal or based on tourism numbers, therefore jobs offering consistent year-round hours are difficult to find. This combined with the high cost of living makes it difficult for families to save up for emergencies and many are forced to live from paycheck to paycheck.

Avoiding eviction

Pierina was in an abusive relationship and when the violence reached its peak, her partner at the time was sent to jail. When her rent was due the following month, Pierina didn't have enough saved to cover the payment. She came to FIRC for assistance and the Community Support program was able to help her get through the month so she and Christopher wouldn't be evicted. After the first month of managing with a single income, she was able to adjust her work schedule and budget so she could afford her place again.

Strengthening Parenting

Providing guidance, role modeling and information on parenting and child development, including special support around children and teens' challenging behaviors.

Early Childhood Development: Over 80 percent of brain development happens during the first three years of a child's life. FIRC works to provide parents with the support and education needed to help them be the first and most important teacher in their child's life. Through monthly home visits and classes, FIRC Parent Educators work with parents to prepare their child to enter elementary school, achieve developmental milestones and address challenges.

School-Aged Programs: The new FIRC Prevention Program focuses on engaging parents in their child's education all the way through graduation. Parenting groups and classes give parents strategies to teach responsibility and improve family communication. Nutrition classes teach parents healthy recipes and eating habits so they can be a role model for their children.

Bridging the educational gaps of cultural differences has been another focus of FIRC. The Summit County High School's drop out rates for English as a Second Language (ESL) students was as low as 50 percent in 2012. In order to address this issue, FIRC has been collaborating with the Middle School principal to give home visits to all ESL students entering the sixth grade. The goal of the visits is to form personal relationships with the families and invite them to be more involved in the students' studies.



Preparing for Kindergarten

Pierina and Christopher receive home visits with a FIRC Parent Educator. They focus on ways to engage Pierina in her child's development and help her be the best teacher she can be for him. Each visit they work on developmental milestones to help Christopher prepare the skills needed to succeed when he enters kindergarten.

connect

Link families to services and opportunities

Making and following through on referrals, maintaining relationships with service providers, and sharing community information with families.

FIRC provides over 2,000 referrals every year. As a resource center, staff work to provide families with the answers and connections needed to help them succeed in parenting, job skills and more. FIRC's programs and classes allow staff to connect with a variety of community members. Once the staff understands the client's situation, the connections can be made to the appropriate services.

Resources and Referrals: FIRC's parent educators are trained to look for possible delays and developmental issues as part of the home visit service. When delays are found, families can be directed to experts to address the situations. Without FIRC's home visits, many of these delays could be missed and not noticed until the child starts kindergarten.

FIRC is grateful for the partnerships in Summit County that allow families to receive a well-rounded approach to helping them achieve sustainability. Collaboration and filling the service gaps continue to be a priority for FIRC.

Community connections

When Pierina started receiving home visits, the Parent Educator realized Christopher's speech was delayed and he was struggling emotionally from the domestic violence that had occurred early in his life. FIRC was able to connect them with Early Intervention for speech and play therapy to improve Christopher's skills. The therapies have been very effective and he is now thriving developmentally.

Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support

Helping parents to connect with each other and develop social networks. When parents know they aren't the only ones struggling with child behaviors or development, they are less likely to take it out on the child.

Summit County can be a difficult place for parents raising a child. Studies show that feeling isolated and alone are major issues for our local parents. Living in a resort town means many empty second homes and the lack of a true neighborhood feeling.

Connecting Parents: FIRC works to connect parents through a variety of social groups and parenting events. Families in the home visitation program are offered monthly socializations to bring parents together for an activity with their child. Mamacitas is an empowerment group for Spanish-speaking women that meets twice a month to discuss a variety of topics from exercise and nutrition to self-defense. Padres de Summit is a group for Spanish and English-speaking fathers to help them connect and bond over the experiences of being dads.

Parents often report that their favorite part of the parenting classes and Dialogue Over Dinner sessions is hearing other parents' solutions and similar challenges. Knowing that they aren't the only ones struggling with certain behaviors helps them realize they aren't alone.



Social Support

Pierina's work schedule made it difficult for her to attend many of the FIRC events, but with encouragement from her Parent Educator she has formed relationships with other mothers in the community. She said she was feeling very alone, but now she is energized from being connected with others.

empowerment

Facilitating children's social and

emotional development

Providing a nurturing and caring environment, using a structured curriculum for social and emotional development, teaching parents to support that development.

Parenting Classes and Developmental Support: FIRC believes that parents are their child's first and best teacher. In all programs, staff work with parents to help them realize the impact they have in their child's life. By engaging with their child, parents can help them develop social and emotional skills that will impact them for a lifetime.

Parenting isn't easy, it doesn't come with a manual and there are always new issues affecting children and teens that need to be addressed. FIRC offers parenting classes and home visits for all parents, regardless of income, because the importance of communication, positive discipline, teaching respect and developing character is universally important.

Parenting Impacts

Through home visits, Pierina has learned to put Christopher first in her life. In the past, she was focused on finding the right relationship, but when she truly understood that she had the power to impact Christopher's development and behavior, she made the necessary changes to be a stronger teacher and mother.

Observing and responding to early warning signs of child abuse and neglect

Consistent monitoring of child health and family stress

Building Parental Resilience: Financial, work, family or relationship stress can have a significant effect on all parents, which is why FIRC works to provide people with strategies to prevent children from becoming the victims of abuse or neglect. Unexpected financial emergencies or deteriorating relationships can happen to anyone, and when parents are faced with trauma or crisis, it can be very difficult to focus on effectively raising a child.

Through forming relationships with clients, FIRC can help families address issues and give them techniques to avoid taking their frustrations out on the child. Staff works to remind parents of their strengths so they can find solutions to their problems and get back on track.



Strategies to avoid struggles

Pierina admits it is difficult to be a single mom and challenging to not have the extra support of a partner. She has realized the more quality time she spends with Christopher, the less he acts out. Instead, he responds positively to her requests. She has also learned effective positive discipline methods to use with Christopher, which prevent tantrums and power struggles.

value

Valuing and supporting parents

Making all family members feel welcome, involving parents and caregivers in decision-making at all levels, and providing many opportunities for participation.

Promoting Stable Families: Building on strengths is the core foundation of all FIRC programs. Staff start with the understanding that all families have strengths and all families need support. By recognizing and appreciating families' strengths, staff are better able to help them get the support they need to become even stronger.

Staff members work with families to recognize their achievements and traits that help them thrive during tough times. Once parents realize their strengths, they can build upon them and set goals towards utilizing new parenting techniques, achieving stable financial stability and more.

Giving children a better life

During every home visit, Pierina assesses her goals and continually works towards achieving more stability for her and Christopher. With the support of her Parent Educator, she feels empowered as she now realizes her impact on Christopher's development. She has learned to appreciate her strengths and utilize them to be a stronger parent for her son. Pierina has realized she has the power to give Christopher the security he needs to thrive. She can give him the best start to life possible.

Strengthening Families Approach

Program strategies to approach families as a whole

- respond to family crisis
- strengthen parenting
- link families to services and opportunities
- facilitate friendships and mutual support
- facilitate children's social and emotional development
- observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect
- value and support parents



Protective factors resulting from effective programs

A protective factor is a characteristic that makes a parent, child, or family more likely to thrive and less likely to experience a negative outcome.

- parental resilience
- social connections
- knowledge of parenting and child development
- concrete support in times of need
- social and emotional competence of children



Impact of Strengthening Families Approach

- strong families
- optimal child development
- reduced child abuse and neglect

Breaking the Cycle

FIRC provides the tools for families to break the cycle of risk factors that can lead to child abuse or neglect, developmental delays and financial instability.

Importance of providing concrete support in times of crisis:

Concrete Support in times of need helps avert the following negative outcomes by ensuring that the basic needs of families and children are met.

Impacts of homelessness and housing instability

- Compared to poor, housed children, homeless children have worse physical and mental health, more developmental delays, more behavioral issues, poorer school attendance and performance, and other negative conditions
- Even housing instability (not necessarily homelessness) negatively impacts children. Moving three or more times is associated with increased behavioral, emotional, and school-related problems

268 families received housing assistance to avoid eviction

34 households received foreclosure prevention counseling to help families stay in their home

Impacts of food insecurity

- Children growing up in food-insecure families are vulnerable to poor health and stunted development from the earliest stages of life
- Studies have found that food insecurity has been associated with health problems for children that may hinder their ability to function normally and participate fully in school and other activities.
- Children who experience food insecurity may be at higher risk for behavioral issues and social difficulties.

1,839 people used the FIRC food bank. While guidelines permit households to visit the food bank once per month, most households visited the food bank 1-3 times during the year.

Medical Assistance and Insurance Enrollment

37 households received financial assistance with the cost of urgently needed medical care

223 individuals received assistance with the process of applying for Medicaid or CHP+ health insurance programs

Knowledge of parenting and child development:

Parents who have some knowledge of basic child development are likely to have more realistic expectations of their children. With that knowledge, parents are better able to provide the right amount of nurturing, supervision, and guidance. When parents understand their roles in their children's lives and learn about specific parenting techniques and strategies, they can form positive relationships with their children and have options for appropriate responses to typical child behaviors.

FIRC's Parenting Class Attendance for parents with children ages 0-18

238 parents attended classes on specific topics

264 parents attended Dialogue Over Dinner, a monthly meeting connecting experts with parents to discuss topics affecting adolescents.

47 parents attended multi-session workshops

25 parents and kids attended Cooking Matters cooking and nutrition classes

Home visitation for parents with children ages 0-5

177 total children served through home visitation

1,897 total home visits completed

Social groups to build connections with other parents

281 fathers attended a father-specific class or monthly group

366 women attended Mamacitas, a monthly empowerment group for Spanish-speaking women

Parental Resilience:

Resilient parents are stronger parents. In times of stress or crisis, their children are less likely to be abused or neglected. When parents are depressed, or too consumed by their own problems, they often have difficulty providing for their children's needs. Resilient parents, however, have more patience with their children, especially in times of stress.

3,500 clients last year were helped one or more of FIRC's services. All programs have the goal of building parental resilience, which results in stronger families.

Funding growth allows program expansion

Donor and funder's support allow FIRC to reach more in the community through a wider program scope.

Increased funding has allowed the programs of FIRC to expand over the last few years in order to fill more service gaps in the community.

The additional funding has led to expanded parenting classes, which now offer much more support for parents with children in school, nutrition and healthy living programs, foreclosure counseling and insurance enrollment for the Marketplace.

Program stability and expansion has been made possible by:

- 65% increase year over year in individual and business donations and special events income from the FIRC Fashion Show and Hearthstone Wine Dinner
- record-breaking revenues from the FIRC owned-and-operated Summit Thrift & Treasure Thrift Stores, which now includes a second location in Breckenridge
- continued foundation and government support
- over \$20,000 in yearly sales from the volunteer-led FIRC Bag Project

Future of FIRC: In addition to supporting program growth, the additional funding allowed FIRC to purchase a building for offices and the food bank. For the last 21 years, FIRC has moved the office and food bank location multiple times and spent a significant amount of staff time finding space to provide classes. The new building opening in March of 2014 provides a professional and welcoming space for all in the community, office space for over 20 staff, teaching kitchen and classrooms.





FIRC's owned and operated Summit Thrift & Treasure thrift stores provide FIRC programs and operations with a stable income along with providing affordable shopping options for the community.

The second location in Breckenridge was able to start making profits within the first year of being open, and sales are showing consistent contribution to FIRC's programs.

The original store in Dillon continues to be the most successful thrift store in Summit County. Since the remodel in 2012, the working and shopping experience has been greatly improved resulting in higher revenue.

The impact of the thrift store revenue can be seen in the following ways:

- Supports staff training and development to stay up to date with the latest policies for government programs and parenting techniques
- Funds a Community Support position to allow for more client follow up with an emphasis on goal setting and budgeting for long-term stability
- Supports construction costs of the new office and food bank building

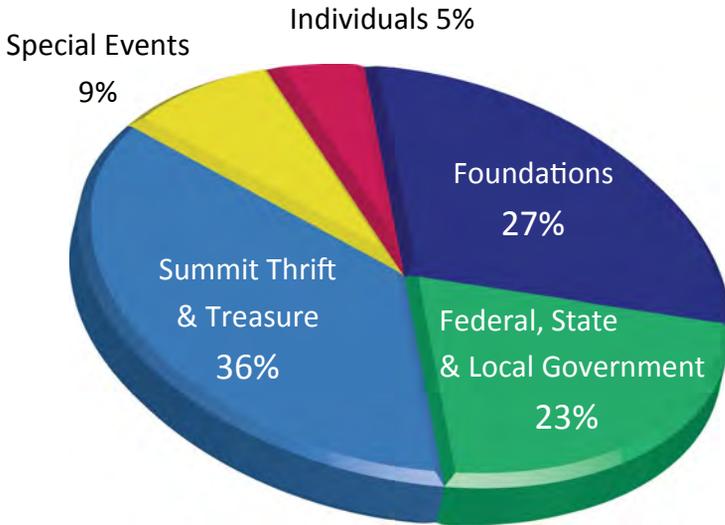
Volunteers

The work of Summit Thrift & Treasure would not be possible without the large volunteer staff that assists with sorting donations and organization. Over 300 volunteer hours are recorded each month at the stores, which keeps labor costs low and allows more money to be contributed to FIRC programs.

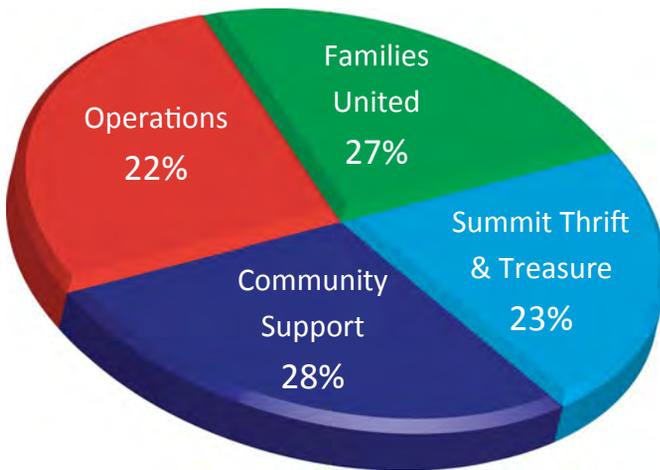


Organization's Financials

organization's income \$2,179,872

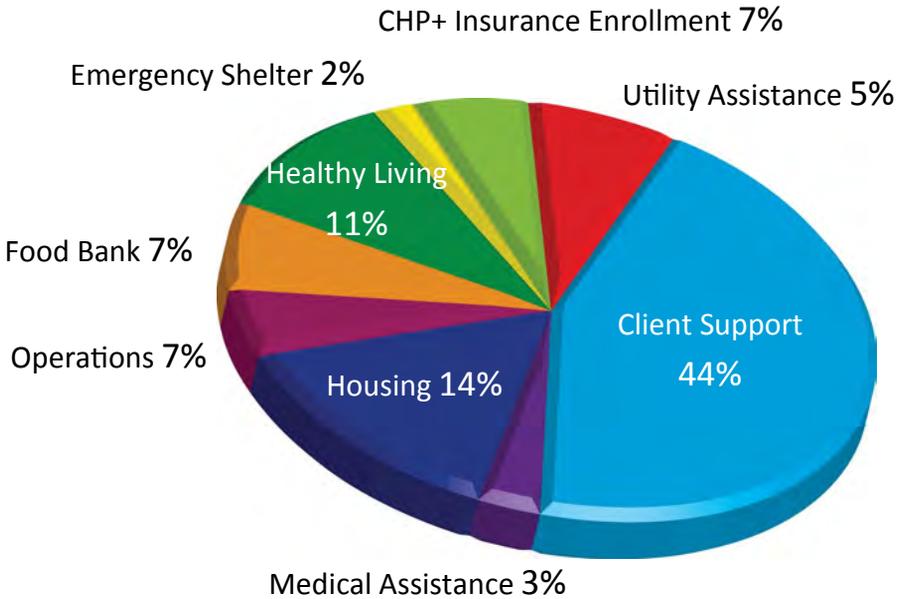


organization's expenses \$1,979,281

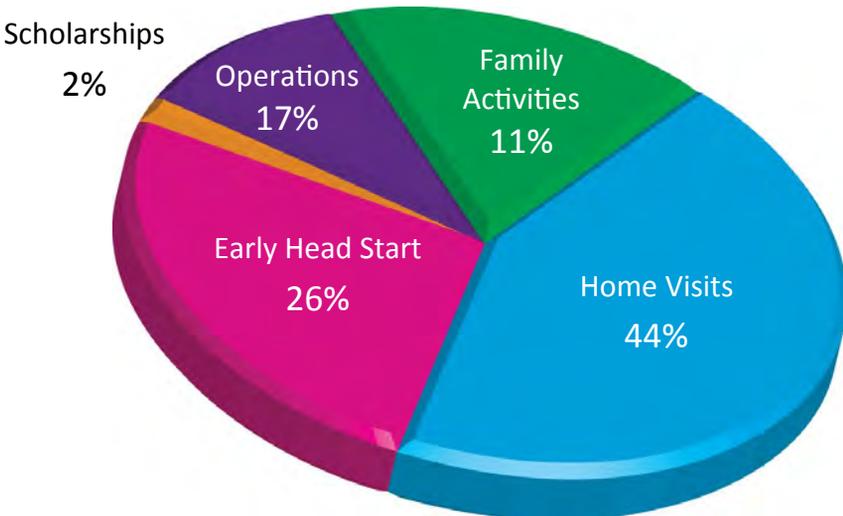


Program Expenses

Community Support Expenses: \$550,846



Families United Expenses: \$528,002

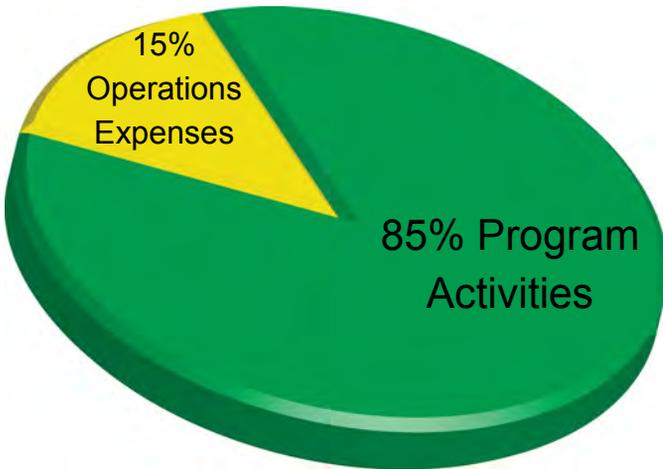


U.S. Better Business Bureau Standards

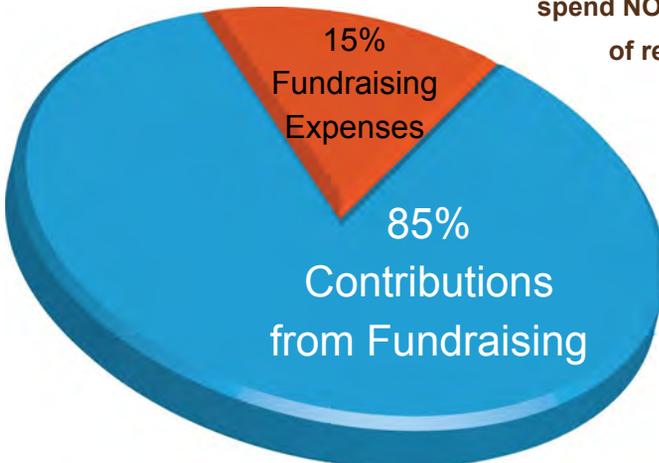
The Wise Giving Alliance has set forth the following standards for an organization that seeks to ensure it spends funds honestly, prudently and in accordance with statements made in fundraising appeals:

Expense Ratio:

According to the Better Business Bureau an organization should spend **AT LEAST 65%** of its total expenses on program activities. FIRC is proud to spend 85% of its expenses on program activities.



Fundraising Ratio: According to the Better Business Bureau an organization should spend **NO MORE than 35%** of related contributions on fundraising.



FIRC has worked diligently to lower fundraising costs to 15%.

Board of Directors

October 2012-September 2013

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In memory of long-time FIRC Board Member Luke Slottow



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