

BELONG

THIS IS WHAT WE DO!



Cover Photo
Joy Pritchard



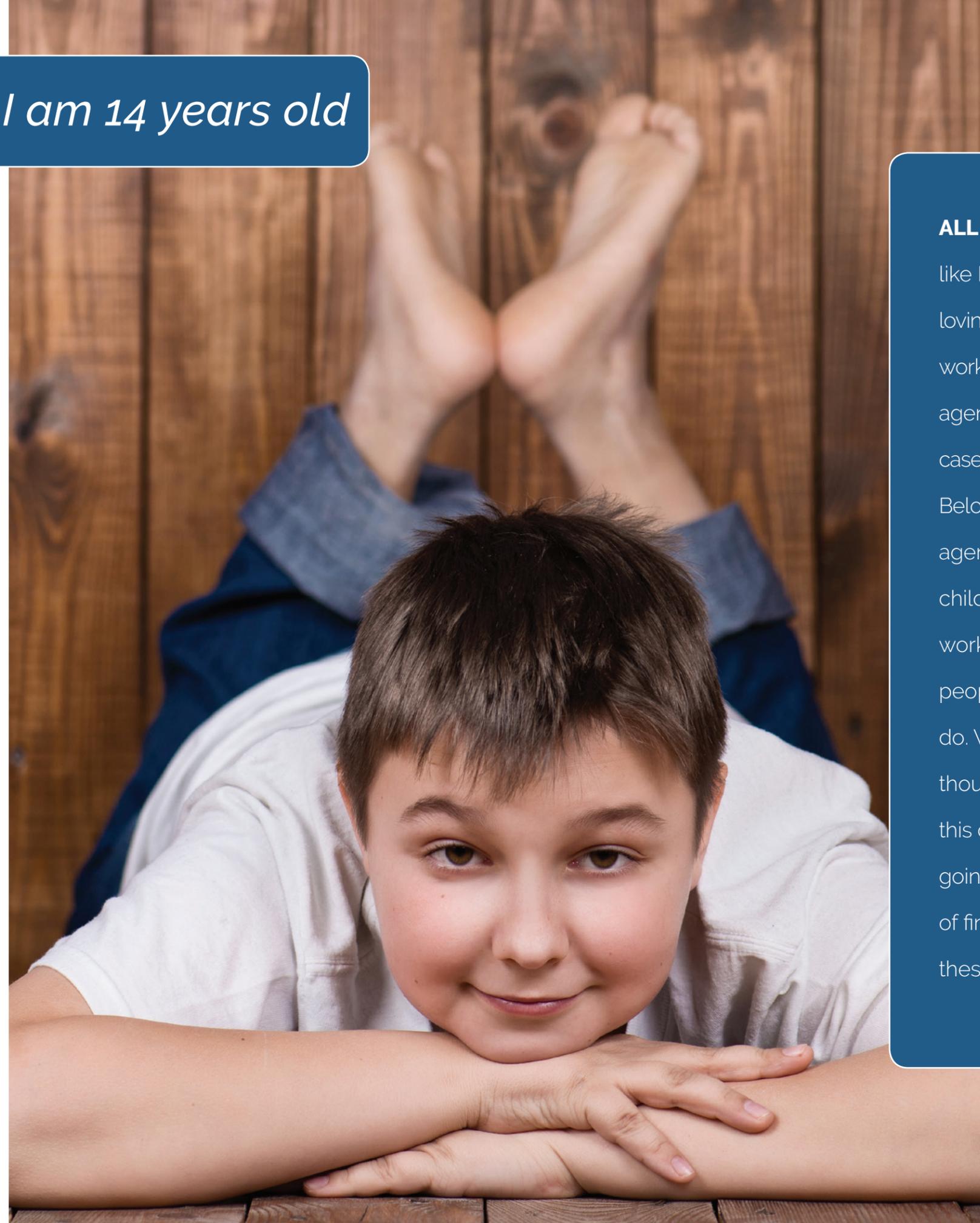
I AM BENJAMIN, and I am 14 years old

My favorite color is green because it's the color of life, you know the match of nature. Well, I like to draw and play with advanced Lego sets. I visualize the future and what I'm going to do in the future. You know, act and stuff. I would like to be a scientist because I would like to reinvent the future. I would like to change the world into a much better and peaceful place. My friends would describe me as nice, caring, creative and a good storyteller. My best day would be..... to..... get adopted. Family means to me that, someone that I can actually, you know, say 'I love you' too. That won't be so mean to me all of the time. Someone that will actually say "good luck sport" or something like that. I want someone like that. To be my family. Well, what I want to do with a family is play, have fun and just be like an ordinary family would be. I personally would like to go travel to Hawaii. Because a part of me is Hawaiian. I want people to know about me that I'm a nice guy. A really nice guy."

This is a transcript from Benjamin's I Belong Project™ video. The I Belong Project™ is a signature program of America's Kids Belong and it is designed to give children in foster care a voice of their own. In 2018, America's Kids Belong produced 183 I Belong Project™ videos. More importantly, Benjamin was welcomed into a new family! His story is one of many.

This is what we do. We help children like Benjamin find families and parents who will call them "sport" and love them for the rest of their life. We do this by uniting government, faith-based, business and creative communities to end the foster care and adoption crisis in the U.S. – state by state.

**For confidentiality purposes the name of the child and some details were changed.*



ALL CHILDREN in foster care, like Benjamin, are placed in a loving family through the care and work of a local social services agency and a local social services case worker. America's Kids Belong is not a local social services agency and we do not place children in families, but we do work alongside and support the people and organizations that do. We appreciate and thank the thousands of caseworkers across this country who are tirelessly going about the very difficult work of finding families to match with these beautiful children.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

In 2018, we took to the road. Literally, we went on tour. We went on tour with Nashville-based recording artist and Grammy Award Winner Chris Tomlin. Chris Tomlin's music has touched the lives of thousands of people across the United States and around the world. On tour, Chris brought along some good friends and a great show, but he also wanted to bring an advocacy for children waiting in foster care. So, he invited us too.

Across the 24 cities of the tour we met hundreds of city leaders in the field of foster care. We listened to them and we shared our model of collective impact. Collective impact and working together is at the heart of what we do. Through a collective effort and through agreed upon solutions, more is possible. Each of us can do something. But all of us working together, can do so much more. It was a message that resonated with the many advocates who came to our pre-concert meetings. But do you know what people really found fascinating? The best thing we told people as we discussed the issue of foster care, was that this crisis is solvable.

Find out more at www.AmericasKidsBelong.org



We really believe the foster crisis is solvable. When we are all working together on behalf of these children, we will have more than enough families. In the pages to come you will see how our efforts in the faith, business, creative, and government spheres of our culture are coming together to make a positive impact on behalf of the over 400,000 children who are waiting in foster care.

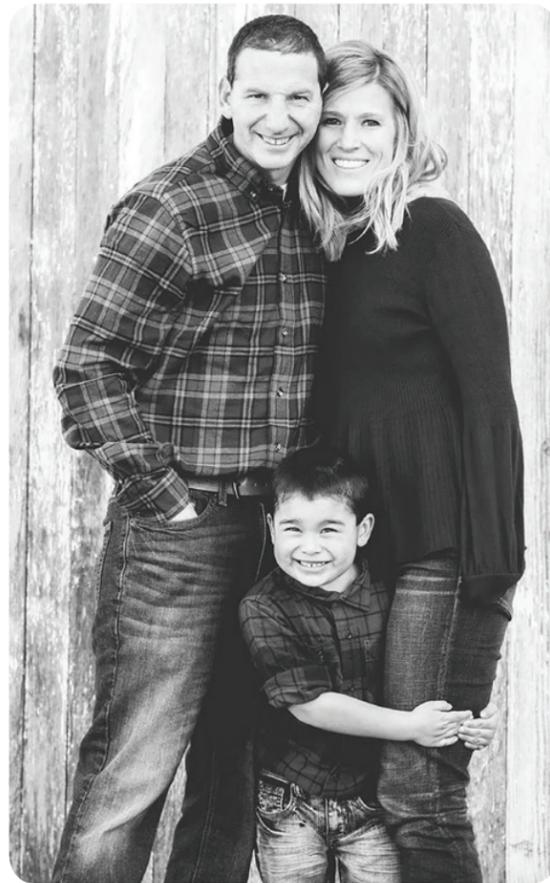
This is what we do.

SPOTLIGHT FAITH

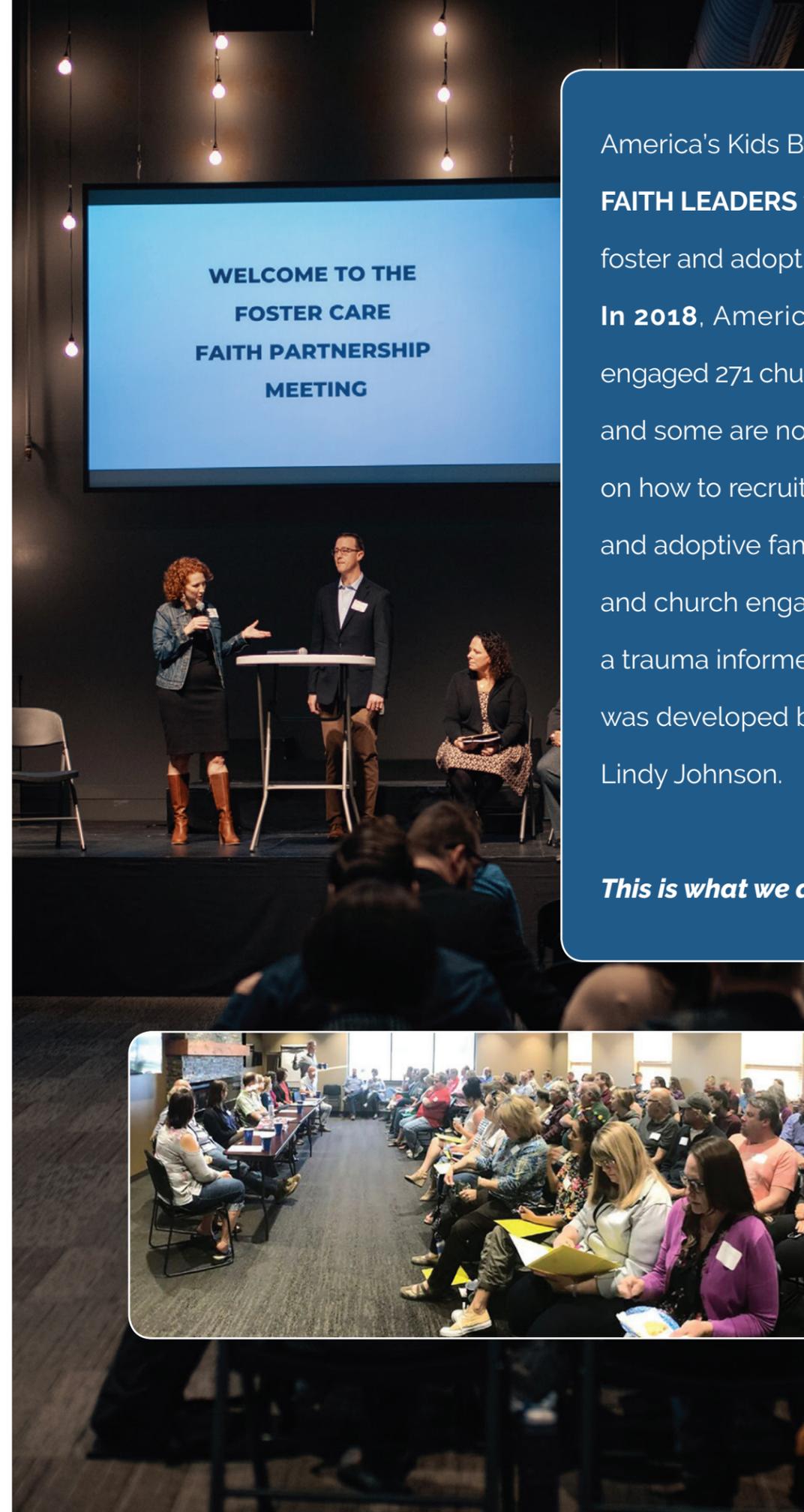
Meet Kristi Woolsey from Spearfish, South Dakota. This past spring, Kristi was on a mission. She went to the churches in her city and she shared the America's Kids Belong message of hope and collaboration. She worked with pastors and church leaders. She spoke in front of congregations. She started developing support services for families who have already adopted children. She followed up with anyone who was interested.

And she did something else. She talked to local case workers. She told them the church was up to something, and it wanted to be a part of the solution to the foster care crisis.

Four months later, for the first time in five years, the area of Spearfish South Dakota hosted a foster parent licensing class. Over the course of 3 weekends, 10 couples completed training to become foster parents. And now, the lives of children in that area are about to be changed. Thanks to the case workers. Thanks to the compassionate parents. Thanks to the church.



Kristi Woolsey is the State Director of South Dakota Kids Belong



America's Kids Belong works with **FAITH LEADERS** to recruit and support foster and adoptive families.

In 2018, America's Kids Belong engaged 271 churches across 7 states and some are now becoming trained on how to recruit and support foster and adoptive families. Future training and church engagement will include a trauma informed curriculum that was developed by our very own Lindy Johnson.

This is what we do.



South Dakota Kids Belong Next Steps Faith Event

SPOTLIGHT BUSINESS

Inside the foster care crisis there is a lot of discussion about the role of the government and the role of the church. In those circles, you really don't hear about a role for the private sector.

But the private sector has a key role in solving the foster care crisis.

Through the work of the Dream Makers Project, the business community is filling that role. The purpose of Dream Makers is to support older youth who are on the brink or who have already aged out of the foster care system. To age out of foster care means that you are no longer considered eligible for assistance through the system, but you are also without a family. Imagine graduating high school without a reliable form of transportation in your future. Or imagine being 18 without a place to stay. Think of what it would be like to be a young person with a dream, but no resources or family to help fulfill it.

Over the past five years 123 businesses have engaged with America's Kids Belong either financially or with their time and talent. We have seen a growing number of businesses, especially in Colorado, who have recognized their potential to support these aging out youth. In 2018 that support meant the fulfillment of 167 dreams,

for youth in 13 different states, with 43 youth receiving emergency services, 26 receiving services to help their move into a first apartment, and 150 youth receiving appreciation and encouragement for graduating high school or technical school.

We want to share two specific examples; Subaru of Loveland donated a car to Marissa, who as an aged out youth had been going back and forth to a technical school via bus or Uber. The Subaru of Loveland donation changed Marissa's life from a state of transportation dependency to one of freedom. Secondly, we are so thankful to Ottercares Foundation (Otterbox) that supported a number of aspiring young chefs to become entrepreneurs and further advance in the culinary industry.

We are so grateful to many other businesses that include: American Furniture Warehouse, Great Way Real Estate and Insurance, Larry H. Miller from Jeep/Chrysler, HeyDay, Haven Homes, Red Wood Trust, and OtterCares (Otterbox Foundation). These businesses have filled specific Dreams, moved kids into their own apartments, prepared 60 stockings for Christmas, provided gift cards for furniture, purchased laptops and have supported entrepreneur chefs.



America's Kids Belong works with **BUSINESS LEADERS** to help kids become independent by ensuring their dream of a life-changing need is fulfilled.

This is what we do.



SPOTLIGHT CREATIVE

Ellie: There are so many kids in foster care, and they're having an orientation.

Pete: Ellie, people who take in foster kids are really special. The kind of people who volunteer when it's not even a holiday. We don't even volunteer on a holiday.

This is one of the many laugh out loud lines from the 2018 box office hit *Instant Family*. The motion picture starring Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne tells the story of a couple who decide to start a family by welcoming into their home a sibling group out of the foster care system. Anyone who is close to the issue foster care and watched the movie, picked up on a number of commonly experienced themes and probably both laughed and cried throughout the show.

The movie produced by Paramount Pictures exposes both the triumphs and challenges of the foster care experience in a manner that can be appreciated by all. And this is what the creative community can do for this issue and for these children. Among other things, it can tell the story.

Our very own Kristin Allender, Executive Director of Tennessee Kids Belong, worked with Paramount Pictures to host "Premieres" in both Tennessee and Virginia. At these premieres over 900 foster friendly movie goers rallied around this compelling and hilarious story.

Through the creative community, America's Kids Belong's I Belong Project™ is telling stories as well. Actually, through the I Belong Project™, kids in foster care are telling their own story. In 2018 183 I Belong Project™ videos were produced and shared of more than 207 children waiting for a family. These kids, on camera, were able to share with potential parents and

families, their personality, what makes them tick, and all the hopes they have for a future with a family who would love them.

In 2018 we worked with film makers, production companies, photographers, and story tellers across the states of Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, South Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia. We thank them for their support and for the way in which they are able to share these stories and this issue.

By inviting creatives into the conversation, you get more than a discussion. You get a story. It might make you laugh. It might make you cry. This is what we do.



America's Kids Belong works with **CREATIVE LEADERS** to give kids in foster care a face and a voice. We call it the I Belong Project™.

This is what we do.

SPOTLIGHT GOVERNMENT

Imagine trying to build relationships with 120 different government agencies across a state that reaches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Central Time Zone of the country. Imagine that each one of those agencies is beholden to a separate governing board and Director.

Former Secretary of the Commonwealth, America's Kids Belong Co-Founder, and Virginia's Kids Belong President Janet Kelly, doesn't have to imagine what this is like. Janet has led our outreach efforts to the federal government and state Governor's offices since co-founding AKB in 2015.

In 2018, in addition to maintaining her federal and state government contacts, she met with more than 60 of the 120 local agencies across the Commonwealth of Virginia. She attended conferences. She met for coffee. She made phone calls, conference calls, and travelled near and far from her home in Richmond.

Why?

Because at America's Kids Belong, we believe things can change by listening to those on the front lines. We can pick up key information and buy-in that will help each state solve this crisis. In a collaborative effort like this, relationships matter. So we start by connecting with people who have a heart for these children.

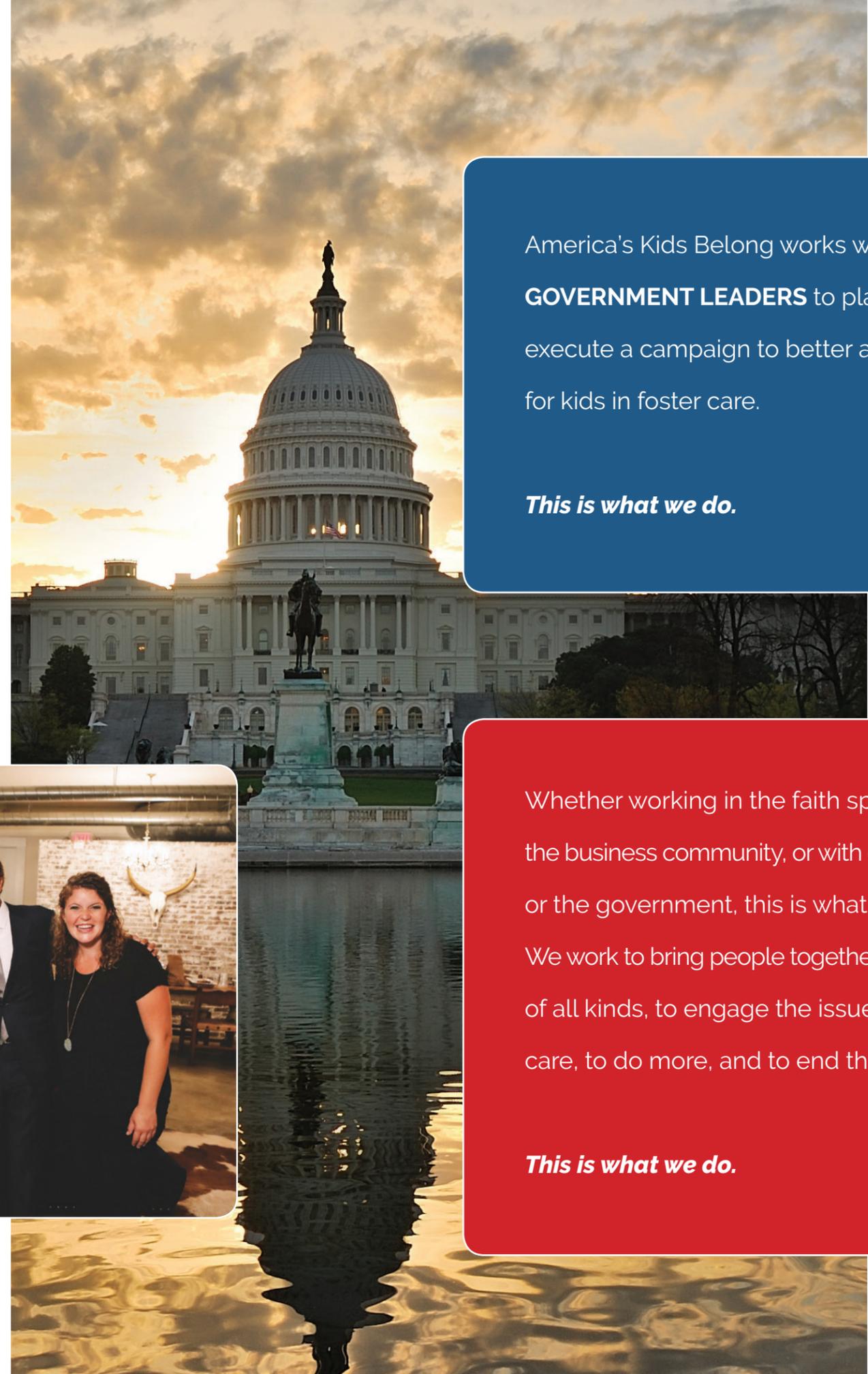
While Janet is working on Executive Branch relationships, our Child Welfare Specialist and former social worker, Kristin Allender, works with child welfare officials in states to ensure we are asking the right questions. We listen to them and together, we build a plan and locally-tailored effort to ensure every child in foster care has belonging. While similar trends exist, these answers are often different state by state!

This methodical approach has been noticed. Thanks in part to their leadership and commitment to these kids, Virginia is ready to launch a statewide initiative in the Spring of 2019. Among other goals, the purpose of the initiative is to significantly increase the number of foster families - and support for these families. This will make Virginia the third state within AKB's history to launch a full collective impact campaign.

Wherever we go, we put a premium on relationships and on our team to work well with others. We truly value our government partners and their leadership. Our state directors and project managers in each state know that the many government case workers and coordinators are keys to the foster care solution.



Governor and First Lady Bill and Crissy Haslam



America's Kids Belong works with **GOVERNMENT LEADERS** to plan and execute a campaign to better advocate for kids in foster care.

This is what we do.

Whether working in the faith sphere, or the business community, or with creatives or the government, this is what we do. We work to bring people together, leaders of all kinds, to engage the issue of foster care, to do more, and to end this crisis.

This is what we do.

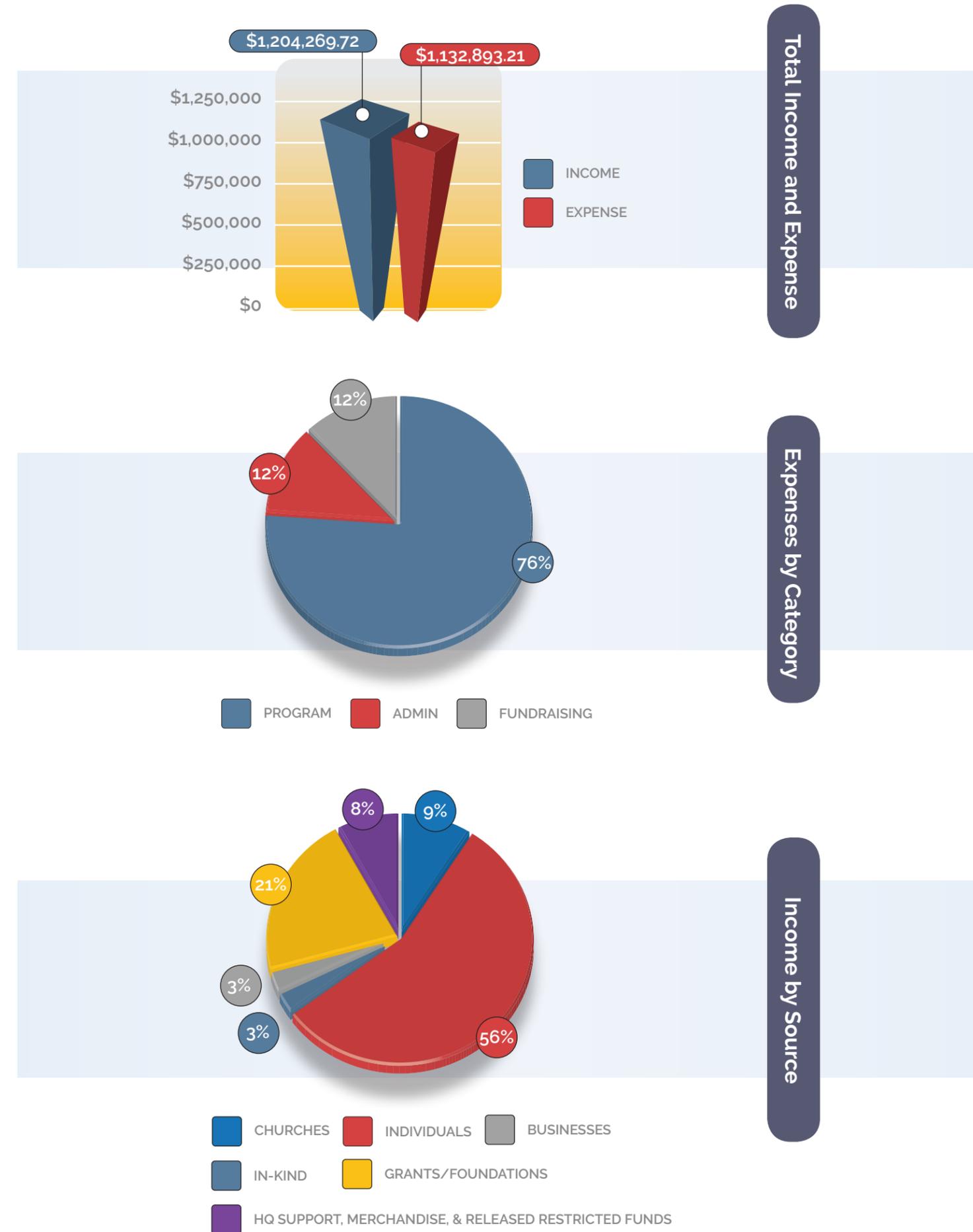
FINANCIALS

In 2018, we successfully completed our second financial audit of the organization. Each audit verifies our financial practices and where necessary makes recommendations to improve our operations. These audits in turn tell potential foundations, donors, and government entities that our accounts are in order, that we are fiscally responsible and that we are reliable stewards of the many financial contributions we receive each year.

In our operating states, the audits are useful because as the parent organization, America's Kids Belong is able to lend its solid financial footing and dependable track record to vouch for the local initiative. In Virginia for example, the audit helped verify the solvency and capacity of AKB so that our local affiliate would have increased eligibility for new I Belong Project™ funding.

As we continue to expand the America's Kids Belong brand nationwide, core to our effort is building confidence not only through reliable programming, but also through sound fiscal management. When new case workers view our videos, or new pastors listen to our church engagement process, or new donors hear that their financial contribution can make a difference, they want to know we really care about these children and that we can really make an impact. They also want to know we are trustworthy.

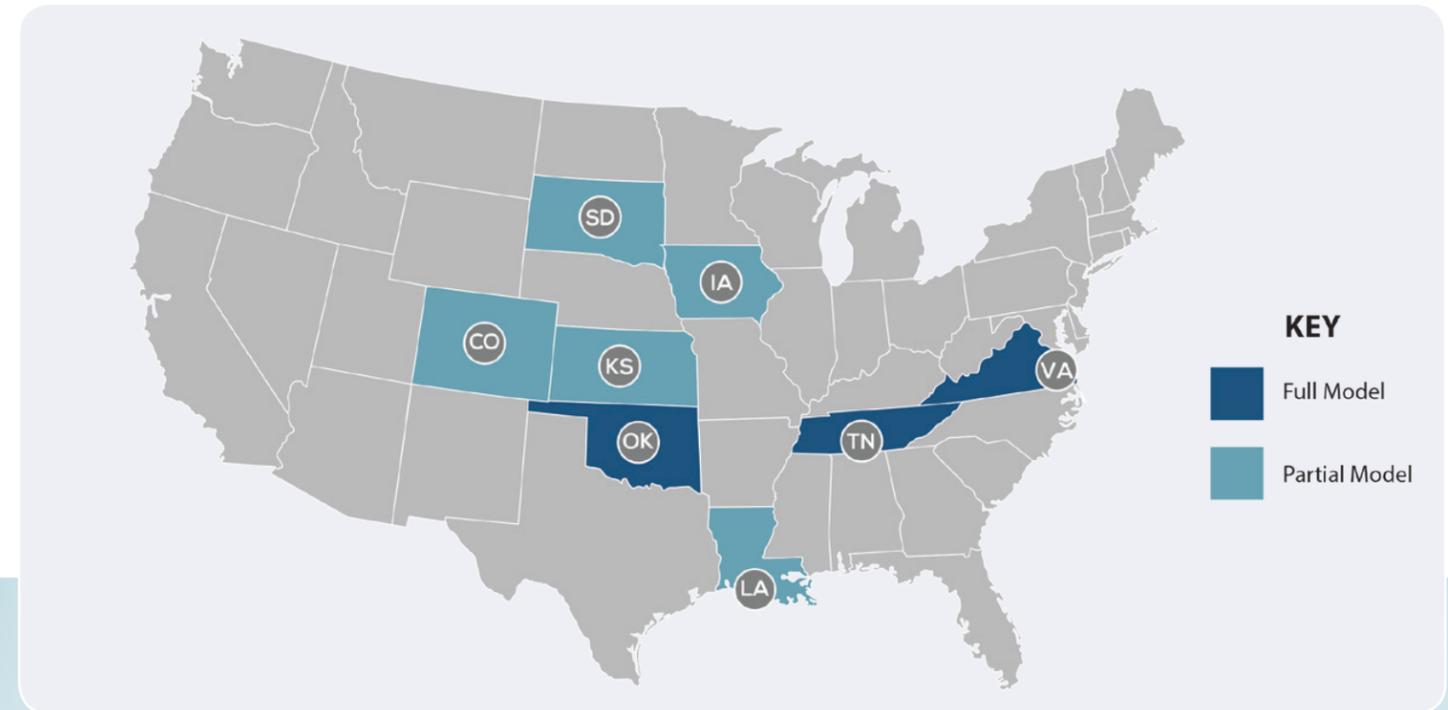
At AKB whether we are working with children, volunteers, or the many resources and relationships we come in contact with, we place a high value on trust and integrity.



THIS IS WHAT WE DID TOP TEN

- We videoed 207 amazing kids waiting to belong to a forever family, receiving hundreds of thousands of views and impressions.
- More than a 1,000 families were recruited to take a next step to learn more about foster care or attend an orientation with the goal of becoming a certified foster parent.
- We consulted and worked with 3 Governors to coordinate statewide efforts of foster care reform and recruitment.
- Tennessee Kids Belong is now an official 501c3 launching them from a state chapter, to an affiliate of AKB and in 2018, they helped the state child welfare agency surpass their recruiting goal by 27%.
- 271 churches were engaged to provide education, develop a Wrap Around ministry, provide a recruitment event, or host a Child Welfare orientation.
- We traveled with Chris Tomlin to 24 cities to meet with hundreds of city influencers on how we can work together to make an impact for foster kids where they live.
- 972 volunteers donated 2946 hours to make a difference.
- This year emancipated youth in 13 different states were impacted through our Dream Makers Project. Through the investment of their time and their finances, individuals, churches, and businesses helped to fulfill 167 Dreams, move 26 youth into their first apartments, provide a graduation party and gift to 150 youth, provide a stocking and Christmas dinner for 100 youth, and meet the emergency needs of 43 youth.
- Our Dream Makers staff in CO worked alongside state elected officials to present HB18-1319 which was approved in May to become a law. This bill permits Colorado counties to provide services for youth who are emancipating from foster care until they are 21 using core services funding. Previously youth decided on their 18th birthday if they wanted to be emancipated and could not elect back into services when they realized they needed the support.
- In Iowa and Kansas we now have team members working with government and faith leaders to begin laying ground work for AKB programming.

THIS IS WHERE WE DID IT



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I really like the old Home Depot slogan that said, "You Can Do It. We Can Help." It captures the spirit and strategy of what we do. **YOU can solve the foster care crisis in your area. We can help.**

Are you a **Business Leader**? You can make dreams come true for kids in foster care and be a foster friendly business (like you might be with military families). We can advise you.

Are you a **Faith Leader**? You can use your calling and your community to recruit and support more than enough foster and adoptive families. We can equip you.

Are you a **Creative Leader**? You can use your skills and your platform to advocate for kids in foster care – giving them a face and a voice. We can train you.

Are you a **Government Leader**? You can run a collaborative campaign with the leaders above to sustainably improve the story for kids in foster care and for the families who care for them. We can guide you.

We can help you – all of you – work together and use your skills and influence for the profound benefit of these incredible kids.

This is what we do.



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Brian Mavis".

Brian Mavis
President, AKB

THE 2018 BOARD

TIM SHIRK

Chairman of Board
Director of Fox River Partners

TODD KINZLE

Vice Chairman
Entrepreneur & Investor

DAWN DAVIS

Treasurer
President- FirstBank- North Market

MARK DEUSCHLE

Board Member
President, Navajo Incorporated

ED GILLESPIE

Board Member
Strategic Communications Advisor

JOE RITCHIE

Board Member
Chairman of Fox River Partners

RICK RUSAW

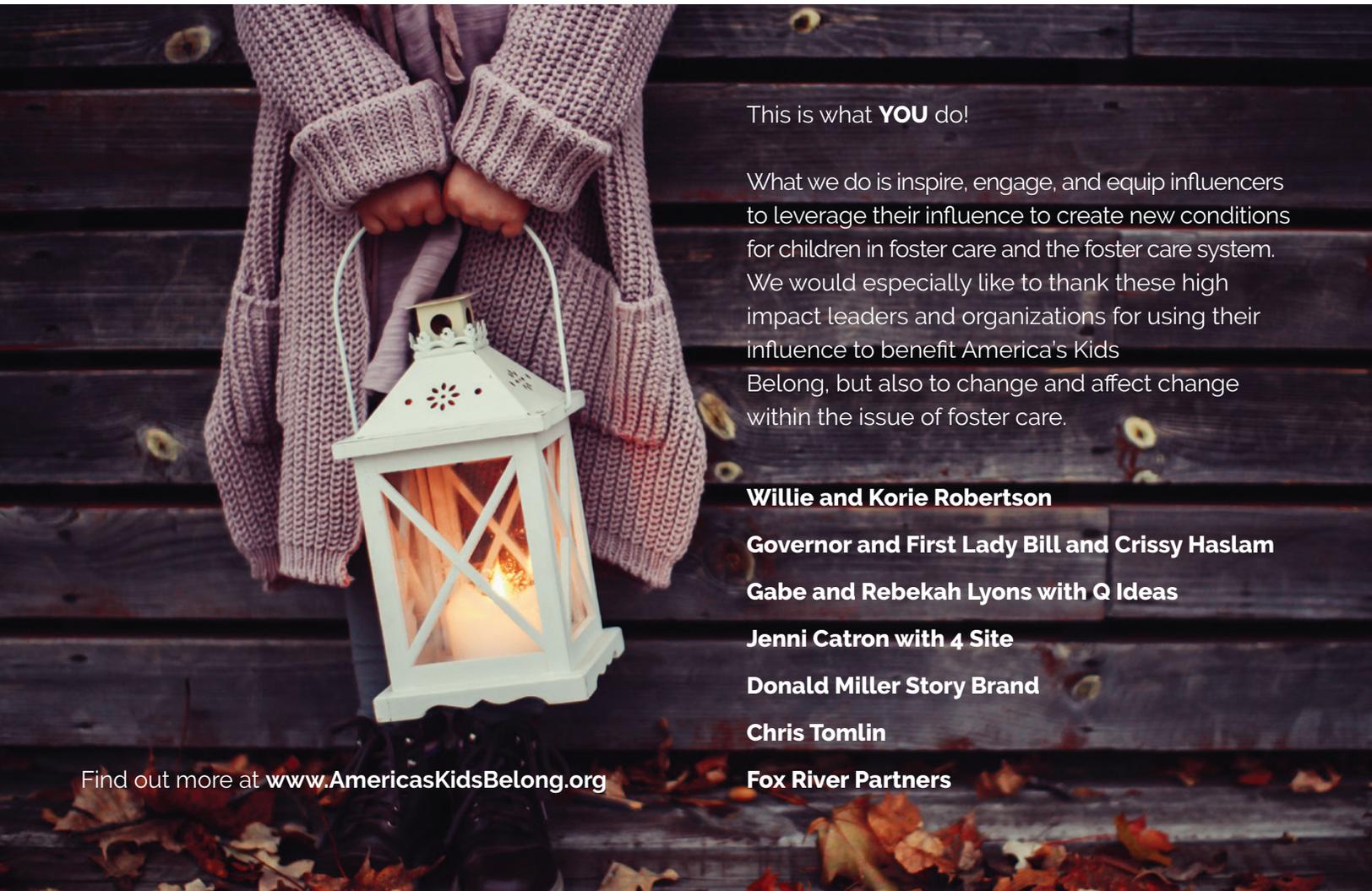
Board Member
Lead Pastor, LifeBridge Christian Church

DEBORAH SHROPSHIRE, M.D.

Board Member
Child Welfare Deputy Director of Community Partnerships



1540 Main St., Unit 218 #331
Windsor, CO 80550
AmericasKidsBelong.org



This is what **YOU** do!

What we do is inspire, engage, and equip influencers to leverage their influence to create new conditions for children in foster care and the foster care system. We would especially like to thank these high impact leaders and organizations for using their influence to benefit America's Kids Belong, but also to change and affect change within the issue of foster care.

- Willie and Korie Robertson**
- Governor and First Lady Bill and Crissy Haslam**
- Gabe and Rebekah Lyons with Q Ideas**
- Jenni Catron with 4 Site**
- Donald Miller Story Brand**
- Chris Tomlin**
- Fox River Partners**

Find out more at www.AmericasKidsBelong.org