A Year of Recovery,
A Lifetime of Resilience
This past year has proven that our community can persevere when faced with enormous uncertainty. In many ways, 2021 has been a year of recovery. Businesses reopened their doors, we hugged friends and family after months apart, and we displayed resilience at home and in the office. Yet, for many children and families across the country, returning to normal wasn’t so simple. The pandemic demonstrated the sensitivity and vulnerability of our children in the upheaval of their routines. The lack of social interaction and the disruption of their daily norms has contributed to a youth mental health crisis across the country, as was declared in the Children’s Hospital Colorado State of Emergency announcement in May 2021.

In the face of this crisis, our team at The Kempe Foundation has remained steadfast in our commitment to preventing childhood trauma, providing support for the professionals and the programs at the Kempe Center, and advancing funding and legislation that will improve the systems of care for children throughout Colorado.

The Foundation displayed this commitment in 2021 by securing private funding for the Child Abuse Response and Evaluation Network (CARE Network) when the state was compelled to make budget cuts. The CARE Network provides vital training and services to physicians, psychologists, nurses and licensed behavioral health providers who have committed to providing standardized access to resources for proper diagnosis and care to children for which abuse or neglect is suspected. We are pleased to share that 100% of the doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals who completed the first CARE Network training reported the training was valuable and would contribute to better quality of care for their patients.

In addition to these efforts, the Foundation successfully advocated for continued funding for programs that Kempe Center professionals oversee, such as the Child Welfare Training System and SafeCare, which specifically benefit at-risk children. We also lent our voice in support of SB-137, new legislation aimed at improving the system of care for mental health in our state by establishing a Behavioral Health Transformational Task Force with a pillar focused on children and youth.

The Kempe family grew in 2021 when we added six new members to our board of directors and expanded our Kempe Ambassadors, who play a crucial role in community engagement. As we look to the future, we are committed to further diversification within our organization to better represent the children and families we serve. We believe that diversity and inclusion will prove effective in accomplishing our goal to significantly reduce childhood trauma and maltreatment.

Reflecting on this year filled with challenges beyond what we could ever imagine, I am grateful for your commitment to Kempe’s mission. Together, we will continue to provide opportunities for all children to live safe, healthy and happy lives. Thank you for being a friend to Kempe, and for being a friend to children.

A Letter from Jon Kruljac
CEO, THE KEMPE FOUNDATION
A Letter from Yvonne Camacho
BOARD CHAIR

The whole world struggled in 2020. In 2021, we began to recover and reconnect with friends, families and loved ones. But this recovery has not been without hardship. All of us, especially children and young people, are coming out of the pandemic with an extra layer of trauma on top of the stress of our normal lives. Youth mental health has become a topic of renewed importance as the increase in teen suicide has devastated families in Colorado and across the country.

Throughout this tumultuous time, The Kempe Foundation has shown incredible dedication to supporting the children, parents and professionals on the frontlines of this mental health crisis. Our Kempe Center leadership team has expertly navigated the pivot to virtual work while implementing critical Kempe programs, expanding the CARE Network to reach rural Coloradans, and coordinating an international conference to inspire transformational change within our child welfare system.

While challenging, this past year has brought about a renewed sense of energy and optimism for what the Foundation can achieve on behalf of the children and families who need us most. With a talented team of leaders at the helm – the Foundation’s new CEO Jon Kruljac, former CEO and new Executive Director of Public Policy John Faught, and Kempe Center Executive Director Dr. Kathi Wells – I am confident that we will continue to recover with resilience. We’re so glad to have you as a part of our future.

Yvonne Camacho

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Yvonne Camacho
Your Impact

The path to healthy childhoods requires a combination of factors, including aligning and integrating systems to serve all children and families, advancing policies that prioritize children, and building capacity to expand programs demonstrated to work. Donations to The Kempe Foundation in fiscal year 2021 supported our work in the following areas:

Implementing Trauma-Informed Care

Led by Dr. Evelin Gomez, the Kempe Center’s Trauma-Responsive Implementation and Practice (TRIP) program has been at the forefront of creating best practices to help mitigate the impact of trauma and promote healing for children. In fiscal year 2021, TRIP partnered with the Colorado Cross-Systems Training Institute, Aurora Public Schools and the Montezuma Cortez School District to deliver trainings and consultations to childcare professionals and educators across the state.

“While many students have struggled with mental health and trauma in the past, it has only recently become a focus due to the pandemic. For the past few years, our team at TRIP has provided educators with tools to help students who are dealing with feelings of anxiety, depression, loss and grief. We know these struggles aren’t new, but they’re magnified from the pandemic.”

– DR. EVELIN GOMEZ

Advancing Child-Focused Policies at the Capitol

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought Colorado to an inflection point in the care and well-being of our children. In May 2021, Children’s Hospital Colorado declared a “State of Emergency” for youth mental health, prompted by inpatient units overrun with youth suicide attempts and suffering from other forms of major mental health illness.

$5.6M in funding secured for Kempe Center programs in FY2021

As such, the mental and behavioral health of Colorado’s children and youth were high priorities for the Kempe Foundation during the 2021 legislative session. In partnership with state lawmakers and child welfare agencies, we actively engaged in efforts to secure funding for critical Kempe Center programs and pass legislation focused on the protection of children and supports for families.

9 Bills passed in the Colorado state legislature

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<th>BEHAVIORAL HEALTH</th>
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<td>Supporting the Child Protection Ombudsman</td>
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<td>HB 1099</td>
<td>Policies and Procedures to Identify Domestic Abuse</td>
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Fostering Healthy Futures

Fostering Healthy Futures® (FHF) is a positive youth development program that uses mentoring and skills training to empower youth to foster their own healthy futures. In fiscal year 2021, FHF entered a new growth phase of training, implementing and disseminating the FHF program model to other youth-serving organizations across the state, including Adoption Options, Ariel Clinical Services, and Lutheran Family Services. Programming will continue to reach children in the Denver-Metro Area and will expand its reach to new areas including Mesa County.

The FHF-Preteen program focuses on preadolescent children (ages 9-11) who have current or previous child welfare involvement due to one or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). These ACEs may include the experience of maltreatment, out-of-home placement, housing, caregiver or school instability, violence exposure and/or parental substance use, mental illness, or incarceration. The FHF-Teen program serves youth in 8th and 9th grade with ACEs, as described above. The FHF team worked with state partners to have both FHF-Preteen and FHF-Teen reviewed and rated for inclusion in Colorado’s Prevention Plan for the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act. Programs like FHF are reimbursed if they fit into the specified rating system — Well-Supported, Supported, and Promising. FHF-Preteen received the highest rating of Well-Supported, and FHF-Teen received a rating of Supported.

Expanding the CARE Network Across Colorado

The CARE Network has continued to increase capacity to ensure quality care for children and families across Colorado. The first group of CARE Network providers – consisting of 30 medical professionals from across the state – received their second annual training in April 2021. For this session, medical professionals received up-to-date trainings on behavioral health.

The CARE Network also welcomed a second group of providers in May 2021. Unlike their predecessors, this group included both medical and behavioral health providers. By expanding the program’s reach to include more providers, the CARE Network has grown to impact more Colorado children and families.
Event Highlights

Activating the Community. During the most difficult days of the pandemic, the Kempe Foundation brought the community together through our shared commitment to providing opportunities for all children to live safe, healthy and happy lives. We gathered in-person and virtually to reconnect, learn, increase awareness and raise funds to build better futures for children and families.

Kempe Center International Virtual Conference

In October 2020, the Kempe Center hosted their inaugural virtual conference: A Global Call to Action to Change Child Welfare. The conference was attended by over 1,400 participants from 20 different countries who convened to debate, innovate and discuss ways to transform child welfare. Attendees included children and young people, family members, leading practitioners, advocates, academics and managers from all over the globe.

Kempe Topgolf Challenge

In June 2021, the Kempe Foundation gathered our supporters together – in person – for the 2021 Kempe Topgolf Challenge. More than 125 golfers joined us for an evening of friendly competition and networking with the Kempe community. Together, we raised $67,000 to support the work of Kempe Center professionals.
“My commitment to Kempe is fueled by an intense compassion for and interest in giving children a voice. Throughout the pandemic, Kempe’s work became more important than ever with children away from the classroom, stressed parents, health worries and potential economic implications impacting the workforce. I have never been so proud to represent a force for good in the current environment.”

“When I walked into my first Kempe Ambassador event six years ago, I had no idea the effect the Kempe Foundation’s work would have on myself and my family. Shortly after that first event, my wife and I had our first child and my perspective changed forever. This became more than supporting a great organization, it became a requirement to continue supporting the Kempe team as they continue to help end child abuse and neglect.”

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BOARD CHAIR-ELECT

Garrett JOHNSON
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