

# Annual Report 2012



Renew! Recharge! Redefine!



## RENEW! RECHARGE! REDEFINE!

That's what we've been up to this year! Founded on a strong vision and pioneering efforts, Crystal Stairs continues to serve as an example of excellence in child care and development. With each day, each family and each year's achievements, we offer promise, potential and opportunity. I am proud to lead this remarkable organization.

**Renewing** our commitment to improve the lives of families through child care services, research and advocacy. During this year, we have faced and overcome challenges – big and small – and have emerged an even stronger organization while we have continued to cultivate and deepen relationships with our families, providers and other community partners.

**Recharging** our batteries because the obstacles have become larger with more frequency. Our work is guided by the disciplined development and adherence to the agency's strategic plan, beliefs, and mission, allowing us to focus on our organizational strengths, stability, leadership and advocacy, operating in concert with our values: empowerment, excellence, integrity and relationships.

**Redefining** our strategy to meet the needs of our community in innovative ways. We have expanded our service area, enhanced our community partnerships and embarked upon expanding our direct services with the award of a Head Start grant.

Thanks to our staff members, management team, board of directors, providers, families, community partners and especially

our donors – individuals and organizations. As a result of these partnerships and longstanding relationships, Crystal Stairs remains prepared to fully embody our mission and deliver much-needed service and hope to our communities.

With support, we have continued to expand. Today, we have an indelible influence on the lives of more than 40,000 children and families within the Crystal Stairs service area annually. Further, our impact reaches throughout the State of California. While our work is far from being done, we remain committed to cultivating opportunities to help children and families thrive.

Most appreciatively,

*Jackie*



## **Our Mission**

Improving the Lives of Families  
through Child Care Services,  
Research and Advocacy

## **Our Values**

Excellence  
Relationships  
Integrity  
Empowerment

## **Our Organization**

Crystal Stairs promotes  
empowerment and  
self-sufficiency, helping  
families transcend the  
staircase of life.

## EXPANDING SERVICES, ADAPTING PROGRAMS

As we expand into new communities, we continue to provide relevant and needed services to support the communities we serve.

### Crystal Stairs offers five major programs and services:

- Child Care Resource & Referral Program
- Child Care Subsidy Program
- Early Care and Education Centers
- Children's Health and Wellness Program
- Community Voices Advocacy Project



Crystal Stairs serves communities covering 92 zip codes as illustrated above.

## BUILDING TRUST, DEEPENING PARTNERSHIPS

**5,250** *parents provided child care resources and information*



The Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Program, our longest-running program, helps connect families, regardless of income, with information on child care services within the Crystal Stairs Service Area.

The R&R Program also trains child care providers – licensed and family providers – on best practices and quality care by offering professional development to help improve their services, relationships with parents, and business. Crystal Stairs has become a trusted resource for families and providers within our communities.

During this past year, the R&R Program enrolled 54 providers into the

countywide GATEWAYS training program that focuses on coaching and monthly trainings to support the early childhood education field.

Held in partnership with the California Science Center, the R&R annual Science Symposium for Educators, a continuing education credit training, focused on early child brain development. More than 175 early childhood educators, K-4 elementary teachers and parents attended the event held April 2012.

Moreover, the R&R Program's Resource Library offers monthly trainings and resources, and lends educational materials to local child care providers.

**65** *provider trainings offered through the R&R program*

**494** *visitors to the Resource Library*



## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, GUIDING TRANSITIONS



Crystal Stairs administers state-funded child care subsidy programs through the California Department of Education (CDE), including the general Alternative Payment Program and the CalWORKs Alternative Payment Program.

California's welfare reform program provides child care in three different stages to support families while transitioning from CalWORKs benefits. Families must meet income and program requirements, including employment or participation in an educational/training program.

In addition to the CalWORKs programs, California's general Alternative Payment Program is available to all low-income families regardless of CalWORKs eligibility. Eligible families apply directly to Crystal Stairs for certification and can select child care providers that meet their needs.

The impact of child care subsidies is directly seen in the earning power created by ensuring that parents can seek, secure and maintain employment, which helps low-income families achieve economic self-sufficiency.

**7,403** parents maintained employment as a result of subsidized child care services

**1,870** parents enrolled in school or training as a result of subsidized child care services

**7,994** child care providers were paid to care for children

**23,478**  
children received subsidized  
child care services



# NURTURING CHILDREN, EMBRACING PARENTS



SAGE Children's Center educates and nurtures children during their important formative years. Opened in 1994, the Nickerson Gardens SAGE Children's Center delivers quality preschool and before and afterschool child care services with academic enrichment. It also provides low-income children in South Los Angeles access to technology. SAGE is a model child care center that provides a quality preschool foundation to children, ages three to five years, and afterschool child care to children, ages six to 12 years. SAGE serves those living in the Nickerson Gardens public housing development and in surrounding communities.

SAGE Children's Center philosophy is to develop a well-balanced and confident

learner. Beyond that, children are cared for in a safe, positive environment that includes curriculum covering math, science, music, and dance and computer experiences. A key component at SAGE is to help children learn to make good choices and to facilitate opportunities that encourage children to develop a positive sense of self.

The SAGE Family Literacy Program was developed to involve parents in areas of learning in the home, communicating and parenting. Parents involved in their child's learning can increase their own and their child's motivation, self-esteem and educational attainment – helping to empower families as they move along the path towards self-sufficiency.

**20** children and their families participated in the Family Literacy Program

**80** children experienced the Nickerson Gardens SAGE Center



# CULTIVATING WELLBEING, OVERCOMING BARRIERS

The Children's Health and Wellness (CH&W) Program seeks to strengthen the connection between access to health care coverage and services with the wellbeing of the community, towards supporting the overall improvement of families. The CH&W Program focuses on conducting outreach and partnerships, helping to overcome barriers that hinder low-income families from enrolling in free and low-cost health care coverage.

Building upon deeply rooted community connections, the CH&W Program provides families with access to health information and services; it also advocates for public health policies by addressing major issues, such

as childhood obesity and access to good nutrition within the Crystal Stairs Service Area.

CH&W staff partner with other community-based agencies, including child care centers, schools, clinics, WIC offices and courts. Deploying CH&W staff at community agency sites, such as WIC centers, and participating at health fairs and other community events have become successful outreach approaches.

Additionally, and most importantly, CH&W staff delivers these services in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways, seeking to reach the most vulnerable families.

**33,161** individuals reached through CH&W outreach efforts

**25** locations where CH&W Program staff are housed within the Crystal Stairs service area and surrounding communities

**5,345** children and families were enrolled in health care services



## CREATING CHANGE, ADVOCATING FOR FAMILIES

**406** parents and providers throughout Los Angeles County participated in Community Voices trainings and events.



Since its inception, Crystal Stairs has embedded advocacy as a central component to its mission, empowering low-income families in South Los Angeles to become self-sufficient. In 2006, Community Voices was established to formalize these efforts to engage parents and providers to become advocates for themselves through community organizing, training and activities throughout Los Angeles County.

Community Voices continues to provide access for parents and caregivers by helping them to find their voice, develop their leadership skills

and share their concerns with state and local policymakers on a variety of issues.

The goal of Community Voices remains to create and sustain public policies that expand the availability of affordable, quality, early care and education resources for low-income children and their families. We do this by creating an effective and sustainable cadre of grassroots constituencies, which includes parents and providers, who can inform and educate policymakers on critical early learning issues.

**190** letters written to legislators

**72** parents and providers represented Los Angeles County at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Stand for Children event held in Sacramento



## MAJOR COMMUNITY IMPACTS



**Crystal Stairs** made significant impact on children and families throughout our service area. We are particularly proud of the following accomplishments:

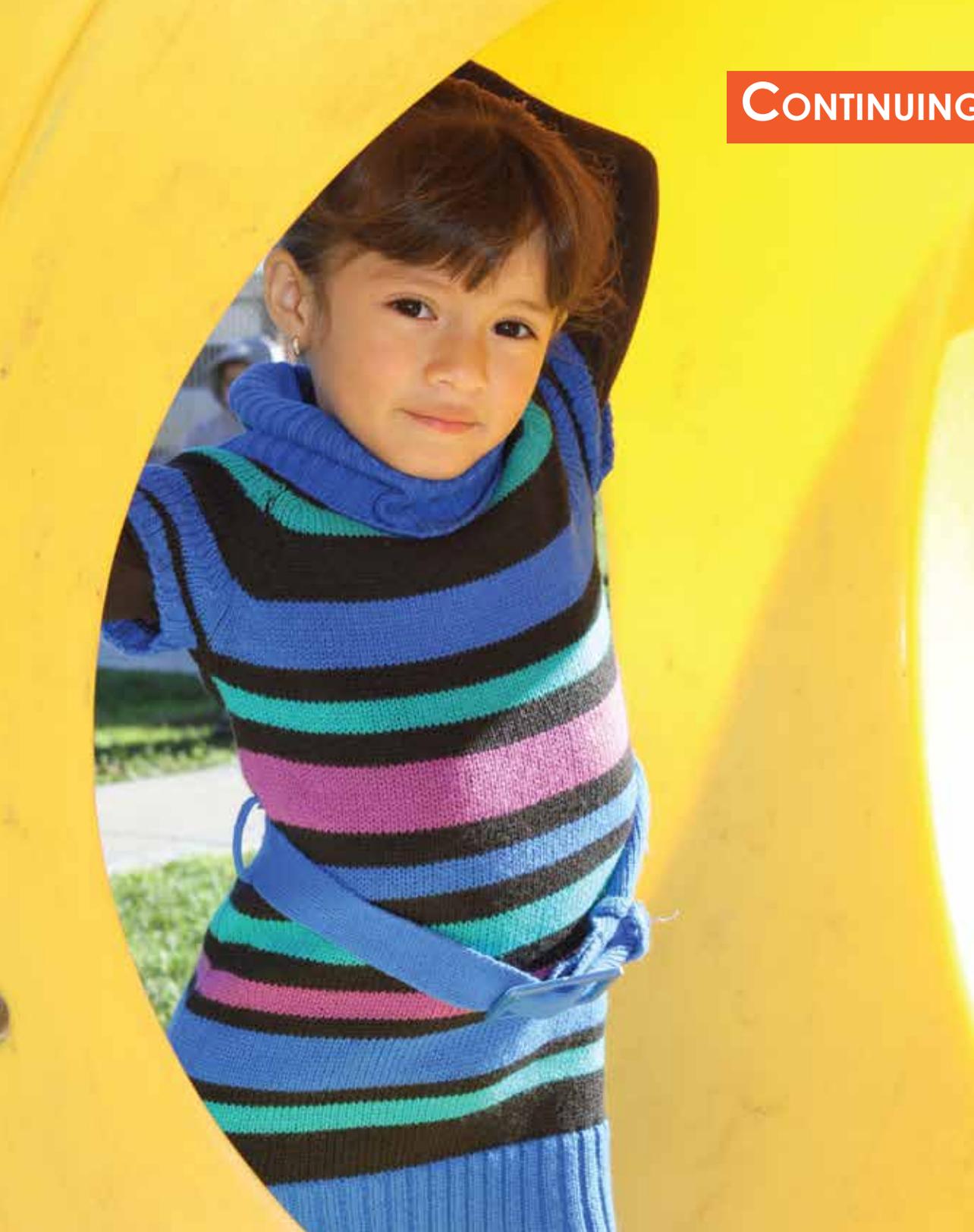
### **The Resource and Referral Program**

expanded its reach into the communities of Compton and Lynwood.

**Crystal Stairs** received a \$500,000 grant to implement the LA County Community Voices Advocacy Project, developing a countywide network of advocates.

**Crystal Stairs** was awarded a Head Start grant to serve more than 800 children in Compton and adjacent South Los Angeles communities.

**Crystal Stairs** expanded its child care subsidy programs into Long Beach and surrounding communities.



## CONTINUING THE IMPACT IN COMMUNITIES

For more than 32 years, our efforts have helped children and their families to flourish in difficult times. As advocates for the care and development of children, Crystal Stairs invests in the lives of children and their families. Since its inception, Crystal Stairs has remained focused on creating effective methods to better assist families. This effort has included managing various funding and other challenges that have affected the field of child care.

Since 2008, state funding for subsidized child care has been drastically slashed by more than \$1 billion, an agonizing blow to thousands of vulnerable children and their families throughout California. As a result, a total of 22,000 child care slots were lost in Los Angeles County when many families were deeply battered by the fallout from the economic recession. Despite this challenging environment, Crystal Stairs has prevailed. And, Crystal Stairs remains strong enough to prepare for future opportunities by:

- Continuing to plan each new year, just as we have done for more than 30 years;
- Continuing to attract opportunities, just as we have done through Head Start and, other funding avenues; and,
- Continuing to manage the challenges of known and unknown factors that might impair our effectiveness, just as we have done through our partnerships and advocacy work.

We continue each year, as we have for more than 30 years, because there are still children who need nurturing, direction, and introduction to wondrous things. Our children also need help with basic needs. And their parents seek guidance and support as they work to build a safe, stable, self-sufficient life for themselves and their children.

Thank you for remembering the children and their families during this critical phase of early learning. Our families are grateful to know their child will blossom into a healthy young adult thanks to your participation. You make this miraculous growth and transformation possible.

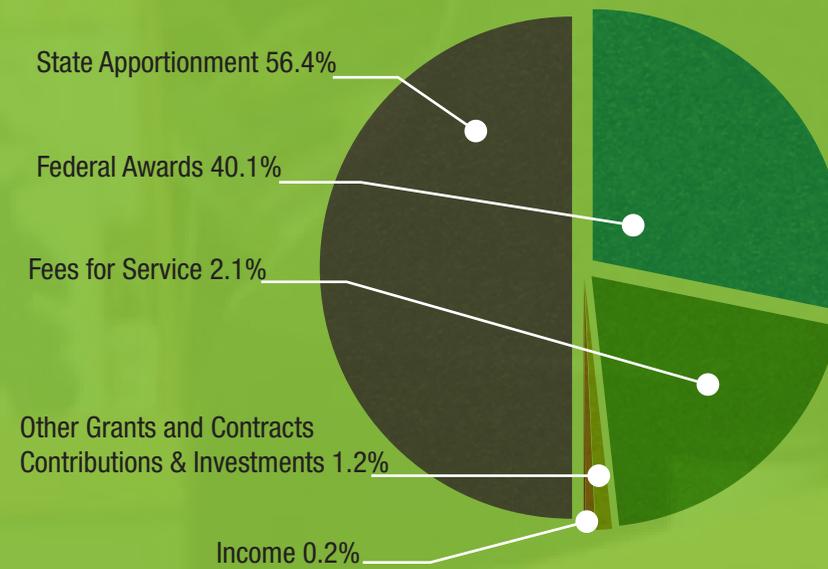
While we are proud of all the accomplishments of this past year, we can't afford to be complacent. There are still many obstacles to overcome and an increasing number of vulnerable children and their families who depend on us. Without your support, there is risk of losing children to hopelessness and isolation. And this is a price none of us can afford.

With sincere gratitude we thank you for remembering the children and the fragility of early life. And we humbly ask you to continue supporting our efforts to help families transcend the metaphoric staircase of life.

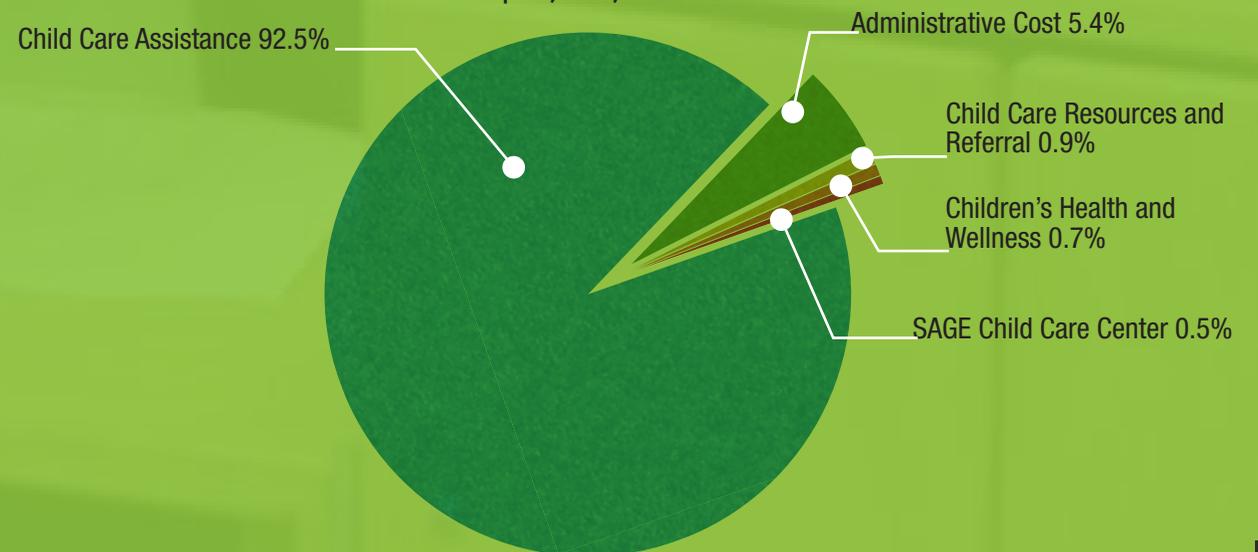
# CRYSTAL STAIRS FINANCIAL PICTURE (FY 2011 - 2012)



**Crystal Stairs, Inc. Revenue June 2012**  
\$89,812,636



**Crystal Stairs, Inc. Expenses June 2012**  
\$89,812,636



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS (FY 2011-12)

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Union Bank Foundation

## **\$10,000 – \$24,999**

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California Department of Education/Child Development Programs  
County of Los Angeles/Department of Public Health  
County of Los Angeles/Department of Public Social Services  
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