

**The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board, Inc.
2013 Annual Report**



www.CFCRBCollier.org
CFCRBCollier@comcast.net



2013 Board of Directors

President

Willie West, MS,BSN

Vice President

Edward Ferguson, Ph.D.

Treasurer

Russell Groos

Secretary

Veora Little, CRNA

DIRECTORS

Honorable Ted Brousseau

Janet W. Eustis

Commander Beth Jones

Suzanne Meiners-Levy, Esq.

Financial Statement

Year Ending 12/31/13

Opening Balance: \$3,108.92

Deposits:

Donations \$2,134.25

Expenses:

Accounting Fees \$165.00

Annual Filings \$ 61.25

Donations for in-service \$200.00

Meetings \$639.59

Office Supplies/Printing \$178.59

Printing \$448.00

Toys/Gifts for kids \$95.00

Training/Education \$202.63

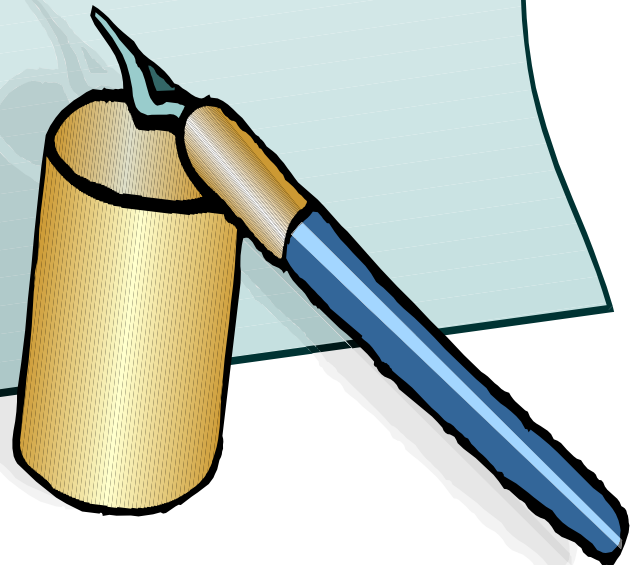
Travel \$ 66.85

Website Renewal \$ 35.00

Website Hosting \$180.00

Total Expenses \$2,271.91

Closing Balance \$2,971.26



**The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board, Inc.
is a court appointed volunteer organization
that promotes timely, positive, and
permanent outcomes for
dependent children.**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2013 marked the 21st year that The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB), a non-profit organization of Collier County, has provided judicial reviews for children in foster care. Our 33 highly trained, court appointed volunteers serve under the direction of the Honorable Elizabeth V. Krier, Dependency Court Judge, and her case manager Judy Groos who provides the administrative support. This year we heard 202 cases involving 313 children. Our goal is to conduct judicial reviews that insure for the safety and best interests of each child and family within the guidelines of dependency statutes, thus fulfilling our mission to promote timely, positive and permanent outcomes for dependent children.

This annual report highlights the activities of CFCRB and the data collected during reviews over the past year. Positive changes and areas of concern are identified. It is evident that many of the concerns are recurring themes from previous years. Data collected through our judicial reviews serves as a guide to all the parties within the dependency system. It remains our challenge to work together in making the positive changes needed to fulfill our goals.

For 21 years, CFCRB has been a vital component of the Dependency Court in Collier County. Panels consisting of five volunteers carry out the majority of first judicial reviews at 3-5 months and post-permanency reviews referred by the dependency judge. They respond to the needs of children in care and their families by providing accurate, precise and complete recommendations to the court.

The role of the CFCRB Board of Directors and Steering Committee goes well beyond judicial reviews, data collection and analysis. It is the Board's responsibility to ensure the execution of our mission statement. In October, our part time executive director Ms. Groos was transferred to court administration, requiring a restructuring the CFCRB. A transition plan was implemented. With the support of Judge Krier and Administrative Judge Christine Greider, our panels continue to operate without interruption.

The Steering Committee offers seven in-service programs to the membership each year with invitations to Guardians ad Litem (GAL) when appropriate. This year's training included a session by Judge Krier on the Child Safety Guide. These programs provide critical information to keep volunteers updated and to improve our skills in asking the right questions during reviews. The CFCRB has been fortunate to have a very stable pool of volunteers. When openings become available, all efforts are made to achieve minority representation.

We are grateful to Judge Krier for her continued support in allowing us the privilege to serve abused, neglected and abandoned children in our community. Judge Krier has assumed the leadership role in implementing the Child Safety Decision Making Model and other areas of improvement within the dependency court in Collier County and the State.

Concerns and Barriers

It has been a difficult year for the Florida Department of Children and Families with an increase in child deaths and missing children who were known to the department. More than ever, it is critical that all stakeholders at the community level be fully engaged in providing the very best oversight to keep children safe and improve the system.

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida (CNSWF) is the Lead Agency in the 20th Circuit. Family Preservation Services (FPS) is the Community Based Care Organization providing case management in the dependency system. Our concerns relate to the lack of information on the community based aspects of care provided by these agencies. FPS has an In-Home Non Judicial program, and Children's Network a Diversion program. We fully support community based care. However, these programs do not have the oversight of the judiciary or any other form of reporting to other stakeholders. It is our belief that these community based programs should undergo a form of monitoring of outcomes so that the effectiveness of the programs can be evaluated.

The most pressing concern remains the very high turnover rate of case managers at FPS. Positions are filled slowly and gaps remain while new case managers undergo training. New case managers need in-depth training, supervisory support and the guidance from CFCRB when attending judicial reviews. Family support workers, instead of case managers, are frequently supervising visitations. Evidence based evaluations are not always made available to the court. Court orders need to be complied with consistently. With the implementation of the Child Safety Decision Making Model, case managers need to know how to write and implement comprehensive safety plans.

The new, redesigned computer generated judicial report which was tested in other counties, has not been implemented. The "old" (FSFN) report remains a challenge to all of those using it. On a positive note, CFCRB has gone paperless, and reports are now distributed to us on-line.

There was a decrease in the number of months children remained in care, A shift in placement of these children was observed: Foster care placements increased, whereas in-home (MASP) decreased. For the first time in our record keeping, adoption was the most frequently assigned goal. However, there are long delays in the adoption process when an Interstate Compact for the

Placement of Children (ICPC) is required. DCF and the State, in conjunction with the Federal ICPC Office, need to streamline this system so that children can be adopted in a timely manner.

It is encouraging that the trend of decreased time in care for children continued in 2013. But, on the other side of this equation was an increase in the number of children whose cases were reopened (13%). 73% of these were due to re-sheltering, an increase of 58% from last year. These cases should be carefully reviewed by FPS to determine what the contributing factors are: Was enough time given to the case; were proper services provided; was there sufficient post placement support. Any time a child is re-sheltered is a traumatic and detrimental event. Parents should be carefully evaluated prior to reunification to determine if they have benefitted from services and are ready to be successfully reunified.

There remains an inadequate number of foster homes in Collier County, resulting in children being placed in outlying counties. When children are placed in rural settings, far from their homes, it often results in less frequent visitation with their biological families, and unavailability of services. More homes need to be found in Collier County. As long as children are placed a long way from home, services need to be provided and transportation made available to parents and siblings to allow for sufficient visitation.

The submission of reports from assigned GALs remains high at 99% and represent 81% of cases although only 62% of GALs were in attendance at the judicial review.

Goals

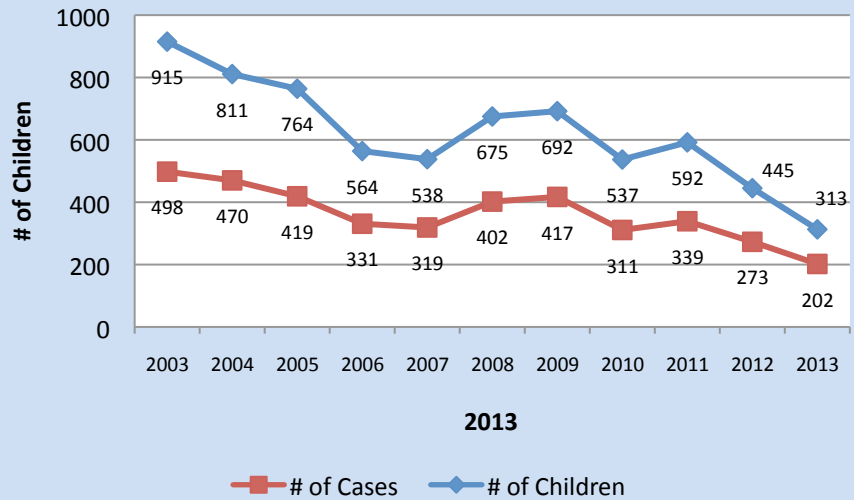
Our goals in the coming year are as follows:

- Work with the court to integrate CFCRB into the Unified Family Court
- Support more evidence based practices
- Support CNSWF and FPS in reducing re-entry of cases into the system
- Provide guidance to new case managers at judicial reviews
- Provide guidance and support to case managers in understanding and implementing the components of a comprehensive safety plan

The CFCRB will continue to build on the positive trends seen in the past year and work with all stakeholders to implement solutions and promote positive outcomes for children and families.

Willie West, President, CFCRB Board of Directors

of Judicial Reviews/# of Children

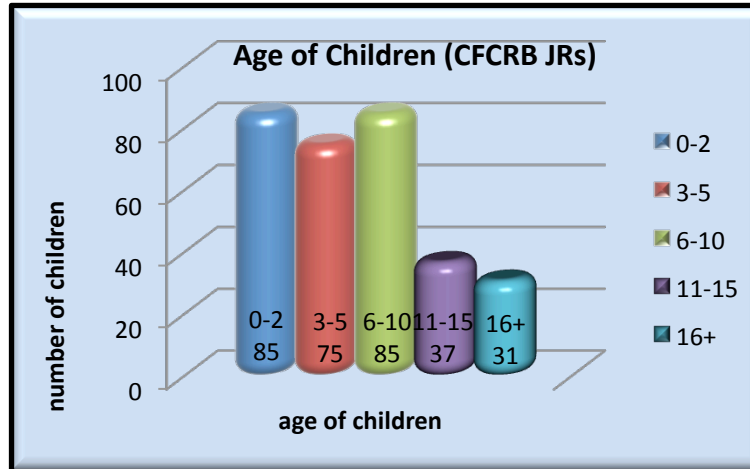


CFCRB

202 Judicial Reviews were conducted by the CFCRB involving 313 children. Of these, 156 Judicial Reviews were non-duplicated during the year.

TREND: There was a substantial decline in the number of JRs conducted by the CFCRB. Factors that may explain this trend are:

- Increase in the in-home, non-judicial services provided by FPS and Diversion cases handled by CNSWF
- Reviews done by Dependency Judge, rather than sending to Panel
- Fewer children entering the system
- More cases are closing, than opening

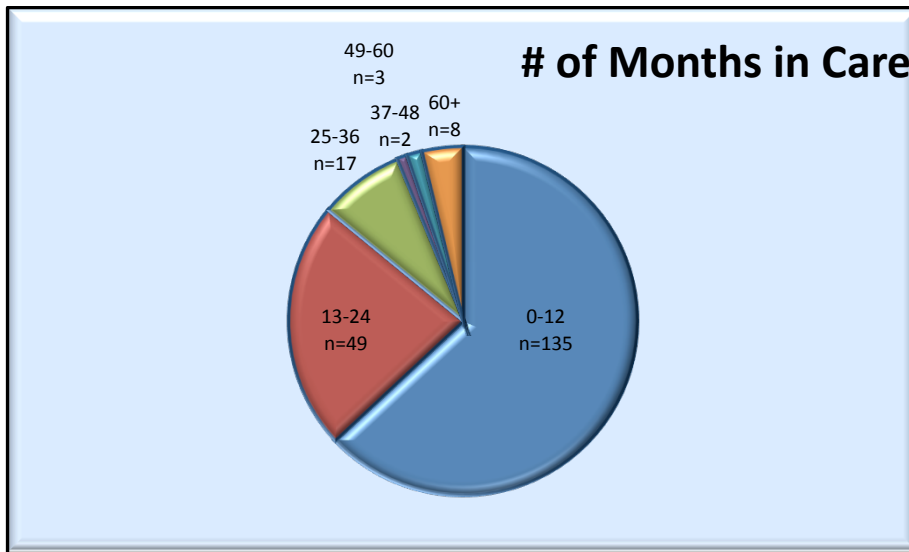


TREND: Children from 0 – 5 years of age continue to be the largest grouping by age. There was a continued decrease in the 11-15 year age group, and a small increase in the 16+ age group.

# of Children	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Age 0 – 2	85 27.16%	117 26.29%	166 28.04%	158 29.42%	211 30.49%	180 26.67%	155 28.81%	183 32.45%	185 24.21%	182 22.44%
Age 3 – 5	75 23.97%	114 25.62%	143 24.16%	138 25.70%	185 26.73%	157 23.26%	112 20.82%	111 19.68%	154 20.16%	165 20.35%
Age 6 – 10	85 27.16%	115 25.84%	153 25.84%	135 25.14%	150 21.68%	155 22.96%	127 23.61%	114 20.21%	199 26.05%	214 26.39%
Age 11 – 15	37 11.82%	68 15.28%	110 18.58%	78 14.53%	98 14.16%	126 18.67%	105 19.52%	111 19.68%	164 21.47%	172 21.21%
Age 16+	31 9.90%	31 6.97%	20 3.38%	28 5.21%	48 6.94%	57 8.44%	39 7.25%	45 7.99%	62 8.12%	78 9.62%
Total	313	445	592	537	692	675	538	564	764	811

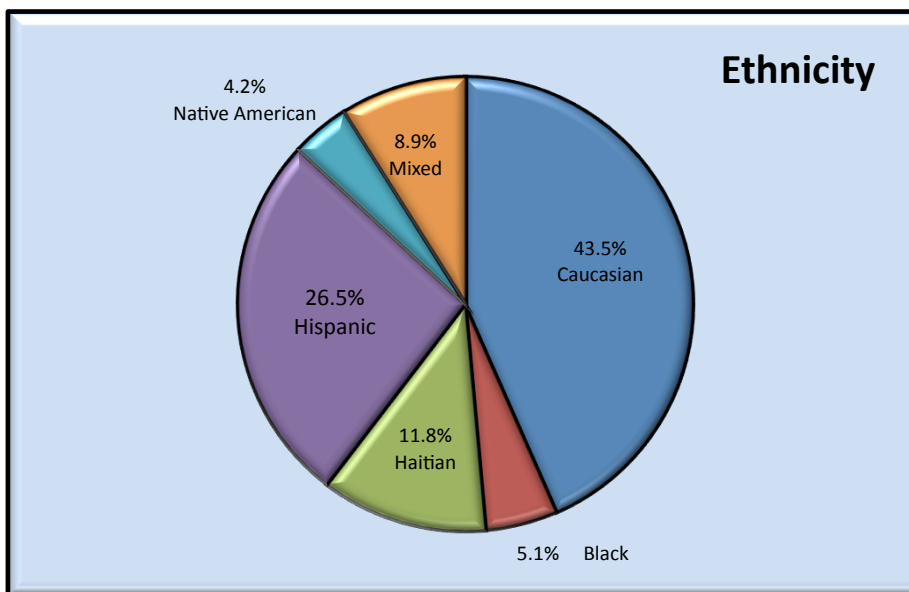
Concern: The 0-5 group is at higher risk because they:

- Are less visible within the community
- Are not in school or attend daycare



TREND: A decrease in the number of months in care continues. In 2013, 63% of children were in care for 0-12 months and 23% for 13-24 months. We see this as positive trend.

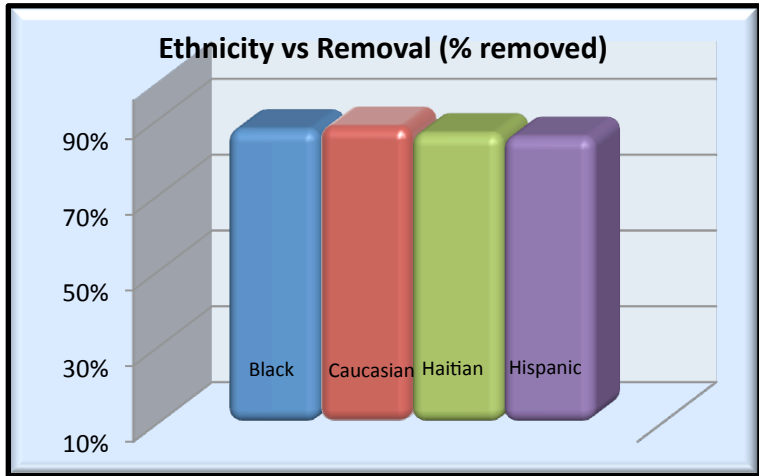
	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
0-12 Months	135 63.08%	101 51.53%	123 46.24%	65 30.37%	140 49.12%	163 51.1%	132 48.48%	65 36.52%	149 35.48%	147 27.22%
13-24 Months	49 22.90%	57 29.08%	88 33.08%	101 47.20%	70 24.56%	84 26.33%	79 28.42%	58 32.58%	122 29.05%	180 33.33%
25-36 Months	17 7.94%	18 9.18%	29 10.90%	20 9.35%	31 10.88%	29 9.10%	24 8.63%	20 11.24%	54 12.86%	110 20.37%
37-48 Months	2 .93%	4 2.04%	9 3.38%	11 5.14%	17 5.96%	11 3.45%	18 6.47%	12 6.74%	17 4.05%	47 8.7%
49-60 Months	3 1.40%	1 .5%	7 2.63%	6 2.81%	4 1.40%	16 5.02%	5 1.80%	7 3.93%	17 4.05%	23 4.26%
60+ Months	8 3.74%	15 7.65%	10 3.76%	11 5.14%	23 8.07%	16 5.02%	20 7.19%	16 8.99%	61 14.52%	33 6.11%



OBSERVATION: There was no change in the percentages of ethnic groupings.

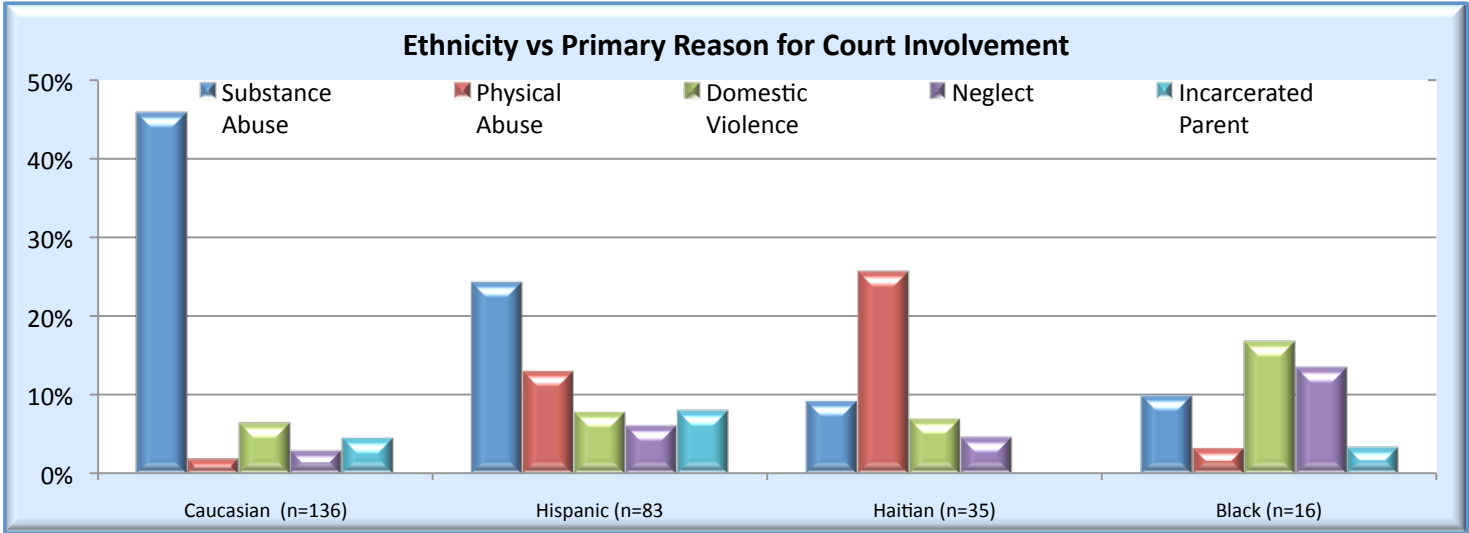
When the ethnicity of children in the school system is compared with our cases, it is interesting to note that the percentage of Caucasian children listed in the schools is lower than that seen in the court, whereas the percent of Hispanic children in the schools is much higher than that seen in the court.

% of Cases by Ethnicity			
	Current Collier County Schools	2013	2012
Caucasian/White	37%	43.5%	46.5%
Hispanic	47%	26.5%	26.1%
Haitian	Not reported separately	11.8%	9.6%
Black/Afro American	12	5.1%	6.7%
Mixed	2	8.9%	9.9%
Native American	1	4.2%	.7%



Percent of Children removed	2013 (%)	2012 (%)	2011 (%)
Black	88	77	83
Caucasian	88	77	78
Haitian	86	98	87
Hispanic	86	73	62

OBSERVATION: The percent of children removed from their families is the same across all racial groups, an indication that there does not appear to be any disparity in the court’s decision making.



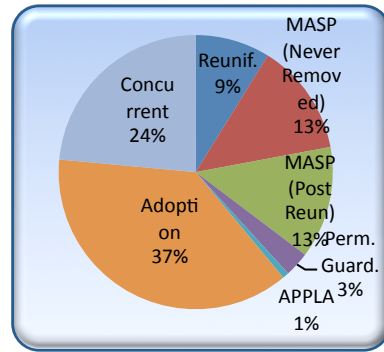
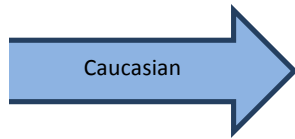
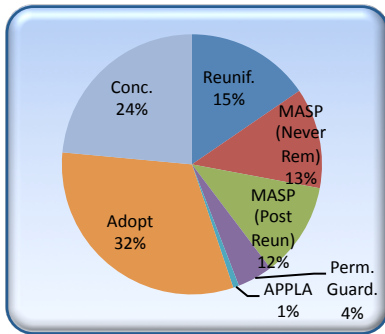
Only the primary reasons for court involvement are listed. Often these are combined with other reasons. Not shown are: Mental Health, Abandonment, Sexual Abuse and Deceased Parent.

- OBSERVATION:**
- Substance abuse remains the leading cause for court involvement in the Caucasian and Hispanic groups.
 - Physical abuse remains the leading cause in the Haitian group.

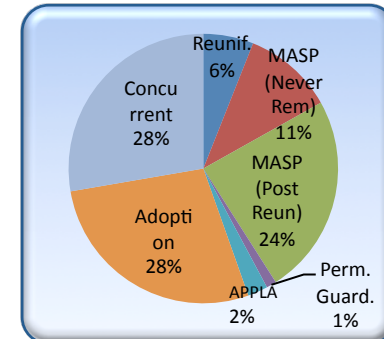
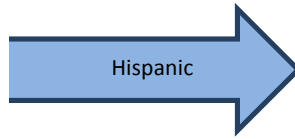
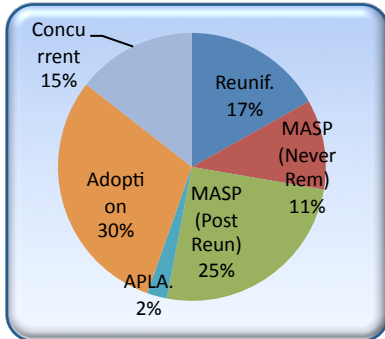
Goal at Onset of Judicial Review

Goal at Conclusion of Judicial Review

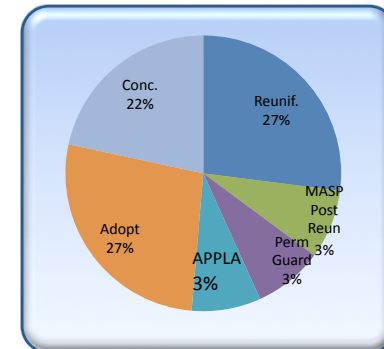
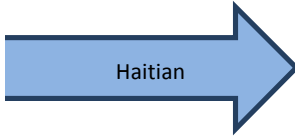
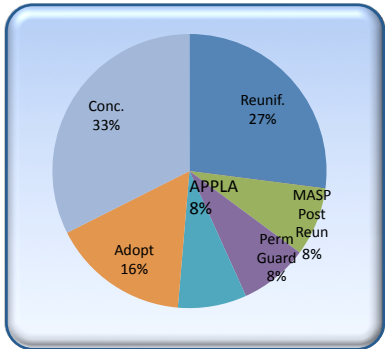
Largest Change OBSERVED in goal from onset to conclusion



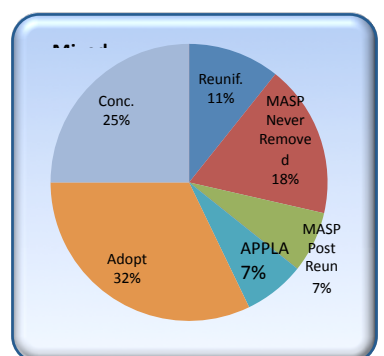
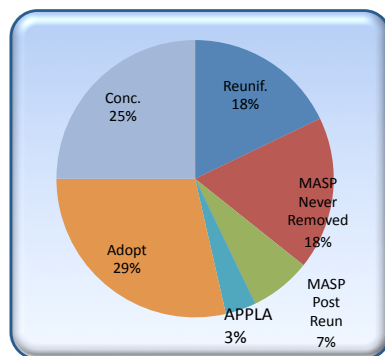
Reunification Goal to Adoption Goal



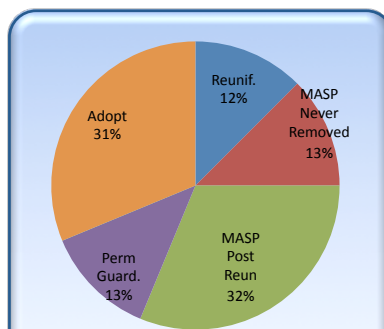
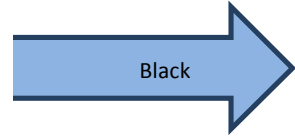
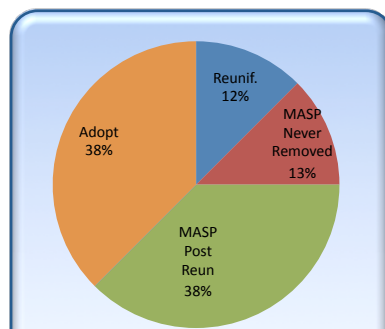
Reunification Goal to Concurrent Goal



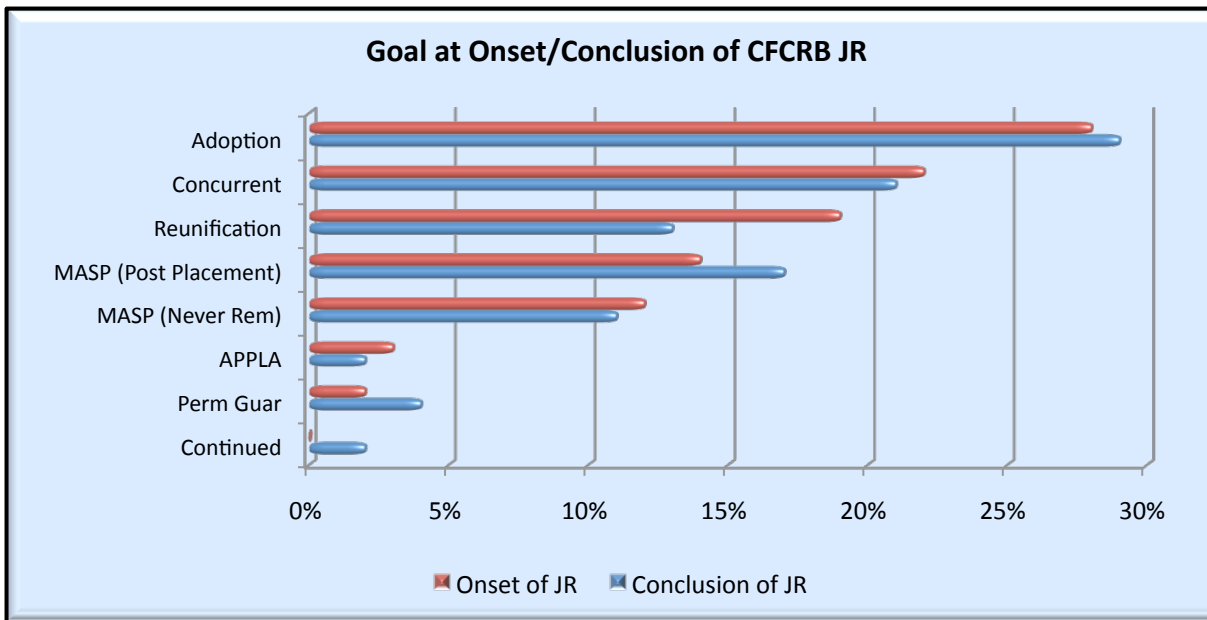
Concurrent Goal to Adoption Goal



Reunification Goal to Adoption Goal



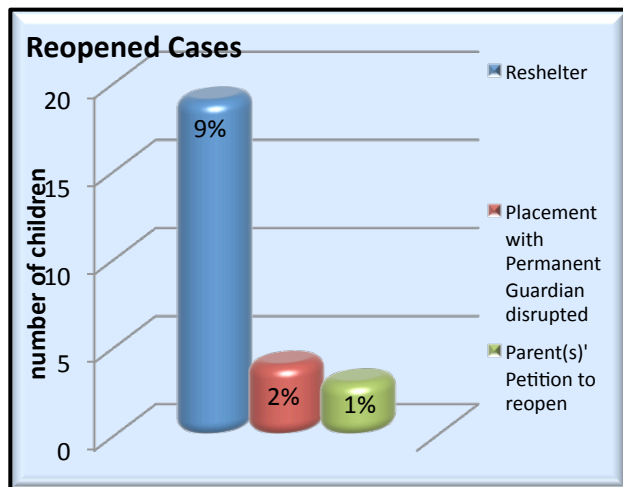
Adoption Goal to Permanent Guardianship Goal



Goal does not reflect the final outcome of case, but rather the recommended goal of CRCRB Panel

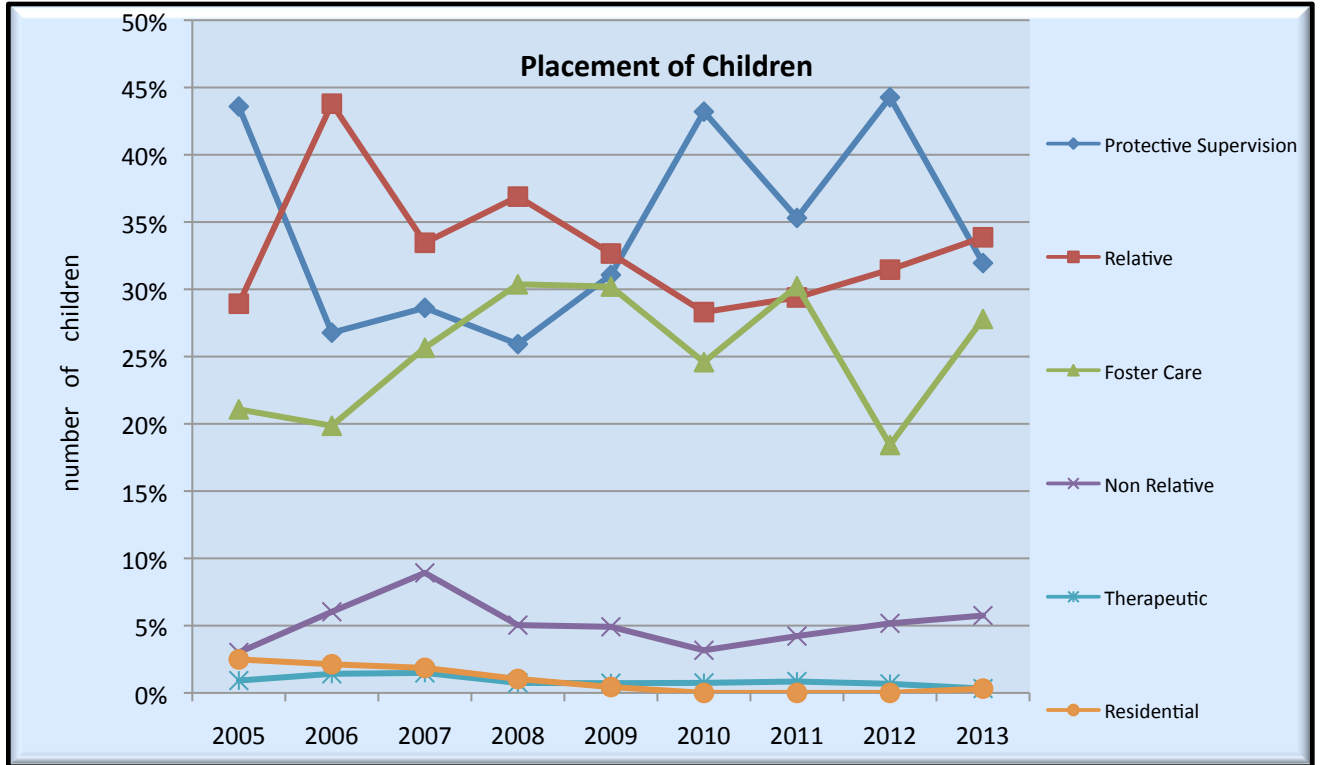
TREND: The goal of Adoption increased by 11% from last year and for the first time in our record-keeping is the most frequently assigned goal (29%). Maintain and Strengthen Placement, (combined) decreased by 12% from 2012.

	MASP (Never Removed)	MASP (Post Placement)	MASP (combined)	Adoption	Concurrent	Reunification	Perm Guard.	APPLA	Continued	Cancelled	Perm Placed Fit Relative
2013	38 12%	51 16%	89 28%	91 29%	64 20%	42 13%	10 3%	10 3%	6 2%	0 0%	0 0%
2012	91 20%	90 20%	181 40%	82 18%	77 17%	76 17%	13 3%	10 2%	4 1%	1 .5%	0 0%
2011	N/A	N/A	183 31%	134 23%	126 21%	95 16%	25 4%	15 3%	12 2%	2 <1%	0 0%
2010	N/A	N/A	169 31.47%	93 17.32%	128 23.84%	79 14.71%	22 4.10%	8 1.49%	30 5.59%	1 .19%	7 1.30%
2009	N/A	N/A	151 21.82%	116 16.76%	156 22.54%	133 19.22%	27 3.90%	23 3.32%	81 11.71%	5 .72%	N/A
2008	N/A	N/A	145 21.48%	90 13.33%	130 19.26%	147 21.78%	20 2.96%	43 6.37%	96 14.22%	4 .59%	N/A



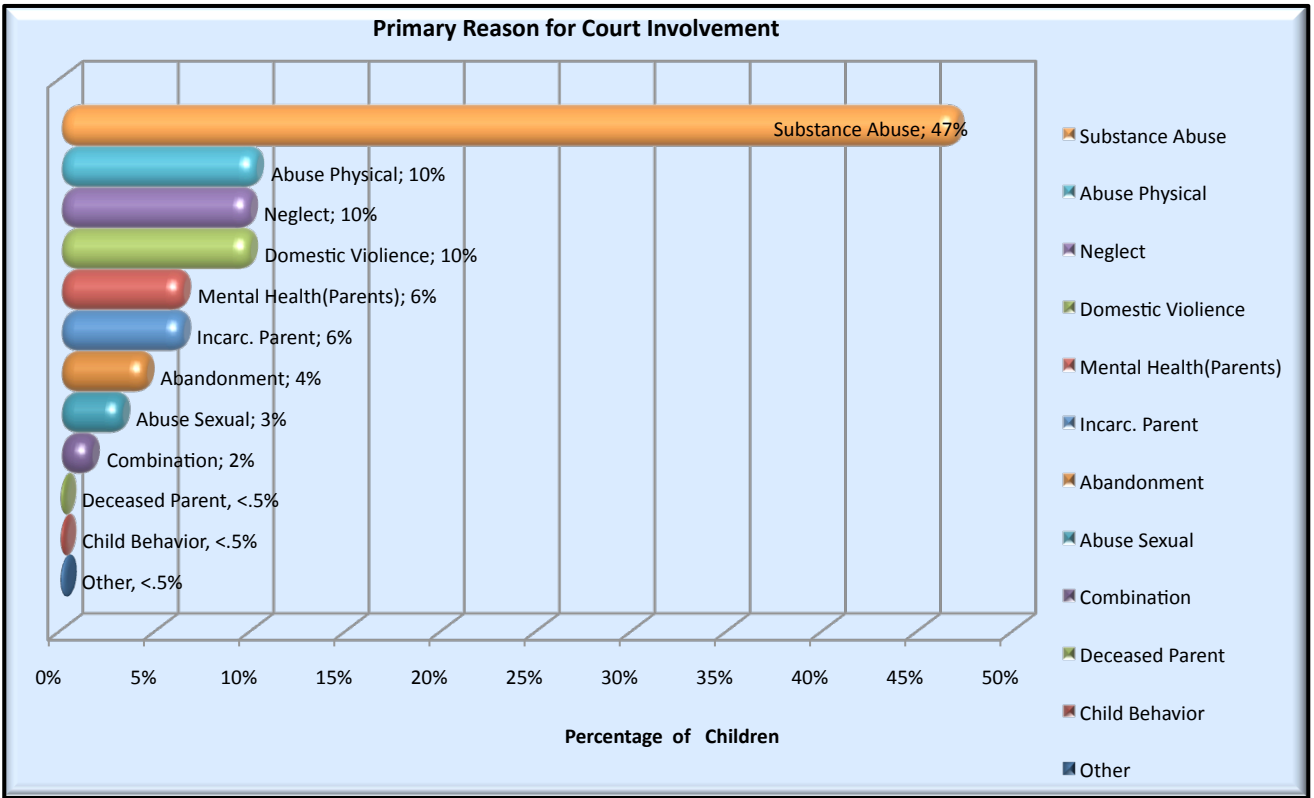
Year Reopened	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Re-sheltered	19	8	15	16	14
Parent(s) Petitioned to Reopen	3	8	7	1	7
Perm. Guard. Reopened to Adopt	0	4	4	5	2
Perm. Placement Disrupted	4	2	3	3	6
Total (# of cases)	26	22	29	25	29

TREND: Twenty six (13%) of the 202 judicial reviews were reopened cases. This is a 5% increase from 2012. 73% of these cases were due to re-sheltering of the children.



OBSERVATION: The most striking change in placement is the decrease of in-home (MASP) placement and the increase in foster care placement. With an increase of adoption as a goal, it is not surprising to also find more children placed in foster care. We also observed an increase in the severity of the cases coming before the court, which may contribute to this trend.



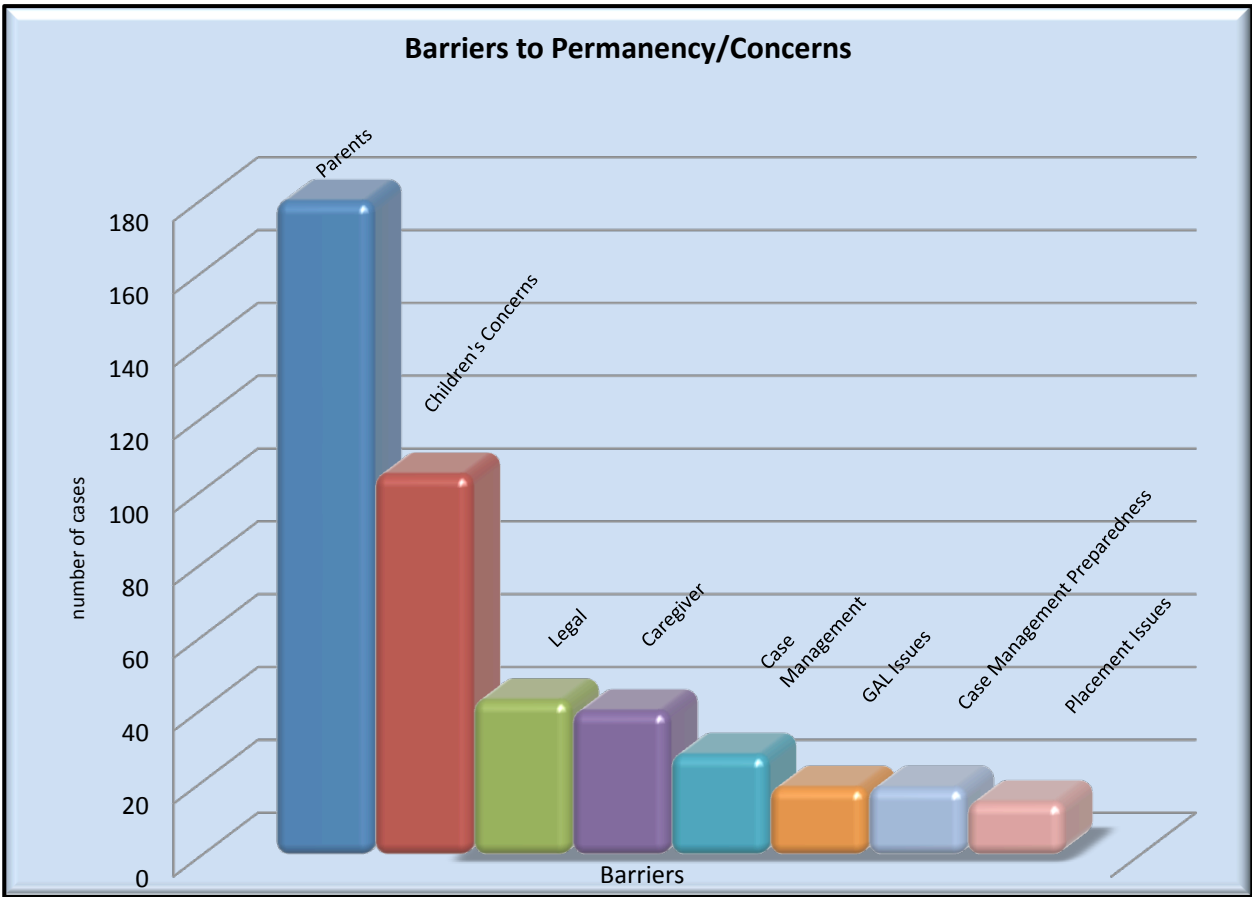


The data reflects only “primary” reason for entry into care. Frequently other factors may exist along with substance abuse.

OBSERVATIONS:

- Substance abuse increase by 9% and remains the most frequent reason for court involvement (47%)
- Abuse, neglect and domestic violence were second at 10% each
- Abandonment remains a low number but doubled in frequency from last year

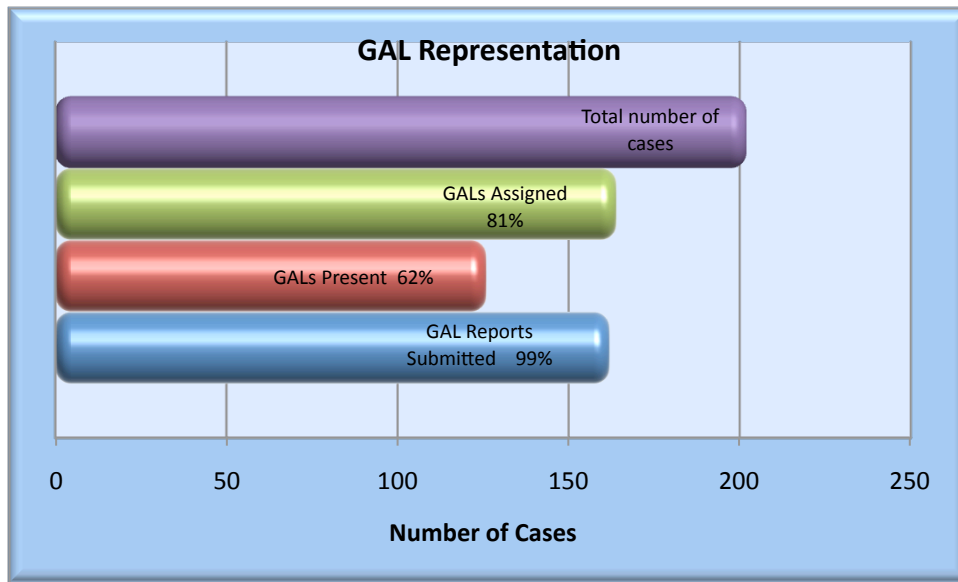
	Substance Abuse	Abandonment	Abuse Physical	Abuse-Sexual	Child Behavior	Deceased Parent	Domestic Violence	Incarcerated Parent	Mental Health Parents	Neglect	Other	Comb.
2013	147 47%	14 4%	32 10%	10 3%	1 <.5%	1 <.5%	31 10%	20 6%	20 6%	31 10%	1 <.5%	5 2%
2012	170 38.2%	7 1.6%	62 13.9%	16 3.6%	1 .22%	2 .45%	66 14.83%	16 3.6%	24 5.4%	71 16%	6 1.35%	4 .9%
2011	228 38.5%	8 1.4%	95 16.0 %	21 3.5%	1 .2%	6 1.0%	72 12.2%	25 4.2%	38 6.42%	82 13.9%	15 2.5%	1 .2%
2010	237 44.13%	10 1.9%	59 10.99%	18 3.35%	1 .19%	2 .37%	49 9.12%	26 4.84%	44 8.19%	76 14.15%	11 2.05%	4 .74%
2009	286 41.33%	11 1.6%	71 10.26%	31 4.48%	0 0.0%	2 .29%	81 11.7%	35 5.06%	25 3.61%	128 18.5%	8 1.16%	14 2.02%
2008	264 39.11%	21 3.1%	114 16.89%	30 4.44%	1 .15%	5 .74%	33 4.89%	19 2.81%	20 2.96%	143 21.19%	15 2.22%	10 1.48%



Barriers and Concerns to Case Completion and Successful Closure

Trend: In spite of seeing a 10% decrease in parent's lack of compliance with case plan tasks, it remains the leading concern as a barrier to case closure (37% of cases)

CATEGORY	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Parents	180 36.8%	306 46.5%	313 37.3%	249 36.09%	131 20.7%	125 19.1%
Children's Concerns	105 21.5%	99 15%	97 11.6%	36 5.22%	5 ≤ 1%	9 1.4%
Legal	43 8.8%	65 9.9%	113 13.5%	112 16.23%	147 23.3%	165 25.2%
GAL Issues	19 3.9%	44 6.7%	81 9.7%	107 15.51%	22 3.4%	54 8.3%
Caregivers	40 8.2%	44 6.7%	58 6.9%	48 6.96%	10 1.6%	11 1.7%
Case Management	28 5.7%	43 6.5%	53 6.3%	31 4.49%	47 7.4%	54 8.2%
Preparedness of Case Manager	19 3.9%	40 6.1%	64 7.6%	62 8.99%	46 7.2%	75 11.5%
Placement Issues	15 3.1%	17 2.6%	10 1.2%	45 6.52%	223 35.3%	160 24.5%
Cases with no Barriers/Concerns	40 8.25	36 5.47%	50 6%	29 9.32%	Statistic not kept	Statistic not kept



OBSERVATION: Guardian ad Litem assigned to cases increased by 14% representing 81% of cases. Attendance at judicial reviews dropped by 17% to 62% of cases.

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
GAL's Assigned	164	183	249	241	274	249	170	167	158	151
% of Cases with GAL assigned	81%	67%	73.45%	77.49%	65.71%	61.94%	53.29%	50.45%	37.71%	32.13%
% of assigned GALs who attended JRs	62%	78.69%	71.49%	74.69%	71.53%	73.90%	79.41%	68.86%	68.99%	73.51%
Report submitted	99%	182 99.45%	199 79.92%	134 55.60%	176 64.23%	202 81.12%	144 84.71%	130 77.84%	137 86.71%	138 91.39%
Total JRs	202	273	339	311	417	402	319	331	419	470



2013 Panel Member Volunteers

Terry Abraham-Whalley

Tom Becker

Bob Bogle

Ed Bransilver

Stephen Brazina

Ann Campbell

Lori Cohen

Mike Dias

Jane Ellsworth

Jan Eustis

David Goldstein

Russ Groos

Colette Hall

Liz Hayes

Newton Hoilette

Joe Jaffe

Fran Kieselhorst

Suzanne Meiners-Levy

Judi Mudarri

Rob Nossen

Pattye Ormsby

Janet Rogers

Sally Salzer

Jim Schoenwetter

Ken Shevin

Elli Taylor

Paul Wachsmith

Irving Waldman

Harold Week

Marv Weisberg

Willie West

Carmen Wise



2013 Steering Committee Members

Bob Bogle

Lori Cohen

Jan Eustis *(chair)*

David Goldstein

Joe Jaffe

Suzanne Meiners-Levy

Elli Taylor

Irving Waldman



Support us....

The CFCRB is recognized as a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. This means that donations you make to CFCRB may qualify as tax-deductible, charitable contributions on your Federal Income Tax forms. Contributions to the CFCRB are a wonderful way to show your appreciation of family and friends or to celebrate happy occasions or the memory of loved ones.

With a minimum contribution of \$10, a notice of your donation will be sent to the family or person you wish to honor. Contributions to the CFCRB are used to fund training, printing and recruiting expenses, none of which are covered by funds provided to CFCRB by the County.

Your check payable to CFCRB may be sent to:

CFCRB Inc.

PO Box 10746

Naples, FL 34101