

# BETTER TOMORROWS

An Annual Stewardship Publication of Family & Children's Center 2024

## What's Inside:

2023 Gratitude and Program Report

Respite Care provides a lifeline to families

Better Tomorrows Beyond Abuse - Matty's Place

Safe Visitation helping families thrive

Save the Date - Bridges to Better Tomorrows Returning

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

## Creating A Nurturing Environment to Serve

Thank you for your support to help Family & Children's Center (FCC) provide our life-transforming work.

The mission of Family & Children's Center is: "to serve children, families and individuals with a continuum of services designed to strengthen families and promote individual well-being."

Our mission is to care for, nurture and help individuals and families during some of the biggest hurdles people face in their lives when they have experienced a traumatic life-altering situation or when a loved one faces severe and persistent mental illness.

Just as a blanket provides comfort and security, FCC's success is built on the strong foundation of collaboration, innovation and resilience. In the ever-evolving non-profit landscape, we are dedicated to create growth and sustainability for our clients.

Let the imagery of a blanket serve as a metaphor for our commitment to providing a secure and nurturing environment for our clients, employees, partners, and stakeholders. Just as a blanket wraps around and protects, we have strived to create a culture that fosters a sense of belonging, security and acceptance.

As we navigate the non-profit landscape, we are mindful of the need to adapt and innovate. Change is interwoven into our strategic plans, ensuring that we stay ahead of the curve and continue to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Thank you for being an essential part of our story. Your continued support binds us together toward future successes. We could not be more grateful.



Tita Yutuc, LCSW, LICSW  
President/CEO



Tita Yutuc, LCSW, LICSW

**"There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."**

-Bishop Desmond Tutu



To learn more about FCC's services and community impact or to inquire about making a charitable gift, please visit us at [fcconline.org](http://fcconline.org) or call the Advancement & Marketing Office at (608) 785-0001.



# 2024 Board of Directors



Jerry Arndt



Angela Binsfeld



Carolyn Colleen  
Bostrack, PhD, MBA



Thomas Brock



Deb Carlson



Tyler Dahl



Barb Erickson



Will Gibson



Mary Ann  
Gschwind, FSPA



Heather Jordan



Andrew Guzzo



Pamela Maas



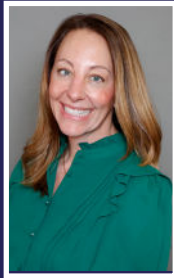
Maria Peterson



Brandon Prinsen



Brian Sines



Amanda Slaggie



Matthew Tradewell



Andrea Wieser



Kathy Wilttrout



## In This Issue:

Page 4 | Introducing our Chair -  
Andrew Guzzo

Page 5 | Preventing child abuse  
in our communities

Page 6 | Respite Care Provides  
A Lifeline To Families

Page 8 | Save the Date!  
Bridges to Better Tomorrows  
Returning October 24

Page 9 | Better Tomorrows  
Beyond Abuse

Page 10 | Safe Visitation program  
helping families heal, thrive

Page 12 | Circle of caring in 2023

Page 13 | Financial Highlights

Page 14-19 | Stewardship  
Report for 2023

Page 20 | In Our ARMHS

Page 20 | Sheronne's Story

Page 21 | Events Calendar

Page 22 | FCC & Partners In  
Wellness Fair Coming to Viroqua



# BRIGHTER DAYS FOR THOSE WE SERVE

Andrew Guzzo has served on the Family & Children's Center Board of Directors for the past six years and currently is the Chair of the Board.

"My Mother and Grandfather provided a family-centered and spiritually-centered experience during my childhood," says Andrew. "They focused on lending themselves to humility and thankfulness for the blessings that are bestowed on many of us. They were clear to me as a child that we are not alone in this existence. We are part of a greater plan and it is important that it is not about 'me.' It is about 'we,' which explains some of why I serve this agency," he says.

As Andrew reflects on the six years of his FCC Board service, a few points stand out:

- The agency's rich, long standing 140-year history of strong Board and CEO leadership has benefitted the agency.
- FCC is agile and able to adjust to changing business needs while still realizing client success, even after the global pandemic.
- The staff addresses challenges head on with thoughtful solutions and ideas.
- The agency has the ability to have a keen focus on fiscal efficiencies while fulfilling the mission with responsiveness to needs of clients and staff.

During Andrew's short time with FCC, he said he has witnessed an amazing team of individuals working together to achieve successful outcomes. My admiration for the professionals on the staff has only grown over time.

"Recently the highlights have been seeing the brand's increasing awareness and the massive philanthropic impact to reach goals to best serve clients to more stable lives. It warms my heart that the message is getting out," adds Andrew.

"Serving and assisting clients for human well-being and safety is the core purpose of FCC. Yet, it does not stop there," recounts Andrew. "The economic impact is far reaching. When our clients get served and transition to a better place, every person the entity serves has the opportunity to then be the best version of themselves, whether it be in school, on the job, or in the community. There is truly a social and an economic advantage with FCC serving our friends and neighbors. It is so gratifying to me, knowing that FCC has highly-trained professionals helping people address some very complex challenges. Of special meaning to me is the intense focus on children. They are our future," adds Andrew.

Andrew believes supporting FCC is important to him and his wife Dawn because they know life is a journey and many have benefitted in some form or fashion by another person helping through difficult times in life. "My wife's value structure is based on sharing her time, treasures, and talents with others. Together, we believe wholeheartedly in the FCC mission as a way to fulfill our goals to serve."

"The challenges and severity people experience through life may be different, but nobody enjoys success or happiness alone.

Likewise, we do not need to, nor should we, have to work through challenges alone," adds Andrew. "This is part of why FCC is vital to our region."

Family & Children's Center - Annual Report

## MEET ANDREW GUZZO



**Andrew Guzzo**  
Family & Children's Center  
Chair, Board of Directors

**"Nobody enjoys success or happiness alone. Likewise, we do not need to, nor should we, have to work through challenges alone. This is part of why FCC is vital to our region."**

**-Andrew Guzzo**



# April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Jennifer Knapp Severson, former board chair and Jerry Papenfuss, 2023 Bridges to Better Tomorrows co-chair placing 'Blue Child Silhouettes' outside of FCC's Franklin Street offices in Winona in April 2023.

Family & Children's Center (FCC) operates two child advocacy centers, Stepping Stones in La Crosse and Matty's Place in Winona, that work with local and state agencies with prevention, early intervention and treatment programs.

Throughout the month of April, FCC will be raising awareness at events and on our social media pages. During the first week of the month, we will highlight that abuse tragically happens in every community. During the second week, we will address how everyone can help end the silence on abuse. In the middle of April, we will address how we can create safe environments for children. And as the month concludes, we will share more about the specific ways that everyone can protect children in Wisconsin, Minnesota and everywhere that they live.

## Signs of abuse and neglect:

- Unexplained injuries, such as bruises
- Extreme behaviors, such as excessive crying, truancy or running away
- Poor hygiene and unsuitable clothing
- Excessive fear of parent(s), caregiver(s) or going home
- Depression or excessive crying
- Constant hunger, tiredness or lack of energy
- Sudden change in behavior
- Attention-seeking behaviors
- Poor peer relationships or inability to relate to children of the same age

For information on FCC's child advocacy centers, contact Danielle Swedberg at [dswedberg@fccnetwork.org](mailto:dswedberg@fccnetwork.org).

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AWARENESS EVENTS

**March 28, 1 p.m., 601 Franklin Street, Winona, MN**

**April 1, 1 p.m., 1707 Main Street, La Crosse, WI**

Join us as we help raise awareness about the impact of child abuse in our area. FCC staff and community members will come together to help place blue child silhouettes at our sites. The silhouettes are a powerful visual reminder of the important work FCC is doing every day to protect children.

**April 11, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 601 Franklin Street, Winona, MN**

Join us for the 'Hands are For...' art contest! Local students are making art that highlights the positive uses of our hands. Judging will take place at FCC at 601 Franklin Street in Winona. A celebration and reception will take place April 18 at WNB Financial in Winona. Check soon for more details on [fcconline.org](http://fcconline.org).

**April 22, 4 p.m., 601 Franklin Street, Winona, MN - Meet at the WSU Gazebo**

Join Winona State University students and community members for a child abuse prevention walk. The walk will start at the gazebo near Phelps Hall and walk to 601 Franklin Street. The public and their friendly dogs are encouraged to participate.

**When you see a blue ribbon, that means someone is standing up against child abuse!**

# RESPITE CARE PROVIDES A LIFELINE TO FAMILIES



**I**n the ups, downs and all the in-betweens of family life, where responsibilities and challenges are numerous, the significance of Family & Children’s Center’s (FCC) Respite Care program cannot be overstated.

## What is Respite Care?

It is temporary care of individuals with special needs or families in crisis, which provides relief for parents or primary caregivers.

The Respite Care program at FCC plays a pivotal role in supporting families facing various stressors, offering a lifeline that nurtures the well-being of both parents and children.

At its core, the program provides families with a temporary break from the demands of caregiving, primarily for children and parents with medical or mental health needs.

“Caring for children, especially those with unique needs, can be emotionally taxing, and respite care serves as a buffer, preventing burnout and fostering a healthier family dynamic,” says Kelli Degenhardt, Family & Children’s Center Respite Care Supervisor.

Respite Care is one of the largest programs at FCC, with 600 enrolled children, 300 providers, four employees and two interns.

“Unless you have a child with special needs, you may not be aware the program even exists.

But for those who use it, it is a lifeline. Parents absolutely love it and believe it is an amazing way to help them best care for their children,” adds Kelli.

“The number of youth needing these supports continues to grow,” according to Kelli.

“Some of these children are at risk for neglect or child abuse because of challenges going on with Mom or Dad or their physical or behavioral limitations,” she says.

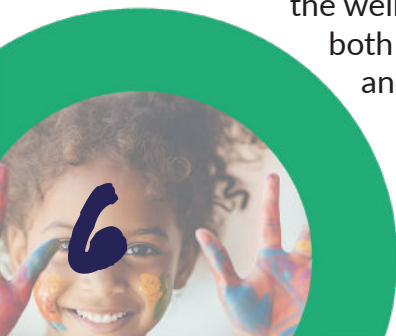
“The program offers a needed break for parents who have significant hurdles to overcome with their children’s care.”



**Kelli Degenhardt**

“Respite care serves as a buffer, preventing burnout and fostering a healthier family dynamic.”

**-Kelli Degenhardt,  
Respite Care  
Supervisor**



Family & Children’s Center works through the Children’s Long Term Supports (CLTS) program. La Crosse County provides the funding for these services. FCC also takes referrals through Child Protective Services and Youth Justice. The program has recently added the ability to provide services in other counties besides La Crosse, Jackson and Vernon County, and has also served youth in Monroe County. The agency is also looking into adding the program in Minnesota.

“Covid was a huge factor in the increase of the program,” says Kelli. “People were home. Everyone was home. Children did not have the support that was formerly provided at school. Respite was a real savior for parents during the pandemic. We are finding there is a constant need for respite and it is growing,” explains Kelli.

“We see providers become like family members. It is very special to see how they can be successful with their children’s needs or families. It is rewarding, too, to see the longevity of the program,” says Kelli.

FCC now has a Respite Drop-In Center located at FCC’s Weston Street location. “It is a place to go where children are provided for and is used daily, on weekends and part-time overnights. Kelli says, “It is set up just like a home setting with plenty of green

space for play. The children love to come to our Drop-In Center to play with our providers. We love the center’s homey atmosphere where children may be cared for while their parents take a break from the physical demands of caring for children with special needs.”

The Drop-In Center is available by reservation for providers and staffed by FCC part time. It is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

In addition to improving social, emotional and cognitive skills, Respite Care is a vital resource that exposes children to a variety of experiences in a supportive environment which helps children build resilience, independence and a sense of belonging. It also strengthens the family unit as a whole.

FCC is dedicated to helping ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive in a nurturing and supportive environment.



**Respite Night at the La Crosse Loggers**

**See more FCC fun on our Facebook page:**



**Like our Facebook page to get the latest updates**



# SAVE THE DATE

## BRIDGES TO BETTER TOMORROWS

The Bridges event committee and FCC Board members cordially invite you to an inspiring evening of music and mission.

Celebrations on the River  
River Park Room

Thursday, October 24, 2024

Social: 5 to 6:15 p.m.

Program: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and desserts

Soft drinks, wine, beer and a cash bar will be available.

The event is free and open to the public.

Register today on [fconline.org](http://fconline.org).



For more information please contact Ellen Hongerholt,  
Advancement Fundraising Consultant, by email at  
[ehongerholt@fccnetwork.org](mailto:ehongerholt@fccnetwork.org) or phone at (507) 459-1989.

# Better Tomorrows, Beyond Abuse

As you drive toward the Mississippi River on Franklin Street in Winona or along Main Street in La Crosse most of the year, it might be easy to overlook the buildings of Family & Children's Center. But in April, that is not the case when a hundred blue child silhouettes dot the yard noting Child Abuse Awareness Month.

Most children will not endure the experience of walking through the FCC doors to receive help at the child advocacy centers of Matty's Place in Winona or Stepping Stones in La Crosse.

But the statistics are still staggering that one in four

girls and one in nine boys will be the victim of physical or sexual abuse.

The children that FCC's staff of Danielle Swedberg, Olivia Kudronowicz, and Nicole Eiken interview almost every day have faced traumatic experiences, whether that be sexual abuse, physical abuse, extreme neglect, drug endangerment, or as a witness to violent crime with a focus on domestic abuse. As Forensic Interviewers and Family Advocates staff are projected to work with 300 to 325 children and families at Matty's Place in Winona and Stepping Stones in La Crosse this year, making the work they do so important.

"Seeing how resilient children can be is huge. It amazes me

how they are here for an interview as a shell of a kid, but we are able to help get them to a safe place to where they are thriving. That is because of the people that responded in a way that the kids felt safe, heard, and provided them with a way to flourish," Eiken said.

The interviewing process that FCC child advocacy experts conduct is not as simple as asking the child to tell you about, "the thing," By teaming up with law enforcement, a district attorney, and child protective services, skilled FCC staff are able to form questions that will help with the legal proceedings against the child's potential abuser. They also work

*(Continued on Page 21)*



# Safe Visitation Program Helps Families Heal, Thrive



Children are getting the chance to ensure they are protected during supervised visits for families who need support or to learn how to best care for their children thanks to Family & Children's Center's (FCC) Safe Visitation program.

Maria (not her given name) and her son came to FCC as a referral from a county's child protection due to probable neglect of her infant who was 6-months-old. A new immigrant, without the support of her family who live in another country, Maria also had the language barrier.

Born prematurely, her son required special care at birth. The father of her child left her to deal with these challenges after the baby was born. All these stressors were too much for Maria to handle alone which prompted a visit from professionals who intervene in these cases. That's where FCC came in to help her learn how to best care for her infant as

well as point her to resources to help on her journey to be a good parent.

"When staff first met Maria, her son weighed just 11 pounds and was struggling," according to Danielle Swedberg, Safe Visitation Program Coordinator.

"I wanted to care for my son, but I just didn't know what to do," said Maria. "I am so happy Family & Children's Center helped me learn how to care for my son. I will finish school soon and am thankful to be able to start a job to help me better care for my son."

With the help of FCC's Safe Visitation program, check-ins have moved to only once per week and the case has now closed. Maria and her son are very happy, healthy, and progressing.

In 2023, FCC served 70 children and 66 adults through its Safe Visitation program. FCC staff provided 1,772 visits. Currently the program provides 45 to 70 visits per week depending on the case load.

For county cases, the Social Workers set duration and frequency, and for grant-based clients, the families typically make these decisions.

Safe Visitation is an important program with Winona's Family & Children's Center that serve the needs of residents in Winona and neighboring counties as need.

"Safe Visitation provides county-based services where visits are provided after a referral from Child Protective Services through individual counties," according to Karrie

**"I am so happy Family & Children's Center helped me learn how to care for my son. I will finish school soon and am thankful to be able to start a job to help me better care for my son."**

**- 'Maria', Safe Visitation Client**



Hahn, Director of Programs Minnesota. "Safe Visitation mostly serves Winona County, but the agency also has the ability to serve other counties as well. FCC provides a wide range of visits from fully supervised visits where the child does not leave the supervision of the FCC Monitor to simply check-ins where the child is living with their family but still under the custody of child protection."

The program is managed by a supervisor, administrative assistant, and fourteen trained Monitors.

FCC Safe Visitation staff provide all transportation to and from visits. Visits take place at FCC facilities, in the community, or in the client's home based on what stage they are in regarding their case. Some families in the program are served for more than a year and services are often provided multiple times per week for several hours at a time. The purpose of this program is to provide information to help social

workers in their quest to seek reunification of families.

FCC also provides grant-based services which are paid predominantly through a grant from VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) which provides services to experiencing domestic violence.

Supervised visits through this program mostly occur at FCC and provide staggered arrival and departure times for the families so they are not required to have contact with each other.

FCC provides this service in people's homes, but only after they have been with the agency for a long time. Safe exchanges provide people with a custody order or a restraining order to have a safe neutral place to exchange their children for visits. These mostly occur at FCC but occasionally happen in the community as well. The purpose of this program is to provide a safe environment for families to do visits and exchanges. Some of our clients have been with this program for multiple years.



Another program at FCC that may not be widely known in Winona is Tracking.

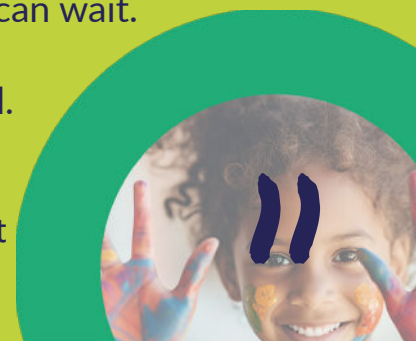
Here's how it works. FCC staff receive referrals from Child Protection Social Workers as well as Juvenile Probation and Truancy Officers. Through this program FCC serves adults and juveniles with Urine Analysis (UA), curfew checks, and face-to-face curfew checks. The purpose is to provide tracking services to provide social workers with information on chemical dependency use with their families, and to provide curfew and face-to-face checks for juveniles going through the court system. In 2023, FCC served 10 Juveniles and 14 Adults in Tracking in 2022. Most of those stay with the agency for more than one year and receive multiple urine analyses per week.

For more information, please call Danielle Swedberg, Safe Visitation Supervisor, by calling (608) 785-0001 ext.2282 or by emailing [dswedberg@fccnetwork.org](mailto:dswedberg@fccnetwork.org).

We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many of the things we need can wait.

**The child cannot wait.** Right now is the time her bones are being formed, her blood is being made, and her senses are being developed. To her we cannot answer 'Tomorrow.' Her name is Today."

-Gabriela Mistral



With your generous support, FCC is changing lives of 5,400 clients in our communities. In 2023, we...



# THANK YOU!



\*Served 3,802 guests at The Other Door drop-in center

Provided 717 clients with outpatient therapy services



Supported 212 families with drop-in, in-home, and out-of-home respite care



\*Helped 99 families grow stronger with Healthy Families programs in La Crosse, Winona and Vernon Counties

Grew 68 young minds in Day Treatment

\*Guided 75 people to safer lives through Vernon County's Domestic Abuse Project

\*Protected 623 children at Stepping Stones and Matty's Place

Aided 174 adults to thrive through Community Support Programs



\* Denotes care and guidance is provided at no charge for this program

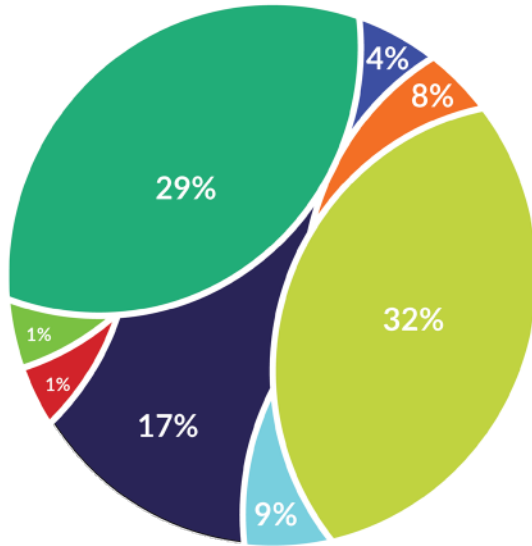
 Family & Children's Center

# 2023 Annual Report

## Financial Highlights

### Sources of Support - Program Revenue

**\$10,790,906**



- \$3,143,284** (29%) Net Program Revenues, Medicaid
- \$3,416,123** (32%) Net Program Revenues, County/Government
- \$380,535** (4%) Net Program Revenues, Insurance & Private Payment
- \$1,821,583** (17%) Grant and Contracted Revenues

### Advancement Activity

- \$816,557** (8%) Unrestricted Gifts, Net Events
- \$139,329** (1%) Other Designated Gifts, Private Grants
- \$104,838** (1%) United Way

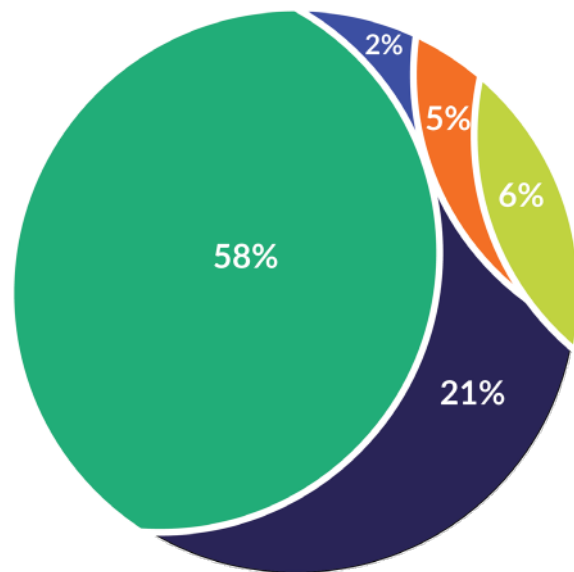
### Other Income

- \$968,657** (9%) Rental & Other Income

### Expenses -

**\$9,891,346**

- \$6,259,226** (58%) Employment Costs
- \$686,170** (6%) Occupancy Costs
- \$2,229,376** (21%) Contracted Services
- \$527,143** (5%) Program Costs
- \$182,804** (2%) Transportation Costs
- \$6,627** (>1%) Other Expenses



### Endowment -

**\$4,949,268**

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY IN 2023

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Welcome to you and all members of the Bridge Builder Giving Societies! FCC's giving societies, listed below, reflect the powerful mission and work done each day at FCC. Growth in philanthropic giving strengthens the programs that impact the more than 5,400 people served by FCC in 2023.

Family and Children's Center is grateful for the tremendous philanthropic support received from January to December 2023. THANK YOU for painting brighter futures for children facing abuse and helping to build bridges to better tomorrows for adults, families, and children in La Crosse, Winona, Viroqua, Sparta, and Black River Falls areas.

If your name was inadvertently misspelled or a correction is required, please accept our heartfelt apologies and contact us at [development@fccnetwork.org](mailto:development@fccnetwork.org) so we may update our records.

### SAVING LIVES CHAMPIONS

Partners who contributed gifts of \$25,000 and more

Altra Federal Credit Union  
Anonymous  
Bay State Milling  
Binsfeld Family Fund  
Dahl Automotive  
Dahl Family Foundation  
Harry and Carla Dahl  
The Elmwood Foundation, Inc.  
Dave and Barb Erickson  
Glendenning Family Foundation, Inc.  
Great Rivers United Way  
Gundersen Health System  
John Lyche  
Merchants Bank - Winona and Greater La Crosse Region  
Nesnah Ventures, LLC  
Otto Bremer Trust  
Jerry and Pat Papenfuss  
Family Fund - Winona  
Community Foundation  
Corey Sauer  
Margaret Simpson Fund of the Winona Community Foundation  
Slaggie Family Foundation  
Charlotte Travelli

Trust Point, Inc.  
Weber Family  
Shawn and Mary Jo Werner  
Jeff and Andrea Wieser  
WNB Financial

### NURTURING PROTECTORS

Partners who contributed \$10,000 to \$24,999

William and Cynthia Berg  
Family Charitable Fund  
Cleary - Kumm Foundation, Inc.  
Guy Comer  
Tyler and Michelle Dahl  
Kathleen L. Foley  
Gostomski Foundation  
Robert Kierlin and Mary Burrichter  
Charles F. Mathy Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation  
Mayo Clinic Health System  
Miller Ingenuity  
Power of 100+ Driftless Region  
John and Kathy Reinhart  
Dave and Barb Skogen  
Wieser Brothers  
General Contractor, Inc.

### WELLNESS HEROES

Partners who contributed \$5,000 to \$9,999

A.L.M. Charities, Inc.  
Gerald and Marilyn Arndt

Dr. Archie and Rosemary Britt  
Family Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation  
Thomas and Jan Brock  
Lyndie Fabian  
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration  
Sue Anne Gelatt Foundation  
Jeff and Sara Kessler  
Elizabeth Callender  
King Foundation  
Patricia and David Ludington  
Roland and Joan Niebuhr  
Nelleen G. Noack, MD  
Russell L. and Vera M. Smith Foundation, Inc  
The Storm Trail Race Series  
Brian and Kathy Wieser  
Winona Community Foundation

### HEALING PARTNERS

Partners who contributed \$1,000 to \$4,999

American Online Giving Foundation  
Anonymous  
Dorothy and Dennis Baumgartner  
Janet Beckwith  
Brian and Barb Benson  
BK5K Youth Fund of the Winona Community Foundation  
BNSF Railway Company  
William and Tracie Bosch  
Don and Cheryl Brenengen Family  
(Continued on page 15)



(Healing Partners Continued from page 14)  
Mike and Diana Carey  
Chart Energy and Chemicals, Inc.  
Gerald Cichanowski  
Robert Cieslak  
Diane and Pete Conway  
Creative Screen Print  
Debbie Dahl Schultz  
Dairyland Power Cooperative  
Debbie and Stephen M. Devine, MD  
Jim and Sue Dillenbeck  
Frank and Carol Drasler  
Phyllis Ernst  
Mark and Dora Etrheim  
FHG, INC  
Mark Garrels and Pamela Maas Garrels  
Genoa - A QOL Healthcare Company  
Chris and Erin Gervais  
Will and Jennifer Gibson  
Green Bay Packers Foundation  
Mary Ann Gschwind, FSPA  
Andrew and Dawn Guzzo  
Jeanette Hammes  
Henry Gund Sr. Trust  
Hirsch Clinic  
Ardith and Andrea Hoff  
John and Diann Honadel  
Brad and Ellen Hongerholt  
Dale Jacobson and Wendy Stachowitz  
JARD Fund  
Daniel and Katherine Kern  
Mary Kessens  
David Lowenfeld  
Laurie Lucas  
Bob and Jean Marck Family Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation  
Barbara and Edward Martinez  
Grange Insurance Company  
Ellie McLoone-Johnson and Richard Johnson  
Neal Meier  
Midwest Family Broadcasting  
Rick and Annette Mikat  
Alexandra Moore  
Dr. Mary Morris and James Killoran  
Lawrence and Edith Nutter  
(Continued on page 16)



Donation closet volunteers Angie Vondroskek (L) and Debra Hermann (R) pause while organizing in-kind contributions at FCC's offices in La Crosse.

A house needs two parts to help it become a home: the people in it and the things that help us live our daily lives.

Family & Children's Center is blessed to have the support of siblings Debra Hermann and Angie Vondroskek. When the pair started volunteering in FCC's donation closet in 2016, they immediately saw a need.

"A lot of people donated, but it wasn't organized, it wasn't very inviting," said Debra.

"It was a very eye-opening experience," added Angie. "It's exciting!"

The donation closet is a repository for in-kind contributions that generous community members make to FCC. Everything from baby clothes and cribs to dishes and books has filled the second-floor space of FCC's Main Street offices in La Crosse.

FCC staff help get the items to clients as they utilize various programs on their path to better tomorrows.

Since then, the volunteers have given their time and effort to ensure FCC's donation closet remains orderly so program staff can quickly find in-kind contributions to distribute to clients.

"Let's make it appealing. Make it look nice, and maybe when you look at items, a client or staff might say I could use that," said Debra.

Since the pair came on board, the space has been organized, is efficient and is an important part of helping clients of all ages.

The items and people, here at FCC help clients as they ensure their houses become more homelike and inviting.



(Healing Partners Continued  
from page 15)

OPTUMServe

Derek and Maria Peterson

JC and Arlene Pfeiffer

Rahn and Judy Pischke

Sue Puerzer

Lee Rasch and Susan Fox

Rob and Diane Reinhart

Dr. Cameron and Mrs.

Carlene Roberts

Daniel Schraith

Bob and Rochelle Schultz

Jack and Marti Schwem Fund of the

La Crosse Community Foundation

Mary Ann Severson

Lana and Eugene Smithart

Jean Sterling and John Sterling OD

Amy and Vince Stodola

Three Sixty Real Estate Solutions

Torrance Casting, Inc

TPI Foundation

Viroqua Area Foundation

Thomas Waldera

Britni and Brad Walz

Watlow Enriching Lives Foundation

Chris and Beth Weiss

Dare L. White and William F.

White Foundation

Winona Eagles Club

Xcel Energy

Daniel and Amanda Young

Tita Yutuc

### SUPPORTIVE ALLIES

Partners who contributed

\$500 to \$999

Chris and Sara Battison

James E. Brickl

Mark and Jennifer Brumm, MDs

Robert and Marjorie Deter

Douglas Detrick

English Lutheran Church

Greg and Terri Evans

Diane Foust and Jim Nelson

Grace Presbyterian Church

Linda C. Groom, MD

Chuck and Carmen Gustafson

Holmen Lions Club

Journey Lutheran Church

Rita Kang

Bob and Marlene Kohner

Dustin and Dominique Luecke

Milo and Beverly Mayer Mach

Family Fund of the La Crosse

Community Foundation

Debra R. and Todd A. Mahr, MD

Marine Credit Union Foundation

Sally and Jennifer Micek

Marie Miller

James Munn

James and Rebecca Naugler

Jayne C Olson

Laura and Eric Podurgiel

Lindsey Pretasky

Kathy Reinolt

River Valley c/o Lee Enterprises

Rotary Club of Winona

Cory and Jennifer Roupe

Schilling Family Fund of the

La Crosse Community Foundation

Mark and Margaret Schneider

Vanee Songsiridej, MD

Scott and Lori Sonsalla

Bernadette Teff Family Fund of the

La Crosse Community Foundation

United Methodist Church

Vernon Electric Cooperative

James and Jo Wickizer

Winhaven Court

WKM Properties

Craig and Dianne Zeches

### FRIENDLY ADVOCATES

#### AND IN-KIND GIFTS

Partners who contributed

\$1 to \$499

Fe C. Abellera

Ben and Julee Agar

Richard and Barbara Albrechtson

Nancy Allen

Altra Federal Credit

Union - Winona

Ron and Terry Amel

Amelse Family

American Marine

Amundson-Christian Detachment

Marine Corps League

Mikayla Anderson

Odell and Carol Anderson

Dr. Hans and Mrs.

Margaret Anderson

Dick and Anne Arlt

Joyce Arthur

Richard Auby

James and Carolyn Bagniewski

Sandie Balduzzi

Cortney Kay Baldwin

Rich and Kathy Barclay

Kenneth Barilani and Cheryl Baum

Howard and Christine Barlow

Irene Barmore

Terry and Julie Bartels

William and Marsha Bateman

James and Peggy Baumgaertner

Butch and Lynne Beier

Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Lora Benacci

John Bender

Joan Berg

Mary and Larry Bergin

John and Rosanne Betz

Richard and Catherine Beyers

Bill Brooke Realty

Breck Binsfeld

Anna Binsfeld

Ken and Donna Birnbaum

Bluff Country Co-op

Anthony and Melissa Boltik

Greg and Beth Bonney

Jerome and Victoria Boortz

Michael and Mary Bottcher

Bremer Bank

Bill and Betty Brendel

John Brevik

Brice Prairie

Conservation Association

Mark O. Briggson

Francis and Dolores Brown

Lisa Bucher

John and Barb Burgess

Nancy Burgett

Lindsey Burns

Albert and Jaclyn Butenhoff

Chris Calico

Martin and Mary Callaway

Cardinal IG Company

(continued on page 17)



## BETTER TOMORROWS

(Friendly Advocates Continued from page 16)

Deb Carlson  
Patrick Cavadini  
Emeron and Phyllis Christensen  
Mike and Linda Cichanowski  
John Cina Seven  
Sarah Cina-Fuchs  
Citizens First Bank  
Arduus Cleveland  
Sheila Connors  
Michele Cook  
Judith Corbett Hutchens  
James and Karen Curtis  
Nancy Danou  
Edith and Michael Davis  
Davis Diggers 4-H Club  
Camille De Gaz  
Delta Kappa Gamma,  
Alpha Omega Chapter  
Peter Delwiche  
Todd and Kymberly DeMaiffe  
Michael and Joyce Diveley  
Patrica Drout  
Drew and Annie Dugan  
Nick and Lori Edstrom  
Fran Edstrom  
Ronald and Carol Egge  
Arthur and Mary Ekern  
Derek and Cathryn Espy  
Steve Everson  
Jodell Fancher  
Logan Favor  
Jenny Felty  
John and Patricia Ferden  
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund  
First Presbyterian Church  
Marilyn and Richard Foss, OD  
Marian Francis  
Carol Fraucksen  
Freeman Lutheran Men's Group  
Shelly and Mike Frischmann  
Anita Froegel  
Debby and Pat Gantert  
Gary and Marsha Gartner  
George and Marlene Gersch  
Frank and Linda Gillette  
James and Jo Glasser  
Charlotte Grant  
Adam and Shauna Gregg  
David and Jennifer Grimsled  
Gary Groth and Nancy Arens

Ole and Judy Gulbrandsen  
Charlene Gundersen  
Jean Ann and Sigurd  
Gundersen III, MD  
Gundersen Health System -  
Department of Nursing  
Gundersen Health System  
Ronald and Merle Gustafson  
Peter and Janice Gutierrez  
Julia and Brian M. Hagan, MD  
Dr. Vicki Hagstrom  
Hahn Charitable Fund of the  
Winona Community Foundation  
Hammes Refrigeration  
Kathie Hanna  
Charles and Cheryl Hanson  
Carol and Gaylord Harrell  
Nancy Hartje  
Sharon Harvey  
Steven and Linda Hayes  
Kevin and Joy Hennessy  
Amanda Herrick  
Ryan and Aubrey Hesselberg  
Ellen and Cory Hesselberg  
David and Mary Hestekin  
Sue and Fred Heuer  
Tim and Bridget Hill  
Randy Hoard  
Bryan and Amanda Hoefling  
Barbara and Harold Hoffman  
Diane and Steve Holmay  
Frank and Lois Holper  
Tom and Bonnie Holzer  
Virginia S. and Kenneth S.  
Horth, MD  
HSR Associates  
Thomas Huber  
David and Sarah Hughes  
Donald and Virginia Iverson  
Joe Jacobsen  
Taeryn Johnson  
Jennifer Johnson  
Michael and Denise Kachel  
Carolyn Kalmes  
Rose Ann Kazmierczak  
Ron and Tawni Kind  
Kish and Sons Electric  
James and Jennifer Kleven, MD  
Linda and William Knobloch  
Lloyd Koenig  
Deborah Kramer  
Monica Kruse

La Crosse Eagles Auxiliary 1254  
La Crosse Lions Charities  
La Crosse Loggers Foundation, Inc.  
Melissa and Charles Lacasse  
Kathleen and Clyde Lawnicki, MD  
Life In Harmony Music  
Therapy, LLC  
Joyce and Jack Lockhart, MD  
Darwin and Carol Lockwood  
Thomas and Lynette Longmire  
Gary and Debby Luecke  
Tony and Karen Lyga  
Almon and Elizabeth Mac Ewen  
Paul Mack and Theresa Daley-Mack  
Erick and Jennifer Maki  
Steven and Peg Manson  
James and Patti Martell  
Hayley Martin  
Marvin Gardens Landscaping LLC  
Amelia Mayer  
Ann McDonald  
Bob and Pat McLoone  
William and Joan McNeil  
Jacqueline Meyer  
Kassie Miller  
Mindoro Lutheran Church  
Stacy Mitby  
Elizabeth Mitchell  
Kay Morton  
Shirley Mounce  
Daniel and Cecilia Mullenbach  
Nora Lee and Fred Naas  
NAMI Olmsted County  
Nancy and Kevin Nelson  
Carol Nelson-Britten  
Angela and Anthony Nemes  
Mrs. Perry Nesbitt  
Corine Neuman  
John and Jackie Newman  
Katherine Niedfeldt  
Cindy and Richard Noel  
Amanda Nogle  
Mary Normandt  
Jennifer and Jason Oefstedahl  
Margaret E. and Richard A.  
Olson, MD  
(continued on page 18)



(Friendly Advocates Continued from page 17)

Michael and Judy Olson  
Bridget Olson  
Onalaska Lions Club  
Onalaska United Methodist Church  
Catherine Onsager  
Ralph and Judy Osborne  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
Patricia and Luther Paulson  
Carol Paus  
Give Lively Foundation INC.  
Karen Pennington  
Sandra and Henry Peterson  
David and Lorna Peterson  
Jeff and Mary Priem  
Kevin and Nancy Quinn  
Rick Radcliffe  
Jonella and Dana Rademacher, MD  
Mike and Therese Regner  
Leah Reimann, MD  
Gerald and Kathleen Reinke  
Matt and Diane Renk  
James Ringstrom  
Barbara Roberts  
Cherie and David Rohde  
Roger Roslansky  
Facebook Payments Inc.  
Brian and Karen Rude  
Gerald and Shirley Ruoff  
Deb Sacia  
John and Dolores Sandleback  
Mary Sargent  
Judy and Bert Sasse  
Sharon Schaefer  
Karol Schlosser Smith  
Schneider Heating and  
Air Conditioning, Inc.  
Paul and Joan Schoenfeld  
Kathryn Schroeder  
Pam and Shannon Schroetke  
Phil and Rebecca Schumacher  
Leslie Schweitzer  
Ben and Katrina Scoville  
Tom and Laura Seaton

Jami Severson  
Stephen Shapiro  
Paul Shultz  
Diane Siler  
Bruce and Mary Simones  
Jean M. and Frederick C.  
Skemp Jr., MD  
Robert C. Skemp  
Sheryl Smith  
Becky Smith  
George and Marita Smith  
Brent and Ellen Smith  
Michael and Kris Smuksta  
Jerry and Nancy Steigerwald  
Robert Stendalen  
Carole Stever  
Richard and Pamela Strauss  
Brad and Lynn Sturm  
Target Corporation  
Laura Taylor  
Gregory Teff  
Dan and Judy Thelen  
Tom and Pricilla Thibodeau  
Sandra and Jeffrey Thompson, MD  
Tom and Deborah Thompson  
Thrivent Choice Points Program  
Douglas and Karen Traastad  
Tom and Jane Treglowne  
Scott and Kathy Turner  
United Way of Central Carolinas  
US Bank Foundation

UW-La Crosse Biology Department  
UW-La Crosse PA Program  
Ruth and Michael Vanderploeg  
Frank and Ruth Vierling  
Cinda Vingers and Sigurd Molland  
Warrior Brotherhood MC  
Patrice Wasmundt  
WCCU Credit Union  
Charlene and Rickey Wegner  
Stanley Weltzin  
Westby Coon Prairie  
Lutheran Church  
Dale and Mary Wetterling  
John Wetzel  
D Eric and Virginia Wheeler  
Rose and Dale White  
Chris White and Fred Giese  
Patrick and Barbara Wilson  
James and Marcia Ann Wine  
Winona Elks - Lodge 327  
Wise Managers, Inc  
Mary Wisneski  
Irving Wittenberg  
Patricia and Harvey Witzenburg  
John and Wanda Wochos  
Frank and Diane Wohletz  
Margaret and Daryl Wood  
Francisco Zernosa  
Lon and Linda Ziehm  
Brenda Zitzmann

**Do you want to protect more children, help adults, and strengthen families? Please consider a contribution in an amount that is meaningful to you today.**

**Call our Director of Advancement & Marketing at (608) 668-2132 or by email at [development@fccnetwork.org](mailto:development@fccnetwork.org).**

**You can also contribute online at [fconline.org](http://fconline.org).**

**Thank you for your support in the past, now and into the future.**



**Research support that for every \$1 devoted to serving children, the return is multiplied four to sixteen times.**

## In Honor of.....

**Tita Yutuc**

*John and Barb Burgess*

**Dennis & Jolene DeMaiffe**

*Todd and Kymberly DeMaiffe*

**Paul Molling, D.O.**

**Annette Faller, M.D.**

*Jodell Fancher*

**Father Brian Konopa**

*Kevin and Joy Hennessy*

**Matthew, Kaehl and Kate**

*David and Mary Hestekin*

**Isaac, Wyatt, Baker and Camden**

*Brad and Ellen Hongerholt*

**Ed and Corine Neuman and family**

*Karen Pennington*

## In Memory of.....

**Dr. Tom Roberts**

**Erin Schafer Fatzinger**

*Ron and Terry Amel*

**James Berg**

*Joan Berg*

**Deacon Richard Sage**

*Bill and Betty Brendel*

**Rosemary Nee**

*John Brevik*

**Frederick Corny Favor**

*Logan Favor*

**Sydney Kohner**

*Bob and Marlene Kohner*

**Ed Neuman**

*Cornie Neuman*

*Shawn and Mary Jo Werner*

**Carly Kirschner**

*Jayne C Olson*

**Dr. Thomas Roberts**

*Barbara Roberts*

**Patricia Roslansky**

*Roger Roslansky*

**Jamie Scoville**

*Ben and Katrina Scoville*

**Jim Webb**

*Wieser Brothers General Contractor, Inc.*

## Leaving A Legacy

Did you know retirement assets are subject to federal estate and income taxes? Family & Children's Center can help.

Approximately 70 percent of your assets could go to the IRS instead of your intended beneficiaries at the time of death. You could save significant tax dollars while leaving a lasting legacy to provide Better Tomorrows to children, adults and families through Family & Children's Center.



Call today and we will help get the conversation started. To learn more, contact the Advancement & Marketing Department by emailing [development@fccnetwork.org](mailto:development@fccnetwork.org) or by calling (507) 785-0001.

## Better Tomorrows Society

Benefactors who have named Family & Children's Center in their wills, trust and/or life insurance policies

*Vicki & J. Michael Hartigan, MD*

*Kevin & Bonnie Mahoney*

*Marilyn McElligott*

*Corine Neuman*

*Mary & Michale Price, MD*

*Kathryn Schroeder*

*Grace & Patrick G. Spencer*

*Jeff & Andrea Wieser*

*Gary & Ellen Evans*

*Sara & Chris Battison*

*Sabina Bosshard & George Parke III*



# IN OUR ARMHS

The Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS) in Winona assists adults who currently have medical assistance (Minnesota “MA”) and a diagnosis of a serious mental illness.

“This could be someone you see every day,” said ARMHS program Mental Health Practitioner Megan Kisner.

With specialized training and experience, ARMHS workers provide clients with the knowledge and skills to become their own advocates and achieve the greatest amount of independence.

“There are challenges for our clients, like low self-esteem or challenges with accessing services that help clients reach their better days,” said Kisner.

Clients are given realistic goals, plans to achieve those goals, and methods for accomplishing those goals. With the help of an ARMHS provider, clients learn to become independent and live happier, healthier lives.

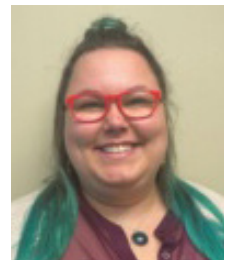
“Community members should be proud of having this resource. We are helping people in Winona,



Houston and Fillmore Counties in Minnesota that need our support,” Kisner added.

Thanks to being a part of the continuum of care that FCC provides, clients get a more complete support structure.

“Referring clients to ARMHS from Hiawatha Hall or to Outpatient Counseling is easier because it is part of one organization. Without this support, our clients could face a mental health crisis without the tools to help them reach their goals,” said Kisner.



**Megan Kisner**  
ARMHS  
Mental Health  
Practitioner

## Sheronne’s Story



Sheronne, who became homeless after ending a relationship, came to Family & Children’s Center’s Hiawatha Hall in Winona after she was charged with trespassing. At the residential treatment facility, she learned to live with structure, and to create goals for herself, including finding employment.

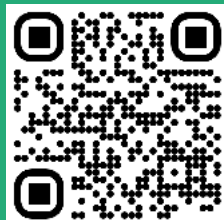
After her time living at Hiawatha Hall, Sheronne transitioned into the Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS).

“After you’ve been in a situation like mine, you don’t have a lot of trust in a lot of folks,” said Sheronne.

Working with ARMHS program staff provided strength and support as she builds to to a better future.

“You can make it through,” said Sheronne. “You can do it.”

Hear more of Sheronne’s Story on FCC’s YouTube page: Be sure to like and follow for more great video content!



*(Continued from Page 9)*

to build a trusting relationship with the child during the interview process. This means that they are honest with them about cameras recording their conversations and that a team of “friends” are also watching the interview. At any time the child does not want to continue with the interview or is not ready to talk about their experiences, the interview is ended immediately.

Matty’s Place and Stepping Stones are not just focused on the forensic interviews. The advocacy work that FCC staff do every day is just as important as the forensic interviews. The term advocacy involves following up with the children and families regarding the court proceeding, providing

them with an abundance of resources or just being someone to listen. At any point, FCC child advocacy could be continuously working with 10 to 40 different families each. Advocacy for these families does not have to be a one-time occurrence, but rather can last weeks or even years for some families.

For the children and families that walk through Matty’s Place and Stepping Stones doors, they will never receive a bill. It is the incredible nature of Family & Children’s Center that allows the Winona and La Crosse communities to have access to such important services. FCC’s generous donors along with grants and local funding are the reason that these families and children are able

to rebuild their lives and have the future they all deserve.

For the children and families that are receiving Matty’s Place and Stepping Stones forensic interviews and advocacy, it is the caring and persistent nature of FCC’s expert staff that gives them the hope to rebuild their lives.

Danielle, Olivia, and Nicole continue to advocate “this is our job, but this is their lives,” as they work every day to help children and their families see a better tomorrow, today.

In La Crosse, Stepping Stones, along with FCC’s programs housed in the Main Street offices, will move to the organization’s new Monitor Street offices this summer.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Catch up on the latest events as they are added to our online events calendar! Head to [fcconline.org](http://fcconline.org) to see the latest additions from our calendar to add to your calendar.



## FCC and Partners In Wellness Fair

Saturday, June 1, 2024, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Join your friends and neighbors at this new event highlighting important mental health programs and services for Vernon County residents. The fair will take place at the Vernon County Memorial Healthcare building and Vernon County Fairgrounds. Enjoy a variety of family-friendly games, live music and more. Turn to page 22 to learn more.



## Bridges to Better Tomorrows

Thursday, October 24, 2024, 5:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Join us for an inspiring event in the River Park Room at Celebrations on the River in La Crosse, WI. The social starts at 5:00 p.m. with the program beginning at 6:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Turn to page 8 for more information. Register today on [fcconline.org](http://fcconline.org) or by calling Ellen Hongerholt at (507) 459-1959.



# FCC & Partners In Wellness Fair

**SAVE THE  
DATE!**

**June 1, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Vernon Memorial Healthcare building at Vernon County Fairgrounds  
210 Fairgrounds Rd, Viroqua, WI 54665

Join your friends and neighbors at the free FCC & Partners in Wellness Fair!

- Live Music
- Bluedog Cycles bike course
- Get in the Seat with Hillsboro Equipment
- Family-friendly games and activities
  - Dunk Tank
  - Foam Pit and Basketball Game
  - Face Painting
- Local Food Trucks including:
  - Jovita's Kitchen
  - Dave's Pizza
  - Noble Rind
  - Magpie Gelato
- Vendor booths
- Mental Health and Wellness demonstrations and information

**FREE  
EVENT!**

**LEARN MORE AT FCCONLINE.ORG**

**BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIR OR BLANKET AND JOIN THE FUN!**

Family & Children's Center has worked in Viroqua for 30 years providing vital service through ten programs including The Other Door, Outpatient Counseling, the Domestic Abuse Project and more!

## NEW FACEBOOK PAGE COMING SOON

Family & Children's Center will soon have a **new** Facebook page! This new page will allow us to share more information with you, as well as get in contact with more community members to ensure everyone knows Better Tomorrows Start with Family & Children's Center. Like our current page to make sure you know the latest as we launch our new page.



**Facebook.com/FamilyChildrensCenter**

We look forward to sharing the ways FCC is protecting children, supporting families and helping adults as FCC assists them to Better Tomorrows.

Please go to [facebook.com/FamilyChildrensCenter](https://facebook.com/FamilyChildrensCenter) or scan this QR code today:

**JOIN US ON ALL OF OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES**



**linkedin.com/company/family-&-children's-center**

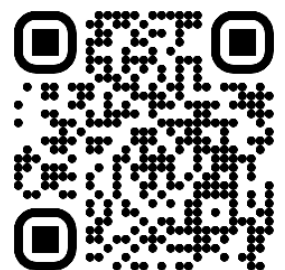


**instagram.com/familyandchildrenscenter/**



**youtube.com/@FamilyandChildrensCenter**

Find links to all FCC social media pages on [fconline.org](https://fconline.org):



Family & Children's Center - Annual Report

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

## Child Abuse Prevention Month

## Bridges To Better Tomorrows



## Contributions from Community



## Dahl Auto Lube-A-Thon

See more of the highlights of 2023:



Editor's note: Better Tomorrows is published annually as a stewardship report for generous donors, partnering organizations, agencies and friends. The annual report is produced by the Advancement & Marketing staff:

- Ellen Hongerholt, MA, Director of Advancement & Marketing - Editor
- Greg White, Advancement & Marketing Specialist - Contributing Writer and Graphic Designer
- Katrina Scoville, MA, Donor Engagement & Events Specialist - Contributing Writer
- Tahlia Rogers, Social Media Intern - Contributing Writer

Additional information and assistance provided by:

- Andrew Guzzo, FCC board president
- Mary Ann Gschwind, FSPA, FCC board member
- Tita Yutuc, LCSW, LICSW, FCC President/CEO
- Kelli Degenhardt, Respite Care Supervisor
- Danielle Swedberg, Stepping Stones and Matty's Place Coordinator
- Olivia Kudronowicz and Nicole Eiken Stepping Stones and Matty's Place Case Managers



Non-Profit Org.  
 U.S. Postage Paid  
 Permit No. 78  
 La Crosse, WI

**Visit us and Like us on Facebook and Instagram**

**La Crosse**  
 1707 Main Street  
 La Crosse, WI 54601  
 (608) 785-0001

**Winona**  
 601 Franklin Street  
 Winona, MN 55987  
 (507) 453-9563

**Viroqua**  
 1321 North Main Street  
 Viroqua, WI 54665  
 (608) 637-7052

**Sparta**  
 920 West Wisconsin Street  
 Sparta, WI 54656  
 (608) 269-0567

**Black River Falls**  
 421 County Road R  
 Black River Falls, WI 54615  
 (608) 396-6398

**JOIN US FOR MUSIC AND MISSION AT  
 BRIDGES TO BETTER TOMORROWS**

**October 24, 2024**

**5 to 7:30 p.m.**

Celebrations on the River  
 2100 Dawson Avenue  
 La Crosse, WI 54603



You won't want to miss Family & Children's Center's **inspiring** news!  
 Registration is required by October 1. The FREE evening includes complimentary  
 hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Join us and help build Bridges to Better Tomorrows!

**Learn more on Page 8**