



# 2025 Annual Report

*strengthening  
our impact*



We bring people together  
to end poverty for good.

Abraham, age 8  
**ZAMBIA**

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## about Children International

We empower youth in Colombia, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, India, Guatemala, Mexico, the Philippines, Zambia and the United States to forge a path out of poverty through access to health care, educational support, positive role models, and the life and job skills they need to become sustainably employed. When equipped to improve their own lives, young people also transform their families and communities, for generations to come.

For more information, visit [children.org](https://children.org).



Nieva family  
**PHILIPPINES**



## A message from our President

### Dear friends,

Children International strengthened our impact and made steady progress in 2025. Across our global communities, we saw children gain confidence, families find stability, and young people step into their potential with determination and hope. These moments were the result of intentional work, strong partnerships and a shared vision that every child deserves the opportunity to build a brighter future.

I invite you to explore our 2025 Annual Report, featuring highlights of how we invest in children, stories from our child and youth development programs, and examples of strategic partnerships, donor impact and our commitment in action. It also shares our financials, leadership team and how to stay connected with us.

As we celebrate Children International's 90th Anniversary in 2026, this report also offers a special look at this milestone. I'm proud of our legacy and the momentum carrying us forward as we continue to change lives and positively impact communities. It's all possible thanks to our supporters, like you.

Our supporters showed up with generosity and heart – reminding young people that they are seen, valued and capable. That kind of belief and tangible support can change everything. In fact, your commitment has enabled 218,271 children and youth to participate in our programs and forge a path out of poverty.

As we look ahead, we do so with great optimism and resolve. Our decades of greatest impact are in front of us. Thank you for your trust, partnership and your unwavering belief in what children can achieve.

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susana".

**Susana Eshleman**  
President & CEO  
Children International

## HOW YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE IN 2025

# 218,271

children and youth participated in our programs

# 21,904

children were notified they could join our sponsorship program

# 1.9 million

children, families and their communities benefited from health access programs

# 3.2 million

children, families and their communities received \$25 million of donated products



Julieann Whittaker with Daniel, the child she sponsors in Guatemala.



## The power of sponsoring a child

**J**ulieann Whittaker's journey as a dedicated sponsor with Children International began as a chance encounter during the holiday season.

While shopping at a mall, Julieann and her daughter stopped at a Children International pop-up booth, where a team member shared information about our child sponsorship program. What started as a simple conversation quickly became a life-changing decision.

"I wanted to help someone internationally who needed it most," Julieann recalls.

During the past decade, she has sponsored two children and seen the impact of consistent support. The first youth Julieann sponsored is now pursuing medical school. This achievement reinforced her belief in what's possible when children are given a chance.

Today, her sponsorship continues with a child in Guatemala named Daniel. They wrote letters back-and-forth for years before Julieann had the opportunity to visit Guatemala and meet him and his family in 2024.

"It was incredible to step into Daniel's world," Julieann says. "At first, he was shy and reserved. Then, as we spent time together, he opened up – smiling, engaging and asking when I would return. I'll never forget it. Our bond now is unbreakable, and the experience has shown me how much joy there is in giving. It has enriched my own life beyond what I expected."

“I wanted to help someone internationally who needed it most.”

– JULIEANN WHITTAKER  
sponsor

## How do we help children succeed?



Andrea (front row, yellow shirt) with her mom (blue shirt), GUATEMALA

### EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Our trained staff and volunteers bring caregivers and children, ages 2 to 5, together for play-based learning to build early cognitive and social skills.

**Andrea** (age 4) blossomed through this support – becoming more communicative, expressive and eager to engage with other kids. Just like so many in our early childhood programs, her emotional well-being improved. Andrea’s progress shows how early investment gives children a strong foundation to start school.



Adrian and his mother, Christine, PHILIPPINES

### EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

**Adrian** (age 7) could not read, write or do basic math until our educational support helped him catch up and become the most improved student in his class. He discovered a love for reading and writing, now enjoys second grade, and has grown from a shy child into a confident one. Today, he is thriving both academically and socially – and dreaming bigger than ever.



Romance leading a radio broadcast, ZAMBIA

### LIFE SKILLS ACTIVITIES

We provide fun activities to help youth develop such skills as teamwork, problem-solving, emotional regulation and leadership to help prepare them for success in the workforce. For example, last March on International Children’s Day of Broadcasting, 30 of our youth led radio forums on children’s rights, poetry, drama, financial literacy and more.

“Talking on radio made me feel brave. I never thought people would listen to my ideas.”

– Romance

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

As youth grow older, we help them use their skills to engage in their communities and advocate for positive change. For example, youth work with local leaders to identify service gaps, raise concerns and make improvements in health clinics.

- In Zambia, **Chuchu** led peers in securing a dedicated youth space at a local hospital – now offering reproductive health education, HIV testing, counseling, a resource library and staff support. Monthly visits increased from 20 to 120 youth.
- In the Dominican Republic, **Milena** helped implement a “community scorecard” process that brings health workers and community members together to make improvements – from strengthening patient care to clinic conditions.

## From learning to earning: our graduates thrive

**B**randon joined Children International when he was 4 years old. We helped him access essential medication for a health issue and enrolled him in programming that equipped him with a positive foundation.

As he grew up, he continued developing through our programs – gaining access to educational resources and experiencing opportunities that helped shape his path. His biggest turning point came when he enrolled in Into Employment®, our signature workforce development program. It’s designed to help young people with the skills and training they need to secure steady jobs.

Into Employment paired Brandon with mentors who helped him see his strengths and taught him resilience. Through the program’s life skills training, sales workshops and exposure to real business environments, Brandon discovered something special – he was an entrepreneur at heart. He gained knowledge and experience that helped him build something of his own when an opportunity surfaced unexpectedly.

His mother had recently lost her job, and he was looking for ways to help support the family. So when their local pet-product supplier closed, he recognized a gap in the market for natural, chemical-free pet snacks and seized his chance to start a business. He bought a dehydrator and began experimenting. The first machine broke. Others doubted the idea. But Brandon was resilient and kept going.

Today his company, **Yammi Dog**, is a thriving national brand in Ecuador with more than 70 points of sale in 15 cities, including the Galápagos. The company employs seven people, operates a physical store and a mall kiosk, and serves more than 2,500 customers.

Congratulations to Brandon and all our Into Employment graduates!



Brandon with products from his company, Yammi Dog, ECUADOR

“Children International helped me find who I am. They opened a world of opportunities – and I held on and found success.”

– BRANDON

Into Employment graduate

### INTO EMPLOYMENT — 2025 AT A GLANCE

10,377 participants

93% completion

65% of participants are female

AS HIGH AS\* 89% found employment within 6 months

\* Employment rates differ by agency

## Expanding health care access with MAP International

Children International deepened its partnership with global health organization, MAP International (Medicine for All People) in 2025. Together, we delivered nearly \$8 million worth of essential medicines and supplies to underserved communities in the Philippines and Zambia.

Through 15 shipments across the year, Children International ensured MAP's donated products reached hospitals and clinics serving children and families with the greatest need. Some of those products included surgical supplies, antibiotics, IV kits, bandages, vitamins, antihistamines, blood pressure monitors, hygiene kits, personal protective equipment (gowns, gloves and masks) and more.

"Our partnership with Children International is rooted in trust and a shared vision that everyone deserves health care," says Chris Palombo, President and CEO of MAP International. "We have three types of networks – manufacturers and distributors, philanthropic investors, and partners we trust. Children International is a consistent and reliable partner, understands the regions we serve, and has strong operational coordination, which is not an easy task when you're distributing a massive amount of medical supplies. Together, we run a quality program and get care to those who need it most."

### PHILIPPINES: IMPROVING CANCER CARE

MAP's donations supported children and families affected by cancer and blood disorders through the Cancer Treatment and Support Foundation in the Philippines. In 2025, this collaboration provided 1,176 children with access to lifesaving medical care, such as surgery and chemotherapy treatments.

This care made a profound difference for families, giving children strength, stability and, in many cases, the chance to survive. Beyond pediatric care, we helped 1,375 adult cancer patients through essential medical and hygiene supplies.



Medical supply donations from MAP International are helping expand access to quality care for children and families across Zambia.

### ZAMBIA: REACHING RURAL COMMUNITIES

This past year marked a major expansion of collaborative impact in Zambia. Children International coordinated with the Ministry of Health, Zambia Flying Doctor Service and Churches Health Association of Zambia to deliver MAP donations to hard-to-reach rural communities.

At Ng'anga Bilonda Hospital in Mwanabombwe District, these supplies:

- Enabled more than 200 patients to receive improved surgical care within three months
- Reduced referrals to distant hospitals by 32%
- Improved safety and efficiency of both emergency and routine procedures

"By working together, we are getting critical health resources to children and families who otherwise might not be able to access care, including those in remote communities," says Christina Becherer, Senior Global Director of Strategic Partnerships at Children International. "Families living in rural areas often face the greatest barriers to care, including long travel distances, limited medical staff and shortages of basic supplies. This partnership helps ensure they're not left behind."

## Partnering with Abbott to tackle pediatric malnutrition

In 2025, Children International joined forces with Abbott, a global health care company, and local health leaders in Colombia to better understand how families experience child nutrition screening. It's a crucial first step in identifying and preventing malnutrition and associated risks, such as stunting (when kids are short for their age). This community needs assessment followed 204 children from ages 1 to 5, a period of growth when proper nutrition can shape a child's lifelong health and development.

Since Children International has long-standing relationships in these neighborhoods, families and community health workers were eager to share their perspectives. Some of the children in the six-month study were already enrolled in our program, while others lived in the communities we serve – giving us a broader picture of how to meet local needs.

Through seven focus groups with caregivers, community health workers, public health professionals and our Children International Colombia staff, participants in the assessment shared what helps – and what hinders – effective nutritional screenings. The outcomes?

- **Findings:** Nearly two-thirds of children participating in the assessment were experiencing malnutrition or its risk.
- **Challenges:** We discovered limited training, outdated equipment, neighborhood safety concerns and gaps in coordination across health care institutions.
- **Strengths:** When screenings were paired with support (such as counseling, rapid health care referrals and food vouchers) along with collaboration between organizations, families felt more confident, informed and connected to the care their children need for healthy growth.
- **Bottom line:** Combining accurate measurements (such as height, weight and mid-upper arm circumference) with culturally sensitive conversations about nutrition makes families more likely to understand results and follow through on care.

These insights are now guiding efforts to design a nutrition-focused quality improvement program that engages the community. This multi-faceted program will include screening, education, supplementation and routine follow-up for children at risk of, or experiencing, stunting. The goal is to strengthen screening practices, improve follow-up and support families with the tools and knowledge they need to help their children grow and thrive.

By listening first, and grounding solutions in community voices, Children International and Abbott are helping build a stronger, sustainable path to healthy child development in Colombia – and beyond.



### Why does this work matter?

Improving child nutrition requires more than measurements. It requires cross-sector partnerships. This work supports UNICEF's Sustainability Development Goals featured at right and brings together health care innovation, nonprofit experience and community insights. This trifecta of expertise is critical to understanding the full picture of malnutrition and building long-term solutions rooted in community trust.



# Children International turns 90

In honor of our 90th Anniversary in 2026, we are taking a look back at the milestones that shaped our organization. Along our journey, we have evolved to support children, youth and families when and where they need it most.

We will be redefining our programming to enable an even larger number of children to break the cycle of poverty. By bringing new programming closer to where children and youth live, trained community members will guide similar-age peer groups through a transformative curriculum to set them on the path to success and independence.

Stay tuned for more to come!



## 1936 ▲

Dr. Ralph Baney, a minister and archaeology enthusiast, founded the organization (then named Holy Land Christian Mission) after encountering children in need during an archaeological dig near Bethlehem. Early efforts included delivering food baskets and opening a small clinic to treat minor illnesses.



## 1940s ▲

During this decade, we expanded to include an orphanage and clothing donations for children in the program.

## 1952

After a polio outbreak in the West Bank, we expanded our medical services to include orthopedic and therapeutic surgeries.

## 1964

We moved into our U.S. headquarters on Red Bridge Road in Kansas City, where we remain today.



## 1970s ▲

Our medical clinic became a full-service hospital, providing free services for children with polio, club foot and other bone disorders. The hospital remained open until 1996.

## 1974 ▶

Joseph Gripkey was appointed executive director. Under his leadership, we experienced incredible growth and expansion, along with a gradual shift to secular programming.

## 1980s

We launched our child sponsorship program with our first agency in San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala. By the end of that first year, 2,300 children were receiving help.

In less than a decade, we were helping 134,000 children and youth each year as we opened agencies around the globe in India, Colombia, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador.

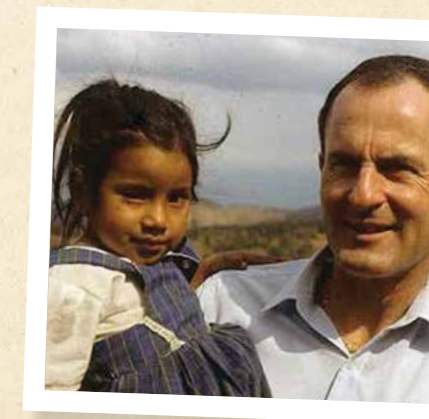


## 1989

We became Children International to emphasize our primary focus on helping children and youth break the cycle of generational poverty, choosing child sponsorship as our main vehicle for impact.

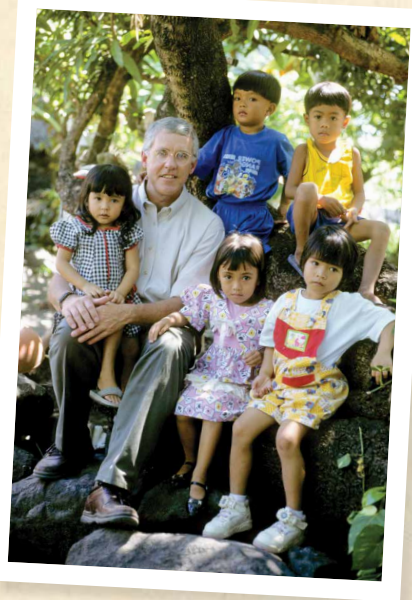
## 1991

We expanded yet again and built our first community center in Asentamientos Humanos, Honduras. Our goal was to create a multipurpose space that could help larger numbers of children and provide a wider variety of services.



## 1994

We teamed up with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to help kids in the United States.



## ◀ 1996

Jim Cook was named leader of Children International upon Joseph Gripkey's retirement. Cook served as the guiding force for developing the youth and job training programs that are now at the core of our solutions to help children and youth forge a path out of poverty.

## 1999

The number of children we served grew and now included 60,000 youth ages 14-19. We realized during this era that older youth needed additional support with their emotional and physical well-being. With this in mind, we launched our first youth program, which included training on life skills, reproductive health, vocational opportunities and career counseling.

## 2004

A longtime dream became reality as we expanded our services to Africa and began operations in Lusaka, Zambia.



## 2005 ▲

We launched operations in Jalisco, Mexico, impacting the lives of approximately 20,000 children and youth each year.

## 2006

We launched a building campaign to improve our community centers and kicked off the effort with the Betty Lou Dahl Center in Quezon City, Philippines — eventually expanding to more than 70 community centers at the height of this programming model.

## 2007 ▼

We enrolled our 1,000,000th child in our sponsorship program.



## Into Children International Employment Hacia Children International el Empleo

## 2009 ▲

We launched Into Employment®, our signature workforce development program, which equips young people with life skills and job training to help them secure initial jobs that pay sustainable wages. The program was established first in the Philippines and Honduras and has expanded to nine countries.



## 2014 ▲

Susana Eshleman became President & CEO upon Jim Cook's retirement. Susana served on Children International's board for 10 years before being tapped to lead the organization.

## 2016

We debuted a new brand and program strategy, laser-focused on one goal: For every child who graduates from our program to move on healthy, educated, employed and empowered to break the cycle of poverty.

## 2020

During this era of the global COVID pandemic, our staff worldwide found innovative ways to keep in touch with the children and families and quickly pivoted to provide digital programming. Many of the innovations from this period are still in use in our field agencies.

## 2021 ▼

*Fast Company* magazine recognized Children International in its "World Changing Ideas" issue for our collaborative efforts to develop the MUAC z-score tape in partnership with four other companies. This product is an inexpensive, effective and life-saving tool (resembling a tape measure) that signals the risk of malnutrition in children.



## 2025

We shifted our U.S. work, based in Arkansas, to our Common Good® program that focuses on younger school-aged children. Partnering with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, we support a social and emotional well-being curriculum in schools in underserved neighborhoods.



## A family's legacy of giving

Their motto: education + opportunity = empowerment

**E**d and Sue Zinni partner with Children International to help youth access the opportunities they deserve. They transform lives based on a belief articulated by Sue: "Education doesn't make someone better; it gives them opportunities."

Empowering children through education is a calling shaped by her own family's story. Sue's mother grew up in poverty, in a home without running water or heat, until a teacher stepped in and changed the trajectory of her life. That single act of compassion opened doors to college, a career as a teacher and a future that once seemed impossible. Today, the Zinnis are committed to passing that same opportunity on to youth around the world through Children International.

### MAKING AN IMPACT

The Zinni family's partnership with Children International started more than a decade ago. They began by sponsoring two sets of siblings in Guatemala – Jonathan and Justin, and Kelli and Jostin. This positive experience led

them to broaden their reach by building three community centers for kids to gather and learn in Ecuador, Honduras and Guatemala.

Later they also supported a talented, young woman named Irma as she pursued an engineering degree. The family loved her sharp mind and determination, and celebrated every milestone Irma achieved, including graduation. This inspired the family to support more youth and expand their giving in 2025, committing over two years to fund:

- Hundreds of Into Employment® scholarships in Ecuador and Colombia
- A new staff role (employability partnership specialist) in each Children International agency around the world to help youth obtain their first job

Their generosity extends beyond the classroom and job training. The Zinnis believe children thrive when their families are supported as well. For example, they also help provide basics for the families they support, such as meals, clothing and shoes.

### BRINGING THE MISSION TO LIFE

A trust in Children International's "boots on the ground," as Sue calls the staff, guides their giving. When the Zinnis discovered that a family needed a new floor, they imagined tile or wood. Instead, they learned the family's home had only dirt. "It put life in perspective," she says. Moments like this deepen their conviction that our work is both urgent and deeply human.

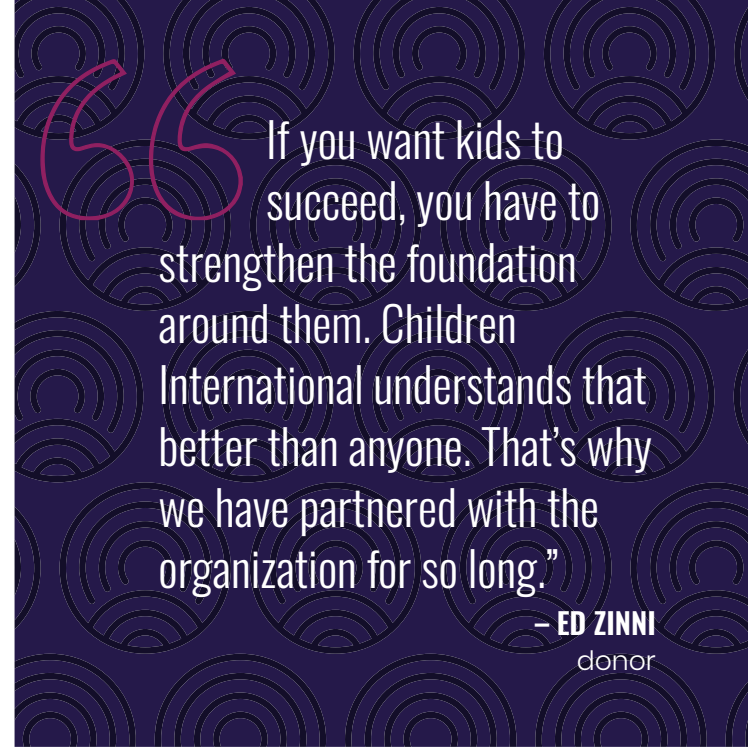
A visit to Guatemala brought that humanity into focus. Sue recalled taking the families of the children they sponsor to a mall – a place the kids had never seen. They rode escalators for the first time, ate at the food court, and took the mothers to a grocery store connected to the mall. First, Sue encouraged the mothers to fill a cart with everything they needed. Then, after, she asked them to fill a second cart with things they wanted, including sweets, cookies and a child's first new toy. One mother added feminine hygiene products to the "want" cart, and Sue subtly moved it to the "need" cart. By the end, everyone was crying – overwhelmed by gratitude and the joy of being seen.

"I'll never forget it," Sue says. "To see what these families are up against was truly humbling. They are so strong. This experience showed us why this work matters so deeply."

### MOVING FORWARD

What inspires the Zinnis most is watching families persist, despite hardships and generations of poverty. They have seen parents envision a better life for their children and trust that they have the support to achieve it, thanks to Children International.

Sue and Ed are passing their spirit of giving on to their two adult sons, who will join them on a future trip to Guatemala to witness the impact firsthand. For the Zinni family, philanthropy isn't just about giving back. It's about honoring the opportunities that changed their own family's story, and helping thousands of children write new stories to forge their path out of poverty.

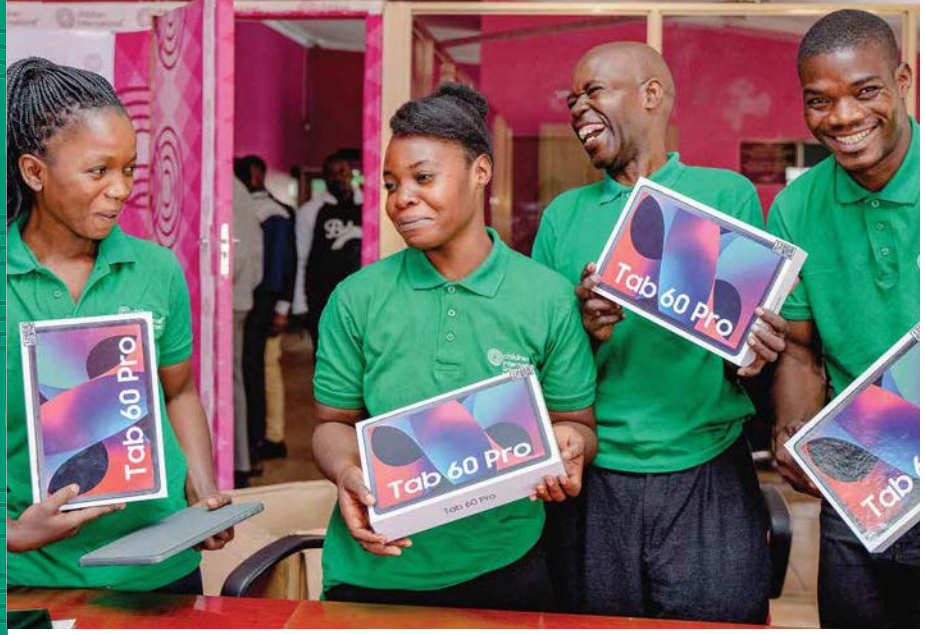


The Zinnis meet their sponsored children in Guatemala.



Ed and Sue Zinni with their sons and daughter-in-law at a recent event held in the couple's honor to celebrate their local philanthropic work.

Product donations  
ZAMBIA



Life skills activities  
PHILIPPINES



Family Gift assistance  
MEXICO



Common Good® program  
UNITED STATES



Early childhood education  
HONDURAS



Digital learning  
ECUADOR



Civic engagement  
INDIA



Into Employment® training  
COLOMBIA



# Facts and financials

## CONDENSED AUDITED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Independent auditor: BKD LLP | For year ended December 31, 2025

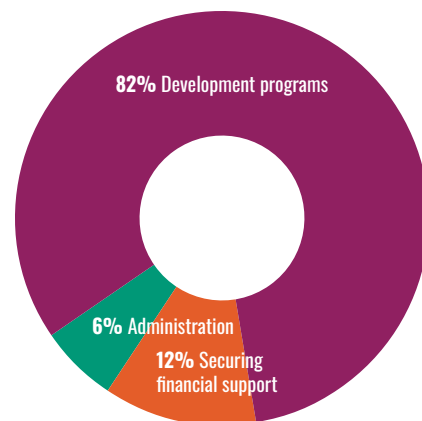
<b>PUBLIC SUPPORT &amp; REVENUE</b>	
Sponsorships and contributions	\$89,514,818
Product donations	\$41,016,060
Legacies and bequests	\$1,606,904
Other income, net	\$5,038,071
<b>Total public support and revenue</b>	<b>\$137,175,853</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Worldwide program services	\$112,811,895
<b>SUPPORTING SERVICES</b>	
Management and general	\$7,815,824
Securing financial support	\$16,854,273
Total supporting services	\$24,670,097
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$137,481,992</b>
Net assets, beginning of the year	\$140,283,475
Public support and revenue under expenses	\$(306,139)
Nonoperating activities	\$7,365,058
<b>Net assets, end of the year</b>	<b>\$147,342,394</b>

To access our full audited financial statements, visit [children.org/accountability](https://children.org/accountability).

# 82%

## OF CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL'S TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES

support programs for children and youth. So when you make a monthly gift or donation to our organization, the majority of your dollars go toward exactly what you intended – supporting children in poverty.



**CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL RANKS HIGHLY AMONG TRUSTED NONPROFIT RATING EVALUATORS:**



# Leadership

## GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Susana Eshleman**  
CEO & President



**Bill Brewster**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Maria Fernanda Corral**  
VP, Global Talent Growth



**Doug Bassett**  
VP, Global Programs and Operations



**Laura Thornton**  
VP, Global Philanthropy and Marketing



**Chris Hoyt**  
VP, Enterprise Transformation



**Tim Bacht**  
VP, Information Technology

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CEO of Lazer Logistics

**Marvin Irby**, Treasurer  
Retired, CFO & CPO of National Restaurant Association

**Steve Berger**  
Chief HR Officer at C.H. Guenther & Son

**Dave Cacioppo**  
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**Brad Cloverdyke**  
Retired, Former VP of HR at American Century Investments

**Andy Erpelding**  
Founder of FLO Growth Partners

**Susana Eshleman**  
President & CEO of Children International

**Suzanne Jimenez**  
National Director of Innovation & Insights at HMM

**PaShon Mann**  
Head of Belonging & Talent Brand at NetApp

**Roland Paanakker**  
Principal of Paanakker & Co.

**Ena Williams Koschel**  
COO of Casey's

## GLOBAL AGENCY DIRECTORS



**Hermelinda Guarin**  
Colombia



**Sofia Betances**  
Dominican Republic



**Lissy Vélez**  
Guayaquil, Ecuador



**Maria Augusta Proaño**  
Quito, Ecuador



**Paola Higueros**  
Guatemala



**Mauricio Moncada**  
Honduras



**Kirti Mishra**  
India



**Alfredo Maldonado**  
Mexico



**Marilou P. Detecio**  
Bicol, Philippines



**Karl Henessy Rafa**  
Manila, Philippines



**Doras Chirwa**  
Zambia



## Your support changes lives

Thank you for standing with children, families and communities around the world. Your support fuels opportunity, confidence and hope – helping young people build the skills they need to break the cycle of poverty. Every act of kindness matters, such as sponsoring a child, donating to our mission or following our journey on social media. We are grateful for your partnership and the brighter futures you make possible every day.

**Explore more ways to make an impact:**  
[children.org/give](https://children.org/give)

**Help us celebrate our 90th Anniversary:**  
[children.org/90](https://children.org/90)



Scan (or click) this QR code to subscribe to our eNewsletter to receive more inspiring updates from Children International!

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