



COMMUNITY VOICE

Summer 2020

Our team members sporting masks that you generously donated. Thank you!

Our Current Normal

How were you expecting to spend your summer? Yeah, us neither. Yet here we are, in the midst of the most serious public health crisis in any of our lifetimes, navigating the ever-shifting world of new regulations, best-practices and scientific findings.

As we have adapted to keep the children and families we work with safe, you rose to meet our new needs time and time again! From donating homemade masks, to raising funds for a foster care mentorship program in St. Louis, to providing takeout meals for youth in residential treatment, we're in awe of your generosity and ingenuity.

The changes brought on by COVID-19 are affecting everyone. If you are feeling an increased level of anxiety or depression during this time, you are not alone. There is actually a term for what we are experiencing societally: collective trauma.

Collective trauma occurs when a group of people experiences a distressing event that their brains and nervous systems are unable to process. This additional stress makes

things especially difficult for individuals and families who were already experiencing traumatic circumstances before the pandemic.

Calls to the child abuse prevention hotline have dropped in half since the widespread closing of schools and businesses because teachers and other mandatory reporters aren't able to see the signs they normally would, not because instances of abuse and neglect have gone down.

In fact, they have likely increased. It's a sobering reminder of the importance of our mission and has kept us going even when the work gets hard.

No matter how much we have to adapt, we are still committed to recognizing, understanding and responding to trauma in our community. Please know that we are here for you, and that we are incredibly grateful that you are here for us. We will get through this together!

To support our mission during this time, make a donation at cornerstonesofcare.org/donate.



Letter from the CEO

Denise Cross

Over the last several months, our team members, children and families have all felt the impact of COVID-19.

Youth in residential care have been sheltering-in-place while continuing to attend school virtually. Foster parents have been working hard to maintain routines and virtual visits with the children in their care and the biological families who love them. Families already impacted by trauma are continuing to take steps toward healing while battling unemployment and additional stress. Today, the work of our essential team is more important than ever.

Fortunately, we are surrounded by a community who cares about the health and safety of their neighbors. Thank you to the Individuals, families, organizations and companies who answered our call for help as expenses to execute our mission increased.

Only because of you, were we able to shift to long-term virtual support with the purchase of additional technology. Only because of you, were we able to cover the increased cost of food and activities for youth in residential care and Pathways transitional living. Only because of you, were we able to purchase additional cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment to keep our children, families and team members safe.

“Most all of my families have needed grocery assistance — two separate fathers have been laid off, so money is tight. In order to help with groceries and limit exposure to COVID-19, we are placing online grocery orders for families at walmart.com. Families are able to utilize the curbside pickup. Other than a few items being out of stock, this has been a great way to get families the necessities they need.”

—Stacie, intensive in-home specialist

Our leadership team is closely monitoring local, state, regional and federal best practices and recommendations and adapting to meet the specific needs of our organization and the children and families we partner with. We’re working closely with the Kansas Department for Children and Families, Missouri Children’s Division, school districts and others to continue meeting the needs of children and families while keeping everyone safe. Every day, we learn more and consider new ways to safely do our work.

Learn more about COVID-19 and recent issues impacting communities across the nation at cornerstonesofcare.org/news.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me at denise.cross@cornerstonesofcare.org if you have questions. Thank you for your continued support of the 15,000 children and families we partner with every day.

Be safe,

Denise Cross,
President/CEO

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Lending a Hand



Our youth are so grateful for the activities donated during the sheltering-in-place orders.



Gillis Friends prepare for the car parade they organized to cheer up and cheer on youth in residential care.



Our kids enjoyed the tasty care packages ChickTime KC put together for them.



Our amazing mentors quickly improvised to keep up with their mentees.

Spring and summer are usually our busiest months for volunteer groups, but a global pandemic has a way of waylaying plans. Even so, you found ways to give of yourself during this time. From dedicated mentors adapting to continue “meeting” with their mentees to putting together care packages for our youth to organizing a car parade for kids in residential care, thank you!

In-person volunteer activities are currently suspended to maintain the children’s safety and health. To donate games or activities for the youth, contact Leah at leah.kent@cornerstonesofcare.org.

Wish List

The best part of summer is adventure, fun and being out of school! This is the perfect season after a long winter and quarantine to get out in nature and enjoy the outdoors! Each of our campuses has a swimming pool and lots of room for the youth in residential care to play games, ride bikes or simply explore.

You can help keep our children happy and busy all summer long by donating and delivering one or more of the following items to any of our campuses.

Poolside Fun

- Swimsuit Bottoms (girls’ 10 – ladies XL)
- Beach Towels
- Swim Trunks (men’s XS – XL)
- Swim Goggles
- Flip Flops (men’s & women’s, all sizes)

Outdoor Games

- Corn Hole
- Sidewalk Chalk
- Kickballs
- Slip-n-Slides
- Ring Toss
- Washers



These activities will be great additions to our campus cookouts and game days this summer!

We respectfully request that all of the items be new. If you would like to donate used items, please schedule a free pick up with our thrift store partner, MAJ-R Thrift, at kcdonationpickup.org. To learn more, contact Leah Kent at leah.kent@cornerstonesofcare.org.



Taking Fundraising Online

Youth spent all winter and early spring planning, planting and growing their plants, flowers and herbs to sell at our annual Thyme for Kids Plant Sale. Then the coronavirus began sweeping across the country. Like many others, we had to adapt to the unusual times we were living in because canceling after all the hard work the children spent caring for their plants was not an option. We didn't know what to expect as we took the Plant Sale entirely online for the first time. You humbled us by your response and continued support of the youth and event:

“The plants arrived and they are beautiful! Please share with the kiddos who worked so hard to grow these that they are bringing so much joy to me right now!”

—Courtney C.

“I was excited when the truck pulled up and delivered my flowers. Everything is beautiful! Thanks so much!”

—Kristen T.



“I’m so glad you were able to continue the sale in these strange times — I know the program means a lot to the kids. Thanks for all you do!”

—Rachel C.

“I would be happy to donate to the plant sale funds. I love that this is a thing! Two of my favorite things — plants and giving to charity! Thanks again.”

—Shelby A.

“I’m so pleased to be part of this and am so happy about the success! Thanks very much for this very special work you are doing.”

—Teresa S.



This year, 439 gardeners shopped online, raising \$28,270 for our Build Trybe program. These funds will help youth heal from trauma while learning horticulture, culinary and construction skills. Thank you to all our donors, long-time and new, who helped make this event such a success!

Where does your donation go? Have all your questions answered by contacting Sally at sally.cook@cornerstonesofcare.org.

We're excited to announce this year's exclusive Chiefs Charity Game tee is now available! Show your Kansas City pride with this Charlie Hustle tee that is not available in any stores. And, because you asked for it, we got it for you — the 2019 Chiefs Charity Game “The Kingdom” tees are now available in adult sizes in gray. Long “LIV” the Kansas City Chiefs!

Get one or both shirts today at [chiefscharitygame.com!](http://chiefscharitygame.com/)



Carry Out for a Cause & So Much More!

When schools closed and shelter-in-place recommendations went into effect in Kansas City, it presented a unique challenge at our residential treatment facilities. Suddenly, the youth no longer had family, mentor or volunteer visits. We knew they would need a reprieve, so we asked for help.

What resulted was a “Carry Out Campaign,” where proceeds purchased nutritious meals on weekends, giving the youth a much-deserved treat. It also allowed us to patronize local restaurants that have supported us for years and were experiencing the economic effects of only offering takeout and delivery.

Once we made the announcement, donations started pouring in. The Kansas City Chiefs even became a matching donor. In total, you donated \$75,000!

From April 4 to May 7, Spokes Café, Tribe, Black Sheep Market, Waldo Pizza, Affare and Ragazza safely provided more than 2,100 delicious, individually packaged meals. The food was top-notch, and our youth were overjoyed every weekend when they arrived.



Your generosity exceed our wildest expectations. The surplus funds raised are being put to good use addressing other needs stemming from COVID-19, such as communication tools and sanitation equipment for team members working directly with children and families. Thank you to everyone — donors and restaurants — who partnered with us to make this happen. We are incredibly grateful!



Planning for the Future

The Cornerstones of Care Foundation supports our mission through planned gifts from donors like you. If you do not have a will or estate plan, now is a great time to create or update yours. It can be a simple and rewarding process that provides you with peace of mind knowing your family and the causes you care about are supported in the future.

To learn more and receive free resources, contact Laurie at 816.508.3608 or laurie.minx@cornerstonesofcare.org.



Taking Care of Yourself

During these unprecedented times, the need for self-care has never been more important. Prioritizing our mental and physical health is essential when it comes to being productive in the workplace and in our own personal spaces, which are often the same these days.

For caretakers navigating this strange new normal, it’s important to remember to “put the oxygen mask on first.” When we are able to take care of ourselves and manage our own emotions and stress, we are able to more effectively and lovingly care for those who rely on us.



Take a moment to create a list of self-care activities you can incorporate in your daily life. Be thoughtful and realistic, such as:

- Spend time with a pet/animal.
- Sing or listen to music.
- Shake, move your body or dance.
- Take a walk outside.
- Sit by a tree and be with nature.
- Think of a peaceful place or meditate.
- Write down your feelings.
- Draw.
- Let your frustration out by making a lot of noise where you won't bother anyone else.
- Talk it out.
- Take five deep breaths.
- Sleep — relax your body and mind.
- Exercise.
- Eat good food.

When life is overwhelming, take a step back and practice self-care. Remember, before you can care for someone else, you have to take care of yourself. Make it a priority.

Learn more about self-care and the Sanctuary Model® of trauma-informed care at cornerstonesofcare.org/traumainformed.

Lighting the Way for Children and Families

Spotlighting Our Staff



Chavonne Woods, youth behavioral health specialist

Chavonne Woods looks after the youth in our residential treatment program on our Gillis Campus. When she isn't working, Chavonne relaxes at home reading and enjoys shopping in her spare time.

What is your position? I am a youth behavioral health specialist shift lead and have been with Cornerstones of Care for 5 years. I work on all the dorms, motivating both the youth and my teammates.

What does your typical day look like? I have some one-on-one time with different youth, help facilitate some group activities, and work to understand each child's learning level and understanding what works for them so our activities can teach them something everyday.

What do you love about what you do? I love being able to work with all the children, being there for them and seeing their smiles — that really brightens your day. I love just knowing that I am helping them.

What is your favorite Cornerstones of Care memory? That's hard. I'd say it's between being able to cook breakfast for the kids, then watch them open gifts for Christmas or watching one boy who had no family find one, get adopted and change his last name — that was special.

What is your favorite quote or saying? "Lead one, teach one."

Learn more about our residential treatment services at cornerstonesofcare.org/residential.

New Virtual Opportunities for Potential Foster Parents



Expanding Services

Before the pandemic, 11 children in Kansas and 19 children in Missouri were removed from their home every day due to abuse or neglect. During recent stay-at-home orders, calls to the Child Abuse Hotline have dropped by nearly 50%.

Unfortunately, the decrease in calls can be attributed to teachers, school staff and child care providers no longer seeing children on a day-to-day basis. Nearly 40% of all hotline calls originate from this group of mandatory reporters.

As children begin to reenter our community, attending summer school, clubs, sporting events and other activities, we expect to experience a significant influx of children entering foster care.

We firmly believe that parents do not wake up in the morning intending to harm their children. When parents have untreated trauma, lack a support network and/or are under significant stress due to employment issues and other factors, the chance of substance abuse increases and the safety of the home decreases.

The information in this article and much more is available to you or anyone you may know who is called to join the community response to families in crisis. Every day, we license individuals, couples and families just like you to safely care for children and partner with biological families.

We're making learning about the need and licensing process even easier by offering virtual opportunities:

1. Download our free 20-minute 'Become a Foster Parent 101: Everything You Need to Know' video.
2. Sign up for a one-hour Real Talk with a Real Foster Parent virtual meeting to get your burning questions answered by an experienced professional.

Visit cornerstonesofcare.org/foster to learn more about these virtual opportunities. Your help spreading the word of the critical need for more foster parents is sincerely appreciated.

The Willingness to Change

Davis* and Darlene are young parents with a history of substance abuse and childhood trauma. They were referred to our intensive in-home services (IIS) after an argument spiraled out of control while they were both under the influence and their kids were at home. They had developed very destructive ways of relating to one another, and as in this instance, it often ended in domestic violence.

At their first meeting with Vicki, our IIS specialist, it was apparent that they recognized the need for change and the seriousness of the patterns they were stuck in, but were unsure of how to move toward healing.

“Both Davis and Darlene were open to services, honest and willing to do whatever it took to make changes for themselves and their children,” says Vicki.



Vicki worked with the couple to develop a relapse prevention plan, identifying triggers that led to their usage and working on coping strategies to deal with some of the underlying issues driving them toward destructive behaviors. During the process, there was a very restrictive safety plan in place that included a zero tolerance of alcohol in the home and daily check-ins by Vicki as well as regular screenings.

“They went to each screening and did not fail one test,” Vicki says. “The dedication that takes is huge!”

At the end of their six weeks with us, Davis and Darlene were hopeful for what lay ahead for them, and so are we! They have remained sober for over a year now, and the kids are safe and thriving in a much healthier home environment.

** Names have been changed to protect identities.*

We firmly believe that prevention and early intervention are the most effective tools we have in reducing the effects of trauma. Learn more about IIS at cornerstonesofcare.org/intervention.



Honors & Memorials

Memorial and honor giving have a lasting impact on the children and families we serve by sustaining the long-term needs of our programs. You may remember a departed friend or loved one, or honor a living individual, by sending a gift in their name via the enclosed envelope or at cornerstonesofcare.org/donate. Please include contact information for those to be notified of your gift.

In Honor Of

William “Fess” Clark
Ms. Ryann Waller

Lynn Cooper
Dr. & Mrs. Donald M. Lieberwitz

Bryan Higdon
Ms. Marcia Hatfield

In Memory Of

David Allen Scheible
Mrs. Barbara Scheible

Roy William Scheible
Mrs. Barbara Scheible



Celebrating Successes

While a good portion of our team are able to work from home during the coronavirus pandemic, many are still in direct contact with youth and community members to provide critical services. When we asked for your help to protect them, you answered the call. We received more than 1,900 homemade and store-bought masks to keep our team safe — thank you!



CORNERSTONES OF CARE

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TRIVIA NIGHT

FOR KANSAS CITY CHILDREN & FAMILIES



The easiest way to positively impact thousands of lives is to join us at an upcoming event. With your help, we can ensure children and families are safe and healthy.

Join Us

**CHIEFS CHARITY GAME
TRIVIA NIGHT**
August 7 — Now a Virtual Event!

Do you love trivia? It's time to put your skills to the test! Gather your closest friends for a fun evening of friendly trivia competition from the comfort of your own home. We'll even have some goodies to keep you entertained throughout the evening. Who knows? You could walk away the trivia champ!

Register team at
cornerstonesofcare.org/trivianight.

Don't Forget

**OPEN DISC GOLF
TOURNAMENT**
September 19
Thornfield Disc Golf Course

Relax with a day of frisbees, foliage and fun at our Open Disc Golf Tournament. Featuring 18 holes of disc golf play, contests, raffles, prizes and lunch at the private Thornfield Disc Golf Course, what more could you want?

Learn more by visiting
cornerstonesofcare.org/disc.

Upcoming Events

CHIEFS CHARITY GAME
TBD
chiefscharitygame.com

CHIEFS CHARITY GAME TRIVIA NIGHT
Aug. 7 — Now a Virtual Event!
chiefscharitygame.com

OPEN DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT
Sept. 19 @ Thornfield Disc Golf Course
cornerstonesofcare.org/disc

PIES FOR A PURPOSE
October — December
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QUESTIONS?
Contact Katie at 913-515-7951 or
katie.culbertson@cornerstonesofcare.org.

