



# The Kids First Fund

2012 ANNUAL REPORT



### From the President

#### Societies that violate women, abuse children, too.

When I started the Kids First Fund in 1999, I was a naïve idealist. Fortunately, I benefit from a wonderful board and knowledgeable professionals dedicated to the protection of children. The early efforts of the Kids First Fund focused exclusively on child abuse and abandonment issues, almost to the exclusion of services to women. Over time, I became aware that violence against women and child abuse do not occur in isolation.

The perpetrators are often the same persons; mothers of abused children are often emotionally or physically abused themselves. This now obvious truth has changed the design of projects supported by the Fund. Services provided to children now address the needs of mothers and awareness-building efforts include violence against women, children, and even how children bully and abuse each other.

My letter in last year's report dealt with the horror of unchecked power and the rape of children at Pennsylvania State University. The world unfortunately never seems to lack fresh evidence of the human capability to injure others. News stories for 2012 seemed to highlight how women were a particular target for violence. 2012 was also an overtly political year in the United States due to presidential and congressional elections. Electioneering discourse provided revolting evidence of how some politicians – and undoubtedly their supporters – made rape a trivial matter. The year concluded with the brutal story of the gang rape of a woman in India.

Evidence of our inhumanity is never more than a headline away.

Every 6.2 minutes there is a rape reported in the United States and one woman out of five will be raped in her lifetime. The headlines from 2012 suggest a type of war has been declared on the female gender. November witnessed the sentencing of some of the 20 men that gang-raped an 11-year-old girl in Cleveland. Four men who gang-raped a 15-year-old in the New Orleans area were sentenced in April and six men who gang-raped a 14-year-old in Chicago were still at large at this writing.

As with child abuse, the reported incidents represent a fraction of reality. Rather than every 6.2 minutes, it's believed a rape occurs every minute in the US. This is the achievement of a well-ordered, well-policed, and civil society. Imagine what occurs throughout the world in the absence of these luxuries.

Inept and soulless politicians created their own form of abuse during 2012. US Representative Todd Aken of Missouri said during an August interview, "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down." The comments predictably led to an uproar and fortunately to the failure of Aken's campaign. Apparently Aken believes there are two types of rape . . . those that are not legitimate and those that are.

Later on, Richard Mourdock, a candidate for a US Senate seat in Indiana would say, "Life is that gift from God, that I think even if life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen." Any plain reading of the quote indicates the man believes rape is a component of the natural order of things. Predictably, the comments were quickly rebutted by the two men . . . but the insanity of their logic had already been revealed.

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## From the President continued

December would bring one last horrid example of violence against women with the gang rape of a young female paramedic on a bus in New Delhi. With her boyfriend beaten and bleeding on the floor of the bus, a group of six men raped and later sexually assaulted her with a metal pipe. The two were left naked on the side of the road; the woman was virtually disemboweled by the attack. She died later of her injuries in a critical care unit in Singapore. Now India looks to its government for solutions. It's not encouraging to note that more than 300 politicians presently in power in India have rape or associated charges on their police records.

Violence against women is nothing new. But the degree to which the topic has been covered during 2012 offers some acknowledgement of its prevalence throughout the world. Unspeakable horrors are committed every day and this brings me to the conclusion of this letter for 2012. We want to believe our societies protect children; but I think we fail miserably. Even while women participate politically and economically in society, they are degraded and abused. Women can and do speak out. But children enjoy none of these privileges. They don't have a political voice, they are not an economic power, and they are often treated as property. I imagine their fate is often several degrees worse, if such a measurement is possible or even rational.

Evidence of our humanity is never more than a donation away.

This is our role. This is our mission. This is what we do. We advocate for, protect, and heal those who don't have a voice. By definition, our efforts focus on children and through practice our efforts help mothers and women as well. We do this in places like Latvia and Moldova where the need is made great by the severe lack of resources and awareness. We have so much work to do and your financial support allows us to do it. Thank you for the privilege of allowing the Kids First Fund to be a faithful steward of your donations.

For the kids,



Jay Sorensen, President and Volunteer

*On the cover: One of a group of children representing several districts in Moldova involved in a program which includes discussion and analysis on topics such as the rights in their communities (including the right to be protected from violence).*



“We advocate for, protect, and heal those who don't have a voice.”

—Jay Sorensen

## Numbers Help Tell Our Story

The 2012 annual report represents a continuing commitment to donor disclosure by including the annual financial statements for the Kids First Fund.

In addition, filings made with government regulators, such as the US Internal Revenue Service, are available for download at KidsFirstFund.org.

Results for 2012 reflect continued difficulties in the US and global economies. Annual cash contributions have ranged between \$6,000 and \$9,000 for the last five years, as shown in the table below.

### Cash Contribution Trend – Past 6 Years

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
\$6,007	\$8,810	\$8,143	\$14,397	\$8,023	\$7,270

However, overall revenue has dropped significantly for two reasons. First, the bank balance held by the Fund once generated much higher income from interest (\$11,498 for 2007). Lower interest rates and a smaller bank balance equated interest income of only \$81 for 2012. The annual travel auction performed better in past years, with net income as



Bob Bahlman has been treasurer of the Kids First Fund since its inception in 1999. He is pictured with furry friends Bailey, Kaylee and Brandie.

high as \$27,861 for 2010. Lower levels of donor support from airlines and hotels have decreased the result with less than \$10,000 raised last year.

Contributions received through online sources during 2012 were \$3,407 with activity generated by Google Wallet and Network for Good. Google Wallet became a less attractive donor channel during 2012 as Google stopped its practice of paying all administrative and merchant fees, an expense that typically ranges from 3 to 4 percent.

Two significant cash distributions were made to fund an ongoing program in Moldova. The board authorized two \$7,500 grants for the child abuse prevention project operated by the Child Rights Information Center in Moldova. The Kids First Fund provided \$15,000 during 2012 for spring and fall programs in rural regions of the country. Additional details for the Moldova project are provided in this report.

The Kids First Fund continued its tradition of operating on a zero-overhead budget and did not incur expenses related to salaries, fundraising fees, and travel. Our cash and investments balance at year end was \$89,164. The Kids First Fund anticipates it will provide \$7,500 to support a half-year of work in Moldova during 2013 in addition to financial support that may be provided to Latvia. The financial statements were drafted by Bob Bahlman, treasurer of the Kids First Fund.

### Kids First Fund, Inc. 2012 & 2011 Income Statement

	2012	2011
<b>Contributions</b>		
Cash donations	\$7,270.11	\$8,023.29
Interest from savings account	\$80.88	\$247.84
Dividends/change in market value securities	\$456.62	\$9.85
Online Travel Auction for Kids (see note b)	\$9,274.11	\$15,607.19
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$17,081.72</b>	<b>\$23,888.17</b>
<b>Expenditures and Distributions</b>		
Grants made to support mission	\$15,000.00	\$75,000.00
Salaries, compensation & benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Professional fees & fundraising	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenses and Distributions</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>	<b>\$75,000.00</b>
<b>Excess Funds – Deposited to Bank Account</b>	<b>\$2,081.72</b>	<b>(\$51,111.83)</b>

Results are not audited, but reflect amounts reported to the IRS.

(a) Items were donated that support the mission of the Kids First Fund.

(b) Net results from the annual online travel auction. All items are 100% donated. Selling expenses associated with eBay auctions were 11-12% of the gross amount raised.

### Kids First Fund, Inc. 2012 & 2011 Balance Sheet

	Dec. 31, 2011	Dec. 31, 2011
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and investments	\$89,164.22	\$87,082.50
Other assets	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$89,164.22</b>	<b>\$87,082.50</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Net Assets and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$89,164.22</b>	<b>\$87,082.50</b>

Results are not audited, but reflect amounts reported to the IRS.

## Latvia Family Shelter Expansion Completed

Construction of the new support building at the Latgale Regional Support Center was completed during the second half of 2012. The building matches the design of the primary shelter and allows space in the main building to be used more efficiently and to expand services for families. The expansion provides overnight rooms for companions of children (such as mothers), long-term storage for vegetables (grown in the garden), indoor sport and play areas, a kid's workbench, and indoor vehicle storage (for garden equipment).

Families wishing to visit their children now can stay overnight in private accommodations. This ensures better security for children in the shelter by keeping those not directly receiving care (sometimes adult male family members), outside the main shelter building.

The Latgale Regional Support Center has a tradition of growing its own vegetables and fruit in adjacent fields. Storing this annual bounty, which adds significantly to financial self-reliance, has been a challenge until now. Space in the support building can now hold squash, pumpkins, onions, and of course, Latvian potatoes. Shelter staff, area residents, and older children at the shelter all lend their hands to care for the crops. The acreage is substantial and requires a tractor from a neighboring farm to turn the soil.

The Latgale Regional Support Center completed its third full year of family shelter services for children in the eastern half of Latvia with service provided to a record number of children and shelter days of care.



The Latgale Regional Support Center has a tradition of growing its own vegetables and fruit in adjacent fields.



The new support building is pictured above, to the left of the main building.



## Shelter Expansion continued

In recognition of government cuts to operating funds, the Kids First Fund created a \$10,000 “Gap Fund” in 2010 to ensure no child is denied access to shelter services. The shelter spent \$4,500 of the funds during an initial 18-month period to provide emergency shelter support for children. The remaining funds were spent during 2012.

There was plenty of development activity at the shelter during 2012. Children attended a specialized summer camp organized and funded by the Latvia Children’s Fund. The shelter also added a soccer field used by girls and boys at the shelter and children from the surrounding village of Rugaji. Several fundraising activities helped the shelter become less reliant on outside donations. Home appliances were donated by Electrolux Latvia after the family shelter won an autumn grant program contest. More than \$10,000 was received from a NATO-affiliated charity bazaar; the funds were spent on furniture for the children’s rooms. These are notable achievements, demonstrating Latvia has traveled far down the path of becoming a society in which charitable endeavors receive meaningful public support.

Family Shelter Statistics			
	2012	2011	2010
Children served in shelter	208	199	142
Total days of care	6,663 days	6,119 days	6,200 days
Mothers served in shelter	30	34	31
Total days of care	823 days	822 days	900 days

*Statistics provided by Latgale Regional Support Center*

Family Shelter Statistics – Primary Referral Reasons		
	2012	2011
Emotional abuse	91%	98%
Abandoned and neglected	60%	53%
Physical abuse	24%	30%
Sexual abuse	18%	16%

*Statistics provided by Latgale Regional Support Center for all children served with multiple referral reasons possible for individual children.*

The Latgale Regional Support Center completed its third full year of family shelter services for children in the eastern half of Latvia with service provided to a record number of children and shelter days of care.

## Milestone Passed! More than 10,000 Teachers, Parents, and Children Benefit from Training in Moldova

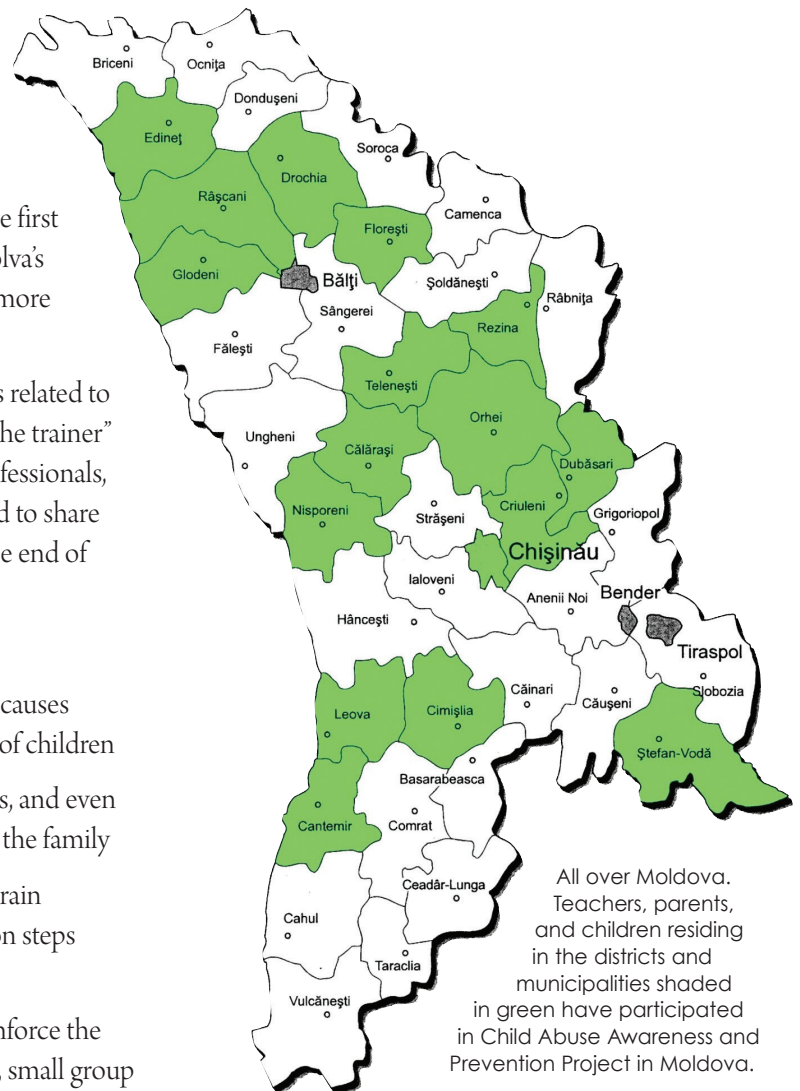
The Kids First Fund and its Moldova-based partner, the Child Rights Information Center Moldova (CRIC), began its third year of cooperation during 2012. CRIC operated the Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Project with 100 percent of grant support provided by the Kids First Fund. The 3-year project will conclude during the first half of 2013 and has reached participants in 17 of 40 Moldova's districts or municipalities. To date, the project has reached more than 10,000 participants.

The project reaches 3 groups with a broad array of topics related to child abuse and abandonment. The first step takes a "train the trainer" approach through 3-day seminars with teachers, school professionals, and social workers as participants. This group is encouraged to share knowledge and experience with parents and students. At the end of training, the participants are able to:

- Define violence and how it affects Moldovan society
- Identify the forms and types of violence in the school, causes of violence and its consequences on the development of children
- Explain the role and responsibilities of teachers, parents, and even children in the prevention of violence in school and in the family
- Plan violence prevention activities using the CRIC's Grain of Sand method which relies on early small intervention steps to prevent abuse

The seminars use a variety of activities to deliver and reinforce the educational message: brainstorming, individual reflections, small group exercises, viewing and discussing videos, and role playing. Participants are provided a take-home library of 15 publications, most of which are proprietary works created by CRIC specifically for the seminar. Publications include training support materials for preventing violence in schools such as child-focused cartoons for resolving conflicts between friends, brochures defining the rights of children, and multiple books addressing Moldova's problem of parents working abroad.

The project takes a very methodical approach to the task of abuse prevention by first establishing a core definition of abuse and seeking to



create a list of how it can occur in a community. The topic is approached from a variety of perspectives – between parents and children, teachers and children, and even bullying among children. Strengthening the belief and legal position that everyone has a right to be free of abuse is a crucial component of the seminar.

The group is encouraged to share knowledge and experience ...

## Training in Moldova continued

The multi-layered approach is intended to reduce abuse at every level. It's unfortunately true, a fair amount of abuse is committed by teachers and the training works to eliminate this source. The next generation of parents – or today's students – learn how abuse can occur in relationships between children. It is hoped this will lead to a reduction of abuse as the current generation matures and becomes parents themselves.

The project has delivered meaningful results for a modest price. More than 10,000 participants have been reached at a very efficient cost of \$3.70 per person. The statistics provided here define the audience reached directly by the efforts of teachers interacting with parents and students. Of course, there is likely a wider audience in each community that benefits from the awareness-building and behavioral changes generated by the core group of teachers and parents.

Teachers are now surveyed on their abuse awareness and beliefs before and after the seminar. This element was requested by the Kids First Fund to measure seminar results. Work will be done to make this step more quantitative. However, the early qualitative feedback has been promising:

- More teachers reference sexual abuse and harassment, in addition to physical abuse, as an area of concern and seek to monitor children for symptoms
- When asked to list forms of violence, the post-training results indicate the addition of new forms such as bullying, teasing, neglect, and violence “against oneself”
- Teachers express higher levels of awareness of the actions they should take to address child abuse after seminar completion
- Before the seminar, only a few teachers indicated knowledge of child abuse legislation and children's rights. Post seminar responses demonstrate a higher level of knowledge, but it is noted, additional educational support is required.

**“How to Recognize Abuse?” is a guide that provides step-by-step solutions for adolescents.**

The Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Project has equipped thousands of teachers, parents, and children with new awareness of child abuse issues. The seminars have continuously improved since 2010 through the addition of materials and refinement of the training curriculum. CRIC, as a partner with the Kids First Fund, has delivered exceptional results in a very cost-effective manner. The project provides a model that other NGOs in other countries are encouraged to copy.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Project – Moldova			
Participant Groups	2011 Totals	2012 Totals	To Date
District representatives trained	56	56	138
Children receiving abuse awareness training	2,416	2,592	6,328
Parents/caregivers involved in effective parenting curriculum	758	831	2,267
Teachers benefiting from sessions organized by colleagues	469	552	1,389
Project Metrics			
Total participation	3,699	4,031	10,122
Kids First Fund program grants	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$37,500
Program cost per participant	\$4.06	\$3.73	\$3.70



## Kids First Teddy Bear Awards Builds Auction Awareness

The Kids First Fund introduced the Kids First Teddy Bear Awards during 2012 as an event to create awareness of the annual International Online Travel Auction for Kids among travel industry professionals. Three awards were presented at one of the airline industry's largest conferences – the MEGA 2012 conference held in San Diego, November 27-28.

Airline Information, the sponsor of this event, graciously allowed the Kids First Fund to make the presentations during the gala banquet attended by more than 450. Teddy Bears, donated by the Vermont Teddy Bear Company, were awarded to three star performers associated with the 2012 travel auction:

- Virgin America donated airline travel to any US destination that generated total bid activity in excess of \$1,700, more than any other single corporate donor.
- Tune Hotels of Asia provided 30 packages – an astounding number of auction items – which included hotels in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.
- Gulf Air was selected as the winner of the 2012 Family Friendly Airline Award in a Facebook poll prior to the auction.

The 2012 auction generated almost \$16,000 for the Kids First Fund. The 9th annual International Online Travel Auction for Kids will start May 1, 2013. The Kids First Fund has already been recognized by Airline Information as its official charity and will benefit from the sale of raffle tickets at events throughout 2013.

Donor companies for the 2012 auction included: Airphil Express, Avis Car Rental, Choice Hotels, Estonian Air, Gogo Inflight Internet, Gulf Air, Hilton HHonors, Pegasus Airlines, SATA Air Acores, Tune Hotels, Vietnam Airlines, Virgin America, Virgin Australia, and Wyndham Hotels and Resorts.



Mitul Lakhani (right), CFO of Tune Hotels, receives a Teddy Bear Award from Jay Sorensen, president, Kids First Fund.



The 2012 auction generated almost \$16,000 for the Kids First Fund.

## Board Member Snapshot – Stuart Benzal

This report continues an annual tradition – the board member snapshot. Stuart is pictured at right with his wife Fraser and very happy daughter Grace, whose hockey team finished in first place.

**Joined board:** 1999 (founding member)

**Family:** Fraser (wife) and Grace (age 13).

**Residence:** Wilmette, Illinois, USA

**Current profession:** Previously with McKinsey & Company, I recently transitioned to lead technology Strategy at Aon plc. Aon is the leading global provider of risk management, insurance and reinsurance brokerage, and human resources solutions and outsourcing services with over 62,000 colleagues in 120 countries worldwide.

**Favorite activity or destination:** Watching my daughter play hockey

**What interests you about the KFF mission?** The Kids First Fund is based on personal investments in improving conditions for at-risk children. This builds commitment, focus and execution other organizations cannot "create." Operating on a zero-overhead budget drives our core mission ... helping the kids that lack the resources, support and voice not be forgotten

**Where do you see us 5 years from now?** Growing our impact in the communities we serve today... keeping focused on our core mission and deepening our connections with the communities and kids we serve.

**What is the most important thing we do?** Drive awareness of issues and follow-up with education in support of breaking the patterns of abuse



Stuart Benzal on the ice with daughter Grace and wife Fraser.

### What is your three-sentence pitch to a friend about why they should donate?

- 1) Every cent goes into helping those children most at risk
- 2) Our efforts focus on those others have forgotten... it's us or no one to support these efforts
- 3) You can see what your support 'delivers' and the impact you have

“Every cent goes into helping those children most at risk.”  
–Stuart Benzal

## About the Kids First Fund

The Kids First Fund helps abused and abandoned children. We protect children from abuse. We empower young adults with a positive future. We strengthen families. We build awareness of child abuse. We operate in countries where resources are very limited. Current projects provide support for children in Latvia and Moldova. The Kids First Fund supports programs to educate child welfare professionals such as police officers, judges, social workers and prosecutors on child abuse issues. Direct assistance is also given to centers providing care for abused children. The Kids First Fund does not incur any expenses since all staffing and services are donated. The organization has been granted special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

## Special Thanks

This annual report is courtesy of the services contributed by Amy Thomas, who operates field|works, a graphic design firm in Shorewood, Wisconsin.

Hosting and updating of the KidsFirstFund.org website is donated by Matthew Frederick, who operates DigitalPerceptions.com, an interactive web media development firm in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

SWISS International Air Lines and airBaltic generously donate travel for board member trips to Latvia and Moldova. Parking is provided by the Hilton Garden Inn Chicago O'Hare Airport. All official trips rely on corporate donations and are otherwise self-funded by board members.

## Learn More and Donate Online

**KidsFirstFund.org**

Write to us at:  
**The Kids First Fund**  
**1916 E. Kensington Blvd.**  
**Shorewood, WI 53211, USA**

Telephone:  
**414/961-1939**



## Your Board of Directors and Officers

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**Sharon Polk, Director**  
(Lenexa, Kansas)

**Jay Sorensen, President**  
(Shorewood, Wisconsin)

## United Nations Representatives

**Jay Sorensen** and **Stuart Benzal** are designated representatives to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

**Irma Kalnina** and **Nicolae Besliu** are the designated representatives to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva and Vienna.