



ABBOTT HOUSE

ANNUAL REPORT

2005

Moving past bad experiences

Very often youth is not the time of innocence and playfulness portrayed in movies and in situation comedies. For many children and adolescents, the passage into adulthood is marked by loneliness, upheaval, and uncertainty.

Each child responds to this turmoil differently. Some blame themselves, adopting self-destructive life-styles. For others, whose lives are complicated by circumstances beyond their control, withdrawal or aggression becomes a part of everyday life. Children learn to adapt, even at their own expense.

There are many indications that a youngster is in trouble. Poor peer relationships, inadequate school performance, or difficulty functioning without drawing unnecessary attention to themselves signals that a young person is in trouble. Some youngsters have problems academically because of special needs, while others may be responding to the effects of drugs or alcohol in their lives. Some youngsters attempt to control aspects of their lives with eating disorders while others may adopt very unhealthy peer relationships.

The number of children who experience sexual and/or physical abuse is startling. And the resolution of these critical issues represents a challenge for youngsters who incorporate this experience into their passage into adult life. Too frequently the result is a cycle that involves self-destructive and painful life styles.

Everyone agrees that these young people need a comprehensive and sensitive treatment program.

About Abbott House

Abbott House is a private charity that provides residential treatment services to girls between the age of nine and eighteen. Located in Mitchell, South Dakota, the agency was founded in 1939 as a memorial to renowned social activist, Grace Abbott. The agency provides comprehensive services that include not only intensive treatment but also foster care in a therapeutic home. The Abbott House is truly dedicated to providing services to children and families that promote personal development and foster responsible participation with others.

Abbott House is a place where girls get **Another Chance**. For most it is the opportunity to turn the abuse and victimization of the past into an experience they live with but that does not overwhelm their lives. It is a model of treatment based on the theory that behaviors are learned and therefore it is possible for new behaviors to be taught. It is a **Teaching** program based upon structured teaching interactions with each girl that are based on her individual needs.

Girls between nine and eighteen come to Abbott House by referrals from protective service, correctional and educational agencies. Forty-four girls receive care and treatment in three residential living units and a foster home. The girls live in small groups of six to eight girls.

Abbott House Programs

A living and learning model - Teaching is the primary focus of the program with the assumption clearly understood that new behavior can be learned and old behaviors can be improved. Teaching occurs within clearly defined teaching interactions that emphasize observable and measurable actions. The program is implemented based on:

- Structured positive reinforcement by verbal praise and practice rewards
- Continuous reinforcement following a desired behavior
- Shaping basic skills and then combining skills with successive desired skills
- Generalizing of skills learned to similar situations in the community
- Discrimination of skills from one circumstance to another

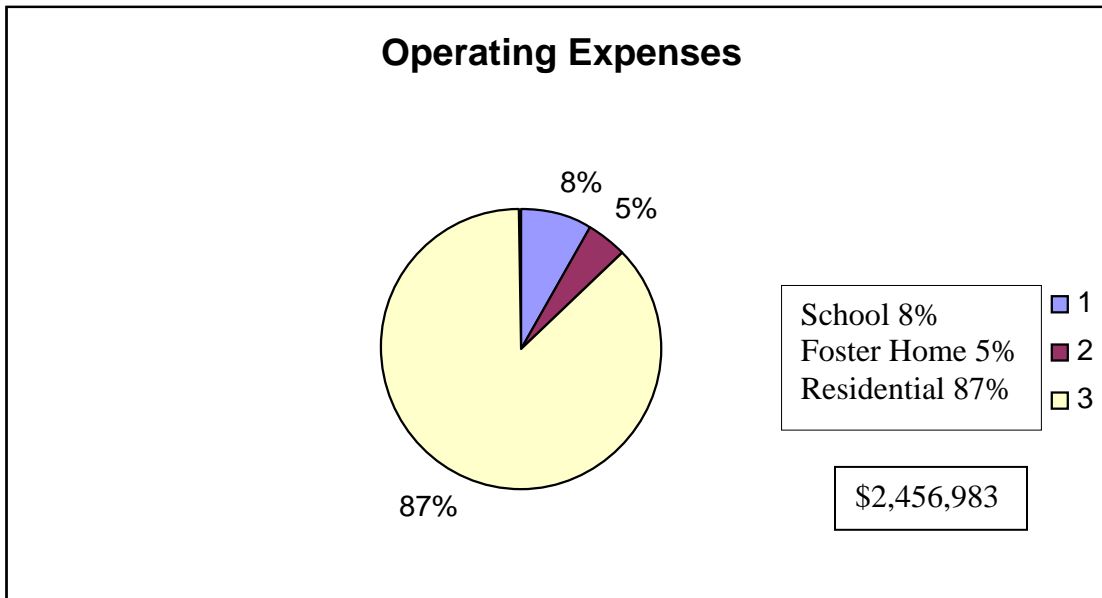
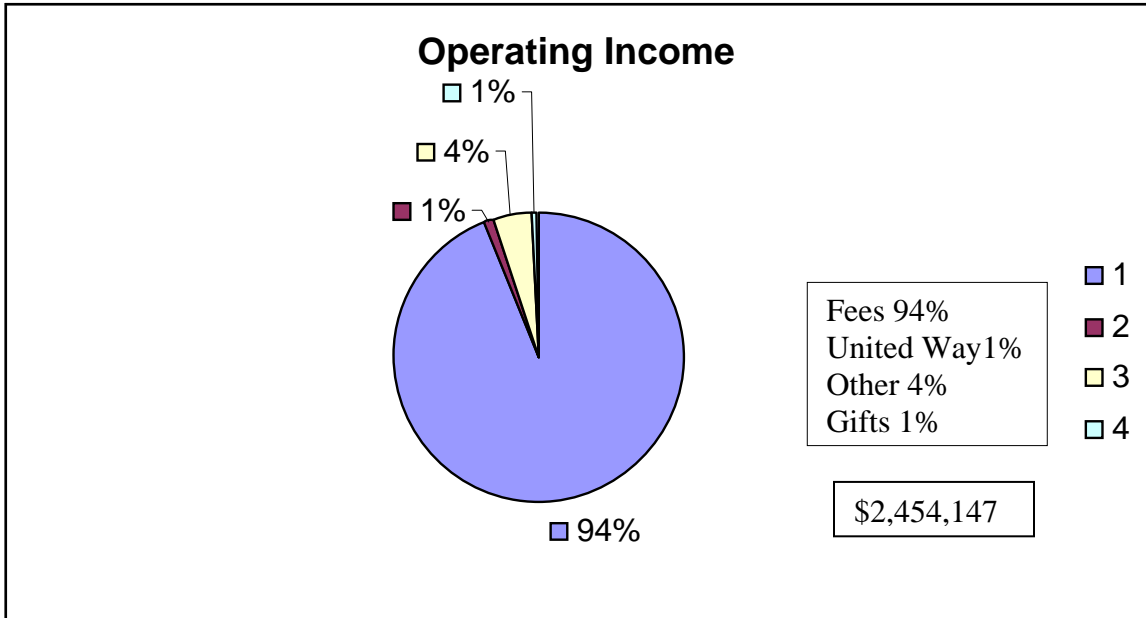
The overriding benefit of this approach is that (1) There is absolutely no punishment associated with this model, and (2) It is clearly measurable and sustainable.

Academic Success - Schooling is an essential part of the total program and it is put into practice with an Individual Education Plan for each girl. The student receives an individualized curriculum based upon their needs in the areas of grade placement, skill level and behavioral goals. Many adaptations are made within the education program to address the individual circumstances of each girl. Our teaching staff closely monitors and evaluates each student's performance and testing is used to assure that the girl's achievement level is increasing. This unique school is in session 250 days each year, thereby extending the opportunities for learning and increasing the chances of successful academic performance after they leave.

Year in Review

Number of youth served:	84
Approved Releases	35
Released to a higher level of care	16
Source of Placement	98% Agency 2% other

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*Where the dollars come from
and how they are used*



Budgeted Income: \$2,487,393
Budgeted Expenses: \$2,481,644