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Community Support



A Message from Pete Caldwell



Foster Placement Becomes Forever Home

we care news

Spring 2024

Community Support Accelerates We Care's Mission

After navigating some of the most extraordinary years in We Care's history, we've had a little time to reflect on the pandemic's true impact on the community we serve and on our agency.

Perhaps most importantly are the things we've learned about our work and the profound support we receive from folks like you who share our vision of a healthy, supportive world for some of Contra Costa's youngest and most vulnerable children. We were able to build incredible connections during the worst of the pandemic because so many thoughtful and compassionate individuals and organizations were wondering how they could help less fortunate families – and then acting on it!

This commitment was never more evident than at the We Care gala at the Blackhawk Auto Museum last fall. During this wonderful evening, we celebrated alongside our loyal supporters, new partners, teachers, staff, and board members. The gala was our most successful event to date, and furthered our ability to extend our safety-net services to even more at-risk children and their families.

And while it was truly an outstanding moment in 2023, the gala was just one of many times our community demonstrated its unwavering support. This past year was remarkable in forging new connections thanks to the shared stories of our families, supporters, staff, and board members.

Here are just a few of the highlights:

- We participated in an exciting grant process with Impact Diablo Valley, a phenomenal local nonprofit. We made several presentations to more than 100 member families. From among 28 outstanding nonprofits, we were extremely honored to be chosen as the 2023 community grant recipient.
- A local firefighters' union created a community partnership with We Care, resulting in not only funding but also the opportunity to share more about our services with families who could benefit from our help.
- Community groups ranging from churches to Eagle Scouts and women's circles reached out to lend their support.

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A message from:

Pete Caldwell, Executive Director



Dear We Care Family,

Welcome to We Care's spring newsletter, and thank you so much for taking the time to read about the latest updates and stories from our staff and partners.

Included here are a story about a remarkable family we had the privilege to work with, some great information in our Advocacy Corner, and our heartfelt gratitude for all the ways We Care has been supported by this community over the past few extraordinary years.

From the hard work of our teachers, clinicians, therapists, and specialists as they navigated – and created – new ways to bring their work to the children who needed them most, to the foundations that actively approached us to see how they could best help, to the individual donors who looked past their own challenges and ensured that their philanthropy was put to good use, we passed through the worst of the pandemic with our programs intact and more than a few important lessons learned.

We are extremely lucky . . . and overwhelmingly grateful.

Looking forward, there are changes in how state and local funding impact our core services, as well as an uncertain economy. But challenges are a normal part of this kind of work, and what IS certain is that We Care's incredible staff and board of directors will ensure that our agency continues to grow.

Every child deserves a chance to thrive, and your support is helping to make that possible for even more at-risk children in Contra Costa County. We are deeply appreciative for your commitment to our mission and your dedication to making a difference in the lives of these children.

So thank you again for checking out our newsletter, and as always, please reach out if you have any questions or if there's anything you'd like to share.

Sincerely,

Pete



join

the We Care Community:

Email: ewilliamson@wecarechildren.org
to be added to our email or mailing lists

[wecare.services.for.children](https://www.facebook.com/wecare.services.for.children)

[@wecare_servicesforchildren](https://www.instagram.com/wecare_servicesforchildren)

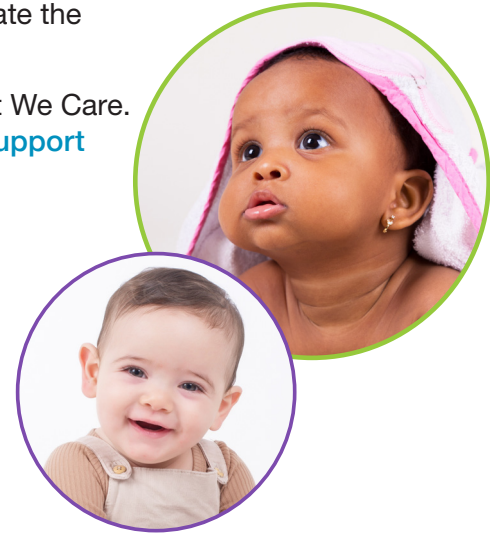
[wecare-services-for-children](https://www.linkedin.com/company/wecare-services-for-children)

YouTube Search
We Care Services for Children

Community Support Accelerates We Care's Mission (continued from page 1)

- Local foundations recognized the alignment of our work with their funding priorities, awarding us grants to further our mission.
- Employees across various industries supported We Care by contributing through workplace giving programs, and their employers matched those donations.
- A local casino included us in the list of nonprofits to which patrons can donate the change from their ticket vouchers.

The outpouring of support has been a source of immense inspiration to us all at We Care. **Each donation and each act of kindness extends our reach, enabling us to support more at-risk children and their families.**



Advocacy Corner

Across America, a silent public health crisis affects untold numbers of the youngest and most vulnerable residents – early childhood mental health and the pervasive impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

As our community navigates a world reshaped by pandemic stressors and the chronic toxic stress of systemic injustices, an estimated 7,000 to 10,000 young children in Contra Costa County desperately need mental health intervention that they are unable to access. Providing nurturing, trauma-informed care in early childhood when it can have the most benefit is pivotal for forging pathways to resilience and healing, and preventing challenges that can last a lifetime.

Please consider joining We Care in our mission through the following activities:

- Educate yourself and others about the significance of early childhood mental health and the impact of ACEs.
- Raise awareness within your community about these critical issues.
- Contact your local representatives to advocate for increased funding and support.
- Support organizations that serve children and families affected by ACEs.



Together, we can help change the lives of many at-risk, underserved children and their families, and strengthen our community.

Your involvement can give these children the chance to thrive.



In response to a call for help from their church, Jason and Lisa opened their home to three young girls whose biological parents were struggling to provide for their needs. The placement was intended to only be for a few weeks, so Jason and Lisa weren't too concerned by how little they knew about the girls and the real reasons they'd been removed from their parents.

Soon though, the girls were showing extreme behaviors, from tantrums and screaming to a disturbing refusal to play or sometimes even to just move. Jason and Lisa recognized that for all their experience with children, they didn't know how to deal with what seemed like deep trauma behaviors.

Lisa was crying herself to sleep most nights, exhausted and worried, as it became clear that the girls were all experiencing the effects of physical and emotional abuse.

But Jason and Lisa refused to quit. They knew these children needed hope – and help. That is when We Care entered the picture.

Unlike traditional therapy, which often treats children and families separately, our approach is holistic, focusing on healing the family unit. Our therapist worked closely with Jason, Lisa, and the girls, creating strategies based on their strengths and commitment to recovery. Together, the children learned new ways of interacting and coping, and Jason and Lisa learned how to establish an environment that fostered healing.

The transformation was profound. From fearing that the future might not be any different than their past, the girls began to embrace their new family and understand their own worth. And this change wasn't just in the girls. Jason and Lisa, too, felt empowered as they learned skills to navigate future challenges as a family together.

Lisa reflects on a moment that tore at her heart. "My child was having a frantic meltdown and was completely inconsolable. I took a breath and remembered, 'Oh wait, we've got this. We practiced this.' Because of our therapist's guidance, we knew exactly what to do in that moment and every other challenging one since."

With We Care's support, Jason and Lisa delivered on their promise of providing the girls with a loving, permanent family where they are cherished.

Surrounded by other family members, they participated in an adoption ceremony in which they fully committed to supporting, loving, and guiding their new daughters for the rest of their lives.

The girls now have a future where they can be somebody, dream big, and extend the love and affection they have received. Jason and Lisa turned a temporary shelter into a forever home, where love rewrites the past and dreams became a reality for their three brave daughters.

Names have been changed for privacy.



Your Efforts to Connect Us With Others Who Share Our Vision Are Invaluable

As we reflect on the exceptional connections we built and strengthened in 2023, and focus on what's on the horizon for We Care, we are reminded again how vital it is to engage with our community.

And we continue to be amazed at all the ways you come together to help us.

To that end, we extend a heartfelt request to you to consider any opportunities within your networks that resonate with our mission. Introductions to philanthropic departments in large businesses, community groups, or individuals passionate about making a difference can significantly contribute to our ability to reach more at-risk children and their families.

We are immensely grateful for your ongoing support. Together, we can create new opportunities for engaging the community and continue to reach those who need us when we can have the greatest impact.