

**PURPOSE -
OUR DRIVING FORCE**
2011 ANNUAL REPORT



A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

purpose

A few weeks ago, I witnessed an 8-year-old boy break down in tears as he struggled to understand why his father walked out on him and his family. It was heart-breaking and made my resolve to fight for families, healthy relationships and marriages that much more urgent.

This 8-year-old's story is representative of so many children of divorce. Outside of abusive and toxic relationships, so many married couples give up on each other because they don't know how to make their marriage work.

We recently interviewed over 20 couples who, a few years ago, completed our programs. When asked to explain why Family Bridges programs helped them make significant changes, three themes jumped out. They all stressed that they needed to increase their self-awareness of what they were doing within their marriage that was not working; they needed to make a decision motivated by seeing others make positive changes; and they needed resources to show and teach them how to make these changes.

It's for these very three reasons, that Family Bridges believes that transformational and long-lasting change requires comprehensive and systemic services. We strengthen families by bringing the wealth of marriage and relationship education to the places individuals are already at, whether that be school, work, church, community center or another integral part of their daily lives.

It's no secret that healthy relationships, healthy marriages and healthy families are good for children, adults and communities - research strongly indicates it. It is also good for the economic well-being of societies and regardless of political affiliation, religious views, gender, race or any other differing factor, **families are something we can all stand behind.** I invite you to be a part of raising healthy relationship and marriage champions in our communities by advocating for our children, becoming role models for our youth and becoming mentors for the couples in our communities.

People are hungry for change, they want to make a difference, they want to be good parents and spouses, they long to be loved. They simply long for relationship happiness. This is our purpose and our driving force.

Alicia E. La Hoz, Psy.D.

our driving force

ABOUT FAMILY BRIDGES

purpose

Our Mission

Promote thriving communities by delivering services to strengthen family relationships, while embracing their cultural and spiritual values.

Our Vision

Family Bridges is committed to transforming communities by empowering families

Our Purpose

Family Bridges believes that we all have a longing for relationship happiness. To that end, we are committed to empowering families, couples, individuals, students and children with relationship skills that will transform not only their lives and relationships, but their communities as well.



Family Bridges recognizes that communities that promote healthy marriages and strong families have lower divorce rates and strengthen the foundations of our society for the good of men, women, children and communities.



Our Goals

- Encourage, promote and create awareness of healthy marriages and relationships and healthy families
- Sustain, enable and inspire couples, families, individuals and students to aspire towards practicing ongoing healthy conflict-resolution and communication skills
- Help minorities access healthy marriage and relationship supports
- Develop new, culturally appropriate resources to help individuals prepare for, build, restore and maintain healthy relationships
- Provide feasible, high-quality job and career advancement services
- Reduce community barriers that keep individuals from using new and existing services
- Build and equip leaders in low-income communities to become volunteers and marriage champions that can integrate healthy relationship programs within their communities
- Equip and educate community-based and faith-based organizations to strengthen and sustain healthy relationships in their communities
- Provide resources for the faith-based community in low-income and diverse communities to help strengthen their marriage ministries
- Develop innovative and self-sustaining programs that bring healthy relationship education to the community



Our New 501(c)(3) Status

After five years of successfully working under the Meier Clinics umbrella and completing a 5-year grant with ACF, Family Bridges became an independent organization and received 501(c)(3) status. With this new status we are able to provide more services to our community. Throughout this report, you will learn of the new things we're doing and how you can join us.

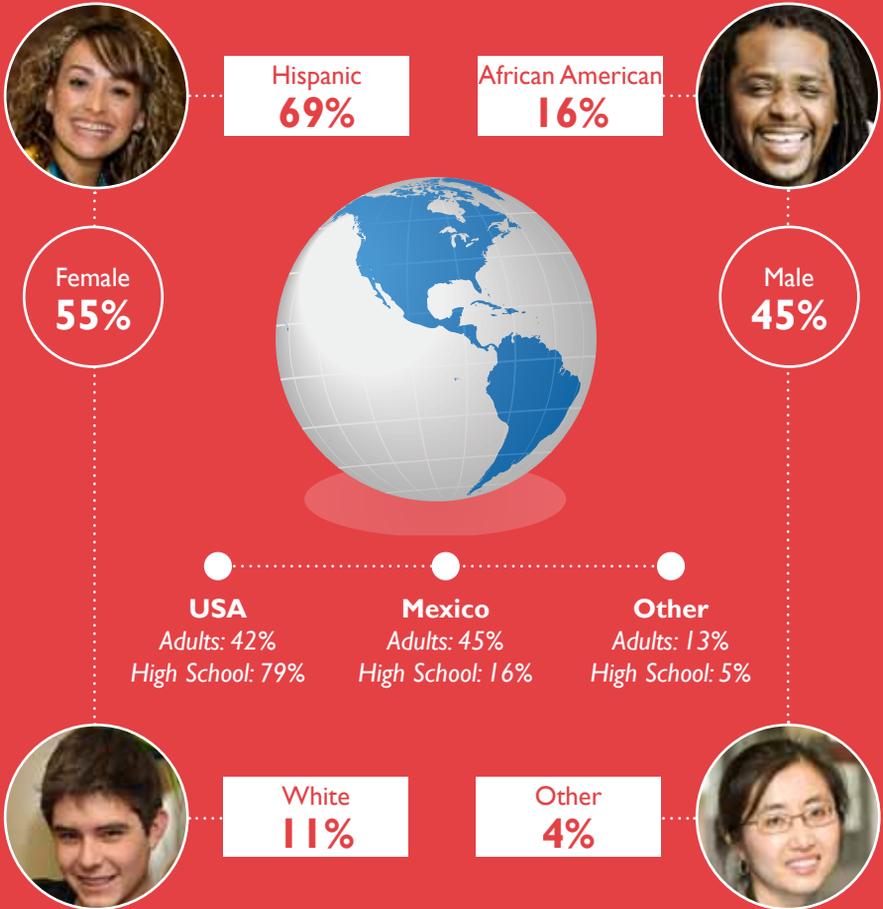
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WHO WE SERVE

The Family Bridges program extends to eight Illinois counties: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Lake, McHenry, Will and Winnebago. Together these counties make up a population of over 8 million persons.

Since 2006, Family Bridges has reached over 60,000 individuals via workshops, conferences, retreats and special events. And that number grows every day.

Over 90% of our participants were born in the United States or Mexico. Family Bridges continues to recognize the importance of culture in our participants' lifestyles, therefore we aim to match workshop facilitators and leaders with groups whose culture most aligns with theirs. This allows the facilitator flexibility to change the approach of the curriculum that would otherwise be inappropriate or ineffective.



How We Serve Our Community

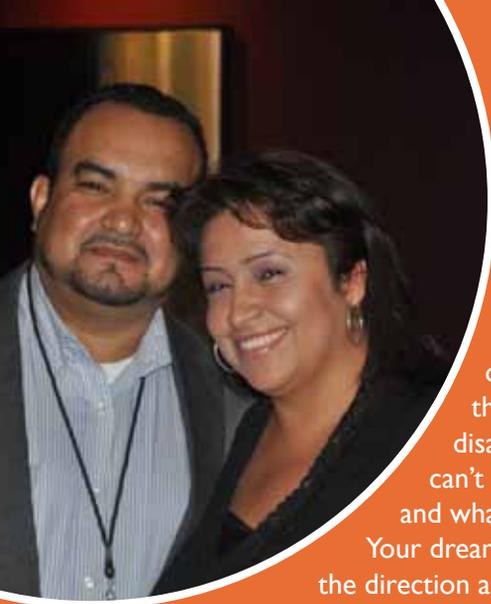
Family Bridges believes in serving the family and the community as a whole. We know that no one lives in a bubble and that in order to reach the entire family, we must serve them by providing services in locations that are already a part of their daily lives. We serve individuals, couples, teenagers and children at their church, community center, work and school. Once we have empowered the family with relational wellness skills, we then provide them with the opportunity to gain leadership skills to transform their communities. Our programs are broken down as follows:

- Family Strengthening
- Social Emotional Learning
- Leadership Development
- Professional Development
- Faith



Because more than 94% of participants report living under the poverty line, we now offer career advancement opportunities as part of our family strengthening program to help increase their quality of life.

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FAMILY STRENGTHENING

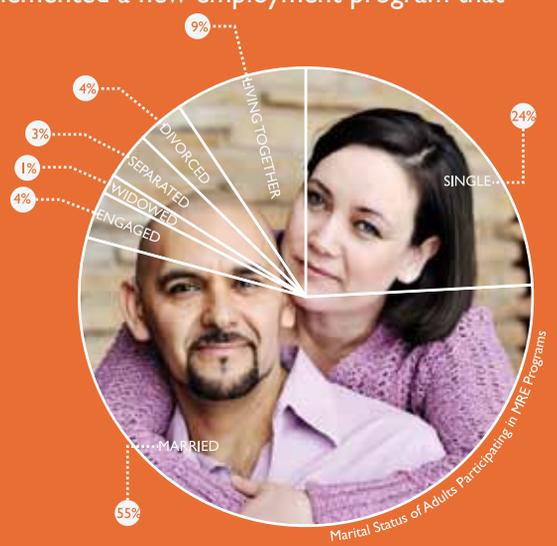
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Families are a constant. When all else fails, they are the one thing you can count on. When good things happen, they are the first ones you tell. Even though they disappoint and you are angered by them - you can't help but love them. Much of who you are and what you value and believe is shaped by them. Your dreams and future are ineffably wrapped around the direction and decisions they make. They can be your inspiration, guiding framework or your biggest hurdle - either way, they can be a source of motivation that pushes you to change. It is because of this, that Family Bridges believes in serving the family as whole.

As one of our participants so aptly said, when it comes to your relationship and your family "...give it all you got. Don't ever give up." And that's exactly what Family Bridges provides – the skills to empower you to keep working on your relationships and to never give up.

Family Bridges offers workshops, retreats and conferences for families, couples, single adults and parents. Each workshop attendee receives ten hours of education, where they are equipped with communication and conflict-resolution skills. In addition, we have added new workshops which include parenting skills, money management, stress management and workplace skills. We have also implemented a new employment program that provides jobs and educational certification to qualified, low-income individuals.

In 2011, we increased our capacity by doubling our partner organizations. We were able to educate and empower many low-income community members in improving their family relationships.





Each participant who attends a Family Bridges workshop completes outcome assessments before and after the program. It's clear from their responses that our program is impacting their lives and relationships.



Couples

Increase in Skill

Singles

60%

COMMUNICATION

"...we are still talking about things that have happened to us, what we have felt, but it's our time and that has very much helped us strengthen our relationship."

60%

71%

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

"[We learned] that it's better to attempt to be calm and solve the problem right away. And another is this: if we want to talk when we are worked up we will not accomplish anything"

48%

38%

COMMITMENT

"And that taught us to learn how to depend on each other, trust in each other. Get ahead together - as a couple."

62%

54%

PARENTING

"Now we spend more time together for the sake of our children..."

35%

37%

MARITAL SATISFACTION

"From 11 to 12 at night is our time, there is no phone, there is no TV, there is nothing that will interrupt our time...it's helped us be happier."

Healthy marriages and strong families are the bedrock of thriving communities. Partner with us to empower families with the skills they need to strengthen their relationships, and thereby transform their communities.

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SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

purpose

Monday through Friday, students of all ages fill classrooms across the country. They are being taught Math, Science, English and other important subjects by competent teachers, yet they are failing to learn. Students are distracted by other students, distraught about family problems, impacted by neighborhood violence and responding to negative peer pressure. Nearly 2 million children and adolescents attend public schools in the state of Illinois, of which approximately 14-20 percent face serious emotional and/or behavioral challenges that interfere with their ability to learn. In schools serving low-income students, this percentage increases to as high as 50%.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies improve students' social and emotional development, readiness to learn, classroom behavior and academic performance. SEL programs teach students how to be self-aware, manage their emotions, set and achieve personal and academic goals. They learn to use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain healthy relationships and demonstrate responsible decision-making behaviors.

Family Bridges has been working with schools in our community to make sure that students are learning key skills that will allow them to not only be successful in school, but in life as well. We have done this by permeating the school system and teaching students, training teachers, reaching out to parents and working with other providers.



Teens are interested in and preoccupied with relationships. They spend a staggering amount of time and energy focusing on family, friendships, crushes, dating, sex, jealousy and heartbreak. Being involved in a relationship is normal for any teen. However, not being able to handle the conflict or the pressure that comes along with it can be detrimental to their future.

Family Bridges understands that relationship and family problems decrease the chances a teen will graduate from high school, and when a teen is doing poorly at school, conflicts at home increase. On the other hand, a supportive family and positive peer relationships give students the stability they need to focus on academics and graduate on time.



7,000+

Number of students we have served to-date.



75%

Approximate percentage of students attending a Family Bridges workshop that improved their communication skills, conflict-resolution skills and detection of self-destructive behavior.



\$63,000

Amount of annual savings to society by one teenager deciding to not drop out or avoided pregnancy because they attended a Family Bridges workshop.

Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders and tomorrow's parents. Let's work together to give them the tools they need to be emotionally healthy, socially capable, ethically sound and unequivocally successful.

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

purpose

Healthy marriages, relationships and families matter. They matter to us and they matter to the dedicated volunteers that give of their time so generously.

Family Bridges aims to strengthen our Chicagoland communities and our volunteers help make a difference by joining our efforts to stand up for healthy marriages, relationships and families and be On the Move.

On the Move is our volunteer program and it's about engaging the community as leaders of change who create thriving communities. Volunteers participating in the program receive tools and training to serve under the values of hope, respect, honesty, unity, identity and balance.

Most of our volunteers are past participants of our programs. Many participants attend a workshop or event because they want to strengthen their marriage, relationship and family. Once they receive the skills to empower themselves they become natural advocates for the mission of Family Bridges.



Be a positive influence in your community and transform your own life, marriage and family by making a difference in the lives of others. Be On the Move with Family Bridges.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

purpose
Family Bridges recognizes that work is a big part of most individuals' lives and that communication and problem-solving are skills that are needed both at home and at work. Six billion dollars is lost by businesses every year due to decreased productivity stemming from family, marriage and relationship problems.

Our GROWTH program provides employees and employers with the skills needed to succeed and increase productivity in the workplace. With this program, employees can improve their communication, negotiation skills, conflict management and problem-solving skills. They learn how to strike a better work-life balance, identify their motivations and become effective leaders.

Research shows that employees equipped with these skills increase company profitability, become more loyal and stable employees and are physically healthier.

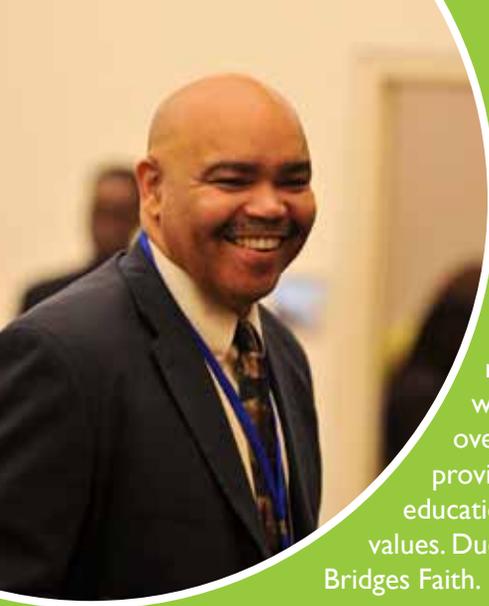
Our GROWTH curriculum is research based. Its interactive and active engagement leads to mastery of skill sets. GROWTH is innovative and multidisciplinary which allows participants to view conflicts and their root cause in a comprehensive manner, allowing for a holistic approach to their resolutions.



GROWTH teaches individuals how to attain a higher level of achievement every day, both on and off the job.

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FAITH

purpose

Family Bridges recognizes the important role of churches in the communities they serve. We have been serving the needs of families within the church and working with faith-based organizations for over 6 years and realized the importance of providing them with marriage and relationship education within the context of their religious values. Due to this need, we developed Family Bridges Faith.

Family Bridges Faith provides pastors and churches with the tools they need to effectively minister to couples and families in their congregations and in the communities in which they serve.

Tools for Pastors

- Pastoral Care for ministry families
- A network of partner agencies that can provide support for a variety of needs encountered in ministry
- Workshops, seminars, and mini-retreats for pastors and pastoral families

Tools for Churches

- Leadership training
- Singles, couples and family workshops with solid Biblical content
- Assessment for initiating or strengthening a ministry to families

Tools for Denominations and Church Organizations

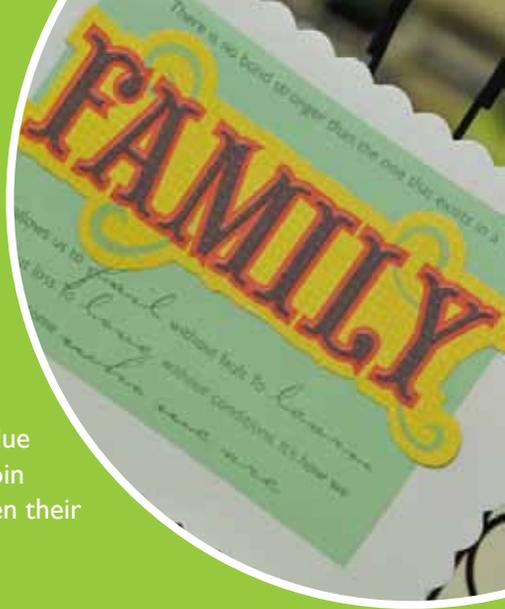
- Speakers and workshop presenters on a wide range of topics related to family and couple relationships
- Assessment for the Pastoral Care of couples and families in ministry

If you believe in the value of Christian marriage, you can partner with Family Bridges Faith to give ministers, their spouses and congregations a safe place where they can learn how to strengthen their relationships.

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FAMILY BRIDGES DEVELOPMENT

Every day, Family Bridges strives to promote awareness of the importance of healthy marriages, relationships and families. As we continue to grow and promote our vision, we have set goals for the upcoming year. If you believe in the value of healthy marriages and strong families, join us and help others learn how to strengthen their marriages and families.



Local

Transform the Joliet and Aurora communities by partnering with churches, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations to saturate the community with family strengthening programs.

Inspire community members and businesses to become Bridge Builders, supporting Family Bridges on a regular basis.

Launch Date Night Chicagoland, a campaign to energize couples to go out on dates.



National

Create a digital marketplace of healthy relationship education by developing mobile and tablet applications.

Publish curriculums and relationship resources in Spanish for local and national educators and stakeholders.

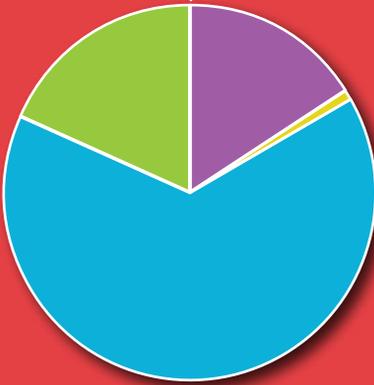
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ANNUAL EXPENDITURES

purpose



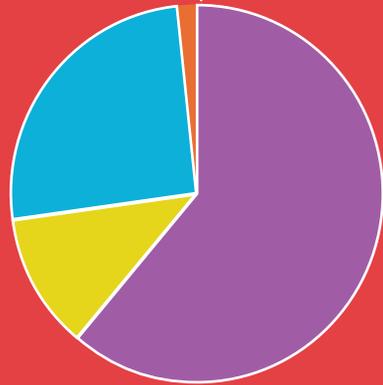
**Community Centered
Healthy Marriage Grant**
September 2012-October 2012



- Services
- Public Awareness, Events & Other Direct Costs
- Personnel
- Administrative



Family Bridges 501(c)(3)
January 2011-December 2011



- Services
- Fundraising
- Personnel
- Administrative

Family Bridges is a 501(c)(3) organization. Meier Clinics Foundation is the fiscal agent for the Community Centered Healthy Marriage grant. Both the CCHM Grant administered by Meier Clinics and Family Bridges 501(c)(3) are audited by an independent auditor.

KEY PLAYERS

Board of Directors

Christian Zapata,
LCSW, I AM ABLE
(Board Chairman)

Maria Buchanan,
MDiv, MA (Board Vice
Chairman)

Ken Kalina, New Life
Centers of Chicago
(Board Secretary)

Penny Gomez, Apostolic
Church of God (Board
Treasurer)

Nancy Brown, Meier
Clinics

Gina Davalos, University
of Chicago Medical
Center

Ruth Donahue, The
Segal Company

Susy Francis, PsyD,
MBA, Cornerstone
Counseling Center of
Chicago

John C. Hennessy,
Selden Fox, Ltd.

Marty Koehler, Koehler
& Koehler

Rick Rivero, Connections
Marketing

Debbi Speck, Speck
Consulting

Providers

Archdiocese of Chicago
Family Ministries Office

Career Advancement
Network

Casa Central

Cornerstone
Counseling Center of
Chicago

Hispanic Bible School

I AM ABLE Center for
Family Development

Instituto del Progreso
Latino

Instituto Superación
Familiar

Lawndale Christian
Health Center

Manjarres & Associates

Meier Clinics

New Life Centers of
Chicagoland

St. Pius V Parish

St. Teresa Parish

The Salvation Army
Family & Community
Services

Staff

Alicia La Hoz, PsyD,
Executive Director

Brenda Bravatty, MA,
Special Projects Coordinator

Maria Buchanan, MDiv, MA,
Community Liaison Director

Josefina Cardona, *Intake &
Workshop Coordinator*

Eva Fleming, *Curriculum &
Content Developer*

Omaira Gonzalez, *Office &
Mentor Program Manager*

James Hommowun, MA,
Project Analyst

Victoria Infante, MBA,
*Social Emotional Learning
Program Director*

Jane Jung, PsyD, *Facilitator
Supervisor*

Barbara Linek, MA, *Director
of Development*

Sarah Pichardo, *Creative
Marketing Director*

Juvy Radford, *Job Specialist
Coordinator*

Judy Riley, *Financial Assistant*

Evelin Santos, *Program
Assistant*

Eddy Vazquez, *Visual
Communications Associate*

Rev. Charles Woehr, PhD,
Faith Program Director

Elizabeth Woehr, *Family
Coordinator*

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BE A DRIVING FORCE

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Social science research strongly indicates that healthy relationships, healthy marriages and healthy families are good for children, adults and communities. According to Child Trends, a Washington research group, 41% of children born today are born out of wedlock and less than 10% of these births are from mothers who graduated from college in comparison to 60% born to mothers with a high school degree or less. While so many single parents do a phenomenal job raising their children solo, the overwhelming majority of single parent homes struggle with the tough economic reality, are drained emotionally and physically, and are isolated. Children raised in single parent homes experience more poverty and are at a higher risk of dropping out of high school and becoming teen parents. On the other hand, according to the Brookings Institution, 58% of teens raised in low-income, two parent homes moved up the economic level in comparison to those raised in single parent homes.

In Illinois, the economic costs of fragile families to taxpayers are about \$800 a year. This is due to health care and social services costs incurred by teen pregnancy, human service costs related to domestic violence and substance abuse, and court costs due to delinquency and crime.

The bottom line is that fragile families impact our communities' overall social and economic well-being. The good news is that we can do something about it. If we each bring our assets and talents to the table, we can make a huge difference.

What's your passion? What talents and skills do you have that you can use to strengthen your community? There is a role for everyone, don't wait any longer. Call us to get involved and make a positive, long-lasting difference.

Call us today to help empower families and transform your community!

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purpose - our driving force



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