



WICHITA  
Children's Home

# From Our Home To Yours



Matrons of the early Wichita Children's Home.

## “They treated us as their own”

From time to time, WCH is visited by those who passed through its doors often decades before. As part of recognizing the 125th year of the Wichita Children's Home, we bring you the story of a former resident and what the WCH meant to her throughout her life.

At nine years old, Thayne Oldfield, now 92 years old, along with her younger sister and brother, came to the Wichita Children's Home after their father, a veteran, fell ill and their mother had to find work in 1930. They traveled from Hays, KS to Wichita where their mother found work at the offices of a prominent orthopedic surgeon. The work was good, but there were no child care options for a working mom.

“My mother had never worked before,” said Thayne. “She made \$12 a week, and paid the Wichita Children's Home \$7 a week for our care. They later lowered that to \$5 a week so she could afford to get us clothes.”



Thayne Oldfield (far left) with her siblings and Vera, their mother's “helper” enjoying a watermelon before their father became ill.

Thayne stayed in the “big girls” house behind the main home while her younger sister and brother were in the main building. One of her duties was working in the kitchen. As it turned out, this served her throughout her life as not only a skill, but a talent.

“We made oatmeal with milk every morning,” said Thayne. “I suppose I can credit some of my longevity to that oatmeal.”

At WCH she said it felt like being in a family. “We missed our mother terribly, but they instilled discipline, fairness and treated us just as their own children,” she said of the Matrons at the home.

“We were always treated as individuals. We were never belittled or shamed in front of the other children,” said Thayne. She recalled that her brother was “well pleased” with the home and that her sister, who she describes as a “free spirit,” often tested the patience of the matrons.

During the seven years Thayne and her siblings were at WCH, there were regular duties for all the children, which included bed checks every week when the linens were changed. “We inspected the mattresses, every seam, to be sure there weren't any uninvited guests.”

She remembers that the children were never dirty, had clean clothes, and that a couple of times a month, though she doesn't remember how they were transported, they went to Sunday School.

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## **BRIDGES helps teen see his potential**

“Good luck trying to make me laugh and have a good time.” This is how Tom described himself on his application to enter the BRIDGES Transitional Living Program (TLP). Along with describing himself as a person who keeps everything inside, that he gets depressed, and has “cut” himself, it was clear that Tom needed someone on his side.

Before entering the BRIDGES program, Tom was couch surfing and hanging out on the streets with other homeless teens. With a history of abuse by his mother and serious health issues, Tom had exhausted all of his options.

“I think of myself as a worthless person who can’t do anything right even if he wanted to,” Tom wrote in his application. “I don’t have many friends. I don’t party, drink, smoke or do any drugs. I am a very hard worker.”

Tom’s description of himself is not unusual for the youth the BRIDGES program serves. The Street Outreach



Service (SOS) was Tom’s first connection with the Wichita Children’s Home. From there, he received the help he needed to move into a BRIDGES apartment. Tom received counseling for his depression and help to develop coping skills for his anger issues.

In addition, Tom was in debt. BRIDGES staff helped him find a job. What began as an internship has turned into a permanent position for him. Now, Tom is nearly debt free. He has taken responsibility for being consistent with his medications to treat his health issues and he is beginning to see his own potential.

“Tom has been a joy to work with and watch him mature and develop,” reported those who have worked with Tom. “He is an intelligent and passionate young man who has become a contributing member of the Wichita community.”

NOTE: To protect the identity of our youth who request it, we do not use their real name or image.

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### ***“They treated us as their own,” continued from page 1***

“But they saw to our moral health every day in how we were treated, and taught to behave,” she noted.

By age 16, Thayne’s mother had saved enough money to purchase a restaurant across from East High School. “We would all help mom in the restaurant and I worked in the school cafeteria to pay for my lunches,” Thayne recalled. “I also did a lot of the cooking at the restaurant and I’m pretty sure my husband will tell you I’m a good cook.”

In her senior year, she had the opportunity to become a nanny,

helping a prominent Wichita couple with their newborn infant. She stayed with them until she graduated high school and then married her first husband.

“We always understood why mom had us at the Children’s Home,” Thayne said. “Today, your heart breaks for the children who are in need of love and care and even meals.”

The mission of the WCH has remained constant: to serve the needs of children and youth, providing stability and a sense of family. Often, for the first time in their lives.

# Happenings at the Home



Betty Suntheimer volunteers teaching cooking classes to the BRIDGES youth. She is also a former WCH resident.



For his Eagle Scout Project, Thomas Spillman and 25 Troop 542 members, parents and friends repaired two sections of broken fence, power washed the patio and furniture, and mulched flower beds.



In June, we held the 6th Annual Education Celebration for BRIDGES youth. Among the graduates were 25 graduating high school, eight earned vocational credits and nine youth who were in college.



WCH participated in an intramural softball league this year. It was good exercise, they learned a lot about teamwork and perseverance.



Weaver employees collected a truck load of school supply donations.

# “Fore the Kids” Golf Tournament still growing

*Even after 30 years, community turning out to support WCH*

Thirty years is a long run for any event, and to celebrate, this year the Wichita Children’s Home changed things up just a bit for this highly successful fund raiser. Once again, we are grateful for the support of Fugate Enterprises as the underwriting sponsor for the tournament.

Thurs., May 30, a celebration party preceding the tournament was held at Crestview Country Club with live music from Déjà Vu, delicious smoked meats compliments of Cargill and Craig Burns of Security 1st, and a live auction with fun items like autographed WSU basketballs and a golf trip to Pebble Beach. More than 200 guests came out to support WCH and enjoy an evening of celebrating and giving.

Then, on Monday, June 3, nearly 200 golfers came out to Crestview for the beautiful weather and some fun golfing with shotgun starts at 7 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Woody Austin played hole 17 with each team. Our thanks go out to all who donated, participated and volunteered to make this “Fore the Kids” Golf Tournament a success.

Mark your calendar for the 31st Annual “Fore the Kids” Golf Tournament which will be May 29, 2014 for the party and May 30 for the golf tournament.

## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY SPONSORS

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Kurt Cornejo, Ron Cornejo, Woody Austin (tournament pro), Marty Cornejo, and Max Beins were one of 49 teams that came to the Crestview Country Club to support the Wichita Children’s Home on June 3 at the 30th Annual “Fore the Kids” Golf Tournament. Austin played the 17th hole with all of the teams.

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# 3rd Annual Classic Cars for Kids

Perhaps it was the rare numbers matching 1970 Hemi Cuda that was the featured car for the 3rd Annual Classic Cars for Kids. Or perhaps that this event is establishing itself as the place to be to see wonderful classic car restorations and compare them to the newest car models. Either way, hundreds came out to support the Wichita Children's Home and enjoyed a great evening of car talk and admiration at Century II on April 11.

Tim Bonnell, Sr., who owns the 'Cuda was happy to be part of the event and said he enjoyed showing off his prized car to help WCH. Joining the Hemi Cuda were 54 beautifully restored classics and showroom models.

"We are grateful for all of those who brought their cars and trucks to the show," said WCH Director of Development Janet Pack. "They make this evening a special one for our guests. We are also grateful to our wonderful sponsors who make this event possible."

Silent and live auction items were donated from dozens of businesses and individuals along with travel and



entertainment packages for attendees to bid on during the evening. Many bidders were very generous which helped boost the funds raised from this year's show.

The result was a significant increase over the 2012 event, raising \$150,000 for the WCH to use towards the cost of providing a safety zone for children in crisis in our community.



A few of the beautifully restored classic cars that the crowd of more than 500 attendees enjoyed.



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WICHITA  
**Children's Home**  
 810 N. Holyoke St.  
 Wichita, KS 67208

[www.wch.org](http://www.wch.org)

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## Our Mission

To assure the safety and well-being of children and to create healthy families by providing: Assessment and intervention services; a temporary home for children at risk of abuse, neglect or homelessness; and education, prevention and advocacy initiatives.

**Celebrating 125 Years of Caring**

## Mabee Challenge Grant

*Will help WCH "Make It Better" for more children and youth*

In July, Wichita Children's Home received notice that the J. E. and L. E. Mabee Foundation located in Tulsa, OK, had awarded a \$1 million challenge grant to WCH. The challenge is to raise \$7.3 million by Jan. 4, 2014.

Barbara and Stuart Ray accepted the responsibility of co-chairs for the Make It Better Campaign to raise the challenge funds.

"The Wichita Children's Home has been at its current location for over 100 years and in its current building

for 50 years," said Stuart Ray. "The community needs for children and young adults have changed drastically over that time."

The new building will provide a shelter for children that is better suited to the short-term crisis care needs of the more than 2,000 children and youth who come through the home's doors each year. The project will include apartments for BRIDGES residents, a community center, day care center, and classroom space.



Our thanks go to all who have already given or pledged thus far. Gifts can be made as a five-year pledge and count towards the challenge.

For more information on how you can give, contact Director of Development Janet Pack, (316) 681-6702 or [j\\_pack@wch.org](mailto:j_pack@wch.org).