



FILLING in the GAPS

In partnership with families,
funders, and the community

IMPACT Report

Selected highlights from 2/2021 - 2/2022



IMPACT Report

Sharing selected highlights
from 2/2021 - 2/2022

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Identifying the value of partnerships.

I am excited to present our Impact

Report. Our value for family is our guide and North Star in providing families what they need to meet their goals. COVID-19 both exposed and created gaps across the entire range of work in human services. In child welfare, ser-

vices vary greatly depending on the needs of each family.

A missing or unavailable service is a gap and, in 2021, we took action to fill the gaps our families identified. We saw a gap in supportive programming for fathers, so we created the Fathers Actively Initiating the Hope (FAITH) program. We saw a gap in driver training for youth and parents, so we

launched a driving simulator and training program.

We saw a gap in respite alternatives in Allegheny County, so we are working to open the first respite home. We saw a gap in juvenile justice diversion and family justice and restoration, so we created the Family Justice Restorative Initiative.



And, as this impact report will show, we also filled gaps in transportation, COVID-19 vaccination, family finding, education assistance, and permanency!

Many times, service gaps go unnoticed because we don't ask families what they need or listen when they tell us. When we open ourselves to family insight, we approach kinship casework with foresight. And, in a child welfare response, we must build it and fly or the gaps grow and multiply. As we remain accountable to the families we serve, we also remain dedicated to letting their voices guide our work, and we respect theirs as the expert perspective.

As you read through this report, remember that families are the ones who fill the gaps in our own lives. Child welfare is no different. The first layer in filling any gap is the value we place on trusting families to know best. That is how we make an impact.

Yours in kinship,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon L. McDaniel".

Dr. Sharon L. McDaniel
President and CEO

Partners increase the impact.

Throughout 2021, we continued to be impacted by—and navigate around—the COVID-19 pandemic. I am enormously proud of how the ASCI team supported one another to better serve children and families. As we all pivot and innovate for our own families, so does the ASCI family pivot and innovate to positively impact the communities where our children and families live.



I believe this report demonstrates that ASCI goes beyond “impact” and works toward “connected and collective impact” by connecting to children, families, and the community so their work is intentional in sharing information, knowledge, and resources. If there is a gap to fill, ASCI works collectively to fill it! For me, this report is a way to celebrate the kinship connections that will always be needed to collectively fill in the gaps and convert challenges to triumphs for every family.

In kinship,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa A. Holt".

Lisa A. Holt
Board Chair

Aligning expenditures to support a value for children and families.

General &
Administrative
Support
Expenses

16%

84%

Direct
Programmatic
Expenses



It alleviates [parents] from worrying about getting a ride. Now I don't have to get on the bus to get [to my visit] at the appointed time.

— MS. D

ASCI BIRTH MOM

We value filling in the gaps that impact our birth parents.

The majority of children who exit the child welfare system are reunified with their families. At ASCI we focus on programs and practices that help facilitate successful reunification for children. A child visiting with their parents is an essential factor in reunification.

IMPACT: ASCI's Family Service Transportation (FST) department supported birth parents by providing them free Uber services to our Rhonda D. Wright Family Center (RDW) in order to assist them with visiting with their children as their other community visitation centers were closed due to COVID-19.



8,237

Our Family Service Transportation department utilized Uber 8,237 times so children could be with their parents. That's an average of 686 trips per month.

We value a collective impact in closing the gaps communities need to thrive.

Families make up communities. Therefore, increased support for kin means personalized support in the home and community. By working with other organizations, we can increase families' access to support, information, and services.



<https://betterbikeshare.org/2021/02/23/in-Pittsburgh-a-new-community-ambassador-program-pays-off/>

IMPACT: ASCI is part of the African American Strategic Partnership (AASP) Community Trust Through Information, Education, and Support (TIES) partnership that is working to prevent further disproportional deaths and hospitalizations in the African American community due to COVID-19. Community TIES was formed to leverage partner networks to mitigate barriers to information and resources through targeted, culturally competent educational outreach and community engagement, clinical services (vaccinations) and resource coordination.

20

ASCI is part of the 20-strong membership organizations that are networking collaboratively to increase accessibility in providing information on the COVID-19 virus, vaccinations, and testing.

“

In our region, community-based organizations like A Second Chance, Inc. and the other AASP Community TIES partners are a critical safety net for residents most at risk. As resources flooded the state and region, public health agencies and offices in receipt of these assets recognized the need for help at the grassroots level to reach into the heart of communities that otherwise were not being connected.

— DR. SHANNAH THARP-GILLIAM
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & EVALUATION
HOMEWOOD CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

817

Students served for Special Education Assistance & Advocacy

Educational gaps must be filled if we truly value positively impacting the health and well-being of the whole child.

Committed to assisting caregivers with specific challenges in the area of special-education placements, it is often necessary to intervene at school meetings and ask questions pertinent to the caregiver. Our advocacy is one that is solution-focused when navigating a special-education challenge.

IMPACT: When students returned to the classroom in 2021, particularly those in special-education programs with Individual Education Plans, ASCI's education liaisons Dr. Christine White-Taylor and Dr. Shani Yeldell focused on maintaining contact with students who had been part of our after-school learning hub during the COVID-19 lockdown.



Anytime I've ever called [Dr. Taylor], she's always helped me. She's been wonderful. She was on the phone with me when we get calls, conference calls, and IEP calls and stuff. She was able to speak up and say what she felt [my children] should be able to have. I'm not an educator. I don't know the regulations. So, when somebody is on the phone who knows what's going on and what [the school] should be doing, they're more likely to do what they're supposed to do.

— MS. R
ASCI KINSHIP CAREGIVER

A value for family means eliminating any gaps when it comes to locating kin for children.

It is not only in policy and practice that we must have a kin-first requirement, it must also be a cultural mindset. If a child needs to be removed from their home, they simply would not ask to go with strangers. Kinship care is never just a policy, it is rooted in recognizing the moral right children have to be with their own families.

IMPACT: Family Finding was the highlight of the Philadelphia Regional Office in 2021 due to the number of referrals we received and our ability to find family placement options for each one. More than half the cases serviced, closed to reunification with parents or permanency with other relatives.



I believe that family should be together. Even if it's not the parents, if there is another close kin that they can be with, that's the best place for them. I agreed to become [my nephew's] kinship caregiver because he needs to be with family. We never thought we were going to have contact with him ever again. So, this feels like our second chance to be with him and enjoy him in our family.

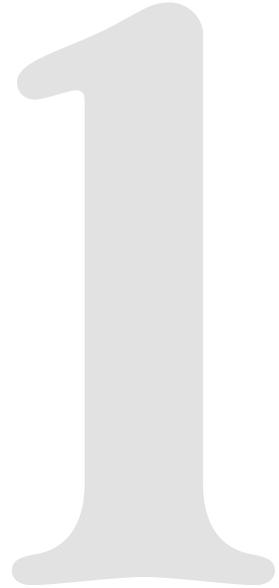
— MS. Z

ASCI KINSHIP CAREGIVER

384

We found family for, and were able to close, all 384 referred cases!

To impact permanency, we must value the decision-making power of each single family, one at a time.



With love, support, and boatloads of sweet treats, ASCI celebrated National Adoption Day with 15 adoptive families in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia on Saturday, November 20, 2021. Eighteen of our children found forever homes, and the courthouses were filled with tears of joy.

IMPACT: Although all families are special, one unique family stood out. Fred and Carolyn Dukes adopted their 8-year-old granddaughter, Brooklyn, who came into their care last year due to the tragic passing of Brooklyn’s mother.

“Every child deserves a forever home,” Fred shares. “It was the best thing to do for our granddaughter. She needs permanency.” Fred describes Brooklyn as a very loving, caring, compassionate, and smart social butterfly. It’s fairly easy to shower Brooklyn with love because of who she is, he says. She brings new life into the Dukes’ household. This beautiful 8-year-old is also gifted in piano and loves to draw. Even though Brooklyn is their granddaughter, she was so excited to be named “daughter” to Fred and Carolyn.

This year’s National Adoption Day changed the Dukes’ family dynamic forever. Fred also shares that he is a former employee of A Second Chance, Inc. He spent 14 years with the agency and now works for Allegheny County’s Office of Children, Youth and Families. So, during this process, he knew exactly what needed to be done, and his ASCI family helped execute the adoption. “I had a clear understanding of the passion and vision of Dr. McDaniel. Everything they provided that we needed for Brooklyn was excellent,” he says.

Fred and Carolyn are excited to watch Brooklyn continue to grow into her destiny and cannot wait to see the positive impact she will make as a young African American woman who wants to make a difference in people’s lives.



Pictured: Carolyn and Brooklyn Dukes



Sharon L. McDaniel, PhD, EdD, MPA
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