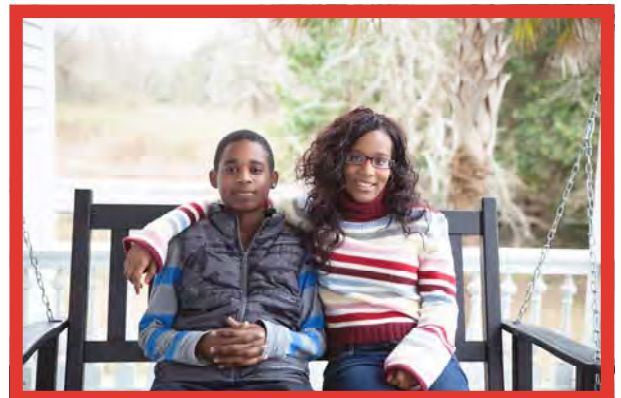


South Carolina Foster Care Review Board

2014—2015 Annual Report and Recommendations



2014 DATA SNAPSHOT

STATS AT-A-GLANCE

- 3,219 CHILDREN ENTERED FOSTER CARE
- 27% OF CHILDREN ENTERING CARE HAD PREVIOUS OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS
- 2,914 CHILDREN LEFT FOSTER CARE
- 46 % OF CHILDREN RETURNED HOME
- 13% OF CHILDREN WERE ADOPTED

2014 REVIEWS

- 5,914 REVIEWS HELD
- 3,630 CHILDREN REVIEWED
- 418 REVIEW BOARD MEETINGS

AREAS OF CONCERN

- 32% CASE PLAN BARRIERS
- 31% AGENCY POLICY VIOLATIONS
- 23% LEGAL BARRIERS
- 6% ADOPTION SERVICE DELAYS
- 5% LEGAL HEARINGS NOT HELD TIMELY
- 3% LEGAL HEARINGS NOT HELD

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE 17 MONTHS OR LONGER

- 985 CHILDREN
- 59% LEGALLY FREE FOR ADOPTION
- 36% IN CARE FIVE OR MORE YEARS

SC HEART GALLERY

- 156,470 WEBSITE VISITORS
- 1,328 INQUIRIES
- 306 ADOPTION EVENTS
- 145 CHILDREN PHOTOGRAPHED
- 39 VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS

ADOPTIONS

- 389 FINALIZED ADOPTIONS
- 39% WITHIN 24 MONTHS
- 16% AGE 13 AND OLDER

PEOPLE POWER

- 190 VOLUNTEERS
- 9,221 CASE REVIEW HOURS
- 15,899 TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS
- 21 BOARDS COMPLETED SERVICE PROJECTS

2014 REVIEW BOARD OF THE YEAR

- REVIEW BOARD 2B, AIKEN AND BAMBERG COUNTIES

2014 REVIEW BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

- ANN MALETIC, REVIEW BOARD 5B, RICHLAND COUNTY

Data contained in this annual report represents children reported by the South Carolina Department of Social Services, who remain in foster care at least four consecutive months and are reviewed by the South Carolina Foster Care Review Board.



RECOMMENDATION

The South Carolina Foster Care Review Board is supported by a seven-member State Board of Directors who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The State Board meets quarterly and is responsible for reviewing and coordinating the activities of local review boards. It makes recommendations in an annual report to the Governor and The General Assembly.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW FOR FAMILY PRESERVATION CASES



State Board Recommendation

Since 1974, the Foster Care Review Board (“FCRB”) has provided an external, third-party review system for all children residing in foster care in South Carolina. This independent system of accountability has successfully utilized citizen volunteers to promote safe, permanent homes for children in foster care in a timely manner and has increased public awareness regarding issues faced by children and families involved with the child welfare system.

The Department of Social Services (“DSS”) and the FCRB will continue to develop an independent review system for Family Preservation cases that will provide routine, child-specific reviews in order to ensure immediate and enduring safety for children within the Department of Social Services’ oversight.

SUMMARY OF REVIEWS

5,914

The Review Board analyzes ongoing, comparative data related to children in foster care in order to gain a better understanding of the trends impacting the system, as well as future implications related to each child reviewed by local review boards.

During calendar year 2014, local review boards held 418 local review board meetings, completing 5,914 case reviews for 3,630 children in foster care. In 2014 there was an increase in the number of review board meetings and the number of children reviewed.

Data regarding entry into foster care for 3,219 children was received from the Department of Social Services and entered in the Review Board data-management system during calendar year 2014. Local review boards held reviews for 1,829 of these children, while 1,390 children either left foster care prior to a case review, or had not been reviewed as of December 31, 2014. Twenty-seven percent (27%), or 872 children had at least one previous out-of-home placement.

INDICATOR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
CHILDREN REVIEWED	4,986	4,427	3,716	3,475	3,630
REVIEWS HELD	8,130	7,149	5,794	5,876	5,914
REVIEW BOARD MEETINGS	434	432	405	403	418
CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	1,514	1,332	1,565	1,568	1,829
CHILDREN RE-ENTERING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	558	513	724	661	768
CHILDREN LEAVING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	2,175	2,163	1,916	1,676	1,543

Areas of Concern

7,371

The monthly review process allows local review boards to identify system concerns that are barriers to permanence for children in foster care. These system deficiencies, or areas of concern, are items that are not in compliance with law or agency policy.

In 2014, local review boards identified 7,371 areas of concern, an increase from 2013. Legal barriers, including delayed and late hearings, accounted for 31% of all areas of concern. No court order at the time of the review was the most frequently noted legal concern in 2014 (1,072), followed by the Termination of Parental Rights complaint not being filed timely (179). The most frequently identified program area of concern was a lack of progress toward permanency (821). Agency policy violations, including case plan barriers, accounted for 63% of all areas of concern and delays in adoption services accounted for 6%.

SUMMARY OF REVIEWS

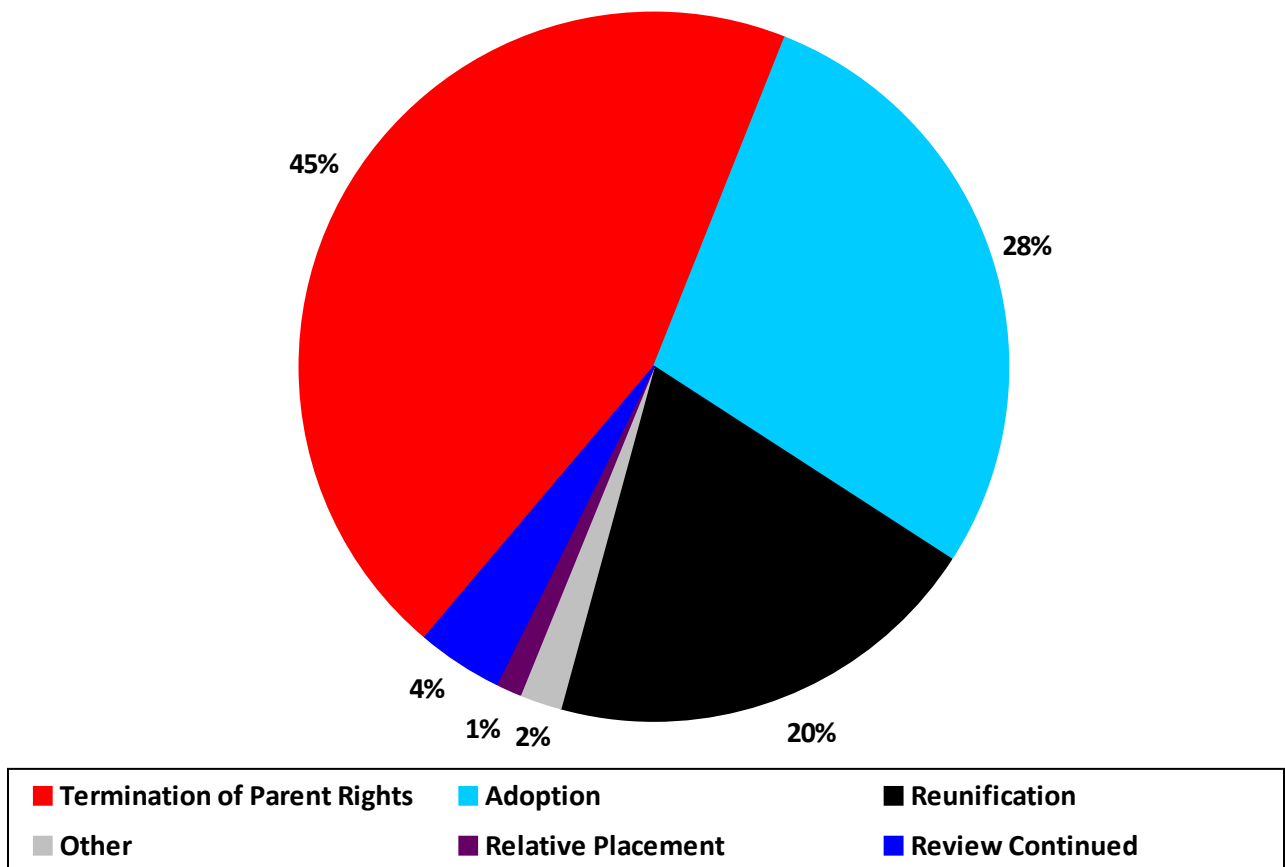
Case Decisions and Recommendations

Local review boards carefully consider input from interested parties prior to issuing a recommendation on each child's case. Board members are required by statute to consider the most appropriate permanent recommendation possible for each child. Recommendations are sent to the Family Court, DSS, and Guardians ad Litem.

If a required interested party is not invited or if additional information is needed for the board members to make a permanent recommendation, no recommendation is made and the review is continued. Reviews that are continued or not held are rescheduled within three months of the original review date.

The graph below illustrates the percentage and type for each recommendation issued by local review boards in 2014.

Review Board Recommendations



ENTERING FOSTER CARE

3,219

This is the number of children who entered foster care between January and December 2014, 8% more than in 2013.



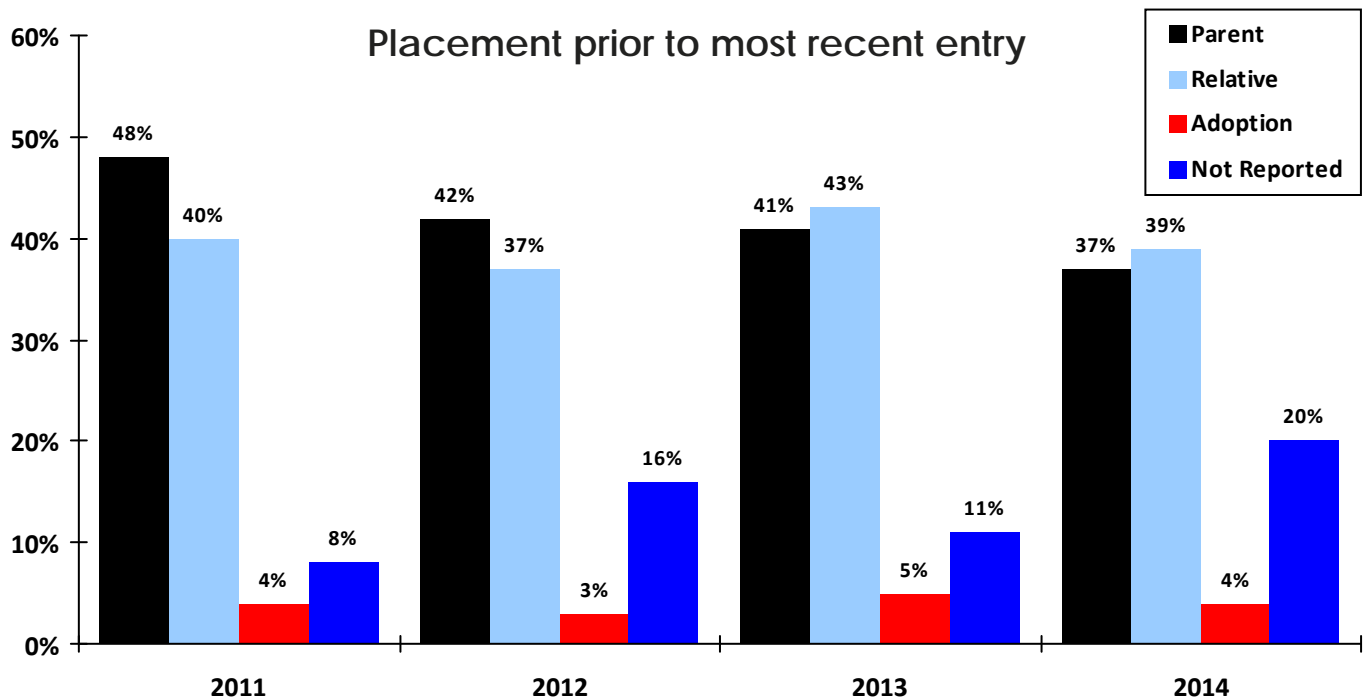
Thirty-nine percent (39%) of children entering foster care in 2014 entered due to physical neglect, while 36% entered care due to abuse. The remaining children entered foster care due to drug exposure/testing positive for drugs (18%), reason not reported (3%), abandonment (3%), and voluntary placement (1%).

Previous Out-of-Home Placements

872

Of the 3,219 children reported to have entered foster care in 2014, 27% (872) had at least one reported previous out-of-home placement. Of the 872, thirty-seven percent (37%) entering foster care came from the home of a parent, 39% from the home of a relative, and 4% from an adoptive home.

The Review Board reports on all out-of-home placements for children who enter foster care because moving from home to home, or coming in and out of foster care, creates additional trauma for a child. The chart below displays prior placement data for the most recent entry to foster care by calendar year.



LEAVING FOSTER CARE

2,914

DSS reported that 2,914 children left the foster care system in 2014. Of these 2,914 children, local review boards reviewed 1,543 of these prior to their leaving foster care. The remaining children left foster care prior to a case review.

Returning a child to a parent or finalizing an adoption are the most permanent options for children who leave foster care. In 2014, 68% of children reviewed were returned to a parent or had a finalized adoption. The following table summarizes data for all children leaving foster care in 2014.

INDICATOR	ALL CHILDREN	CHILDREN REVIEWED	CHILDREN NOT REVIEWED
CHILDREN LEAVING FOSTER CARE	2,914	1,543	1,371
PERMANENCY OUTCOMES			
REUNIFICATION	1,332	661	671
FINALIZED ADOPTION	389	385	4
OTHER OUTCOMES			
RELATIVE CUSTODY	902	274	628
EMANCIPATED OR TURNED 18	223	205	18
OTHER /NOT REPORTED	68	18	50

The following table compares the reason children left foster care with the agency plan presented at the last review.

REASON LEFT CARE	DSS PLAN AT LAST REVIEW						
	Adoption	Reunification	Relative	Non-Relative	APPLA	TPR	No Plan
ADOPTION	77%	1%	0%	0%	1%	20%	1%
REUNIFICATION	<1%	93%	1%	0%	0%	3%	3%
RELATIVE CUSTODY	1%	53%	29%	1%	0%	12%	4%
NON-RELATIVE CUSTODY	15%	40%	5%	20%	0%	15%	5%
DECEASED	33.3%	33.3%	0%	0%	33.3%	0%	0%
EMANCIPATED	42%	18%	5%	0%	25%	10%	<1%

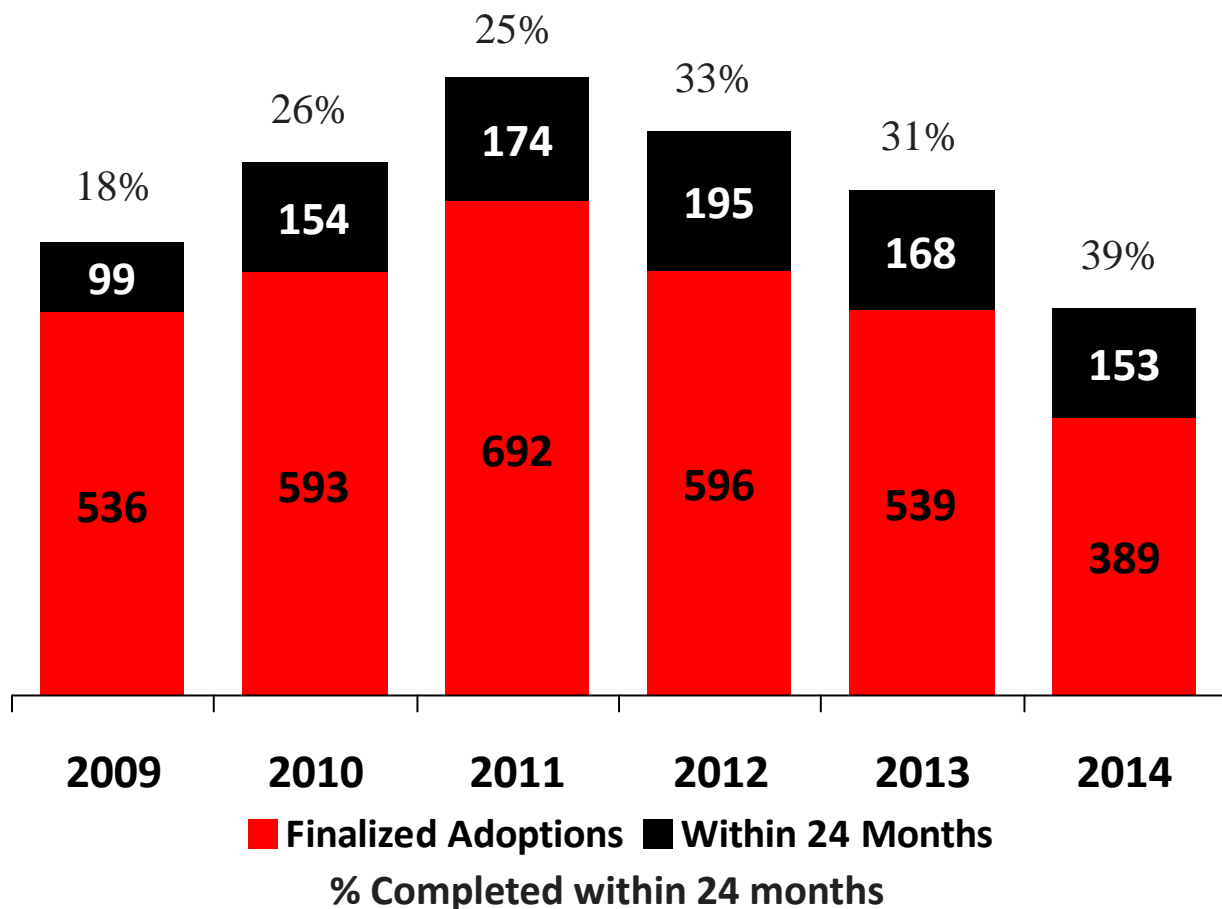
ADOPTIONS

389

Of all children who left foster care in 2014, 13% (389) had finalized adoptions; thirty-nine percent (39%), or 153, of these adoptions were completed within the federal standard of 24 months, a significantly higher percentage over previous years. The average length of time a child spends in foster care before a finalized adoption remained at 38 months.

The average age at adoption was seven years, and in 2014 adoptions were finalized for 62 children age 13 and older. Teen adoptions accounted for 16% of all finalized adoptions. Positive permanency for older youth should continue to be a priority for the child welfare system in South Carolina.

Finalized Adoptions by Calendar Year



REMAINING IN CARE

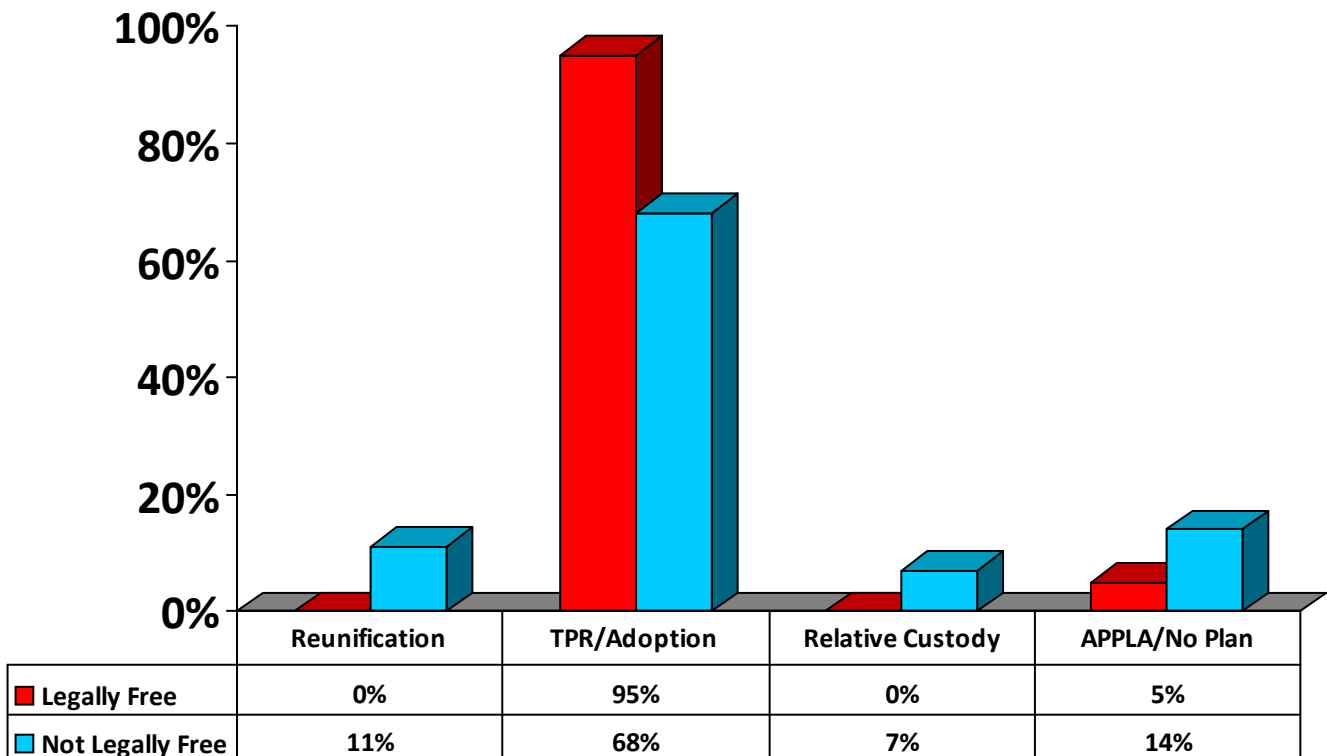
985

There were 3,543 children in foster care as reported to the Review Board by DSS as of December 31, 2014. Of these, 27% (985 children) have been in the foster care system for their most recent foster care entry for 17 continuous months or longer.

Of these children remaining in care 17 months or longer, 59% (581) are currently legally free for adoption. The average length of time in care for these children is five years, or 59 months. The length of time in foster care ranges from 17 months to 16 years; and 209 (36%) children have spent five or more years in foster care.

The following graph compares the DSS plan at the last review for children who have been in foster care for 17 months or longer and whether they are currently legally free for adoption.

DSS Plan for Children in Care 17 Months or Longer



HEART GALLERY

Heart Galleries across the United States provide public awareness of the need for foster care adoption and help find forever families for individual children. The South Carolina Heart Gallery continues to benefit from the generosity of local photographers who donate their time and talent to provide beautiful portraits of waiting children, and from public exhibit space offered by faith communities, libraries, restaurants, and other businesses.

2015 marks the tenth anniversary of the Heart Gallery in South Carolina. In the past ten years the Heart Gallery has grown from having one volunteer staff member and less than ten exhibits to four full-time staff members and over three hundred community photo exhibits.



Heart Gallery Program Director Millie Qualls and Audra Brown, Community Liaison



Heart Gallery Photographer Brett Grooms

The Highlights

2005:

- ◆ January – Parade Magazine highlights the New Mexico Heart Gallery and its success in matching waiting children with adoptive families, inspiring the creation of Heart Gallery chapters in many states, including South Carolina
- ◆ March – first planning meeting between community advocates and SC DSS Adoption staff
- ◆ June – inaugural SCHG photo shoot
- ◆ August – first community exhibit held at Charleston County Public Library; scheartgallery.org website launched
- ◆ November – The State newspaper features HG exhibit at City Art Gallery, highlighting National Adoption Month

2005 – 2007:

- ◆ Volunteer staff - 1 coordinator; 2 community liaisons
- ◆ 14 community photo exhibits generate 44 inquiries for featured children

2008 – 2010:

- ◆ 1 full-time coordinator and 1 part-time assistant funded through partnership of Foster Care Review Board and SC DSS
- ◆ SC Heart Gallery Foundation created by community volunteers to assist with marketing and special events
- ◆ Singer-songwriter Edwin McCain featured as spokesperson in TV commercial
- ◆ Fox Carolina and Ashley Furniture partner to provide media coverage
- ◆ 355 community photo exhibits generate 3,409 inquiries for featured children

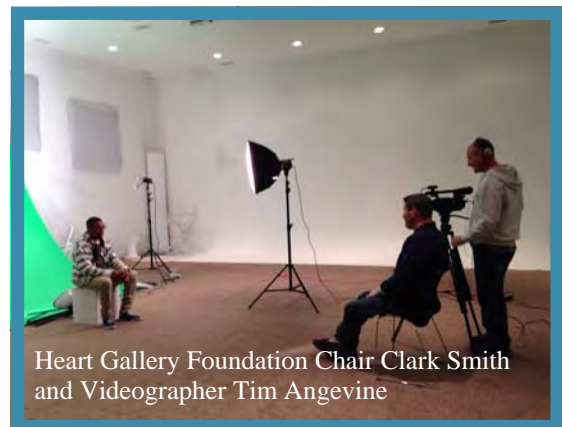
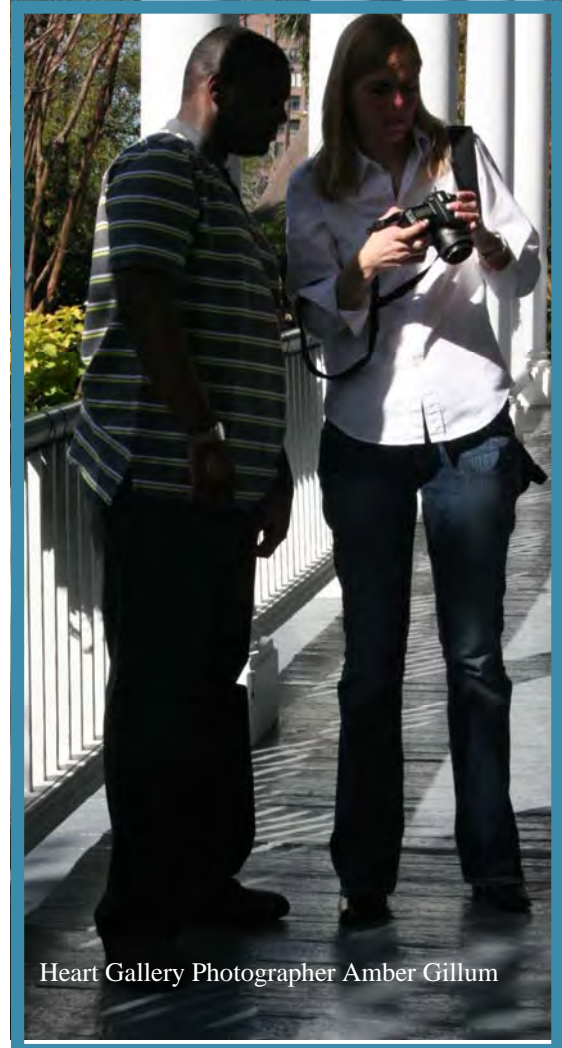
HEART GALLERY

2011 – 2014:

- ◆ 2 full-time adoption investigators hired to expedite adoption process for interested families
- ◆ First Gentleman Michael Haley joins Edwin McCain as spokesperson
- ◆ National Heart Gallery exhibit travels to Spartanburg
- ◆ Press conference and HG exhibit held at SC State House to announce awareness campaign
- ◆ Waiting-child video profiles created and released by SC Heart Gallery Foundation
- ◆ 1,178 community photo exhibits generate 4,978 inquiries for featured children
- ◆ 311 families initiate the adoption application process through SCHG and 93 adoptive home studies are completed

2005 – 2014 Cumulative Totals and Accomplishments:

- ◆ 155 photographers donated their time and talent
- ◆ 1,167 children attended photo shoots; 905 unique children photographed
- ◆ 87 waiting-child videos produced and released by SC Heart Gallery Foundation
- ◆ 1,547 community exhibits held in donated public space
- ◆ 8,431 inquiries received
- ◆ 311 new family intakes
- ◆ 93 adoptive home studies completed
- ◆ 465 children matched with families (51% of children photographed)



OUTCOMES BY COUNTY

The following table compares 2014 Review Board data for South Carolina's 46 counties for children reviewed, children entering/re-entering, children leaving care, and permanency. Permanency is defined as a child being returned to a parent or having a finalized adoption. For children who left care but did not achieve permanency, 31% (902) went to the custody of a relative and 10% (291) turned 18 or the reason they left care was not reported.

For children entering and leaving care, these numbers reflect all children reported to the FCRB by DSS. They include children who were reviewed and children that DSS reported leaving care prior to a review being held. All percentages are rounded to the highest whole number.

County	Reviews Held	Children Reviewed	# Entered FC	Previous Out-of-Home Placement	# Left FC	Permanency		Other Outcomes	
						% Returned to parent	% Adopted	% Relative Custody	% Other
State Total	5,914	3,630	3,219	27% (872)	2,914	46% (1,332)	13% (389)	31% (902)	10% (291)
Abbeville	34	19	14	21% (3)	17	65% (11)	6% (1)	18% (3)	11% (2)
Aiken	117	79	105	30% (32)	96	41% (39)	6% (6)	43% (41)	10% (10)
Allendale	12	6	8	25% (2)	10	20% (2)	0%	70% (7)	10% (1)
Anderson	316	198	120	42% (50)	103	32% (33)	38% (38)	13% (14)	17% (18)
Bamberg	8	6	12	8% (1)	11	18% (2)	0%	64% (7)	18% (2)
Barnwell	42	23	18	28% (5)	14	57% (8)	14% (2)	29% (4)	0%
Beaufort	53	30	33	27% (9)	38	55% (21)	16% (6)	26% (10)	3% (1)
Berkeley	137	92	95	21% (20)	101	67% (68)	8% (8)	18% (18)	7% (7)
Calhoun	15	9	4	0	11	82% (9)	9% (1)	0%	9% (1)
Charleston	574	364	268	20% (54)	251	33% (83)	16% (39)	38% (96)	13% (33)
Cherokee	133	82	60	32% (19)	79	37% (29)	16% (13)	37% (29)	10% (8)
Chester	37	22	9	0%	8	25% (2)	0%	63% (5)	12% (1)
Chesterfield	89	56	27	22% (6)	20	50% (10)	30% (6)	15% (3)	5% (1)
Clarendon	48	26	4	0%	12	42% (5)	33% (4)	17% (2)	8% (1)
Colleton	54	27	55	31% (17)	51	63% (32)	8% (4)	23% (12)	6% (3)
Darlington	143	95	66	24% (16)	74	46% (34)	9% (7)	37% (27)	8% (6)
Dillon	84	42	40	45% (18)	30	57% (17)	23% (7)	13% (4)	7% (2)
Dorchester	111	65	59	32% (19)	63	40% (25)	14% (9)	32% (20)	14% (9)
Edgefield	7	4	6	17% (1)	13	69% (9)	15.5% (2)	0%	15.5% (2)

OUTCOMES BY COUNTY

County	Reviews Held	Children Reviewed	# Entered FC	Previous Out-of-Home Placement	# Left FC	Permanency		Other Outcomes	
						% Returned to parent	% Adopted	% Relative Custody	% Other
State Total	5,914	3,630	3,219	27% (872)	2,914	46% (1,332)	13% (389)	31% (902)	10% (291)
Fairfield	27	15	1	0%	4	25% (1)	50% (2)	0%	25% (1)
Florence	100	66	58	26% (15)	66	36% (24)	20% (13)	32% (21)	12% (8)
Georgetown	35	21	22	14% (3)	18	33% (6)	17% (3)	44% (8)	6% (1)
Greenville	597	364	309	31% (95)	302	42% (127)	16% (49)	34% (103)	8% (23)
Greenwood	37	24	38	21% (8)	18	50% (9)	6% (1)	38% (7)	6% (1)
Hampton	11	6	1	100% (1)	5	20% (1)	0%	40% (2)	40% (2)
Horry	299	198	135	29% (39)	132	58% (77)	9% (12)	25% (33)	8% (10)
Jasper	39	21	10	0%	17	88% (15)	12% (2)	0%	0%
Kershaw	108	66	50	46% (23)	48	48% (23)	6% (3)	33% (16)	13% (6)
Lancaster	74	44	53	23% (12)	40	63% (25)	15% (6)	12% (5)	10% (4)
Laurens	208	116	71	21% (15)	59	39% (23)	17% (10)	36% (21)	8% (5)
Lee	13	8	7	43% (3)	4	0%	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)
Lexington	300	189	187	26% (49)	144	43% (62)	17% (24)	28% (41)	12% (17)
Marion	49	29	24	71% (17)	16	19% (3)	31% (5)	38% (6)	12% (2)
Marlboro	20	13	15	40% (6)	14	57% (8)	22% (3)	14% (2)	7% (1)
McCormick	3	3	2	0%	6	100% (6)	0%	0%	0%
Newberry	73	46	25	20% (5)	39	57% (22)	5% (2)	28% (11)	10% (4)
Oconee	166	101	71	24% (17)	47	28% (13)	15% (7)	47% (22)	10% (5)
Orangeburg	123	75	68	10% (7)	44	20% (9)	27% (12)	41% (18)	12% (5)
Pickens	322	197	120	41% (49)	138	46% (63)	15% (21)	28% (39)	11% (15)
Richland	494	276	409	19% (79)	352	55% (193)	3% (10)	30% (106)	12% (43)
Saluda	16	11	11	27% (3)	12	75% (9)	0%	17% (2)	8% (1)
Spartanburg	483	304	319	28% (90)	215	39% (84)	14% (29)	40% (87)	7% (15)
Sumter	57	42	48	48% (23)	21	38% (8)	14% (3)	24% (5)	24% (5)
Union	27	16	4	25% (1)	14	43% (6)	29% (4)	21% (3)	7% (1)
Williamsburg	24	15	14	21% (3)	10	10% (1)	10% (1)	60% (6)	20% (2)
York	195	119	144	26% (37)	127	59% (75)	11% (14)	26% (33)	4% (5)

BARRIERS BY COUNTY

The FCRB is statutorily mandated to report on deficiencies in the child-welfare system. One tool for measuring deficiencies is areas of concern. These are defined as non-compliance with law and/or agency policy and are identified during the review of a child's case.

The following table summarizes data collected during reviews held in calendar year 2014. The data compares areas of concern in individual counties. All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

County	Total Areas of Concern	Areas of Concern per Child	Case Plan Barriers	Agency Policy Violations	Legal Barriers	Hearings Not Held	Hearings Not Held Timely	Adoption Service Delays
State Total	7,371	2.03	32% (2,362)	31% (2,265)	23% (1,707)	3% (198)	5% (356)	6% (483)
Abbeville	48	2.53	56% (27)	6% (3)	25% (12)	0%	0%	13% (6)
Aiken	141	1.78	37% (52)	41% (57)	14% (20)	0%	2% (3)	6% (9)
Allendale	7	1.17	71% (5)	0%	29% (2)	0%	0%	0%
Anderson	231	1.17	37% (86)	36% (82)	16% (37)	2% (5)	6% (15)	3% (6)
Bamberg	7	1.17	71% (5)	0%	0%	0%	0%	29% (2)
Barnwell	13	.57	62% (8)	15% (2)	15% (2)	0%	0%	8% (1)
Beaufort	59	1.97	34% (20)	22% (13)	15% (9)	0%	0%	29% (17)
Berkeley	172	1.87	44% (76)	11% (19)	25% (43)	6% (10)	7% (12)	7% (12)
Calhoun	22	2.44	32% (7)	9% (2)	41% (9)	0%	18% (4)	0%
Charleston	870	2.39	33% (291)	17% (144)	26% (223)	5% (43)	8% (73)	11% (96)
Cherokee	102	1.24	47% (48)	10% (10)	37% (38)	0%	3% (3)	3% (3)
Chester	31	1.41	26% (8)	23% (7)	45% (14)	6% (2)	0%	0%
Chesterfield	37	.66	41% (15)	24% (9)	24% (9)	0%	11% (4)	0%
Clarendon	20	.77	55% (11)	0%	45% (9)	0%	0%	0%
Colleton	77	2.85	26% (20)	39% (30)	13% (10)	2% (2)	8% (6)	12% (9)
Darlington	56	.59	12% (7)	14% (8)	54% (30)	11% (6)	9% (5)	0%
Dillon	73	1.74	21% (15)	38% (28)	36% (26)	0%	5% (4)	0%
Dorchester	135	2.08	48% (65)	12% (16)	26% (34)	4% (6)	2% (3)	8% (11)
Edgefield	5	1.25	60% (3)	20% (1)	0%	0%	20% (1)	0%

BARRIERS BY COUNTY

County	Total Areas of Concern	Areas of Concern per Child	Case Plan Barriers	Agency Policy Violations	Legal Barriers	Hearings Not Held	Hearings Not Held Timely	Adoption Service Delays
State Total	7,371	2.03	32% (2,362)	31% (2,265)	23% (1,707)	3% (198)	5% (356)	6% (483)
Fairfield	18	1.20	28% (5)	22% (4)	44% (8)	0%	6% (1)	0%
Florence	70	1.06	46% (32)	24% (17)	29% (20)	1% (1)	0%	0%
Georgetown	40	1.90	28% (11)	30% (12)	15% (6)	0%	15% (6)	12% (5)
Greenville	377	1.04	32% (119)	36% (137)	21% (80)	1% (4)	8% (29)	2% (8)
Greenwood	59	2.46	20% (12)	34% (20)	24% (14)	0%	3% (2)	19% (11)
Hampton	19	3.17	26% (5)	5% (1)	58% (11)	11% (2)	0%	0%
Horry	301	1.52	34% (103)	37% (112)	13% (37)	4% (12)	6% (18)	6% (19)
Jasper	69	3.29	25% (17)	28% (19)	17% (12)	2% (2)	0%	28% (19)
Kershaw	210	3.18	36% (77)	30% (62)	17% (35)	6% (13)	1% (3)	10% (20)
Lancaster	24	.55	29% (7)	25% (6)	42% (10)	4% (1)	0%	0%
Laurens	388	3.34	39% (151)	26% (100)	19% (73)	3% (11)	4% (16)	9% (37)
Lee	17	2.13	53% (9)	12% (2)	23% (4)	0%	0%	12% (2)
Lexington	600	3.17	26.33% (158)	39% (232)	25.33% (152)	3% (20)	4.33% (26)	2% (12)
Marion	41	1.41	22% (9)	22% (9)	37% (15)	0%	19% (8)	0%
Marlboro	8	.62	50% (4)	38% (3)	12% (1)	0%	0%	0%
McCormick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newberry	153	3.33	50% (76)	29% (45)	5% (8)	0%	0%	16% (24)
Oconee	62	.61	47% (29)	24% (15)	16% (10)	6% (4)	5% (3)	2% (1)
Orangeburg	43	.57	21% (9)	0%	28% (12)	23% (10)	28% (12)	0%
Pickens	560	2.84	27% (151)	24% (132)	30% (167)	3% (16)	7% (40)	9% (54)
Richland	1,345	4.87	27% (372)	46% (616)	19% (255)	1% (15)	1% (7)	6% (80)
Saluda	22	2.00	55% (12)	9% (2)	14% (3)	9% (2)	9% (2)	4% (1)
Spartanburg	623	2.05	24% (153)	40% (250)	29% (178)	1% (4)	4% (28)	2% (10)
Sumter	20	.48	30% (6)	25% (5)	0%	10% (2)	30% (6)	5% (1)
Union	18	1.13	11% (2)	6% (1)	44% (8)	0%	22% (4)	17% (3)
Williamsburg	15	1.00	40% (6)	60% (9)	0%	0%	0%	0%
York	163	1.37	36% (58)	14% (23)	37% (61)	3% (5)	7% (12)	3% (4)

AWARDS

The State Board of Directors selects a Review Board and Review Board Member of the Year. Community partners, staff, and Review Board members nominate boards and individual review board members. The Professional Development and Awards Committee of the State Board reviews all nominations and makes recommendations to the State Board.

Local Review Board 2B: Aiken and Bamberg Counties, was selected as the 2014 Review Board of the Year. Review Board 2B Members are **Ronda Bamberg, Cathy Griffin, Mary Kolarek, Steve McElmurray, and Phyllis Yerace.**

Together this board has worked hard to improve many aspects of the child-welfare system. To address the needs of children in care, the board has supported adoption-recruitment efforts including the Heart Gallery and DSS Region II Adoptions. Cathy Griffin provided snacks for and volunteered at the August 2014 Heart Gallery photo shoot at Edisto Gardens. Mary Kolarek and Phyllis Yerace attended the August 2014 Region II Adoption Expo during which they facilitated games and activities between children and prospective adoptive families. Additionally, the board recognizes that the overall well-being of children in care includes opportunities to have new experiences. As a result, the board worked with a local community theater to secure twenty tickets for teens to attend the musical *9-5*. At the end of the year, the 2B board members also provided holiday gifts to help ensure that every child received a Christmas gift.

The board also recognizes that many others work on behalf of the children in foster care. Consequently, the board makes it a priority to provide pizza gift cards to the case managers quarterly. To engage other partners, Mary Kolarek attended the USCA's Teacher Institute to present information about FCRB and the role teachers play in the child-welfare system. Additionally, at a GAL In-Service training day, board members shared information with the Aiken GAL Program about the role of FCRB. Throughout the year the board has worked to keep the Aiken County legislative delegation aware of the needs of children in foster care. Senator Tom Young attended a review in August; the board also met with him to discuss concerns and trends. As their nomination notes: "They are a strong, cohesive, and bonded board who works to bring out the best in each other and actively take part in working to create a better future for children in foster care."

Review Board 2B Review Board of the Year



Left to right: Phyllis Yerace, Mary Kolarek, Cathy Griffin, Ronda Bamberg, and Steve McElmurray

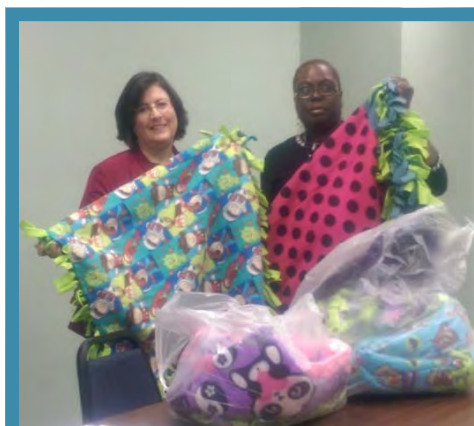
AWARDS

Ann Maletic of Review Board 5B: Richland County, is the 2014 Review Board Member of the Year. While attending a review, it came to Ann's attention that there were not always sufficient car seats available to case managers. Looking to improve this situation, Ann undertook the challenge of obtaining new car seats for Richland County DSS state vehicles. After much work, in November 2014 Ann was able to get the South Carolina Automobile Dealers Association to sponsor 20 car seats and 12 booster seats for Richland County. A special sticker acknowledging the donation was affixed to each car seat prior to installation in the vehicles.



Left to right: Review Board Coordinator Doretta Crosson-Irby, 5B Review Board Members Ann Maletic, Cheryl Anderson, and Millercin Weeks

**Ann Maletic
Review Board
Member of the
Year**



Left to right: Ann Maletic and Richland County DSS Resource Staff

Ann also saw the need for young children to have a comfort to hold onto during the first scary days of being in care. Wanting to help ease that pain, Ann handmade and presented to Richland DSS seven baby/children's blankets to comfort and cuddle the babies. She also donated book bags and school supplies to help

ensure each child was prepared for a successful academic year.

As an adoptive parent and former foster parent, Ann understands the importance of a forever family and has supported the Heart Gallery by providing snacks and volunteering at photo shoots.



Left to right: State Board Chairperson Jo Hecker and Ann Maletic

PEOPLE POWER

15,899 Volunteer Hours

The total number of volunteer hours, 15,899, contributed by nearly 200 volunteers statewide was valued at \$340,681 to the state of South Carolina. The hours spent reviewing cases and providing additional services to board members' individual communities is highly appreciated by the FCRB Staff and State Board of Directors.

FCRB volunteers are objective, independent reviewers of children in foster care. Local review boards held **418** meetings and spent **9,221** hours reviewing cases for **3,630** children in foster care. The review boards issued Advisory Recommendations to DSS and the Family Court for permanent case plans for each child reviewed and identified non-compliance with agency policy or statute in each case. Review board members also generously donated an additional **6,678** hours supporting and strengthening services to expedite safe, permanent families for children. Local review boards contributed the following in 2014:

- **21** review boards completed service projects to support programs and events for children in foster care and those who serve them.
- **25** review boards sponsored Heart Gallery exhibits, or donated refreshments and assisted at photo shoots where children who are legally free for adoption had professional photographs taken for adoptive recruitment.
- **24** review boards participated in quarterly meetings with child welfare partners to discuss trends and issues impacting children in foster care.
- **12** review boards provided quarterly reports to legislators on local review board activities and trends impacting children in foster care.
- **4** review boards presented the Foster Care Review Board's Annual Report to their legislative delegations to inform legislators of trends in the foster care system.





WHO WE ARE

STATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2nd Congressional District, Richland County
1st Congressional District, Berkeley County
3rd Congressional District, Greenville County
4th Congressional District, Spartanburg County
5th Congressional District, Cherokee County
6th Congressional District, Richland County
7th Congressional District

Jo Hecker, Chairperson
Charles (Chuck) Koches
Dan Bracken
Monica Hill
Martha (Sissy) Brock
Andrea McCoy
Vacant

STATE OFFICE STAFF

Director/General Counsel

Michelle Dhunjishah

Program Director

Kate Bozik

Program Supervisor

Stephanie Spink

Review Board Coordinators

Tiffany Brand

Danielle Calabro

Jessica Cliett

Doretta Crosson-Irby

Lauren Ford

Tashima Martin

Angel Sbardella

Nina Spinelli

Heart Gallery Coordinator

Millie Qualls

Heart Gallery Program Information Coordinator

Morgan Taylor

Heart Gallery Recruitment Specialists

Amanda Blackmon

Hayley Salley

Staff Attorney

Lindsey McCallister

Data and Research Administrator

Lisa Vosburgh

Business Manager

Jeanette Davis

Administrative Assistants

Corlette Minor

Heather Valentine

FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD

Advocating Permanent Families for Children



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Phone: 803.734.0480

Fax: 803.734.1223

Website: <http://fcrb.sc.gov>

Advocating
permanent families for children

VISION

South Carolina will make child well-being a top priority by assuring safe, permanent families for all children in foster care.

MISSION

The mission of the South Carolina Foster Care Review Board is to provide external accountability for the foster care system and to advocate on behalf of children in foster care.