



The Kids First Fund

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

MARKER

2. The Kids First Fund is committed to...

From the President

This year's letter will not dwell on a big central theme, nor spend much time on the events of 2014. Instead, as this organization moves into its 16th year, I wish to write about our future.

According to the things that can be measured by numbers, the 15th year of the Kids First Fund was very productive. Fundraising from all sources, such as individual donations and the annual online travel auction, generated more than \$20,000. This allowed us to end the year with a healthy balance statement showing total assets in excess of \$100,000. When combined with our activities in Moldova and Latvia, the business of the Kids First Fund was responsibly conducted while reaching or helping thousands of children, parents, and those in child protection professions.

We added two talented and motivated board members during 2014. Doug Mullen lives in Washington DC and is the Assistant General Counsel for Airlines for America, which is one of the world's premier airline trade associations. Indra Petersons, who most recently the weather anchor of CNN's morning show "New Day," has a mother and father who were born in Latvia. You are invited to learn more about them later in this report.

But beyond these developments, I had a nagging feeling we could be doing much more. I am very pleased by the results of the work done by the Child Rights Information Center, our partner organization in Moldova. However, our activities in Latvia would benefit from identifying a new initiative to embrace. Meanwhile at home, our website has grown tired from a lack of attention and our ability to cultivate individual donors was failing. We can do better and we will.

Your board of directors intends to improve the Kids First Fund during 2015. I am happy to share the following initiatives with you:

- Stuart Benzal, a board member since our founding in 1999, has become our Chief Marketing Officer and his volunteer efforts will lead programs to increase donations from our website and by the personal solicitations of our board members.
- The development of a membership club to permit a new group of potential supporters to donate a modest amount to receive a small package of benefits. Awareness for this campaign will be created through the Adwords account generously donated by Google.

- KidsFirstFund.org will be updated with a new appearance and feature more images related to the work and good that we do. Our good friend, Matthew Frederick, will lead this redesign and implementation. I thank Matthew for supporting our website for many years and donating hosting for the site.
- The grantmaking process for a new project in Latvia will be completed. This will result in the selection of a partner organization to provide child abuse prevention services based upon the successful model we support in Moldova.

This last item will be our big news for 2015. Similar to Moldova, we will provide annual grants of \$15,000 for school-based child abuse prevention education in impoverished rural areas of Latvia.

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From the President continued

When combined with our \$15,000 annual grant for Moldova, our cash outflow will total \$30,000. This requires us to boost our fundraising efforts to maintain the financial health and to reach our full potential as an organization.

I am very proud of the board of directors that have chosen to join me on this path. Donor activity among directors reached a record level during 2014. And all members of the board are becoming engaged in the work of the organization. In short, the Kids First Fund is set on a course for healthy and sustainable growth.

Thank you for supporting our effort to protect, and heal those who don't have a voice. 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: A student in Moldova participates in a Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Project training session.

Image credit: Child Rights Information Center Moldova.



KidsFirstFund.org

Numbers Help Tell Our Story

The 2014 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.

Revenue from donations and the travel auction represent the engine of our good works. Annual cash contributions have largely ranged between \$6,000 and \$9,000 for the 2007 through 2014 period, as shown in the table below:

Cash Contribution Trend – Past 8 Years

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
\$6,007	\$8,810	\$8,143	\$14,397	\$8,023	\$7,270	\$15,709	\$7,596

Kids First Fund, Inc. 2013 and 2014 Income Statement

	2013	2014
Contributions		
Cash donations	\$15,708.80	\$7,596.01
Interest from savings account	\$90.78	\$76.07
Dividends/change in market value securities	\$835.44	\$409.49
In-kind items (see note a)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Online Travel Auction for Kids (see note b)	\$14,390.97	\$12,415.48
Total Contributions	\$31,025.99	\$20,497.05
Expenditures and Distributions		
Grants made to support mission	\$25,000.00	\$15,000.00
Salaries, compensation & benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Professional fees & fundraising	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Expenses and Distributions	\$25,000.00	\$15,000.00
Excess Funds – Deposited to Bank Account	\$6,025.99	\$5,497.05

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.

Cash contributions for 2014 fell by almost half from the prior year amount due to several factors. Results for 2013 were boosted by a single \$10,000 contribution that year. Results from the annual travel auction fell due to troubles caused by a single bidder on eBay. His actions prompted us to remove several high value items from the auction to prevent further troubles faced by one of our donor airlines.

Two significant cash distributions were made to fund our program in Moldova; no distributions were made to Latvia. The board authorized two \$7,500 grants for ongoing support of the child abuse prevention project operated by the Child Rights Information Center in Moldova. The Kids First Fund provided \$15,000 during 2014 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 \$100,687. The Kids First Fund anticipates it will provide \$15,000 to support a full year of work in Moldova during 2015 in addition to \$15,000 for a new project in Latvia. The financial statements were drafted by Bob Bahlman, treasurer of the Kids First Fund.

Kids First Fund, Inc. 2013 and 2014 Balance Sheet

	Dec. 31, 2013	Dec. 31, 2014
Assets		
Cash and investments	\$95,190.21	\$100,687.26
Other assets	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Assets	\$95,190.21	\$100,687.26
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
Net Assets and Fund Balance	\$95,190.21	\$100,687.26

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

Latvia Family Shelter Helps Record Number of Children

The Latgale Regional Support Centre for Abused Children and Women, known as Rasas Perles (Pearls of Dew), provided support to a record number of children during 2014. This follows four years of increased activity.

The shelter continues to implement a multidiscipline approach to helping children recover from child abuse. Children are placed here after a referral has been made by a government agency. Sometimes the mother, who also may be a victim of abuse, is placed with the child. Financial support associated with these placements comes from a combination of national and municipal sources, along with the general program support provided by private donations, corporations, charities, and EU governments. The allocated budget for 2014 was €249,565 (US \$284,000); actual expenditures were higher at €259,414 (US \$296,000).

The multidiscipline approach relies upon a curriculum of care developed for each child. Children and mothers benefit from regular psychological consultations during the prescribed 30- or 60-day stays permitted by government support. The shelter strives to provide the following benefits to every person receiving assistance:

- Teach children and mothers elementary skills of interpersonal communication.
- Provide access to healthy living activities in the kitchen, woodworking room, and gym.
- Identify resources and alternatives for mothers when they encounter difficult situations.



Children were encouraged to form dance groups and take roles as artists, teachers, or directors to create a theatrical-style performance.

- Learn and practice the definition of socially acceptable behavior.
- Build confidence for mothers in their role as caregiver and protector.
- Create recreational and sporting events for children to build self-confidence and healthy interpersonal interaction.

The shelter has a variety of places in which these activities can occur, including the vegetable gardens, greenhouse, instructional kitchen, and woodworking shop.

Overall the shelter strives to increase the capability for families to build trust and cooperation as methods to eliminate violence in the home.

The shelter began a new initiative during 2014 which will continue through the end of 2015. Thanks to support from the governments of Iceland, Lichtenstein, and Norway, the shelter received funds of nearly €50,000. The project is designed to decrease domestic abuse by identifying victims and those who commit abuse. These families will receive extensive rehabilitation attention with the objective of creating functional and harmonious families. The program is designed to leave a framework for helping families affected by domestic abuse in the Latgale district of Latvia.

Family Shelter Statistics – Latvia					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Children served in shelter	142	199	208	248	272
Total days of care	6,200	6,119	6,663	6,845	9,390
Mothers served in shelter	31	34	30	31	46
Total days of care	900	822	823	720	1,650

Statistics provided by Latgale Regional Support Centre

Family Shelter Statistics – Primary Referral Reasons				
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Emotional abuse	98%	91%	85%	79%
Abandoned and neglected	53%	60%	48%	45%
Physical abuse	30%	24%	30%	37%
Sexual abuse	16%	18%	12%	16%

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

Training in Moldova continued

The final layer of awareness-building engaged more than 12,235 children and 3,206 parents and caregivers during 2014. This network relies upon volunteer activity, which will affect the quality of self-reporting of statistics provided by trainers to CRIC.

Feedback provided by those receiving training, such as teachers, demonstrates why the need is so great. Most teachers are not aware of the child protection system and their obligation to act in the best interest of the child. Before training occurs, they are not able to identify the skills they should pass to their students on how to prevent violence. Few teachers know how to report suspected cases of abuse against children, even though this is required by national legislation. Sadly, little collaboration exists between educators and social services in communities. Reliance upon a multidisciplinary approach, which relies upon a variety of professionals, to serve the needs of abused children is virtually non-existent. The entire training experience is designed to change this situation in Moldova, district by district.

The project continues to deliver very meaningful results at a modest cost. More than 32,500 participants have been reached at a very efficient cost of \$1.61 per person since the project began in 2010. The statistics provided here define the audience reached directly by teachers interacting with parents and students. Of course, there is a wider audience in each community that benefits from the awareness-building and behavioral changes generated by the core group of teachers and parents.



This is an image of train the trainer in action with a large group of teachers learning about the child abuse prevention curriculum developed by CRIC.



This group of school children just completed training to build awareness on the issue of child abuse and to learn solutions when they or their friends are victims of abuse.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Project – Moldova

Participant Groups	2011 Totals	2012 Totals	2013 Totals	2014 Totals	To Date*
District representatives trained	56	56	213	220	545
Children receiving abuse awareness training	2,416	2,592	6,240	12,235	23,483
Parents/caregivers involved in effective parenting curriculum	758	831	1,545	3,206	6,340
Teachers benefiting from sessions organized by colleagues	469	552	510	626	2,157
Project Metrics					
Total participation	3,699	4,031	8,508	16,287	32,525
Kids First Fund program grants	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$52,500
Program cost per participant	\$4.06	\$3.73	\$1.76	\$0.92	\$1.61

*Project began in 2010.

Source: Child Resource Information Center.

Kids First Fund Elects Douglas Mullen, of Airlines for America, to Board of Directors

Douglas Mullen was named a vice president of the board of directors in 2014 and will provide legal counsel to The Kids First Fund. Doug is the Assistant General Counsel for Airlines for America, which is one of the world's premier airline trade associations.

Based in Washington DC, he provides legal counsel to member airlines (which includes Alaska, American, Atlas Air, Delta, Federal Express, Hawaiian, JetBlue, Southwest, UPS, and United) on compliance issues for international and domestic regulatory matters. Doug manages industry litigation in foreign, US Federal, and state venues. He represents the airline industry at conferences and meetings. Prior to this he worked for the US Federal Aviation Administration and the US Department of Commerce. Doug is a doctoral graduate of the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America. He received his master's degree from American University and bachelor's from Bridgewater State College.

"I'm pleased to welcome Doug to the Board. He will provide essential legal services to the Fund and is eager to work to advance our goals," said Kids First Fund Board President Jay Sorensen. "Doug strongly believes that there is nothing more important than protecting and nurturing children and is thrilled to have the opportunity to help kids in countries with limited resources."

"I am honored to have the opportunity to have a role in preventing child abuse and helping children who have been abused or abandoned. I have always felt a connection with Eastern Europe and in particular, the Republic of Moldova. I am looking forward seeing the work we accomplish there."



Douglas is our new Vice President and resides in Washington, DC.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to have a role in preventing child abuse and helping children who have been abused or abandoned."

Kids First Fund Elects Indra Petersons to Board of Directors

Indra Petersons, most recently the weather anchor of CNN's morning show "New Day," was elected to the Kids First Fund Board of Directors in 2014.

Indra is a Certified Broadcast Meteorologist, a distinguished designation by the American Meteorological Society. She is also a professional member of the American Meteorological Society (AMS) and the National Weather Association (NWA). In 2014, Indra was recognized by The Alliance for Women in Media with the Women with Solutions: STEM Leadership in Media award. The award honors women whose leadership has increased awareness and access to science, technology, engineering and math, especially to girls and young women.

"I'm pleased to welcome Indra to the Board. She comes to us with a personal interest in helping the children of Latvia, since it is the homeland of her mother and father. As soon as she learned of our goals and accomplishments, she was determined to help," said Kids First Fund Board President Jay Sorensen.

"I'm very proud of my Latvian heritage and feel strongly about helping children succeed in life regardless of their circumstance. I not only look forward to doing what I can to aid Kids First, but also to building upon my personal connection to Latvia."



"I'm very proud of my Latvian heritage and feel strongly about helping children succeed in life regardless of their circumstance."

Topbonus, Southwest and Tune Hotels Receive Kids First Teddy Bear Awards

The Kids First Fund recognized the top performers of the 2014 International Online Travel Auction for Kids. Although many airlines and hotel brands generously donate to the Fund, the awards are given to the three highest performers in the auction each year. The 2014 awards were presented on the evening of November 18, 2014 and honored:

- Topbonus donated packages totaling 400,000 frequent flier miles, to redeem on airberlin and program partners such as Etihad Airways, generated over \$3,700 in total bids – more than any other single corporate donor.
- Southwest Airlines provided six unrestricted tickets that generated the second highest bid activity, which was in excess of \$3,600.
- Tune Hotels generously provided 25 two night stay hotel accommodations at various Tune locations in London and Edinburgh, Scotland. These generated the third highest bid activity for any single donor company, bringing in \$2,200.

Topbonus, Southwest and Tune Hotels each received a Kids First Teddy Bear Award in recognition of their support for this year's auction. Each bear has been custom crafted by the Vermont Teddy Bear Company with the logo of the Kids First Fund and a sash recognizing the recipient company.

The recognition event occurred during the MEGA Awards Gala on November 18, 2014 in New Orleans, Louisiana and was associated with a global airline industry conference hosted by Airline Information. Jonathan Clarkson, Director of Rapid Rewards, received the Kids First Teddy Bear Awards on behalf of Southwest Airlines.

New to 2014 auction was a FlyerTalk auction page with unique items such as mileage vouchers from Delta SkyMiles and airberlin topbonus. FlyerTalk is one of the most popular online communities frequented by business travelers who are passionate about all things travel-related. The community includes over 200 forums with more than seven million posts discussing airline, hotel, credit card, and phone and rental car companies.

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Kids First Teddy Bear Award recipient in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 18, 2014 (left to right): Jay Sorensen, Kids First Fund and Jonathan Clarkson, Southwest Airlines.

Each bear has been custom crafted by the Vermont Teddy Bear Company with the logo of the Kids First Fund and a sash recognizing the recipient company.

Teddy Bear Awards continued

“We are pleased the FlyerTalk online community can partner with the Kids First Fund and provide opportunities to bid and win travel with global donors such as the airberlin topbonus program, Southwest Airlines, and Tune Hotels,” said Brent Conner, Vice President & General Manager, Travel & Leisure for Internet Brands (the owner of FlyerTalk). “But more importantly, FlyerTalk is delighted to have a positive impact on the lives of many children who need our help. The proceeds of this auction will help children who feel they have been forgotten and will remind them there are people who care.”



Donor companies for the 2014 auction included: Air Arabia, Atlantis Casino Resort, Best Western, Budget Car Rental, Choice Hotels International, Delta SkyMiles, Delta Ottawa City Centre Hotel, Hyatt House Hotels, Icelandair, InterContinental Montreal, Miracle Springs Resort and Spa Hotel, Rocketmiles, SATA Air Acores, Southwest Airlines, topbonus, Tune Hotels, and Virgin Australia.



Board Member Snapshot – Maria Marinuta

This report continues an annual tradition – the board member snapshot.

Joined board: 2013

Family: Maria is pictured at right with her husband Vitalie and children Octavian and Ionela.

Residence: Born in a small village in Moldova and has resided in Texas, Kansas, California, and Florida. My current residence is Chisinau, Moldova.

Current profession: Medical doctor at the Central Military Hospital in Chisinau. At the same time, I also operate a business in the tourism and travel sector. My activities include the International Women’s Club of Moldova, which organizes charitable activities to benefit women and children in Moldova. I was a founding member of the organization and currently a member of its board.

Favorite activity or destination: Promoting true and healthy values, being actively involved in charitable activities, traveling (every destination is a unique experience), cooking, and reading.

What interests you about the KFF mission? Coming from a big family of eight children, and as a mother of two grown-up kids, and a happy wife of a military person, I want KFF to continue its support for preventing domestic violence against children and women. Every child and woman has the right to live without physical and psychological abuse. But this goes beyond words alone. At the World Summit for Children, world leaders made a universal appeal and signed a joint statement to ensure every child has a better future . . . KFF actually implements that vision.

Where do you see the Fund five years from now? Working hard and reaching more people, in five years from now, I think KFF could be a leading fund in the world to protect children.

What is the most important thing we do? We care and teach others to care and teach children about their rights. In many cases our



Maria with her husband Vitalie and children Octavian and Ionela.

involvement provides lasting benefits for child growth, protection and development. We listen to children and ensure their participation – which in the end builds their confidence and, I hope, to trust in Moldovan society.

“Every child and woman has the right to live without physical and psychological abuse.”

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.

airBaltic generously donates 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.



The Kids First Fund is a charity recognized by Airline Information, which provides generous financial support and includes the Teddy Bear Awards in its annual MEGA Event airline industry conference.



Vermont Teddy Bear provides custom crafted teddy bears for the annual Kids First Teddy Bear Awards.



Learn More and Donate Online

KidsFirstFund.org

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Your Board of Directors and Officers

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(Neenah, Wisconsin)

Stuart Benzal, Director
(Chicago, Illinois)

Diana Cronan, Director
(Washington, DC)

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(Riga, Latvia)

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Irma Kalnina, Director
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Hamid Ladjevardi
(New York City and Riga, Latvia)

Maria Marinuta, Director
(Chisinau, Moldova)

Doug Mullen, Vice President
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Jeff Patrias, Director
(Eagan, Minnesota)

Indra Petersons, Director
(New York City)

Jay Sorensen, President
(Shorewood, Wisconsin)

United Nations Representatives

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

Roger Grigulis and Irma Kalnina
are the designated representatives
to the Economic and Social Council
at the United Nations headquarters
in Geneva and Vienna.