



18 DEGREES

Where New Beginnings Come to Light

2023 Annual Report

Our Story

18 Degrees is where the sun stands just below the horizon at daybreak. It's more dark than light at that moment, and it's hard to see the way forward. At 18 Degrees – it's our mission and privilege to meet people at that point, with the promise that for them, for all of us, the light will grow from the start of each new day.

Our Mission:

Every child in a family,
every family in a community.

A New Day Awaits

A look back over the past year fills us with gratitude for the contributions, direction, and insight from our community members, supporters, staff, partners, and volunteers. Our collective work has been instrumental in our ability to navigate the range of social conditions, community developments, and economic cycles to create more equitable and inclusive spaces where our participants can thrive.

18 Degrees is proud to be a shining example of partnership and resilience to those we serve. Over the last year, we have walked with many towards their new beginning. We have expanded and enhanced our services to meet the needs of our communities, advocated for critical funding, and provided support to thousands of children, youth, and families throughout Western Massachusetts.

In the pages ahead, you will read the stories of Jacob, Aubry, Izaiah and Kalyn, who found the support and guidance they needed at 18 Degrees. Their journeys and the lasting impact they experienced are captured in our four core areas: Early Education & Care, Foster Care & Adoption, Child & Family Well-being, and Youth & Community Development.

With new leadership in place, guidance from our esteemed board of directors, and commitment from our competent staff, we face the dawn of a new day with optimism and enthusiasm as we look to our next agency strategic planning process equipped with the skills and knowledge we have gained along the way. We are as dedicated as ever to providing exceptional services and living out the core values that strengthen our organization and our community — accountability, integrity, courage, and better together.

We are better together with your ongoing support and collaboration as we look to where the sun stands just below the horizon – that's 18 Degrees. With you, we are excited for a new day to promote the well-being and strengths of those we serve to build better communities.

Many thanks,

Stephanie & Buffy



Stephanie Steed,
President and CEO



Buffy D. Lord,
Board Chair



Meeting the needs of our communities

Over the past year, we expanded and enhanced our services to include:

- » **2 additional Peer Recovery Coaches** working with families in recovery as part of Parents as Teachers, allowing us to serve an additional 24 families in recovery
- » **A Substance Use and Prevention Specialist** to provide protective factors for youth between the ages of 12-24 who are vulnerable to developing substance use disorder
- » **Funding for an additional full-time Family Support Worker** in the Pioneer Valley to provide Parent Wellness programming utilizing the Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath) model
- » **An additional Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Supervisor**, allowing us to train and support 15 more CASA volunteers, increasing the number of children we can serve in the Berkshire Juvenile Court System

"I have really found community at the Family Resource Center. I love bringing my daughter to groups and spending time with her while connecting with others who understand my experiences."

18 Degrees Family Resource Center Participant

"Two things compel me to volunteer for 18 Degrees. First, as an organization, it lives its mission in all the work it does. Second, the people who work at 18 Degrees are devoted, kind, caring, perseverant, and committed to nurturing transformation for the children and families with whom they work. They inspire me every day!"

Sheila Heffernon, 18 Degrees Board Member

18 Degrees
served over
4,000
children, youth,
and families
throughout
Western
Massachusetts.





Early Education & Care

Jacob's Story

When Jacob entered our Early Education and Care (EEC) program as a toddler, he was excited to learn and play with his peers, but he faced many challenges.

Jacob experienced foster care for most of his young life and had difficulty managing his emotions. When overwhelmed, he would often hit, have tantrums, and hide under furniture, upsetting the other children. The EEC team recognized that Jacob would need more social-emotional support than some other toddlers because of his experiences and behaviors. At his young age, he had big emotions — anxiety, worry, anger, and grief. Although he was recently and happily reunified with his family, the transition brought about even bigger feelings that he struggled to manage.

To ensure his future success, a collaborative effort involving site directors, teachers, and his family

was made to create an individual success plan for Jacob. The goal was to support him each new day and give him a healthy start as he continues to grow.

In the classroom, Jacob was provided with visual aids to help signal transition times. He received encouragement to name his feelings and was taught coping skills such as taking deep breaths. The EEC team's involvement extended beyond the classroom as they helped his parents connect with community resources and learn new skills to address both Jacob's and the family's complex needs.

By developing and practicing these new skills at home and in the classroom, Jacob became more engaged in learning and social activities and experienced more smiles and smoother transitions. The nurturing skills provided by 18 Degrees and crucial community collaboration helped Jacob to be a happier and more resilient preschooler.

178

children received
early education or
out-of-school care.

88%

of caregivers
reported their
children were
building or
maintaining
new skills.

79%

of caregivers agreed
18 Degrees Early
Education Program
connected them with
additional resources
in the community.



Foster Care & Adoption

Izaiah's Story

This spring, Izaiah stood proudly at the podium to give his high school senior speech, an opportunity for graduating students to share highlights, memories, and more in front of family, friends, and faculty. Izaiah used his time to share heartfelt remarks filled with love and appreciation for his family — the foster family that opened their hearts and home to him seven years ago.

That day, like many days in Izaiah's life, he was surrounded by a village of people who walked with him on his journey. His extended family in the audience included another foster mom from his younger years and members of the 18 Degrees permanency team, who consistently supported him during each transition. Filled with pride and excitement, they each listened as he offered his remarks, laughing, crying, and applauding his accomplishments.

Izaiah spent the summer working with children as a camp counselor and many hours training at the gym to reach his goal of competing in the Boxing Junior Olympics. With the support of the 18 Degrees permanency team and his foster family, Izaiah has built many healthy and encouraging long-term relationships that will stay with him through the next phases of his life. He is now studying for the ParaPro Assessment test to work as a Paraprofessional in Springfield Public Schools and is on a waiting list for his first apartment.

"Many of us walked with Izaiah as a child and then as a young adult, never imagining how deeply he would touch us," reflected Alison Mengel, 18 Degrees Vice President of Programs and a member of the team that worked closely with Izaiah. "We are all so proud of his current successes and look forward to seeing his future achievements."



Izaiah highlighted the impact that each member of his family had on his journey, recognizing them as mom, dad, and his two brothers. He spoke from the heart as he described the bond they created.

"Those four people took me in when I was young, lost, and needed love. They gave that to me without any hesitation. I couldn't be more grateful and honored to call you guys family. You helped me get where I am today."

46

children received intensive foster care services with 40 Healing Homes foster families.

7

young people found their forever families through adoption when reunification was no longer an option.



Child & Family Well-being

Aubry's Story

Aubry was determined to reunite her family. When we met her in 2019, she was learning to cope with substance use issues and working on improving her parenting skills according to her reunification plan with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). She was referred to 18 Degrees for Family Time Visits and worked with Erika, a Family Support Worker, to stay connected with her two pre-teen children and triplet toddlers who were all in foster care.

It was an exciting start to the new year, when in January of 2021 Aubry and her children were reunified. She had made great strides, but navigating life with five children was hard. Before long, Aubry felt overwhelmed and courageously asked DCF for help. They referred Aubry back to us, this time for family support services and we were able to pair her with Erika again because of the level of trust they had already built.

Aubry's partnership with Erika helped her access the various services and resources in her community, including recovery programming and behavioral and mental health support for her family. Even with these resources, it often felt like an uphill battle as she worked diligently to balance

parenting her five children while maintaining employment, along with finding appropriate transportation and housing on a limited income.

In the spring of 2022, Aubry found herself overwhelmed and experienced a setback that put her children back in DCF's care. She felt defeated. She wanted to give up, but Erika was there to remind her that everyone's journey has starts and stops, successes and setbacks. Growth is a learning process that is not always a straight line.

Over the course of the next year Aubry made huge changes in her life, becoming a recovery coach in her community and using her lived experience to help others on their journey. She purchased a vehicle that could safely transport her family of six and continued to show up for her children at Family Time Visits and remained engaged in their care. Last summer she completed her reunification plan and her children returned home.

With her children in her care, Aubry is working hard to be self-sufficient and continues to break down barriers to opportunity for her family. She knows now that even if there are setbacks in the future, she doesn't have to go it alone. 18 Degrees is here when she needs it.

3,600+
services utilized
through the
18 Degrees Family
Resource Center
(FRC).

1,000+
children, youth,
and families served
through the FRC and
Community Support
Programs.

50+
families maintained
their bond through
18 Degrees' Family
Time Visits.



Youth & Community Development

Kalyn's Story

Kalyn came to Pittsfield Community Connection (PCC) in February of 2021, filled with hopes and aspirations, but the path to reaching her goals was full of obstacles and roadblocks. Challenges in her home and school life led her to work with PCC. After a few months, she agreed to be matched with a PCC Mentor. Each week, they found ways to connect and have fun. They attended community events, went to the movies, cooked, and enjoyed meals together.

Over the past two years, Kalyn has had many accomplishments, including gaining work experience, achieving honors-level grades, and

applying for and being accepted into college to study marine biology. With her mentor walking with her along the way through challenges and successes, Kalyn knows she has a trusted role model and a caring friend she can lean on.

Building a supportive, healthy relationship with her mentor has increased Kalyn's self-esteem and confidence. Mentoring has so profoundly impacted her journey that she wanted to apply and was accepted into the Mass Mentoring Youth Leadership Council. The Council brings together a diverse group of high school students from across the state to actively participate in the legislative process and contribute their insights to policy goals.



When reflecting on her relationship with her mentor, Kalyn said,

"I am so thankful for my mentor. She is one of the best people in my life! I am grateful for all the fun times we've had and the support she's given me."

39

youth were connected with a PCC Mentor, helping them build trusting and healthy relationships.

250+

young people aged 10-24 were supported by Pittsfield Community Connection and West Main Connection to help them become safe, engaged, and successful.



67

students and their families served

300+

hours of ensemble-based instruction.

90%

of students report improved leadership and collaborative problem-solving skills

82%

of students report that they see themselves as positive role models.

Kids 4 Harmony

A Youth and Community Development Program

Kids 4 Harmony is a free, intensive after-school music program in Pittsfield and North Adams. Since its inception in 2012, Kids 4 Harmony has provided high-quality music instruction, abundant performance opportunities, and family support at no cost to the participants. Inspired by Venezuela's El Sistema model of music for social change, Kids 4 Harmony removes barriers to opportunities for connection and community through music. With a three-pronged focus on musical excellence, student well-being and development, and family support, Kids 4 Harmony allows children to build self-confidence, discipline, and citizenship while widening their aspirations.

10 of our students participated in competitive opportunities across the country including Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) National Festival, Heartland Chamber Music Festival in Kansas City, MO, and the El Sistema USA Symposium in Indianapolis, IN.

In a milestone opportunity, Kids 4 Harmony was invited to perform one of the 2023 season's Tanglewood Prelude Concerts ahead of the Beethoven main event performed by Emanuel Ax, Leonidas Kavakos, and Yo-Yo Ma on August 25, 2023.



"Looking back to where I started in 2nd grade, all the way to my college auditions, words can't describe how truly thankful I am to this program."

Geivens '23, Kids 4 Harmony Teaching Assistant and violin student for 11 years. Geivens graduated from high school in June and is currently attending the UMass Amherst Music Program.



"I will forever remain shaped by Kids 4 Harmony and the lessons of perseverance, community, empathy, and friendship. I have developed meaningful relationships, learned teaching skills, practiced patience, and seen tremendous growth in my students."

Katerina '23, Kids 4 Harmony Teaching Assistant and violin student for 4 years. Katerina graduated from high school in June and is currently serving a year abroad in Bolivia with The Novogratz Bridge Year Program at Princeton University.

Volunteers:

We are thankful for our dedicated volunteers who give the gift of their time and skills to serve the mission of 18 Degrees.

Mary Lou Accetta
Esther Altman
Valerie Andersen
Mariah Auman
Lindsay Avery
Vivian Berard
Brian Berkel
Ginamarie Bocchino
William Bodine
Sandra Bonilla
Janis Bowersox
Syrah Bradley
Pamela C. Breslin
Nancy Bullock
Emily Burke
Jill Cancellieri
Kevin Carlin
Kyana Chainani
Destiny Charron
Lisa Chen
Jeanne Chivers
Nancy Cohen
Sandra Cohen
Benjamin Colon
Claudia Coplan
Lori Cote
Nathan Cracolici
Jamie Davenport

Michael Dooley
Marissa Dubecky
Meehan
April Einstein
Grace Enchill
Dan Entwisle
Theresa Fasano
Amanda Feeley
Elizabeth Filkins
James Fowler
Laurie Gallagher
Ann Gallo
Jennifer Goewey
Wylie Goodman
Amy Guachione
Matt Gukowsky
Linda Gunderson
Maggie Hallowell
Maggie Hayes
Kristine Hazzard
Elizabeth Herland
Amy Herring
Allison Hope-Eagan
Bryan House
Marc Johnson
Rachel Kaufmann
Ria Kedia
Francine Kelleher

Paula Kelley
Steven Kerner
Grace Kim
Alexa Knight
James Kolesar
Margo Kramer
Gail Krumpholz
Grace Krzanik
Paula Jane Kurasch
Randi M. La
Lanny Lambert
Brenda Landes
Jamie Laprade
Shela Levante
Linda Levesque
Kaida Li
Mary Lo
Susan Magazine
Rachel Malley
Kathleen Maroney
Ray Martin
Robin Martin
Kate Mathews
Ellen Maxon
Carol Maynard
Catherine Mayne
Mollyrose McCarthy
Barbara McMahon

Susan Mechanic-Meyers
Conor Meehan
Jon Millburg
Kelly Minahan
Joan Morgan
Karen Murray
Scott Murray
Elizabeth Neiderman
Andrea Nix
Rachel Olander
Lesley Oransky
Jason Ostrander
Monica Palansky
Lynn Pandell
Jack Quattrochi
Juan Ramos
Mary Jo Ramos
Leah Reed
Tobias K Reutter
Cheryl Richards
Colleen Rossi
Emma Safran
Dawn Schoorlemmer
Emily Schwartz
Michael Scott
Teri Scott
Audrey Shadle
Sarah Sharma
Mia Shepherd
Daniel Simonds
Mark St Germain
Marianne Stec
Sami Strout
Kailey Sultaire
Nancy Tierney

Michael Trainor
William Travis
Elizabeth Tully
Dorcas Ujiji
Claudia Vance Cass
Isaac Voltoline
Diana Wall
Ray Wang
Diane Wespiser
Kaitlyn Marie Wheeler
Charles Yanikoski
Linda Yanikoski
Elaine Yanow
Evan Young
Nicole Zhou
Rosie Ziarnik

KIDS 4 HARMONY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Linda G. Conway,
Co-Chair
Dorothy Weber,
Co-Chair
Ed Bride
Sheila Heffernon
Susan Lombard
Jane Mayer
Philip McKnight
Dr. Carolyn Newberger
Dr. Eli Newberger
Penny Pincus
Elizabeth Selkowitz
Carole Siegel
Carol Smokler
Ken Stark

Over 30 community members volunteer their time to be Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). After undergoing a 30-hour training, they serve as advocates for children in Berkshire County Juvenile Court cases.

“Being a Court Appointed Special Advocate has been challenging and incredibly rewarding. The three boys I advocate for have many different professionals involved in their lives, from teachers, specialists, medical providers, and more. I often serve as the connector of the providers. I have helped them transition between schools, placements, and DCF caseworkers. While many providers have caseloads of children, my sole focus is on these three sweet boys and making sure their needs are met and voices are heard.”

Kristine Hazzard, 18 Degrees CASA volunteer



158
volunteers provided
6,012 hours to the
children, youth, and
families that we
serve at 18 Degrees.

Donors

Thanks to our generous supporters for illuminating the path to new beginnings for those we serve.

Our printed donor roll reflects gifts of at least \$500 or notable memorial tributes received between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. For our full list of donors, please visit 18degreesma.org.

\$25,000 and up

Jim Chervenak
Linda G. Conway
Josephine & Louise Crane Foundation
Phil and Kathy McKnight
The Green Foundation

\$15,000 - \$24,999

Ellen J. Bernstein
Dean Foundation for Little Children, Inc.
Donald C. McGraw Foundation and
Elizabeth and Robert McGraw
The Feigenbaum Foundation
Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts

\$10,000 - \$14,999

Bud Ackerman Fund
Charles H. Hall Foundation
Gilson Family Foundation
Greylock Federal Credit Union
Guardian Life Insurance Company of America
Lee Bank
Linde Family Foundation
The Gru Fund
The Malley Family Foundation

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Nancy and Peter Finn
Werner and Karen Gundersheimer
Lawrence and Rosemary Harnett
Jane and Robert Mayer
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Penny and Claudio Pincus
Craig E. Smith, in memory of Virginia Stanton Smith
Carol and Irv Smokler
The Ruth Krauss Foundation, Inc.
Dr. Dorothy Altman Weber,
in memory of Stephen Weber

\$2,500 - \$4,999

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Duncan and Susan Brown
D'Addario Foundation
A Better Community Clothing Sale
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Joan and James Hunter
Jewish Women's Foundation of
Berkshire County
Susan and David Lombard
Margaret P. Stevenson Foundation
Perry Fund for Others
David and Nancy Ratner
Laura Rosenthal and Jim Himel
Rebecca and Michael Thompson

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Anonymous
Glenn Allan
Hank Alpert
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Ann Appelbaum and Rabbi Neal Borovitz
BBE Office Interiors
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Berkshire Community Action Council
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James and Mary Maxymillian
Jacqueline and Jaan Metsma
Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires
Dan and Marcia Parnell
Claudia Perles and Gerry Fultz
Steven R. Perles
Pittsfield Cooperative Bank
Karen and Ron Rettner
Carol and Richard Seltzer
Adrienne Silverstein
Edward and Carla Slomin
Doris Stark
Ken Stark
Nancy Stark and Stanley Iezman
David H. Strassler
The Dobbins Foundation
Town Fair Tire Corporation
John Tullock
Michael and Clare Tullock
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David M. Wise and Debra A. Chudnow
Richard M. Ziter, M.D. and Eric Reimer

\$500 - \$999

Paul and Phyllis Berz
The Brien Center
Drs. Deborah Buccino and Eric Plakun
Mary Jo Carpenter
Rebecca Cellana
Paula Consolini and James Mahon
Judith and C. Jeffrey Cook
Sarah E. Cook
Susan Coolidge
Country Club of Pittsfield
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Edwards Church of Northampton
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Elizabeth Strauch
C. Randolph and Sheila Thunfors
Diane and Steve Tobin
Robin Tost
Alexandra Warshaw
Wheelock Whitney
William and Adrienne Wootters
Dr. Sharyn Zunz

In Memory of Stephen Weber

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Diane Austin and Aaron Nurick
Linda J. L. Becker
Diane A. Berube
Paul and Phyllis Berz
Barbara Blitstein
Josephine Chaset
Phyllis Cohen and Jeff Lazarus
Linda Colvin
John Cullinane
Margaret Eagle
Jill and Gerry Finkelstein

Financial Snapshot

Timothy Joseph Finley
Nancy and Peter Finn
Ann and Peter Herbst
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John Hussey
Melissa Kagnoff
Carol Noble
Anthony Olenik
Barbara Roberts
Susan and Jeremy Rudd
Vicki and Bruce Safran
Ken Stark and Debbie
Lewis and Margery Steinberg
Kristine Strand

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Anonymous
William Bourdon
Marianne Gamelli
Elaine Matthew
Leonard Sigal
Pamela Streeter
Lisa Tenney
Tari Wheeler Roosa
Charles Wheeler Jr.
Tracy Williams

Local Funding

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
Berkshire United Way
Boston Alliance for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual
and Transgender Youth
Cultural Council of Northern Berkshire
Mass Mentoring Partnership
Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership
Northern Berkshire United Way
Pittsfield Cultural Council
United Way of Franklin & Hampshire Region
Williamstown Community Chest

Public Funding

Berkshire County Juvenile Court
City of North Adams
City of Pittsfield
MA Children's Trust Fund
MA Department of Children and Families
MA Department of Early Education and Care
MA Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education
MA Department of Public Health
MA Executive Office of Health and
Human Services
Massachusetts Cultural Council
North Adams Public School District

18 DEGREES

Income and Expenses for the Years Ended
June 30, 2023 and 2022

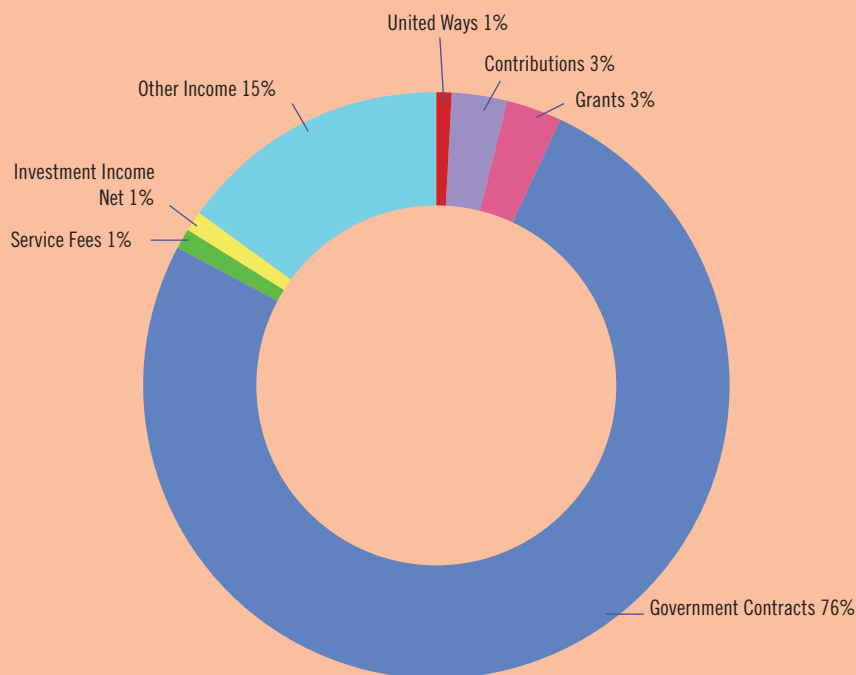
	FY23	FY22
Income		
United Ways	\$151,464	\$152,464
Contributions	\$314,816	\$497,137
Grants	\$309,748	\$255,148
Government contracts	\$8,290,716	\$7,846,415
Service fees	\$138,418	\$47,097
Investment income (loss), net	\$59,695	\$(37,664)
Other income*	\$1,693,916	\$1,249,293
Total Income	\$10,958,773	\$10,009,890
Operating Expenses		
Program expenses	\$8,491,264	\$8,394,771
Core mission support	\$1,510,905	\$1,393,622
Fundraising	\$116,794	\$120,150
Total Operating Expenses	\$10,118,963	\$9,908,543
Subtotal Excess (Deficit)	\$839,810	\$101,347
Extraordinary items **	-	\$367,312
Total Excess (Deficit)	\$839,810	\$(265,965)

The above is an excerpt from 18 Degrees' financial statements for the years ending June 30, 2023 and 2022. A complete audit report is available upon request.

*Other income includes payments received from the Employee Retention Tax Credit

**One-time payments for professional services related to the calculation of the Employee Retention Tax Credit

2023 OPERATING SUPPORT



18 DEGREES LEADERSHIP

Stephanie Steed,

President and CEO

Gina P. Blake, LICSW,

*Vice President of
Programs*

John D. Cadiz,

*SHRM-SCP, Director of
Human Resources*

Sarah Frederick,

*Senior Director of
Advancement*

Bryan House,

*Vice President of
Youth & Community
Development*

Alison Mengel, LICSW,

*Vice President of
Programs*

Ben Wax,

*Vice President of
Finance & Operations*

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Dr. Carolyn Newberger

Carole Siegel

Ken Stark



FOLLOW US

on social media to
learn more about the
new beginnings that
come to light every day
at 18 Degrees.

What We Do:

18 Degrees promotes the well-being and strengths of children, youth, adults, and families to build better communities throughout Western Massachusetts in four core areas:

- **EARLY EDUCATION & CARE**
- **FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION**
- **CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING**
- **YOUTH & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Our work transcends the four walls of any building — we remain mobile, meeting people where they are, in their homes and their communities, walking with them to their new beginnings.



18 DEGREES
**Where New Beginnings
Come to Light**

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Pittsfield, MA 01201
413.448.8281

59 Interstate Drive
West Springfield, MA 01089
413.584.5690

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