

FROM OUR HOME TO YOURS CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF CARING



Reaching a Milestone

On the Cover Reaching a Milestone -2-

A Young Mother's Story -3 -

Happenings at the Home -4-

Classic Cars for Kids -5-"Fore the Kids"

Golf Tournament

-6-Honors and Memorials -8-Child Abuse Prevention Month

If you know a victim of abuse or crime who needs help, please contact the Home at 684-6581. We can provide referrals to the Attorney General's Victims of Crime Fund.



125 years. Five generations. The turning of two millennia. It is the milestone that the Wichita Children's Home, established in 1888, celebrates this year. This makes the WCH only 27 years younger than the state of Kansas.

"It is a momentous feeling to know that this home has been here for the children," said Chief Executive Officer Sarah Robinson. "It is also a little bittersweet because the need for us continues."

The big, whitewashed two story home that started as an orphanage has become a different kind of safe harbor that extends well beyond the walls of the building.

Though the orphanage was in a house, the approach to care was

more institutional, providing for basic needs with a dose of strict discipline. "Those who have come back to visit tell us about the strict 'house moms'," said Beth Thummel, volunteer coordinator.

"The Children's Home was very much a close knit family from about the 1960s through the 80s," said Thummel. "Some of the children would stay for years."

At the time, it was meant to be a temporary situation, but for children who had difficulty in the foster homes, they would return or wind up staying at WCH. That feeling of family hasn't changed. You feel it when you walk in the door and each child or youth that seeks help is wrapped with care from the people who welcome them at the home through the foster families for the younger children, to those who provide support to the older youth.

While discipline is still part of the WCH, there is a different approach in the home during a child's short-term stay as a longer term situation is identified for them. It is also a place where a disenfranchised youth can find some-

one to talk to, help to get off the streets, and know that there is someone in their corner.

It is a place where an older teen can seek help and find a stable living situation as they age out of the foster care system in order to find their path to financial and emotional independence.

Part of the longevity of the WCH has been evaluating the need, the resources, and what organizations are providing services the children need.

Reaching out to displaced youth through street outreach and the BRIDGES program were added in the 1990s, as funds became available through the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act enacted by the federal government. These grants assisted organizations in addressing the needs of older youth as the need was identified throughout the country.

"We sometimes saw our six- to 12-year-olds come back time and again," Thummel noted.



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BRIDGES helps young mother find stability and pursue education to provide for her children

Sarah was 14 when her youngest siblings' father left their family. With no income, her mom couldn't pay the rent and the family was evicted. Her mom did not have a job, so they stayed with family members, often all of them in one room.

"We would move from one house to the other, " Sarah said. "I just couldn't live like that and decided to find a way to figure something out on my own."

She was 16 when she left her family to find that "something else." Plus, she had a two-year-old daughter to take care of. She found herself staying with friends and family, usually having only a couch to sleep on. There was no stability for her daughter who would have to stay with different family members while Sarah went to school or work.

Then someone told her about the Wichita Children's Home BRIDGES program. She applied and was accepted to move into one of the apartments in September 2011, about the time she found out she was pregnant with her second child.

"It has been a real help to have a stable home for my daughter, and now my son," said Sarah. "We could get into a routine so she has more structure and I could spend time with her."

Sarah had just graduated high school and was starting college classes with the goal of getting her Nursing degree, plus she was working 30 to 40 hours a week. Just before she came to BRIDGES, the stress of working full time and going to school full time along with not knowing how long she would be staying where she was forced her to drop her classes.

"I thought maybe I could save up and be able to get an apartment on my own, but you can't afford a place when you're working a minimum wage job," explained Sarah.

BRIDGES has given her that consistency she needed to be able to go to work and school, while raising her now five-year-old daughter and ninemonth-old son. In addition, she participates in a "mom's group" each week and has a therapist through the Wichita



Sarah and her two children have the stability they need for Sarah to realize her goal of becoming a nurse.

Guidance Center and a BRIDGES case manager who help her when she feels things are getting out of control.

"I want to finish school and get my RN and then work towards my BSN," said Sarah. "I want to be able to provide for my kids."

At 19, Sarah's focus is on making a good home for her children. She's learning about making decisions that will help her do that with the help of the WCH staff who are there for her when she needs them. "They're like a family in that they're honest with me and don't just tell me what I want to hear," she said. "I know they're looking out for my best interest."

Now in her third semester of community college, Sarah said she's excited as each semester ends because she can see the progress towards her goal. In May she'll apply for the Nursing program at Butler Community College and she hopes she's accepted for this fall. That would mean she would be finishing her RN in the same semester that it will be time to exit the BRIDGES program.

"Even if I have to re-apply for the spring 2014 semester, I know I have people who will be helping me connect with the resources to make it through until I can get a good job and have my own place," said Sarah.

Sarah exemplifies the reason for the BRIDGES program's existence—to help older youth, who are in a precarious situation, find the footing they need to make a good life for themselves and often, their children.



Volunteers are important to us in so many ways. From helping with mailings, to sorting donations that come in for the children, to mentoring our youth. Every volunteer helps us make a difference in a child's life. April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month and we are thankful for all of the volunteers who give their time to help us help the children.



The second week of December, volunteers helped sort the toys and gift items that were donated so each child had a gift under the Christmas Tree.



Employees from Triumph Aerospace raised funds and "adopted" several of our BRIDGES youth at Christmas. They purchased items from the youths' wish lists and went shopping for them. This is the second year they have sponsored our youth.



A group of volunteers from the Weaver company brought us a welcome surprise when they pulled up with a moving truck full of food, new clothing, toys and hygiene items the company's employees had collected for the children.



For the fifth year, Mel Hambelton Ford General Manager Phil Nightingale spent Dec. 1 on the roof of the dealership until five Ford pickup trucks were filled with gifts for the children and youth at the Wichita Children's Home.

3rd Annual Classic Cars for Kids April 11 features restored 1970 HemiCuda



Classic Cars for Kids brings dozens of beautifully restored cars and trucks to Century II Exhibition Hall to benefit the Wichita Children's Home. This evening includes heavy hors d'oeuvres, incredible cars, a silent and live auction and knowing you are helping WCH be here for the children.

The HemiCuda. It is perhaps the ultimate in classic cars for the Mopar car enthusiast. At the 3rd Annual Classic Cars for Kids, this fully restored, numbers matching 1970 HemiCuda will be the featured car.

It will be joined by meticulously restored muscle cars, sports cars, stock models and hot rods in the Century II Exhibition Hall on April 11. Classic Cars for Kids is one of the major fundraisers for WCH.

Tim Bonnell, Sr., who owns the 'Cuda is pleased his car will be there to help. When he first bought the car, it had a different engine. By a quirk of fate, the help of eBay, and some negotiation, he was able to track down the original engine.

"I've kept track of the entire process restoring this car," said Bonnell. "I bring the notebook with all the records with the car when it shows."

You don't have to be a fan of classic cars to enjoy the event, but you should like to party with hundreds of others who support the work of WCH.

Silent and live auction items are being collected from dozens of Wichita businesses and individuals. Travel and entertainment packages are being put together for bidding.

"There should be something for everyone at the auctions," said Janet Pack. "We are inspired by the many people who are donating for this event again and those who heard about it and want to be involved this year."

You can request tickets, which are \$100 per person, with \$57 of each ticket tax deductible, through the WCH web site address below.

> Reserve your tickets online at: www.wch.org Click on "Events"



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Photo by Chris Albertson

"Fore the Kids" Golf Tournament celebrates 30th year when golfers tee off June 3 at Crestview Country Club



At last year's tournament, Jeff Stutey, Brett Jackson, Mike Carney, Jeff Adams comprised one of the teams for Fugate Enterprises, the long-time presenting sponsor of the "Fore the Kids" Golf Tournament.

For its 30th year, the Annual "Fore the Kids" Golf Tournament date has moved to Monday, June 3 at the Crestview Country Club.

We extend our thanks to Fugate Enterprises for renewing as the presenting sponsor this year.

The "Fore the Kids" Golf Tournament tees off bright and early Monday morning for the breakfast round at 7:30 a.m. with the lunch round beginning at 1:15 p.m. Every player has a hole in one opportunity to win a special prize. Registration is \$300 per player.

Pre-Tournament Party May 30

Golf registrants and the public are invited to join us Thursday,

May 30 at Crestview Country Club for a special 30th anniversary party with live music by Déjà Vu.

Complimentary beer and wine with cookout-style hamburgers and hot dogs will be served with a live auction following.

"We are looking forward to celebrating the 30th year of what is our biggest fundraiser for WCH," said Director of Development, Janet Pack.

Tickets are \$30 and each golf registrant will receive a complimentary ticket in their packet.

In addition, there will be a putting contest for \$10 per round with prizes awarded for first, second and third place. Everyone at the party is invited to participate, whether or not you're a golfer.

Please Note the Move to JUNE this year:

Monday, June 3 Register online at www.wch.org/events

125 Year Milestone from page 1

"We knew there was no stability for them, which lead us to look at what we could provide to help."

By this time, WCH was the only crisis residential center in Wichita. Focusing on what they do best—police protective custody residential and short-term foster care for children and youth from newborns through age 21–the WCH applied this expertise to expanding the term "residential" for the oldest youth who needed a stable situation as they exited the care of the State.

This was how the BRIDGES program came to be in the early 1990s—there was no resource for children aging out of the foster system. BRIDGES is a partnership with resources in Wichita for counseling, life and parenting skills, educational, and occupational training. Robinson noted there are 82 of these programs across the country now.

"We address their trauma first, then partner with others who help with parenting and life skills," said Robinson. "We work to break the cycle of abuse by giving them a better way to manage stress, coping with what life throws at you and seeing that they can move forward."

As more services became available for the youngest children,

the WCH chose to close the nursery in 2000 and the six- to 12-year-old "household" in 2004. No longer do children stay for years, but even those who spent a short time with the WCH come back to visit because of the open arms they found when they needed them most.

Most children in the foster care system in Sedgwick County come through the Wichita Children's Home. In the last decade, that's well over 11,000. Consider how many lives have been touched in 12 decades. Consider how many lives are affected because the WCH is here at anytime of the day or night.

Following are the Wichita Children's Home Memorials from Sept. 1, 2012 to Feb. 28, 2013

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> Celebrating 125 Years of Caring



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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

During Child Abuse Prevention Month, learn how you can become part of the solution

We see the results of abuse, but also work to prevent child abuse by helping families from the Families Kan Project to the voluntary care program, to the dozens of presentations we do each year in the community.

You, too, can become part of helping to stop the abuse cycle.

Please consider helping in these ways:

- Be aware of the children in your neighborhood, at church or in your classroom at school.
- If you know of a parent(s) who is struggling, offer to give them a break and care for their child(ren) or consider being their mentor.
- Become involved with a program or agency that works with parents and children.
- Contact KCSL or WCH to request

a "Period of Purple Crying" video to share with groups you're involved with to educate parents about Shaken Baby Syndrome.

• Refer a parent to United Way's 2-1-1 line for services, or the Kansas Children's Service League's Parent Help Line (800) 332-6378 or the Wichita Children's Home voluntary care program, (316) 684-6581.

If you have a concern about a child's safety, contact the local Wichita DCF office at (316) 337-6601 or the 24-hour Kansas Protection Report Center at (800) 922-5330.

For more information on child abuse, go to www.preventchildabuse.org.

We all can help stop child abuse by being aware and being willing to help where we can.



April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month