

THE FELIX ORGANIZATION



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE SINCE 2006

Letter From Our Founders

Dear Felix Family,

We started the Felix Organization 10 years ago. Our mission was simple: to ENRICH the lives of children growing up in foster care. Thanks to the efforts of our supporters, we are still devoted to this cause today. As adoptees who were fortunate enough to be "taken home," our greatest desire is to provide new experiences and broaden the horizons of children who are not as fortunate.

Our purpose is to provide programs for children growing up in foster care that will leave a positive impact on their lives, whether we send them to our signature program CAMP FELIX (now based in both NY and LA), host a Thanksgiving dinner for them, or give them gifts at Christmas time. If we send them to a sports event, the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular, provide grants for dance class or football camp, buy them textbooks or computers, the goal remains clear: TO CHANGE THE LIFE OF A CHILD in foster care who has less than our children and we do.

We believe ALL children are OUR children and we are responsible for ALL of them. As we approach our 11th year, we are appealing to you, our past, present and future donors, to help us keep the dream alive.

We can only change the world if we inspire the children in it. Together we can change their experiences and therefore change the future for the better.

God bless and thank you,
Sheila and Darryl



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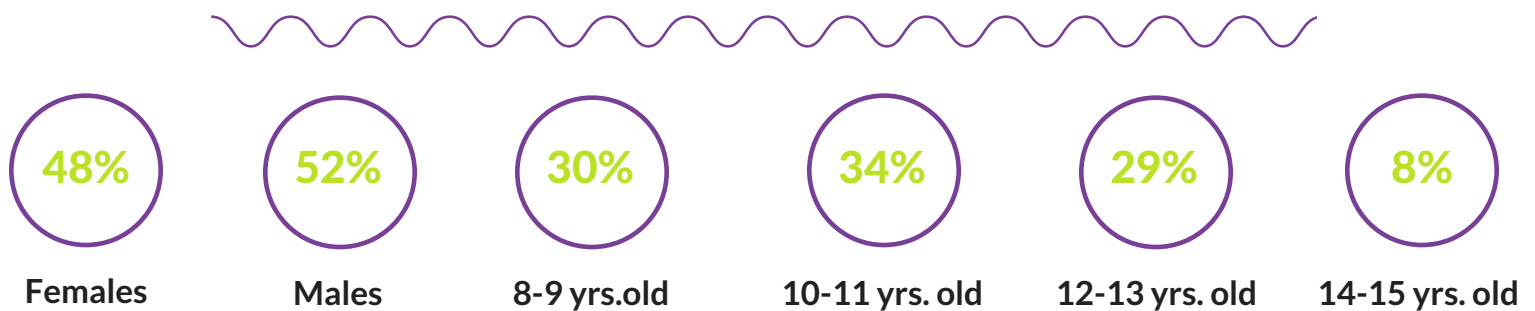
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Camp Felix

For four weeks each summer, children in the foster care system from New York City's most impoverished communities are given the chance to leave behind their difficult circumstances and gain independence, make new friends and explore the natural world at our campus in Putnam Valley, New York, approximately one hour north of New York City. Here is a look at who our campers are:





In 2016,

166

New York City youth attended
Camp Felix.



Of those 166 campers,



93

were **NEW** campers!



THANK YOU TO OUR IN-KIND DONORS:

State Bags donated 100 backpacks this year,
outfitting our campers for the summer and also for
their first days back to school!



Felix Friend, **Artie Rabin**, donated sweatshirts to our
campers to keep them warm on chilly summer nights!

(Please see our full list of in-kind donors on page 20)

CAMPER SPOTLIGHT: JASMINE



Jasmine is a shining example of a Camp Felix alumnus. She has been a camper, counselor-in-training, volunteer, and plans to be a counselor when she turns 18.

In 2016, she participated in a creative writing workshop sponsored by Beyond Camp.

"The first lesson I learned was just being true to myself and writing exactly how I talk. "

Here she writes about her experiences in the class. We couldn't be more proud.

September 10, 2016:

Well today was a big day for me! I can definitely say that it was a day full of challenges. I say this because of my first task today. This task involved me traveling to the city to begin my very first class of creative writing. I think this was a challenge for me because it is number one something definitely out of my comfort zone and something I would not normally do because I can get very shy. So being in this class was surely a huge step out of my comfort zone. Although I can definitely say I am glad that the class is small and I am meeting new people as well as getting to know the people I already knew, even better.

I thought the class would be big and full of experienced people who would look down on me. So when I saw Robert, a lot of that negativity I had in my mind went down the drain. I am also so thankful for the size setting. Large crowds tend to deeply frighten me. Although I may never know it or it may take time for me to learn, I really want to know what it is that I wrote that made Missy as well as a few others tell me I was a good writer and recommended me to participate in this class. I am really looking forward to all of the techniques and learning material from this class.

I'm already hard on myself, but I will continue to do what I do because at the end of the day for a sixteen year old I know I am excelling. I mean look at me: I have a job and I'm claiming some type of independence. Those were my challenges today and I am glad the day is over and I am still alive! I did it!

BY JASMINE

OUR VALUES

The RESPECT Values program drives our culture at
The Felix Organization.

These values offer a simple guide for leading a more
positive life.

R

Respect for self and others

E

Engage in positive
decision-making

S

Support each other at
camp

P

Peaceful conflict resolution

E

Experience something new

C

Care for your environment

T

Tolerance for others despite
differences



CAMP FELIX WEST



Camp Felix is now serving foster children on both coasts!

IN 2016, WE SENT:

100

foster children to camp for one week in the mountains outside of Los Angeles.

100

teens to Camp Felix West for a holiday retreat in December.



We are proud that at Camp Felix West, more than half of the camp counselors are former foster youth. This provides campers with mentorship by young adults who can truly relate to their circumstances.



“

MARCELLO (CAMPER - VOLUNTEER):

**LEADERSHIP,
BROTHERHOOD,
DEDICATION...I TAKE
THAT EVERYWHERE I
GO. I EVEN CHANGED
SOME OF MY FRIENDS'
LIVES WITH THOSE
THREE WORDS.**

”

BEYOND CAMP

Beyond Camp is a program that provides grants for NYC & LA youth in foster care to join extracurricular activities throughout the year.

In 2016 we distributed over

\$15K

to

26

youth.

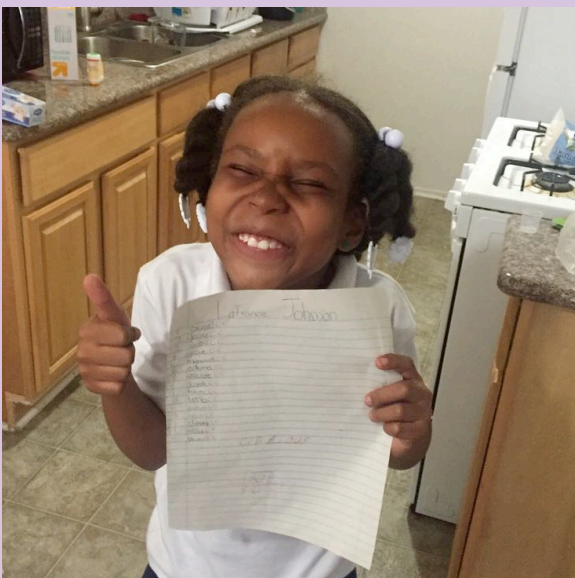
In 2016:

34% of grants were academic, including textbooks, after school tutoring, and Spanish lessons.

23% were for the arts, including dance, photography, piano lessons, and guitar class.

23% were sports related, including football, basketball, and gymnastics.

19% were vocational, including welding, cooking, recording studio time.



LaFrance dreams of being a scientist and finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease. With the help of Beyond Camp, she attends an after school program that encourages her to do her best in school. Columbia University, here she comes!

FELIX FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Felix provides year-round experiences for children in the foster care system in New York City and Los Angeles including Broadway shows, private movie screenings, professional sporting events and more.



Every year we host 100 children for a Thanksgiving Feast-i-val in partnership with Hill Country Barbecue restaurant in Manhattan.

In December, 100 children experienced the magic of the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular, a NYC tradition that every child deserves to enjoy!



SECRET SANTA

Secret Santa is a gift-giving initiative that provides holiday cheer to older youth in foster care who are often overlooked at this time of year.

In 2016, we distributed:

over

\$30K

in gift cards to over

900

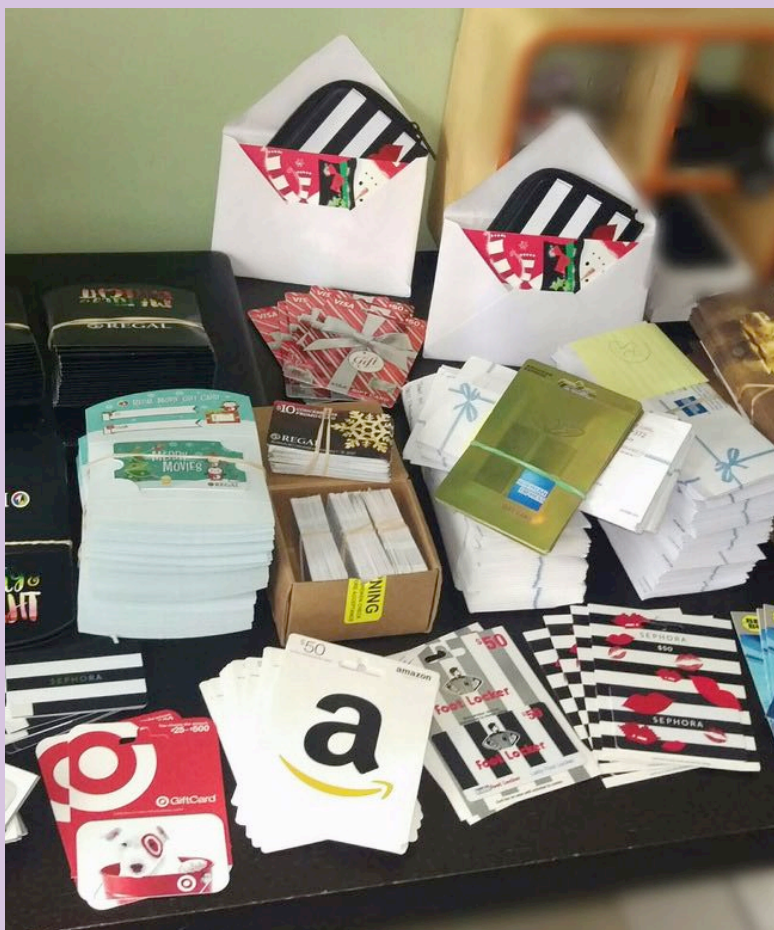
kids.

Two new corporate partners supported our gift drive this year:
Peloton and Baron Capital.



Regal Cinemas donated \$5,000 in gift cards to give children for the holidays.

The remaining cards came from Felix friends, including Lorraine Bracco, Denise Chamian, Lisa Herman, Robby Browne and many more!



CHAMPION SPOTLIGHT: TRAVIS WELCOME



Travis has worked with The Felix Organization since 2008. From humble beginnings as a beloved counselor at Camp Felix, he went on to serve as Assistant Director of Camp Felix for two years and now works year round at our partner, The New York Foundling's school for foster children, Haven Academy. We caught up with him to learn more about his experience with FELIX and here's what he had to say:

What makes Camp Felix different from other sleepaway programs?

...The fact that we're able to change the child's environment without removing their culture. We attract staff members that come from all over the world who bring with them unique traditions and life experiences and we say to them, "Be yourself" because kids will only connect with you if they know you're being genuine.

What made you continue going back to Camp Felix for seven summers?

Honestly, realizing the impact I had on my campers was incredible. It was a life changing experience to watch children push themselves out of their comfort zones everyday. I'll always remember the first set of hugs and thank you letters I received at the end of my first summer. To know that we have the ability to be a safe haven for children during the summer despite their current living situation is really what kept me coming back.

What is something you have learned from working with children?

...Never give up. As adults when we fail at something we tend to go into a state of shock where we are restricted by the fear of failing again. However, children are quite different; they can fall 4-5 times and quickly get up without hesitation. In the moment, there might be tears and frustration, but there is never fear of trying again. They get up, they fall, and they try again until they succeed.

How did working at Camp Felix impact your life?

Working at Camp Felix definitely helped me figure out what my path in life was at a very early age: I learned how to be a DJ, learned how to put a show together, give speeches, and host events. All of which helped me realize that I have a great ability to connect with people in a very impactful way through music and speaking.

As a junior board member for the Felix Organization, what do you hope to accomplish?

My goal is simple: connect as many talented individuals with youth who can directly benefit from the experience of having a young professional in their life. The impact of having a conversation with someone who is already in the career you dream of pursuing can significantly help shape your perspective on the life goals you have for yourself.

What do you hope children learn from you?

As a kid I vividly remember watching TV and hearing all the reasons I wouldn't make it: the statistics, the crime, the incarceration rate, etc. I hope children learn that they can be leaders within their community despite the odds placed against them.



OUR IMPACT

Our campers report:

- "I have the support needed to reach **my goals,**" including making the honor roll, going to college, and becoming a counselor!
- Being at Camp Felix helped "**me gain confidence and reach my goals.**"
- "Being at Camp Felix helped me learn how to overcome challenges."

What the Beyond Camp grants have allowed us to do for our campers is give them continued opportunities like Camp Felix all year...The short term effects are priceless - watching them be excited about the classes and feel committed to what they are engaging in. The longer term effects are increased participation and engagement in school and many other social and emotional benefits.

-Gabi, Social Worker



IN 2016

41

Camp Felix campers have become Counselors in Training (CIT).

8

CITs have become volunteer staff.

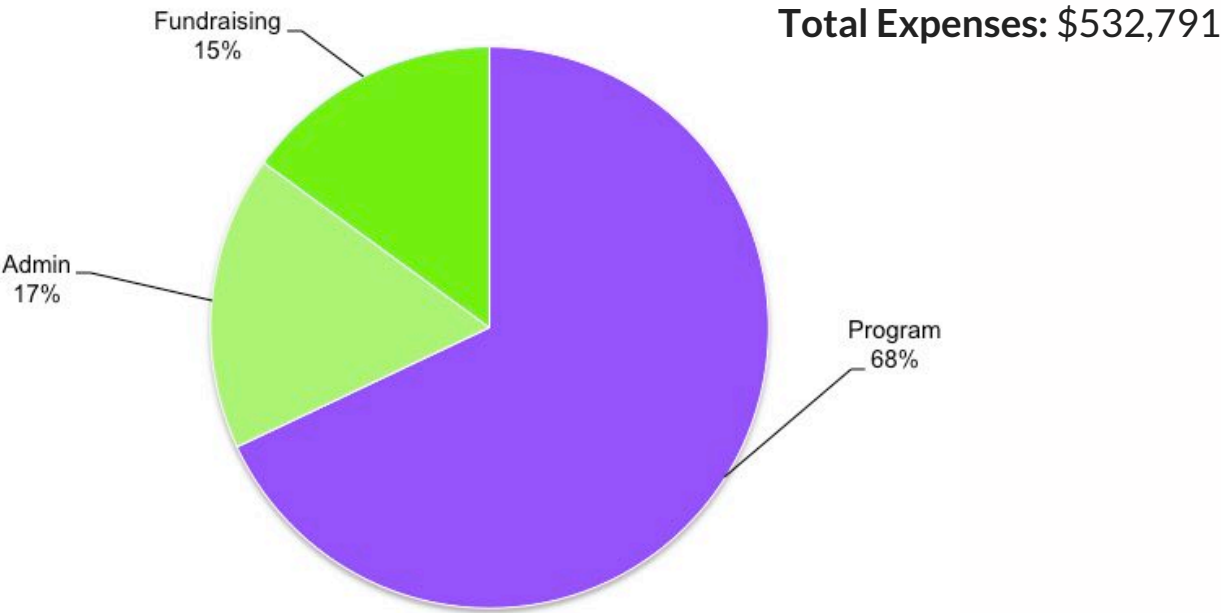
6

former campers have become Camp Felix employees.

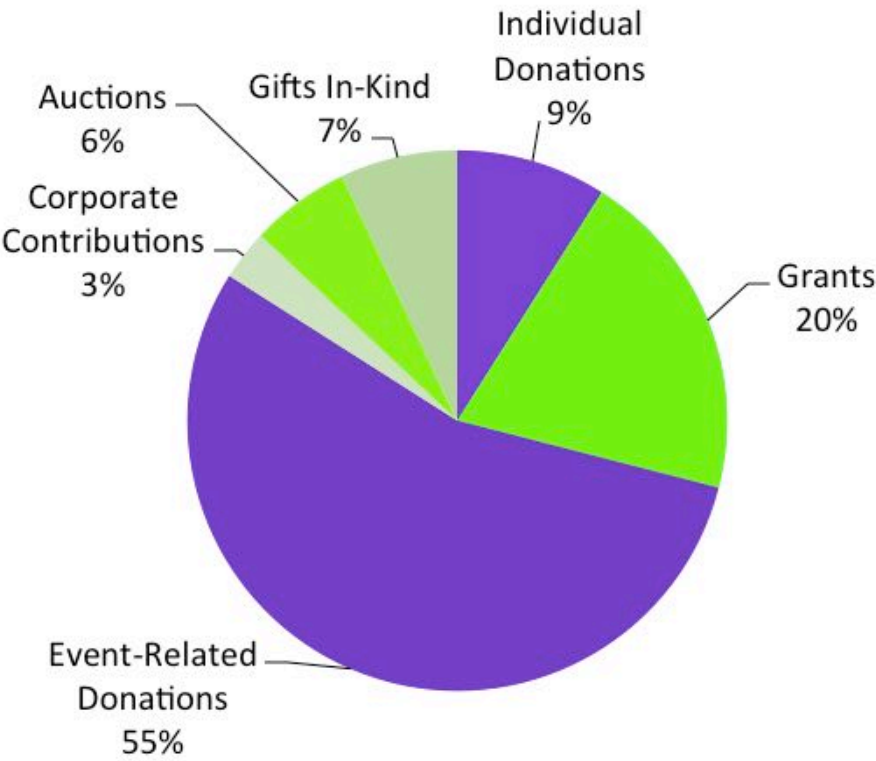
The Felix Organization helps our youth build job experience, expand their leadership skills, and learn on-the-job competencies that help them begin their professional careers.

FELIX 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



CONTRIBUTIONS BY SOURCE



WHO WE ARE

FOUNDERS

Sheila Jaffe

Casting Director & Children's Rights Activist

Darryl "DMC" McDaniels

Musician & Children's Rights Activist

STAFF

Amanda Simonetta

Executive Director

Myra Scheer

Creative Consultant

Tiffany Araya

Program Coordinator

HONORARY CHAIR

Lorraine Bracco

Actress, Producer, Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Michael Lang Organization

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John Shaw

Personal & Self-Actualization Coach,
Business Coach/Consultant, Spiritual
Teacher, Counselor & Minister

Vanessa Spencer

Owner, Rodriguez Spencer Casting

Claire Mercuri

Founder/President, Claire Mercuri
Public Relations

Laura Tufariello

President, Founder and Owner
Design and Source Productions, Inc.



JUNIOR BOARD

The Junior Board is a dynamic team of young professionals who use their talent and experience to act as ambassadors for Felix by fundraising and engaging other young professionals to make a difference in the lives of youth in foster care.

Sean Bahrami

Contracting Officer, Columbia University

Shane Walsh

Post Production Associate, Viacom

Morgan Baker

Graphic Designer

Justin Kirkland

Basketball Coach & Actor

Dan Wonderly

Freelance Photographer, Wonderly Imaging

Saman Behbani

Director, Business & Legal Affairs at National Geographic Partners

Alexis Van Wart

Master's Candidate in Social Work, Adelphi University

Mike Dassinger

Director, Strategic Content Operations at MTV, VH1 and Logo

Travis Welcome

Futures Program Director, Haven Academy

Dan Casarella

Executive Assistant, MTV Networks/Logo

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We would like to give a special thanks to the Dance This Way **Gold** and **Silver** sponsors below who showed great dedication to our cause this year.



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Allie Silber Ander
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Ashley Dunsing
Bella Pagan
Brandon Pagan
Brittany Greve
Cassie Bosquet
Clayton Barmore
Connie Lee
Dan Smith
Davesh Singh
Debbie Dragone
Destiny Paradiso
Diana McGrail
Donnie Kehr
Ed Heck
Emilio Pagan
Fiona Benson
Gloria Fields
Jamie Grace
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Jennifer Pagan
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Patricia Ngo
Sal Bellino
Sarah White
Scott Duquette
Shay Roehm
Shea
Solange Burnett-Loucas
Stephanie Lira
Sydney Grodin
Tanya Boulton
TJ Mizell
Tony Bey
Tristan Pagan
Xavier Pagan
Zach Mines
Zara Pagan

Foster Care Liasions

April Dinwoodie
Barry Chaffkin
Caryn Ashare Norman Gabriella
Cassandra
Jane Feyder-Siegel September
Sucher
Shirley Salomon
Susan Abrams

To everyone else who contributed,
we thank you, as every dollar counts!

“

MARQUIS (CAMPER):

**MOST KIDS, THEY DON'T
REALLY GET A BUNCH OF
OPPORTUNITIES IN LIFE...AT
CAMP FELIX YOU COULD
FEEL LIKE YOU'RE ONE OF
THOSE KIDS WHO GETS
OPPORTUNITIES..."**

”

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

DONATE

\$500

Will send one child in foster care to Camp Felix for one memorable, life changing week.

\$250

Pays for textbooks for our college bound youth.

\$100

Will provide 3 campers with swimsuits, goggles, and swim caps as they learn to swim.

Make Your Check Payable To:

**The Felix Organization
43 Oyster Bay Road
Locust Valley, NY 11560**

Or donate online at
www.thefelixorganization.org/donate

Kids 4 Kids

Kids 4 Kids is an initiative that engages young people in our mission of providing inspiring opportunities to children in foster care.

Sydney (left) used her Bat Mitzvah money to send 8 children to Camp Felix in 2016. She also spent a day volunteering at Camp Felix 2016.

To sign a kid up, visit
www.thefelixorganization.org/kids-4-kids-



ANNUAL EVENTS



OPEN HOUSE

AUGUST/PUTNAM VALLEY

A BBQ and Talent Show at Camp Felix where our campers showcased their talents and skills learned at camp!



OM THIS WAY

OCTOBER/NYC & SAN FRAN

A Hip Hop Yoga benefit event at Equinox led by New York's leading yoga experts.



LAUGH THIS WAY

NOVEMBER/LA

A night of comedy at the Laugh Factory hosted by Darryl "DMC" McDaniels, Russell Peters, and Chris Spencer.

Check out www.thefelixorganization.org for this year's dates!



dancethisway.org



@felixorganization



@Felix4Change

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For more information, email us at
info@thefelixorganization.org



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