



2025 Gratitude Report

FR1**ENDS** of the
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Generational Change,
One Child at a Time

Eastern Idaho



Gratitude From Our Executive Director and Board Chair

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I look back on this year, I'm struck by the steady strength of this community. Together, we've shown that when children are surrounded by consistent, caring relationships, they rise. Families grow more confident, children gain stability, and our whole region becomes stronger.

The young people we serve aren't defined by their barriers; they're defined by their potential. Every day, they show resilience, curiosity, and hope. With your support, they're learning the skills and confidence to succeed in school, build healthy relationships, and pursue their dreams. Caregivers are also finding their footing again and rediscovering the power they have to shape their family's future.

Your generosity makes this possible. You've given our Friends, the professional mentors who walk beside each child and family week after week, the tools to build trust, model strength, and celebrate progress, both big and small.

Thank you for investing in what's possible. The results of this work are already visible in the lives of the youth and families we serve, and there is a greater harvest ahead.

With Gratitude,



Gina Judd

Executive Director

Friends of the Children – Eastern Idaho

*In just our second year,
Friends - Eastern Idaho was
voted Idaho State Journal
Readers' Choice Best
Nonprofit!*



Dear Friends and Supporters,

This past year has been one of steady growth and meaningful impact for Friends of the Children – Eastern Idaho. What started as a small but determined effort to support youth through long-term mentoring has grown into a program that's touching lives across Southeast Idaho. Our Friends are doing incredible work—helping children build confidence, stay engaged in school, and believe in their own potential. You can see the results not just in data or reports, but in the way these kids light up when they talk about their goals and what they've accomplished.

The progress we've made has only been possible because of the teamwork between our staff, board members, and community partners. Together, we've hosted enriching summer literacy and STEM camps, deepened relationships with schools and families, and strengthened our presence in the community. Being named Best Nonprofit Organization by the Idaho State Journal's Readers' Choice Awards was a proud moment for all of us—it reflected both the hard work of our team and the growing awareness of the difference this program makes.

As I look ahead, I'm filled with optimism. We're building something lasting here—one relationship, one success story at a time. Thank you to everyone who continues to believe in this mission and supports our work. Your trust and generosity make it possible for us to keep changing the lives of children and families across Eastern Idaho.

With deep appreciation,



Randy Jensen

Board Chair

Friends of the Children – Eastern Idaho



Board of Directors

Joel A. Beck

Heidi Colson

Kathy Downes

JaNae Swassing

Angela Groves

Becky Martin

Matt McEwen

Our Friends - Eastern Idaho Story

With a focus on improving the well-being of Idaho's children, key state and local stakeholders and community leaders supported bringing the Friends of the Children model to Idaho in 2023. To launch our new chapter, one million dollars in seed capital funding was raised from a diverse funding base.

The need in our community is great. 51% of American Falls households and 46% of Pocatello households live below the ALICE threshold (2022 United Way Report). Only 51% of Idaho students arrive at school ready to learn to read, which is last in the United States. Our program works to break these cycles of generational poverty and provide youth and families with opportunities to thrive.

Research shows that a consistent, supportive relationship with a caring adult is the single-most important factor in shaping a child's future - and can mitigate childhood adversity and trauma. Our unique program works to do just that:

- ▶ We intentionally serve the children in our community facing the greatest obstacles.
- ▶ We employ and train salaried, Professional mentors called Friends.
- ▶ We commit for the long term. 12+ years, no matter what.
- ▶ We work closely with parents and caregivers and in all facets of a child's life.

OUR LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Because Friends - Eastern Idaho part of a national network with more than 30 years of proven results, we know our professional mentoring model works. For three decades, our model has been breaking cycles of poverty and getting results for youth.

For example, of youth enrolled in Friends of the Children who have experienced foster care:



92% enroll in post-secondary education, serve our country or enter the workforce.



83% graduate high school



93% avoid juvenile justice



98% avoid early parenting

Compared to youth who experienced foster care without a Friend:

55%	74%	74%
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Ricky's Story



When Ricky* started school, he struggled to hold a pencil. His letters didn't look "just right," and his frustration grew with each attempt. Ricky was at risk of falling further behind, of being another child whose potential goes unrealized.

But something was different for Ricky. Because of you, he had Eduardo. Eduardo is Ricky's professional mentor (his "Friend") who walks alongside him four hours each week. Eduardo approached this learning challenge with consistent reassurance and creative, hands-on learning. Instead of falling behind, Ricky discovered that letters come in many shapes and forms. He built them out of toothpicks and gumdrops. He shaped them from clay. He practiced with encouragement and without judgment.

The four hours each week Eduardo spends with Ricky are funded by you. You provided the toothpicks, gumdrops, clay, pencil grips, and treats along the way. And by year's end, Ricky not only did he have some of the best handwriting in the class, his confidence had soared.

This fall, Ricky headed back to school knowing that whatever new challenges arise, Eduardo will be there. Not just this year, but for 12+ years, no matter what.

We are grateful for the generous hearts that provide Ricky and children like him with the support to thrive rather than just survive. You empower them to break cycles that have trapped their families for generations, and together, we will keep working until every child in Eastern Idaho who needs a Friend has one by their side. *Youth name changed to protect privacy.

Youth Demographics

43%

live with a single
caregiver

50%

of enrolled youth
are Latinx

81%

qualify for Medicaid

2 youth have lived
in/are currently
in foster or
kinship care

9

Caregivers responded with an average score of 9 out of 10 when asked whether their child's Friend is positively impacting the family home and helping them better understand their child and their needs.

Dolly's Story



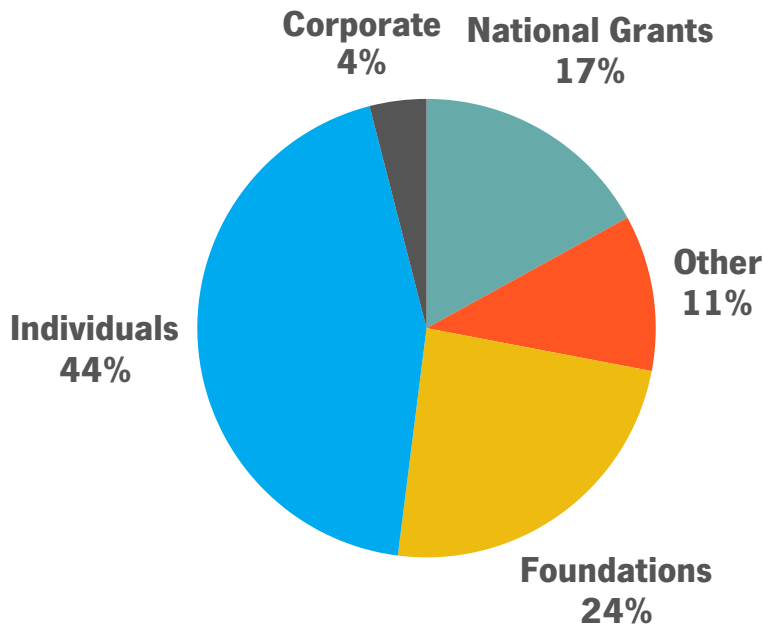
Because of you, moments like these are possible.

During engineering activities at our summer STEM camp, a young girl named Dolly* began to get very frustrated. She didn't quite know how to ask for help. Then she said she didn't want any help. She said she didn't want to do anything. She went and sat on the bench, very frustrated and disengaged from the activity and the learning opportunity it presented.

Thanks to your generosity, Chelsae (her professional mentor, or "Friend") was there. She came over to Dolly calmly and said, "Your behavior shows me that you need something. Maybe something to drink and some time to calm down?" She offered different options, observing and connecting with Dolly's reactions. When Dolly eventually asked for some chocolate milk, it only took a moment or two for her to be ready to re-engage with the activity, picking up where she had left off. Later, when things started to get challenging again for her, Dolly immediately left the table and walked over towards Chelsae. After a minute or two of being next to her Friend, Dolly was able to return to her place at the table and complete the project, ultimately expressing her pride in her finished creation.

This is a beautiful example of the impact of your investment in these children. Dolly is learning to lean on her Friend when she needs co-regulation and learning what works for her body. It also showed the strength a Friend provides just by being there, day in and day out, providing patience, understanding, and acceptance. The model of supportive mentorship you make possible empowers these young children to learn the tools they need to be successful, whether building a model car or eventually building a career or a family. *Youth name changed to protect privacy.

FY2025 Revenue: \$429,467



FY2025 Expenses: \$556,163



For additional financial reporting, please visit friendseasternidaho.org/financials



4,431 miles
driven in 2024



family engagement
events in the past
12 months



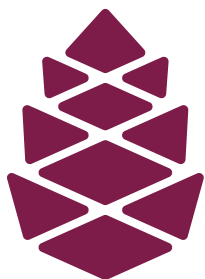
80 individuals
served through 2Gen
Program Approach



18 youth x
300 miles/hr x
4 hrs/week x
52 weeks/yr =
62,400 miles
with Friends!

**Thanks to the support of our community,
Friends - Eastern Idaho was one of the **top
ten** fundraisers during Idaho Gives 2025!**

Thank You to Our Major Donors



IDAHO
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Anonymous Donor

American Falls School District

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Portneuf
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Idaho Office of Drug Policy

Kristi Timmons

Aaron Moore

Jack & Mary Pat Winderl Fund for At-Risk Teenagers

Joel Beck

And Our Partners



LOOKOUT
CREDIT UNION



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