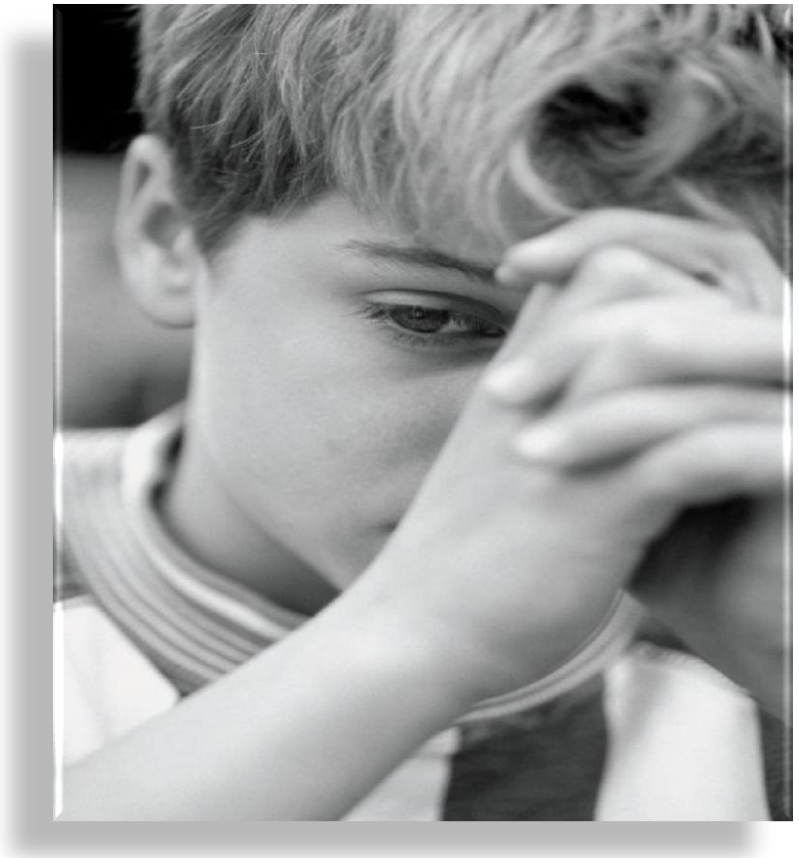
Safe Families *for* Children

The Crisis is real for every child!

- In 2013 over 3 million allegations of child abuse and neglect were reported in the US alone, affecting over 6 million children.
- In 2014 children in Foster care increased in the US by 14,000 to over 415,000
- In Virginia nearly 52,000 allegations of abuse and neglect were reported.
- 6,200 were actually substantiated and acted upon.
- Nearly 46,000 families in crisis still need help
- 75% will get a second hotline call

90% of families in crisis don't get the help they need….

Until it is too late!



Rachel's Story

CMA CGM

LOVE

The Limiting Challenges of Foster Care!

Limited resources, overwhelmed caseloads and a struggle to get positive outcomes.

The highest percent to age out of Foster care 25%

- 40% will be homeless
- 50% will struggle with drugs and unemployment
- 50% will not receive their high school diploma
- 60% of males will be convicted of a crime
- 75% of woman will have early pregnancies
- 50% will depend on some form of public assistance

Research has found that children in foster care, regardless of the length of time in care, are twice as likely to be absent from school, twice as likely to be suspended, three times as likely to be expelled, and up to 3.5 times as likely to be receiving special education services. The average 17 to 18 year old in foster care reads at just a seventh grade level. Many of these children continue to be challenged by developmental, behavioral and mental difficulties.

In light of these outcomes, we must be committed to keeping children out of a system that further corrodes and limits their successful development. Safe Families is that solution in many states.

A Movement of Hope for Families in Crisis

- Founded in Chicago in 2002, Safe Families for Children is a multi-site volunteer movement that gives hope and support to families in distress. We continue to research and set the highest standards in child welfare and how families are supported during a crisis. This is a model that is being duplicated throughout the country.
- Since 2002 over 20,000 children have been hosted by volunteers in over 27 different states…and we are growing throughout the world.
- In 2014 alone over 5000 children were hosted in Safe Family homes throughout the U.S.
- And, all at NO COST to local or state governments!

Why is this working in 27 other states?

#1 Prevention

Prevention can be much more effective and sustainable than intervention

- The primary role of Child Protective Services is to intervene when a parent or care giver has crossed the line of abuse or neglect. This often allows the crisis to escalate beyond control. Agencies are now responding to a problem that may have been avoided by prevention.
- Research shows that child abuse can be prevented, it is the by-product of other factors such as stress, mental health, domestic violence, job loss, dysfunctional living, poor parenting skills, etc.
- Early intervention in the lives of families is the key to preventing a future crisis.
- Safe Families is able to reach at-risk families earlier, and often more effectively, than other agencies because of their approach to get ahead of the crisis and defuse it before the potential escalation.

Why is this working in 27 other states?

#2 Volunteers

Studies show Volunteerism
is on the rise

- The Safe Family Model was built on the belief that volunteers can be a powerful source of good in our communities.
- Volunteers who hold many of the same values are very reliable.
- Volunteers are sincere people who genuinely believe in the power of helping those in need.
- Volunteering reduces the chance for false and misguided motives.
- Volunteers allow us to build a strong network, yet without the burden of astronomical funding.

Why is this working in 27 other states?

#3 Community and faith-based

- The Safe Family model is viewed as a resource, not a threat to families in crisis. Help and Hope!
- When people are vulnerable and in need, it is a meaningful relationship they reach for, not programs.
- The faith-based community provides genuine and sincere volunteers who understand hope and the power of lasting friendships. Programs move on…friendships stay.
- The faith-based community can also provide an endless source of support and practical resources to meet the physical and spiritual needs of families.

Why is this working in 27 other states?

#4 People Driven not Program

- The Safe Family Model measures success in the lives of children and families, not in the size of the program.
- Decisions are always made in the best interest of children and families.
- Programs change and move on, and new people will be over them tomorrow, but it's real friendships and relationships that motivate and support us through the tough times.
- It's people helping people, neighbor to neighbor and family to family, the basics of humanity, not just a program.

Why is this working in 27 other states?

#5 It’s Commitment to Safety

- Safe Families is committed to establishing and following the latest in best practices for child safety and welfare.
- All volunteers are fully vetted through screening, background checks, finger printing and training.
- All hosting of children is monitored weekly by the Family Coach Supervisor.
- Special interest groups may question our safety practice but parents do not, 27 other states do not, and 20,000 families hosted do not.
- Never one allegation, lawsuit, or child lost to sex trafficking.

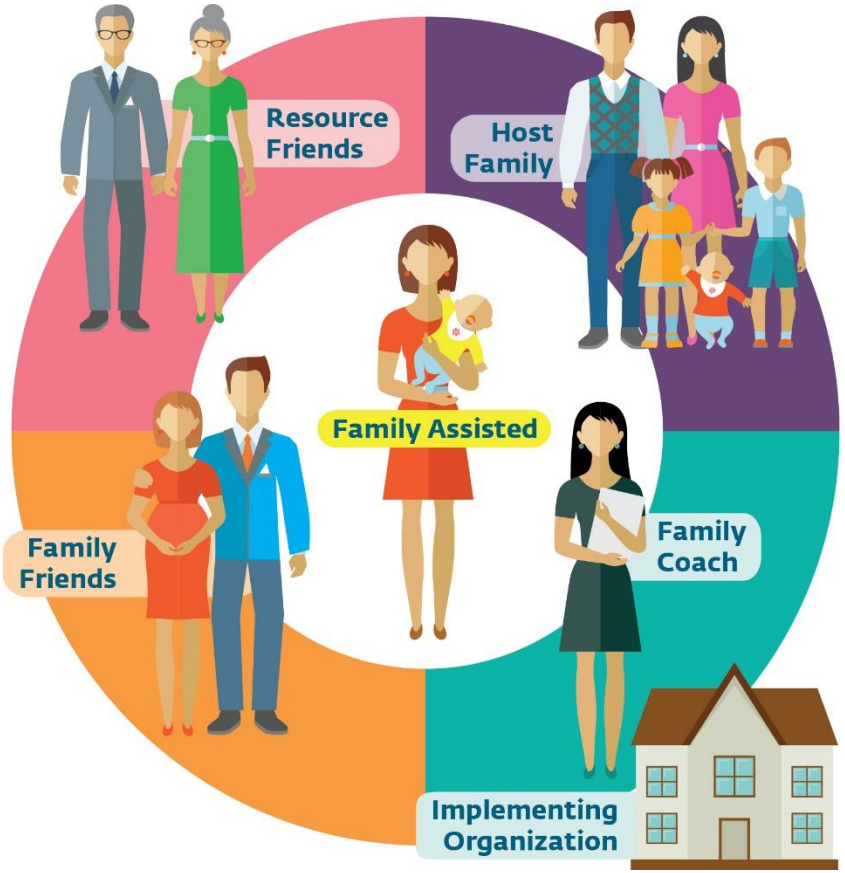
Why is this working in 27 other states?

#6 Partnerships

- Safe Families leverages good relationships within the community to build a network of resources and services for each family.
- Partnerships include a diversity of groups and organizations such as; DSS, Schools, Agencies, Courts, Churches, Counselors and many different community-based service providers.
- These wrap-around services help to provide the quick and efficient help families in crisis need.
- Partnerships build a community around the family in need.

Complete Community of Care

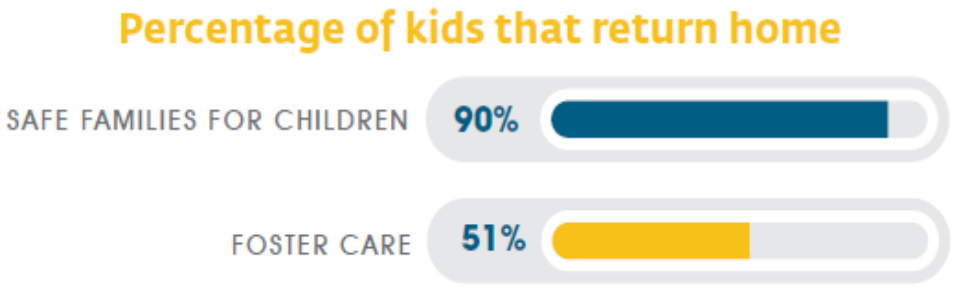
Families in crisis voluntarily place their children with a fully-screened and trained "Host Family". The Host Family voluntarily cares for the children for a short period of time while the parent gets the help they need. In all hosting arrangements, safe reunification of children with their parents is the primary goal. Parents never lose custody of their children.



The success of this model is based on both child protection and parental support, by providing wrap-around services that are committed to the growth and well-being of the family.

The Safe Families model surrounds the family in crisis with a caring community, with each member focused on meeting specific needs that will achieve the goals of maltreatment prevention, reunification, and long-term stability.

Here is our success!



The Case for a Safe Families Pilot Program

- Safe Families nationally is welcoming the idea to work with DSS.
- Patrick Henry Family Services would see this as a continuation of their partnership with state and local agencies.
- Local DSS departments would welcome the relationship and support.
- DSS at state levels see this as a viable solution to address the need for prevention practices in Virginia.
- Most importantly the communities want this.
- Finally, families need this.
- **If we say we are truly concerned with child welfare, then we must embrace new ideas and practices that are both proven and successful!**
- **Safe Families for Children!**

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