



Our Mental Health Programs



Meet Erica!



Thank You to Our Gala Sponsors!

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we care news

Fall 2019

Dear We Care Family,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well and enjoying the season!

This has been an eventful few months at We Care. In addition to exciting new program efforts in our work with infants in our mental health department and strategic planning in our developmental programs, we held our annual Gala – by far the most successful in We Care’s history!

The work of so many talented, dedicated staff and volunteers created an incredible and elegant evening of celebration and support. Guests enjoyed silent- and live-auction packages, Monte Carlo-themed gaming, a wonderful dinner, and dancing late into the night. **Most importantly, we ended the evening with an unprecedented outpouring of financial support for We Care and we could not be more grateful!**

The resources raised that night will do so much. As opposed to grants and contracts that have limitations, these funds allow us to continue to innovate and dramatically improve our reach to children in our community. These are the resources that impact the lives of children who otherwise “fall through the cracks.” I can’t overstate how important this is – and how appreciative we are of the deep generosity of the people who believe in the importance of the type of work We Care does.

If you attended, you know how grateful we are, and if you didn’t, please join us on October 17, 2020! I’m thrilled to announce that **we’ll be hosting a celebration of We Care’s 60th year!** This very special night will be at the Blackhawk Auto Museum, a perfect fit for a “timeless” celebration! Mark your calendars, and again, thank you for all you do to help many of the most vulnerable children in our community.

Pete



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Our Mental Health Treatment Programs

In We Care's mental health treatment programs, each day our clinicians work to help heal young children exposed to violence in their home or community. This is some of the most important work we do.

Not that long ago, psychologists thought that because of their age, very young children had a unique resiliency that allowed them to escape the kind of impact older children experience as a result of "mere" exposure to domestic violence or other types of trauma. Decades of research now prove that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) not only have a significant psychological impact but dramatic physical health outcomes as well.

Healing the impact of trauma enables children to grow, learn, be healthy, and avoid continuing a cycle of abuse into adulthood. At We Care, we provide evidence-based therapies that specifically address the debilitating impact of all types of early trauma and it is the extraordinary generosity of partners like you that enables us to do this critical work. We wanted to share a story of one such case. We have changed the names of the child and mother.

"Tyler" was a three-year-old with a history of exposure to domestic violence, neglect, and abuse. The impact of this trauma included tantrums, speech delays, night terrors, and intense separation anxiety from his mother, "Christie," who herself was the main victim of the violence and was struggling to gain the strength to leave her relationship with the abuser.

Christie knew she needed to get help for her son, but she was reluctant to trust the "system," which in her mind included Tyler's We Care therapist. Furthermore, she did not understand why she was expected to join Tyler in his treatment. As someone who had been exposed to – and been a victim of – violence her whole life, she had great difficulty understanding the connection between the trauma in their lives and Tyler's behaviors.

In the treatment sessions, the therapist knew she needed to quickly build trust between herself and Tyler's mother. She helped create this bond by including aspects of case management that Christie felt were more helpful than "just" therapy. Help with housing and support that enabled Christie to escape her abusive relationship then allowed a level of trust that brought her into parent/child therapy. Once this was accomplished, the therapist was able to focus on the relationship between mother and son. She helped Christie develop empathy



At We Care, we protect the privacy of children in our care even when their parents give us permission to tell their stories. Therefore, while the families' stories are true, names and images are likely to be changed.

and 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 to give Tyler a voice to express his feelings.

During the sessions, Christie opened up to the therapist about her history of trauma and how her most recent relationship had caused flashbacks to earlier abusive encounters. This disclosure helped the therapist work with Christie to help understand how her past was impacting her parenting.

Treatment drew to a close as the sessions helped craft new and healthier communication between Tyler and his mother, along with a sense of trust and security in his own home that Tyler had never experienced before. Having created this safe haven for herself and her son, Christie reported that his symptoms had reduced dramatically, and when there were occasional lapses, she used the therapy techniques to quickly address the issues. In the last session, Tyler, Christie and the therapist celebrated the new path forward that the family had created. Tyler was going to become a very different teenager and adult than what had seemed, only a year before, to be his destiny.

Cases like this are the reason we work so hard to help provide families with the help they need. **Every child deserves a life free from the impact of devastating circumstances over which they have no control.**

It's your support that makes all this possible.



Welcome We Care's New Director of Marketing & Communications

We are so excited to introduce We Care's new Director of Marketing and Communications, Erica Williamson! Erica comes to us with a long history of incredible service to our community based on her love of children and powerful commitment to the principles of volunteerism. In addition to her professional career working in HR and Communications at a public agency for 21 years, Erica has volunteered with both the Down Syndrome Connection and Special Olympics, as well as other nonprofits. She currently is a Wish Granter with the Make-A-Wish foundation. Her experience in these various positions was perfectly suited to creating a deep understanding of and passion for We Care's work.



And talk about jumping right into the thick of it! On day one, she picked up the lead on preparations for our annual gala from Barbara Langsdale who was retiring from We Care. And at the end of her 4th month, Erica threw one of the best events We Care has ever had! The evening was an extraordinary success, and her talents, creativity, humor, professionalism, and epic effort were on display throughout.

We could not feel more fortunate to have such an amazing person follow Barbara in this role. Welcome, Erica!

workplace giving

We Care is so thankful to our supporters who donate through their workplace campaigns and hope you continue to do so.

For those who are new to workplace giving, check with your Human Resource department and please consider choosing to donate to We Care.



we care videos

To hear about your impact on one We Care client, go to wecarechildren.org/videos and watch "Michael's Story."



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(11/2019)