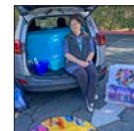




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we care news

Spring 2025

65 Years of Care, Connection and Community

When you think of We Care, you might picture the purple dinosaur on the playground, classrooms full of toddlers learning through play, or families helping their child navigate trauma. But our story began long before any of that—with a group of parents who realized no one was offering help for their preschool children with cognitive and physical disabilities.

As they looked around and asked, “Who cares about our kids?”, they found the answer in themselves: “We care.”

In 1960, those parents came together to create what didn't yet exist: a place where their young children could receive the support they so desperately needed...and deserved. The parents understood their kids' complex needs and knew that real change would have to begin with them.

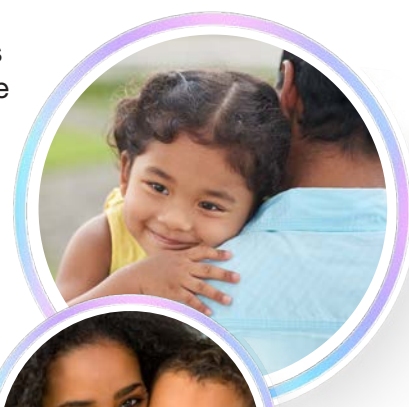
That same spirit lives on in We Care today.

Families are still deeply involved—but now they don't have to face those challenges alone. With We Care by their side, parents can support their child's growth while we provide compassionate, targeted services. That might mean helping a nonverbal toddler communicate, guiding a caregiver through a tough behavioral moment, or supporting a mother's mental health so she can connect with her baby.

This support exists because we continue to evolve with the families we work with—most of whom come from underserved communities and are raising children with significant needs. What began as a developmental center has expanded to include mental health care, education, and family-centered support.

And every family we meet helps shape what we do next.

The pandemic made that adaptability even more critical. We embraced virtual visits, new technologies, and flexible ways to meet families where they are. Many of those changes were integrated into today's model as we discovered they truly work for the families we serve.



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65 Years of Care, Connection and Community Continued from Page 1

And through all that change, some things have stayed exactly the same.

The purple dinosaur still stands tall. Recently, two former We Care kids returned as adults to recreate childhood photos next to that dinosaur and reconnect with longtime staff. These moments remind us that the connections built here truly last a lifetime.

As Executive Director Pete Caldwell says, ***"We are creating future grandparents."***

And that's a legacy we're honored to carry forward—one child, one family, and one generation at a time.

Continuing to Grow Alongside the Families We Serve

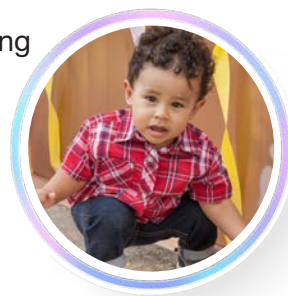
After reflecting on 65 years of growth, it feels only right to turn toward what's next. At We Care, we're always looking for new ways to support families early—when the right kind of help can make all the difference.

To that end, we're expanding in three meaningful ways:

- **Home-Based Infant Development Services:** Weekly home or community visits provide early intervention for infants and toddlers with developmental delays, supporting skills like motor development, communication, and emotional growth.
- **Thrive: Parents as Teachers (PAT):** In partnership with the Early Childhood Mental Health Program, this nationally recognized, research-based model offers in-home support from pregnancy through kindergarten, focusing on parenting tools, child development, and school readiness.
- **Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP):** A trauma-informed treatment that helps young children and caregivers process difficult experiences, and strengthen their relationship through shared healing.

Thrive and CPP are supported by two new state-awarded training grants, allowing us to expand access to high-quality, research-based services. We're honored to be among the few Northern California providers selected to offer these models.

Each of these efforts reflects our commitment to meet families where they are—with care that creates lasting impact across generations.



Remembering Sherry Mullin



It is with very heavy hearts that we share the recent passing of Sherry Mullin who had been a cherished member of the We Care family for 15 years.

Sherry was the first person families and staff saw at our preschool. With a warm smile and wave from her office window, she made everyone feel welcome. Her behind-the-scenes work kept our developmental services running smoothly, but her presence reached far beyond logistics.

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A Playhouse Built with Care—and Community

Earlier this month, We Care was honored to take part in a very special event hosted by Kaiser Permanente Walnut Creek Medical Center in partnership with Habitat for Humanity. **To kick off Nurses and Patient Care Week, Kaiser staff and volunteers came together to build and donate five custom playhouses to local families and nonprofits serving young children.**

Thanks to a nomination from Linsey Dicks, our longtime board member and Kaiser's Chief Administrative Officer, We Care was selected as one of the recipients. The playhouses were built onsite by teams of Kaiser employees who dedicated their day off to support this project. HGTV's Rachel Taylor lent her design expertise to the build teams, and retired NBA player Adonal Foyle joined the event to read his new children's book to families in attendance.

Executive Director Pete Caldwell and Director of Community Engagement Erica Williamson were proud to attend and witness the energy, care, and teamwork that went into creating something so thoughtful for children in our community.

The new handcrafted, custom-painted playhouse is already being used and enjoyed immensely by the children in our developmental preschool and Beyond Boundaries classrooms.

We are so grateful for our long-standing relationship with Kaiser Permanente. From grants and sponsorships to board leadership to generous events like this one, Kaiser has remained a dedicated partner in our mission to support at-risk young children and families.

To everyone at Kaiser and Habitat for Humanity who made this possible—thank you. Your generosity and hard work will bring joy and connection to our children every day.



The new dinosaur-themed playhouse now lives on We Care's preschool playground—right next to our famous purple dinosaur.

WALNUT CREEK
FIRST WORK, THEN PLAY

Affordable housing continues to be one of the most challenging issues facing Bay Area residents, so in addition to contributing \$600,000 to build the 42-unit affordable housing community Engstrom Place in Walnut Creek, Kaiser Permanente has built five children's playhouses on the Walnut Creek Medical Center Campus. Three playhouses will be donated to families in need at A Child's Place Daycare in Antioch, We Care Children in Concord and the Boys and Girls Club, according to Kaiser press release.

Above, 16-year-old Oliver Grigorevski of Pinburg, center, uses a cordless drill to help build one of the playhouses at the Walnut Creek Kaiser campus on Saturday.

HGTV on-air personality Rachel Taylor, right, gives a helping hand to volunteers Michael Wright and Margaret Wheat during Saturday's building get-together project.

Former Golden State Warriors forward Adonal Foyle greets San Erica Williamson of We Care Services for Children at Saturday's event.

Media coverage of the playhouse build in the East Bay Times highlighted We Care's participation in the event, including a photo of Erica Williamson with retired NBA player Adonal Foyle.

Article and images by D. Ross Cameron.

Remembering Sherry Mullin Continued from Page 2

Sherry brought comfort, consistency, and kindness to all who crossed her path.

She also had a deep love for painting, photography, ceramics, jewelry-making, and crochet, and proudly displayed many of her beautiful pieces in her office. As we remember Sherry, her coworkers and the families we serve have reflected on the warmth she brought to everyday moments—how she always made time to help, how her smile brightened their mornings, and how her quiet kindness touched so many.

Sherry helped shape the experience of We Care in ways that will not be forgotten. Her absence is deeply felt, but her impact will continue to live on in the community she was so proud to be part of. We all extend our deepest condolences to Sherry's family and friends.



Rozzie's Big Steps Toward Independence

Rozzie started at We Care's Beyond Boundaries classroom for toddlers with autism, or at risk of autism, just before her second birthday. Born at only 29 weeks, she had already overcome more than most toddlers her age. Her mom, who first connected with We Care when her goddaughter attended years ago, knew Rozzie needed support—especially in communication and social interaction. What she found was so much more—a team who saw Rozzie's potential and knew how to help her reach it.

At home, Rozzie was playful and social, but new settings made her quiet and reserved. On her first day, she brought her favorite Minnie Mouse doll for comfort, but since personal items needed to stay safe in cubbies, she soon found a substitute Minnie in the classroom and carried it everywhere. This was a small but telling glimpse of her resilience and emerging independence—qualities that would continue to be nurtured throughout her time at We Care.

In the classroom, Rozzie was known for her curiosity and joyful energy.

Her teachers, Maria, Masako, and Gina, watched her transform from a quiet observer into a confident, playful leader. She learned to share, take turns, and connect with other children in ways that hadn't come easily before. And as her comfort grew, so did her words. Her language flourished, and she began expressing her needs clearly—not just to her mom, but to the world around her.

Her family saw the difference right away.

She became more verbal, more socially engaged, and more connected to her daily routines. Her mom shared that Rozzie's growth made life at home smoother and created new ways to bond. Despite relying on Uber and Lyft for transportation, she made sure Rozzie rarely missed a day—clear proof of her dedication to her daughter and her belief in what We Care could offer.

By the time Rozzie turned three and transitioned out of the program, she wasn't just ready—she was excited. The toddler who once clung to the edges of group play was now running toward new experiences, eager to participate, learn, and lead. "She was like a magnet," Masako said. "Everyone loved being around her." Maria added, "We got to watch her grow in every way. I can't wait to see what she does next."

From water play and bubble days to coloring and classroom clean-up, Rozzie embraced it all. And as for We Care—we all look forward to seeing what she does next!

