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We Care Newsletter

Impact of Violence on Children

FALL
2016

Each year millions of children are exposed to violence in their homes and/or their neighborhoods. Often unseen, the impact of domestic violence on children in our community is profound. In addition to dramatically impacting a child's ability to do well in school, form healthy relationships, and avoid drug and alcohol abuse, the impact of violence on young children has a clear effect on the likelihood of the victim becoming an abuser later in life.

What do children need to grow up safe and healthy? They need a safe and secure home that is free of violence, neighborhoods that are safe, and families who love and protect them. For many children, their homes and/or neighborhoods are not safe havens.



Here at We Care we recognize the devastation violence has on children, families, and the community as a whole. For this reason, we have many programs -- that you as part of our We Care Family support -- that work with children and families living with violence. Your belief in and support of our work helps us change harmful patterns in families and create safe home environments. Below, we share a story with you of just

the sort of impact We Care - and you - have on the most vulnerable children in our community.

Ben was four years old and had a history of exposure to community violence, domestic violence, neglect, and abuse. His experience caused tantrums, speech delays, night terrors, and intense separation anxiety from his mother, a victim of domestic violence who was struggling to leave her relationship with the abuser.

Ben's mother knew she needed to get help for her son, but she was reluctant to participate herself and trust the therapist enough to attend sessions regularly. She did not know why she needed to be in therapy with her son and didn't understand the connection between her exposure to violence and his behaviors.



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A message from **Pete Caldwell** Executive Director



Fall is always an exciting time at We Care. If you're following us on Facebook (and please do!), you recently saw pictures of an amazing group of kids arriving for their first-ever preschool or therapeutic experience. That morning with eyes wide and more than a little concern, they met the professionals who are now changing the arc of their lives. By the time they left at the end of the day, each couldn't wait to come back.

For them, of course, We Care is fun and interesting and filled with really nice people; but for all the teachers, behavior specialists, and therapists working hard to develop assessments, plans, and customized approaches to the children's unique needs, it's intense and profound work. As the fall progresses, we'll see the changes in these children's abilities that come from that hard work, and for those on staff at We Care, being a part of that amazing process is what makes all the hard work worthwhile.

This year fall also brings exciting additions to our teaching and clinical staff, new investments from generous partners who share our understanding of how critical it is to provide early intervention, and improvements in the ways we deliver services.

I'm particularly excited this year by the advances we've made in integrating our mental health and developmental programs. Through the generosity of the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation and Steve and Debra Gonsalves, we now have developmental consultation available for all our mental health cases as well as a process to bring mental health assessment, planning, and treatment to children in our developmental classrooms. This integration and these new services signal a tremendous step forward for We Care in our ability to address the specific needs of the children who depend upon us. Too, we're extraordinarily grateful for the incredible partnerships we've been able to forge with some of the most far-sighted, compassionate, and generous community funding leaders in Contra Costa County.

...so, happy fall, and thank YOU for being part of the We Care Family!

Best,

Pete

Giving Through Your Workplace

Thank you to those who choose to give through their workplace programs. Your donations allow us to enhance and expand programs and work with more children and families in our community. We encourage you to once again choose We Care when selecting your area of support.

Join AmazonSmile

Want an easy way to help children at We Care. Join AmazonSmile and select We Care Services for Children as your charitable organization. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases. Get started today <https://smile.amazon.com>.

Impact of Violence on Children (cont.)

In the treatment sessions, the therapist knew she needed to build trust between herself and the mother. She was able to do this in part by providing case management that helped find housing and respite services. Once this was accomplished, the therapist was able to focus on the relationship between mother and son. She helped mom develop empathy and new, healthier communication skills with her son that eased his tantrums, night terrors, and separation anxiety. Reflective play (a counseling method to help children communicate their inner experiences through the use of toys and play) was used with Ben to give him a voice to express his feelings.

During the sessions with mom, she opened up and shared her history of trauma and how her current relationship was causing flashbacks to earlier abusive encounters. This disclosure helped the therapist work with her to help understand how her past was impacting her relationship with her son.



The end result of the counseling sessions was a dramatically changed relationship where their home became a "safe haven" free from violence. Ben now has fewer tantrums, night terrors, and he no longer has separation anxiety from mom. The long-term result for Ben is that in addition to having a dramatically safer childhood, the likelihood of him continuing the cycle of violence and becoming an abuser himself has dramatically decreased.

We Care Services for Children

Cordially Invites You to Attend the

Little Stars
Gala

Saturday, November 5, 2016

5:30 pm to 11:00 pm

Contra Costa Country Club
801 Golf Club Road
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Reservations \$125 each or table of 10 for \$1,125

www.wecarechildren.org/events

Cocktail Attire, Black Tie Optional

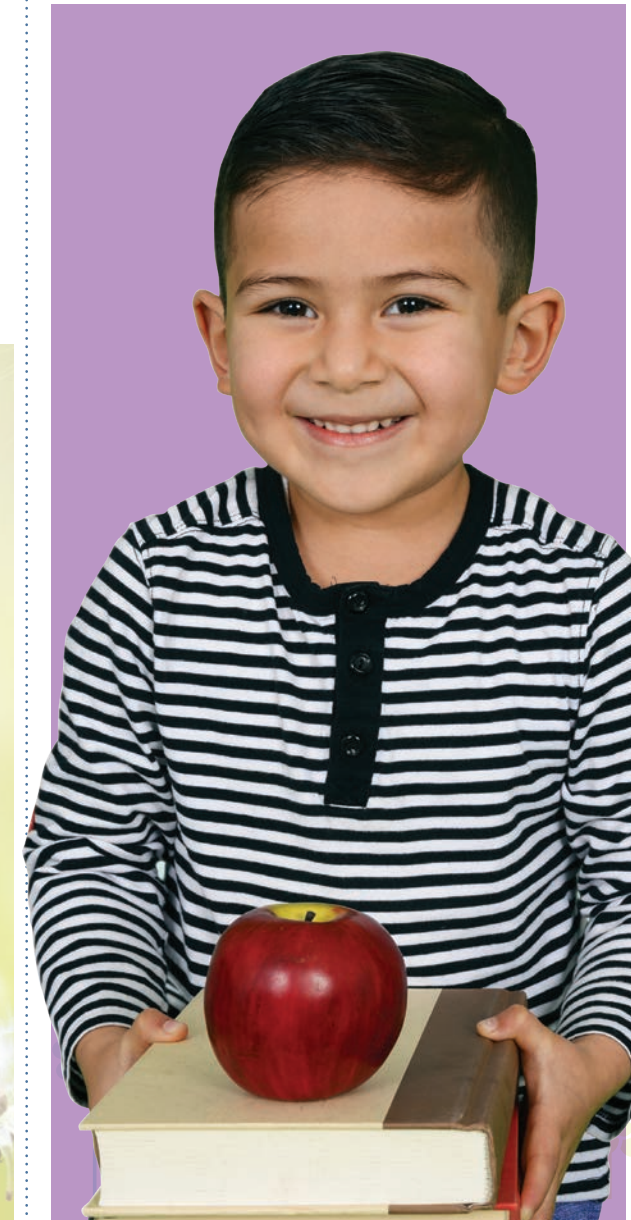
Hope Changes Everything Gala Sponsors

Hitachi Data Systems | Tesoro Corporation
Kiwanis Club of Walnut Creek | R. C. Fischer & Co.
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Check out our latest educational videos!

You'll find them on our website (wecarechildren.org) in "Videos" on the "News" menu.



our mission

Through targeted, compassionate, and effective early intervention services, We Care helps young children and their families reach their full potential, regardless of their abilities or circumstances.

Our Incredible Board of Directors

Of all the volunteers at We Care who give so generously of their energy, wisdom, and compassion, one group is impossible to acknowledge adequately - the members of our board of directors. Each of these remarkable people takes significant time and energy away from their “regular” lives to ensure that the things required to keep We Care functioning are in place. From strategic planning to political connections to fundraising and sharing significant expertise, these talented and passionate community leaders are indispensable. *We thank them for all they do.*

Currently, We Care has openings on its board. We have a wide range of skills and experiences and backgrounds so are not limited to any particular skill sets. What we are looking for are individuals with passion for the work we do, a willingness to serve as an ambassador for the agency, and a commitment to supporting our work. If you, or someone you know has these qualities and interests and would like to know more about board membership, contact our Executive Director Pete Caldwell at pcaldwell@wecarechildren.org for more information or to connect with our board governance committee. Thank you!

