

# MountainStar Family Fact Sheet

March 2006



## Our Mission:

Preventing child abuse and neglect by providing intensive early childhood therapeutic programs and parenting services to Central Oregon's most vulnerable families.

- ONLY program in Deschutes County that provides comprehensive services to prevent child abuse and neglect in at-risk families with children, ages 6 weeks to 4 years.
- Based on the highly successful Relief Nursery model. (1 of 9 Relief Nurseries statewide and only program located east of the Cascades).

## High Need in Deschutes County:

- 18% of children are living in poverty; 40% of the homeless are children; Deschutes County designated 1 of 7 "High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas" in Oregon (due to methamphetamine).
- 276 child abuse victims in 2004 and 2,900 reports of suspected abuse.
- 42% of the victims **statewide** are between 0-4 years, and 75% of the mortality from child abuse and neglect **nationwide** are between 0-3 years.

## Who We Serve:

We serve families with multiple risk factors for child abuse/neglect, including unemployment, heavy childcare responsibilities, drug/alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and run-ins with the law. A majority of our clients are women and their children, including a number of single and teenage mothers. *(Over the past year 91% of our families reported high levels of stress, 56% reported substance abuse issues, 76% were unemployed or underemployed, 79% were living at or below the poverty level which is \$18,400/year for a family of four, and 41% had no means of transportation.)*

## How We Help:

- **Therapeutic Classroom Program** -- creates a safe, predictable, empowering environment where at-risk, distressed infants and children can thrive. *(The majority of our children receive therapeutic support, because they are experiencing social, language, intellectual, emotional and physical delays. If not dealt with at an early age, these problems will negatively impact their ability to learn in school, function independently and develop positive relationships throughout their lives.)*
- **Outreach Program** -- provides crisis intervention and ongoing services for high-risk families.
- **5 Core Services** – All families are eligible for the following services: (1) parent support and referral, (2) parent skills training classes, (3) home visits, (4) respite care, and (5) basic needs support.

## How families are referred to us:

Clients are referred to us through a network of community agencies and organizations serving families at risk, including the Department of Human Services, law-enforcement agencies, abuse/violence prevention programs, drug and alcohol treatment services, and other programs addressing the needs of children.

## How we're different from other "children's" programs:

We are dedicated solely to preventing child abuse and neglect. Our free services are available to any at-risk family whose child is aged 6-weeks to 4 years. Families can enroll multiple children, and our staff provides active case management and support year-round. Other programs provide parent education, referrals and/or recreational activities (Family Resource Center, Healthy Beginnings, Together for Children, Bend Metro Park District). Some programs have restrictions on which children can be enrolled and at what age (Healthy Start/Ready\*Set\*Go, HeadStart). A few programs provide primarily post-abuse services (KIDS Center).

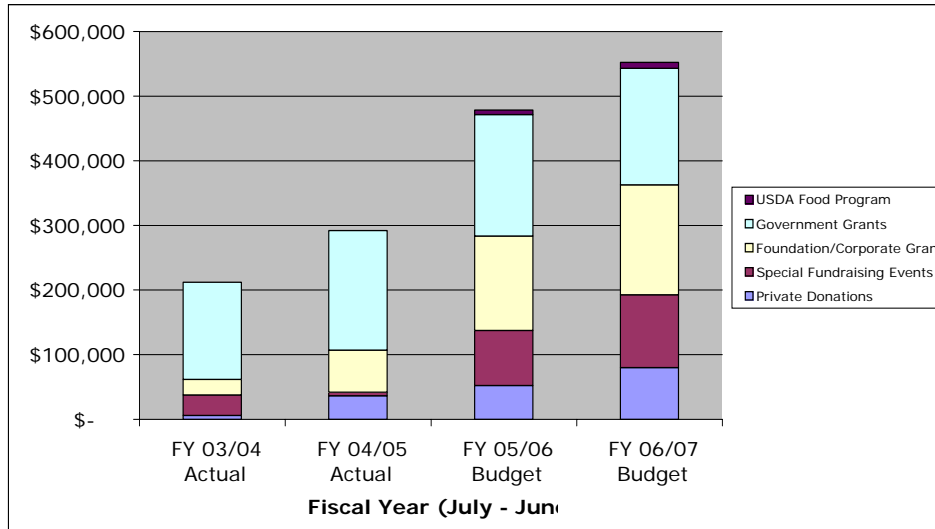
**About Our Organization:**

- Founded: April 2001 (501c3 nonprofit status in February 2003)
- Staff: 12 employees and 35 volunteers (Monthly volunteer hours: average 200 hours)
- 2006 Organization of the Year recognized by the Bend Chamber of Commerce

**Accomplishments --- July 2004 to June 2005:**

- **60 children enrolled in Therapeutic Classroom** - 86% of these children attending our therapeutic classroom demonstrated increased self-esteem and age appropriate cognitive and motor skills.
- **57 parents** (of children in therapeutic classes) - 78% of parents demonstrated a reduction in family stress, improved parenting behaviors, and reduction in risk factors for child abuse or neglect.
- **103 children & families** – served through Outreach Program (29 served in FY 03-04).

**How We're Funded:**



**The Importance of Early Intervention:**

Ninety percent of brain development occurs within the first 3 years of life. Independent research from the Northwest Regional Education Laboratories shows that the Relief Nursery model is effective in reducing child abuse and neglect and keeping children out of foster care. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System reports that 76% of the fatalities in 2002 were children 4 years old or younger. Relief Nurseries are targeted at the most vulnerable children and our services really do make a difference.

**New Deschutes Children’s Foundation Campus**

One of the things that make MountainStar truly unique is our “center” based services. Our facility in Bend is a safe haven for children; a place of education, support and community for parents; and a nexus where multiple service providers work together to assist high need families and children. We currently serve 100 children and their families annually. However the growing demand for our services in Deschutes County currently far exceeds our capacity to fill this need. Once construction of a new campus now being developed through the Deschutes Children’s Foundation is completed, MountainStar will be co-located with several other partner agencies and organizations that provide services to families with young children.

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