MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello Friends!

At this time last year, I was introducing myself to the many supporters of MountainStar. I was eager to see what the future could hold as I started overseeing MountainStar’s services provided to over 300 children and their families. I am thrilled to report that MountainStar has remained strong, and we are growing by leaps and bounds! In this year’s annual report, you will find information about this growth, the things that are important to MountainStar, and the work of preventing child abuse.

One of the biggest takeaways from the past few years has been the importance of investing in our “human capital” - our MountainStar staff. The hard work and dedication of MountainStar’s team make our programs great, but daily work with families who are struggling can bring a heavy stress load. One of the ways we are expanding is by providing support at each of our sites, to allow for even better services to children and families. So, we have added two staff positions in each location to build capacity and increase outreach into the community.

At MountainStar, our work is all about building community. Strong community starts with addressing the needs and barriers that are experienced by our most vulnerable families. That is where time, energy, and money can have the most impact. That is how we build communities that benefit everyone - communities filled with possibility and hope.

Over the past year I have seen that this work truly takes a village. I am filled with gratitude for our donors, volunteers, advocates, and community partners who recognize the importance of this work and stand with us to keep kids safe and help parents succeed. Our community invests in MountainStar, and we are proud to remain at the forefront of conversations around crisis intervention, trauma-informed care, high-quality early childhood programs, and multi-generational impact. This work matters, and we are honored to be a leader in Central Oregon.

As a part of the MountainStar family, please accept my sincere thanks for your partnership and commitment to child abuse prevention. I feel privileged to work alongside you on behalf of children and families in our community.

Sincerely,

Kara Tachikawa, Executive Director

**RELIEF NURSERY MILESTONES**

- 100% of children served are at risk of abuse/neglect
- 71% of families served live below the federal poverty line
- Average number of family risk factors: **15**

Most common risk factors for MountainStar families include:

- Mental health struggles
- Housing and food insecurities
- Poverty, under-employment
- Lack of support network

**MOUNTAINSTAR FAMILIES**

**MOUNTAINSTAR KIDS**

- 98% of children remained free from confirmed cases of abuse and neglect
- 99% of children did not require foster care or another out-of-home placement
- 100% of children received developmental screenings
- 84% of children either met or exceeded the benchmark for social-emotional development

Top skills met or exceeded:

- Balanced social/ emotional skills to meet needs of self and others
- Improved literacy and engagement with reading
- Making friends and interacting with peers
- Increased behavior around persistence and motivation

**MADRAS ADVISORY BOARD**

- Jane Ahern
- Beth Ann Beamer
- Bud Beamer
- Glenda Cloud
- Stephen Hills
- Tara Jackson
- Roy Jackson
- Susan Matheny
- Kristin Peterson

**PRINEVILLE ADVISORY BOARD**

- Ruth Brumagin
- Robert Haden
- Kandy Marling
- Linda Pierce
- Kathleen Wilson
- Janette Wiseman
*With warm memories of Mary Reed*

Redmond Advisory Board

- Terri Collins
- Christy McCulloch
- Katie McGowan
- Angela Saraceno

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Adverse Childhood Experiences can also include other factors such as poverty, racism and other forms of discrimination, community violence, and larger disruptions like natural disasters or war. This ACEs pyramid is a visual demonstration of how historical trauma and negative social conditions can form the foundation for ACEs and the detrimental outcomes that can follow. It is important to note that a traumatic start to a child’s life does not automatically lead to a life of disease and early death. Although each of the levels on the pyramid can lead to the following outcomes, there are resources and tools that can serve as an “off-ramp” at every level of the pyramid. These off-ramps create resilience which leads to positive development and wellness.

MountainStar’s services provide an off-ramp for children and families at the lower levels of the pyramid, and we connect them to continuing resources that will help as they move forward.

The work MountainStar does is serious, and there are cases that don’t become the perfect success story. Our services look different for each child because of the unique situation in every household. Occasionally, even with the support of our services, we see kiddos that need to be removed from their home. That doesn’t, however, change MountainStar’s commitment to the children that walk through our door – a commitment to give every child the best start possible. We want to tell you the story of one of these kiddos.

Amber and her mom have been in the program for one year, starting when Amber was three years old. Early on, she experienced an extremely chaotic home with no safe place for her to play or sleep. Her bright blue eyes would constantly dart around the classroom filled with uncertainty and anxiety. Amber was non-verbal and she was having a really hard time. In August, due to safety concerns, Amber was removed from her home and placed in foster care.

But MountainStar works towards success, even in situations like these. Our staff worked with Amber’s foster parents to ensure she stayed in the program. Amber’s mom is working towards reunification. Our staff meet with her at least once each month to help her work on goals, and Amber has been to the preschool classroom to see where Amber is learning and growing. With the support of MountainStar staff and Early Childhood Special Education, Amber is getting the support she desperately needs. She is beginning to use sign language and is working on some first sounds.

We are committed to working with Amber, her mom, and her foster family to help them through this incredibly difficult time.

Because every child deserves the best start possible, MountainStar never gives up on children and families.
LA PINE EXPANSION
With over six years of outreach services in La Pine, MountainStar is establishing a permanent site with two therapeutic classrooms for families in South Deschutes County. This is MountainStar’s fifth site in Central Oregon, in addition to Bend, Madras, Prineville, and Redmond. This capital project was made possible through funding from Deschutes County, United Way of Central Oregon, and a one-time legislative allocation, in addition to private donations from several individuals and groups.

MountainStar is thrilled to have a permanent location in La Pine and plans to open our doors in 2023.

REDMOND EXPANSION
MountainStar has talked a lot about Redmond over the past few years, and for good reason. In August 2020, we established this new site and over the past year the conversations turned to expansion and a remodel project to create a second classroom for children ages three-to-five years old.

A unique partnership opportunity with American Rescue Plan Act allocations from both Deschutes County and Representative Zika’s office enabled this project to move forward. With a second classroom, MountainStar will now serve over 55 Redmond children and their families annually.

INCREASED STAFFING
With funding from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust and the Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation, MountainStar has added outreach coordinators and program assistants across its sites. These new positions reflect MountainStar’s commitment to expand services and lead Central Oregon’s efforts in providing trauma-informed care and building resilience in our community’s children.

GROWTH, COMMITMENT, & GRATITUDE
“We are grateful for the many partnerships that enabled this expansion of sites, services, and staffing. The Central Oregon community exhibits a tremendous commitment to keep children safe and to give them the best start possible. With their continued support, MountainStar will remain a leader in early childhood care and help meet the needs of families who are struggling the most. It takes all of us working together to build hope for children and their families, and this hope will become the foundation for the future of our community.”

-- Kara Tachikawa
MountainStar Executive Director

MountainStar is expanding services across the region. We are building new spaces, remodeling, reaching new communities, and investing in human capital.
On August 14th, MountainStar hosted its 8th Annual Birdies for Babies (B4B) golf and gala fundraiser. A big thank you to participants for coming out and showing your support for child abuse prevention and the babies and toddlers across Central Oregon. 100% of event proceeds support MountainStar’s trauma-informed, strengths-based child abuse prevention program that partners with Central Oregon families who are living in crisis.

With over 200 participants, this year’s event was a tremendous success raising $350,000. A big thank you to our 8-year lead sponsor, Pahlisch Family of Companies (Pahlisch). Pahlisch has been a long-term supporter, recognizing the value that MountainStar’s programs bring to our community. Thanks to Pahlisch’s $25,000 post-event matching gift and donations received through September, we raised a grand total of $400,000 for local babies and toddlers.

MountainStar extends a special thanks to the B4B planning committee. This team goes above and beyond to ensure the event is successful and guests have a great experience. Thanks ladies!

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BEND WITNESSES PADDLE
MountainStar is grateful for McKenzie Stott and all the witnesses that showed up for the Bend Witness Paddle. We love seeing families come out for this event and are grateful for all the donations to MountainStar. The mountain of diapers and funds raised for local families are so appreciated. Thanks everyone!

CARRING 4 KIDS
MountainStar and Webfoot celebrate a 15 YEAR PARTNERSHIP! At the helm, Gavin Hepp and Travis Uhrich, have shown an unwavering commitment to MountainStar families and prevented child abuse across Central Oregon. Our event looked a little different this year and instead of snuggling pumpkins, Webfoot staff gathered to celebrate their community-focused work as they continue to raise critical funds for MountainStar families. We think Webfoot is seriously awesome and we are proud of our continued partnership!
Are you following us on social media? Do you receive our monthly eNews? For more information go to mtstar.org!

Talk to your family, friends, and neighbors about prevention services and invite them to join the MountainStar family.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES TO KEEP KIDS SAFE

MountainStar Family Relief Nursery’s mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect through community support and therapeutic services that help vulnerable children and families succeed. We are the only program in Deschutes, Jefferson, and Crook Counties providing therapeutic classrooms, parenting education services, and family support targeted at protecting babies and toddlers who are at significant risk for abuse and neglect.

We envision communities that support each parent’s efforts to nurture their children’s emotional, physical, and intellectual development in a safe environment.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP!