

BETTER TOMORROWS

An Annual Stewardship Publication of Family & Children's Center 2023



What's Inside:

2022 Gratitude and Program Report

Raven's Journey - Simple Things and Gentle Parenting

Opening Doors, Changing Lives - Step into The Other Door

Save the Date - Bridges to Better Tomorrows Returning

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Program Spotlights - Treatment Foster Care, Host Homes

Greetings friends and partners,

Most adults, children and families desire stable and productive lives. But sadly, not all people grow up with nurturing and loving parents to provide their children with the tools and experiences to develop into responsible and resilient adults. Or due to traumatic experiences, some individuals are unable to effectively live their best lives without special care and support.

FCC's therapists, counselors, case managers and staff work to create better tomorrows for those we serve. However, we cannot fulfill our mission effectively without financial support. It is only with the Relentless Support you have given that FCC can deliver the tools and resources to help our clients achieve their dreams for which our clients hope.

Your Relentless Commitment positions FCC to evolve, expand and grow to continue serving the quickly changing needs of our neighbors and friends – right here at home. FCC responded to help create better tomorrows through the following efforts in 2022:

- Increasing outpatient services for rural Wisconsin clients through a \$450,000 federal grant.
- Expanding services through the new annual event, Bridges to Better Tomorrows, by touching the hearts and minds of 250 guests and raising unprecedented financial support (See the results on page 8).
- Appealing to and more widely reaching new ages and groups of clients and friends with a refreshed logo offering a vivid, cheerful and updated flare for today's digital age.
- Completing a facility usage study to most effectively respond to future changing service patterns and evolving facility needs.

Thank you on behalf of the people we serve, to every single donor who gave a gift of any amount to help fulfill our mission.

Thank you to those who attended an event, took a tour, liked a FCC post, or gave an in-kind gift to help a child, an adult or those with severe and persistent mental illness.

Thank you for helping us take a Relentless Stand for those we serve.

Gratefully,



Tita C. Yutuc, LCSW, LICSW
President/CEO



Tita Yutuc, LCSW, LICSW

“...to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you lived. This is to have succeeded.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



To learn more about FCC's services and community impact or to inquire about making a charitable gift, please visit us at fconline.org or call the Advancement Office at (608) 785-0001 or (507) 459-1989.



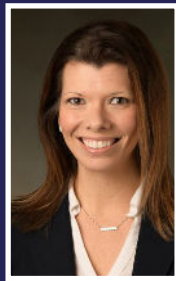
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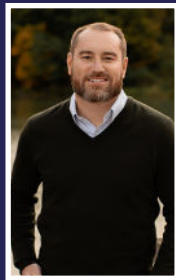
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BRIGHTER DAYS FOR THOSE WE SERVE

Jennifer Knapp Severson has been on the Family & Children's Center Board of Directors for the past seven years. This year she began her tenure as the Board Chair. Jennifer and her husband, Josh, who live in Winona, have three children - Fletcher, 9; Sloan, 7; and Bergen, 5.

"I knew about the child abuse prevention and mental health services when I joined the FCC Board," articulates Jennifer. "But I did not understand the full scope and breadth of all of the agency's 20 plus programs. It is a lot! Every year, I have learned more and more."

What is the most exciting part of the mission according to Jennifer is that as differing needs of our clients have become apparent, FCC has responded and changed along with those needs.

"When joining the Board," Jennifer says, "I first felt my role was like that of a sponge - absorb and understand all the myriad ways Family & Children's Center helps people. Then when I had served on the board for a year or two, I could better understand the greater impact of the agency. Now after a few more years, I want to shoot for the stars to help the agency fulfill its vision for serving more and more people who have been affected by trauma."

Jennifer believes past board chairs and President/CEO Tita Yutuc have and continue to dream big. "That is what I wish to do to during my tenure," says Jennifer, "to continue to cast a strong vision for best serving the needs of people."

"For years, I have thought about the role of prevention," says Jennifer. "It is a goal we strive toward. At one of our retreats, we had a Gundersen Emergency physician share an example of one person who had a chronic mental health challenge. This person went to ER 150 times in one year. How much did that affect health care costs, resources and services? The answer is that it has a huge impact on our health care."

Jennifer says this is part of why prevention has been a big goal of hers. She knows it is a hard task, but believes FCC is already doing a lot with prevention and early intervention to help change the cycle in families.

"We give parents and their children the tools to help end the cycle of abuse and neglect. We can truly help change the generational patterns, so the next generation will be raised with the knowledge and skills to stop the of emotional, physical, sexual abuse," states Jennifer. "I want FCC to continue building a model that grows and grows - helping lead individuals who have experienced trauma to follow a better path towards brighter days."

Family & Children's Center - Annual Report

MEET JENNIFER KNAPP SEVERSON



Jennifer Knapp Severson
Family & Children's Center
Chair, Board of Directors

"I want FCC to continue building a model that grows and grows - helping lead individuals who have experienced trauma to follow a better path toward brighter days."

-Jennifer Knapp Severson



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Danielle Swedberg, Program Coordinator, Stepping Stones and Matty's Place and Eryn Potthast, Administrative Assistant - Safe Visitation & Tracking placing 'Blue Kids Silhouettes' outside of FCC's Franklin Street offices in Winona in April 2022.

Family & Children's Center 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.

Danielle Swedberg is the Program Coordinator for FCC's child advocacy centers (CAC). According to Danielle, FCC provided services to 639 children and their non-offending caregivers who were part of a child protection investigation in 2022. "The occurrence of child abuse is approximately 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 13 boys nationally," says Danielle.

According to the National Children's Alliance, CACs see fewer cases that involve sole allegations of neglect. But experts do frequently encounter such allegations as part of a larger case of maltreatment. And neglect is the most common form of maltreatment according to information published by the Children's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families.

Signs of abuse and neglect:

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

For information on FCC's child advocacy centers, contact Danielle at dswedberg@fccnetwork.org.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AWARENESS EVENTS

April 19, 5 p.m., 1707 Main Street, La Crosse, WI

April 25, 5 p.m., 601 Franklin Street, Winona, MN

Join us for Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse during a 'Meet and Eat' with FCC staff during this free event that is open to the public at our La Crosse offices in the John Burgess Conference Room on April 19 and at our Winona office on April 25 in the Slaggie Family Conference Room. Child care will be available. Please sign up five days ahead of the event. The presentation will run 5:30 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. Space is limited, but registration is required. You can register on fcconline.org.

April 25, 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.

May 20, 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 May 27 at Winona National Bank. Check soon for more details on fcconline.org.

LEARNING THE VALUE OF SIMPLE THINGS AND GENTLE PARENTING



Hazellee deftly maneuvers her two-year-old little fingers into the peace sign to share her age, “Two,” she says proudly, looking up with inquisitive, brown eyes as she wears a green military-style jacket - matching her mother in every way - except for the pink, sparkly boots and pony tail.

“My daughter is flashier than I am,” says Raven Tillman with a smile.

Raven and Hazellee are part of one of Family & Children’s Center’s longest running programs, Healthy Families,

celebrated its 30th year operating in La Crosse in 2022.

FCC’s program is affiliated with Healthy Families America (HFA), one of the leading family support and evidence-based home visiting programs in the United States. The foundation of the program is that early, nurturing relationships are essential for healthy development. Healthy Families strengthens parent-child relationships, promotes healthy child development and enhances family well-being through weekly in-home visits with a trained staff member.

Agency-wide, Healthy Families has the capacity to serve and support 145 families through the first five years of their children’s lives.

Families participate voluntarily and at no cost to themselves. Families are matched with a case manager who personally visits them in their home or least restrictive environment, identifying strengths and reducing barriers to help them meet their goals to improve family functioning.

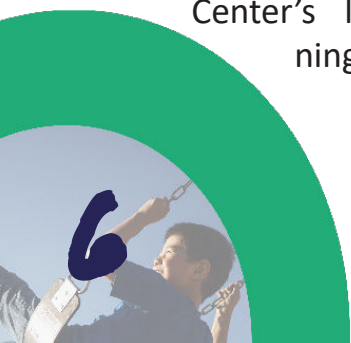
“Being a parent is hard,” says Andrea Pierson, Healthy



Andrea Pierson

“Being a parent is hard. Everyone deserves to have someone in their corner.”

**-Andrea Pierson,
Healthy Families
Program Coordinator**



Families program coordinator. “Everyone deserves to have someone in their corner as they navigate the joys and struggles of parenthood.

The Healthy Families program provides parents with trusted support -- someone to collaborate with to set meaningful and attainable goals, connect them with valuable resources and offer information about child development.”

Raven grew up in La Crosse as an active child playing basketball and volleyball, but she has had more loss than someone her age should ever experience. Her father died when she was in middle school, and sadly, Raven has lost two babies to stillbirth.

Due to the losses of her children, OB/GYN nurses suggested Raven take part in the Healthy Families program when she became pregnant with Hazellee. Pierson and Raven were matched shortly after Raven gave birth. While pregnancy and childbirth were not without concerns, today Hazellee is a happy, healthy little girl.

“I have been working with Raven since Hazellee was an infant,” says Pierson. “Together, we have celebrated her accomplishments, and I have empathized and validated her feelings during times of hardship. Raven is resilient, goal-oriented and continuously improving herself to be the best mom she can be.” “Andrea respects the way I want to see myself parent,” says Raven. “Andrea makes time for me. She listens. Then she shares her viewpoint. Her non-judgmental input helps me to get to the best answer about my parenting. Healthy Families has also helped me gain perspective on so many other important things in life.”

Raven recalls gentle parenting was not part of her family’s natural family dynamic. However, what she has learned through Healthy Families has helped her change that pattern. It has helped Raven respect her child.



“Hazellee needs to know she is valued,” says Raven. “I listen to Hazellee. I respect and communicate in a way where she listens to me. This was taught to me (through the Healthy Families program), because otherwise I would not have known.”

Raven says she has learned the following through Healthy Families:

1. **Personal self-respect.**
2. **Life balance.** Raven reveals she tried to go to school full-time and work full-time and realized that was not good for her or Hazellee.
3. **Experiences are more important than material things.**

Raven will graduate this spring with a Human Resources degree and currently works at Hy-Vee as an HR assistant.

Due to the success of Healthy Families in La Crosse, the program expanded into Vernon County in 2021. Last year, FCC received a \$1.25M grant from the Minnesota Department of Health to start the program in Winona County. The grant supports the program for the next five years to assist 40 new families and their children. For more details contact Andrea Pierson by emailing apierson@fccnetwork.org or by calling (608) 785-0001.

THANK YOU for taking a relentless stand to prevent child abuse, support early intervention services and help fund treatment programs at the Bridges to Better Tomorrows Event in 2022.

Last year FCC served 5,500 persons with loving, compassionate care for mental health and family guidance services.

Your generous and loving hearts connected to reach the Matching Challenge grant of \$350,000 with \$710,000 raised.

**Love Can Build A Bridge Between Your Heart and Mine –
Don't you Think It's Time.**



Libby Weber Laura Eddy
Co-Chairs of

Bridges to Better Tomorrows 2022

**TAKE A LOOK AT OUR INAUGURAL
BRIDGES TO BETTER TOMORROWS EVENT**

SAVE THE DATE

BRIDGES TO BETTER TOMORROWS

Andrea Wieser and Jerry Papenfuss, Co-chairs, along with Bridges event committee and FCC Board members, cordially invite you to an inspiring event!

Weber Center for the Performing Arts

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

Social: 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Program: 6:45 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, but space is limited to the first 350 guests.

Register today on fcconline.org.



For more information email ehongerholt@fccnetwork.org
or call 507-459-1989 or 608-668-2132.

Opening Doors, Changing Lives

The Other Door is a community-based drop-in center located at Family & Children's Center (FCC) in Viroqua. It is designed to provide positive social networking opportunities, particularly for people needing support in their recovery from substance abuse or mental illness.

The Other Door is a place – a place to find help, a place to find hope, but most importantly, a place to find people. It provides a safe location for guests to escape from stress, isolation or boredom. This is often one of the first steps taken as they rebuild their lives in the community.

The Other Door was given its name by local residents who wanted to provide an alternative place to socialize and recover. Opening in 2013, the drop-in center was a grassroots effort to make it easier to locate support groups, attend meetings and find non-judgmental fellowship in a supportive environment to work on their mental health and/or addiction recovery. By identifying a regular, consistent meeting place, individuals were able to plan for and count on opportunities to meet, share, socialize, and grow. The Other Door has grown into a premiere socialization spot for people in recovery. In addition to meeting space, the added attractions of a place to watch movies, play games, and enjoy a weekly evening meal has allowed participants to be enriched and to be a part of a community.

The key to the success of The Other Door is not the name, the place or the programs. It's the people.

Ethan (not his real name) is one such person. Ethan moved to Viroqua from the West Coast in 2014. Ethan admits that the move caused some concern for him. What would moving to Viroqua mean for his recovery?

It did not take long for him to put his worries behind him. As Ethan began attending meetings at The Other Door in Viroqua, he states, "As the years turned, I met more and more interesting and gregarious, sober, and wry people who helped me understand the culture of the town."

**"An absolute rock
in my recovery."**

-Ethan, The Other Door guest

According to Ethan, the drop-in center became "an absolute rock in my recovery." In those early years, sometimes the number of those attending meetings was very few.

(Continued on Page 20)



Help for Teens Who are Unhoused

Do you have a place in your heart to help?



Host Homes is a program that serves La Crosse County youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

According to Destiny Ziel, Family & Children's Center Social Worker with Treatment Foster Care & Host Homes, during the 2021-2022 school year, La Crosse reported 162 unhoused students, many of whom are living without an adult guardian. These numbers have risen in recent years, making this issue an urgent one.

Youth who are without a stable and safe living situation tend to struggle with attending school, maintaining employment, and being involved in criminal activity and victimization. Unfortunately, the longer youth remain unhoused or displaced, the greater the likelihood that these struggles will increase in intensity as they move into adulthood.

"Housing services are limited in La Crosse," says Destiny, "and near-nonexistent for minors. It was this realization that led FCC to develop the Host Homes program."

Since its inception, Host Homes has supported dozens of youth with a variety of needs, and many of those youth have left their Hosts having found a permanent connection, a family. In the words of one

youth preparing to leave for college: "I want to stay close to them. I know they're always here [for me]."

Host Homes recruits, screens, and trains adult volunteers who support these youth in a range of ways, all tailored to each unique set of needs and interests. Volunteers have the option to provide:

- Mentorship and guidance
- Short-term and intermittent housing
- Long-term housing

Youth are matched with volunteers and all parties are given the opportunity to build rapport, discuss expectations, and plan for future success with the support of a program social worker, who provides ongoing case management and advocacy for these youth as they work towards their goals in a family setting.

Goals of the program focus on:

- Safety
- Stability
- Mental health
- Physical well-being
- Academic achievement and attendance
- Diversion from the justice system and adult homelessness
- Preparation for independent living, including career planning and support
- Increasing community connections to other resources and necessary services

For information on how to serve as a Host Home volunteer partner, please call Destiny Ziel at (608) 785-0001, ext. 2212 or by emailing Destiny at dziel@fccnetwork.org.



With your generous support, FCC is changing lives of 5,500 clients in our communities. In 2022, we...



THANK YOU!



*Served 3,124 guests at The Other Door drop-in center



Supported 187 families with drop-in, in-home, and out-of-home respite care

Provided 799 clients with outpatient therapy services



*Helped 72 families grow stronger with Healthy Families programs in La Crosse and Vernon Counties and now in Winona County

Grew 63 young minds in Day Treatment

*Protected 639 children at Stepping Stones and Matty's Place

*Guided 114 people to safer lives through Vernon County's Domestic Abuse Project



Aided 189 adults to thrive through Community Support Programs

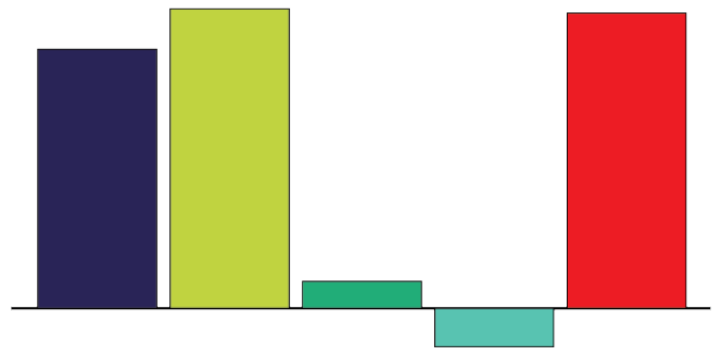
*Notes care and guidance is provided at no charge for this program

 Family & Children's Center

2022 Annual Report Financial Highlights

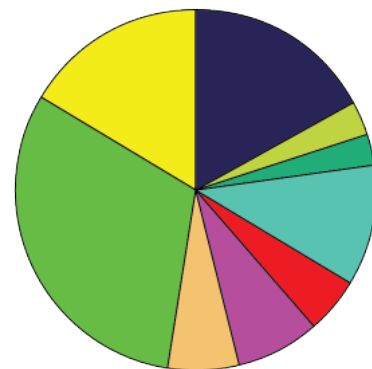
Sources of Revenue

- \$2,667,800 | Contributions (Public and Private Support)
- \$3,085,238 | Program & Service Fees
- \$279,010 | HRSA Provider Relief Fund
- (\$397,918) | Investments & Rentals
- \$3,040,552 | State & County Agencies



Expenses

- \$1,552,237 | Facilities/Maintenance, Personnel, and Administration
- \$267,995 | Advancement
- \$273,543 | Domestic & Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention
- \$975,519 | Family Support
- \$442,498 | Foster Care
- \$690,984 | Housing/Residential
- \$574,252 | Juvenile
- \$2,836,292 | Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder
- \$1,474,777 | Respite Services



Total: \$9,088,096

* Represents the loss from investments

Child Abuse Prevention Endowment: \$5,280,989



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY IN 2022

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Welcome to you and all founding members of the new Bridge Builder Giving Societies! FCC's new 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 5,500 people served by FCC in 2022.

It is not a cliché, this agency would be unable to serve the large numbers of people needing support, guidance, and a helping hand without your generosity.

Family and Children's Center is grateful for the tremendous philanthropic support received from January to December 2022. THANK YOU for taking a Relentless Stand against child 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 ehongerholt@fccnetwork.org so we may update our records.

SAVING LIVES CHAMPIONS

Gifts of \$25,000 and more

Boost geographic and programmatic reach in the communities in which we serve.

Gerald and Marilyn Arndt
Binsfeld Family Fund
Cleary - Kumm Foundation, Inc.
Dahl Automotive
The Elmwood Foundation, Inc.
Dave and Barb Erickson
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Mark Glendenning and Margie Webster, M.D.
Great Rivers United Way
Independent Living Resources
La Crosse County Community Mental Health Services Block Grant
John and Linda Lyche
Minnesota Department of Health - Family Home Visiting Section H
Minnesota Department of Justice

Home and Community Based Services
American Recovery Plan Act Grant
Jerry and Pat Papenfuss Family Fund
RTP Company
Safe Haven Grant
Joshua Severson and Jennifer Knapp Severson
Dave and Barb Skogen
Slaggie Family Foundation
Trust Point, Inc.
UW Community Care Coordinator
WNB Financial
Don and Roxanne Weber
Weber Family
Jeff and Andrea Wieser
Winona HUB
Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
Wisconsin Department of Justice

Focus on Energy Program
Elizabeth Callender King Foundation
Mayo Clinic Health System
Margaret Simpson Home Fund of the Winona Community Foundation
Miller Ingenuity
John and Kathy Reinhart Family Foundation, Inc.
University of Wisconsin Whitewater
Shawn and Mary Jo Werner

WELLNESS HEROES

Gifts of \$5,000 to \$9,999

Invest in programs for youth and unsheltered teens, substance abuse counseling, foster care and more.

A.L.M. Charities, Inc.
Thomas and Jan Brock
Dr. Archie and Rosemary Britt Family Fund
Mike and Diana Carey
Laura and Chuck Eddy
Lyndie Fabian
Kent Handel
Merchants Bank
MN Suicide Prevention

RELENTLESS PROTECTORS

Gifts of \$10,000 to \$24,999

Transform the lives of children and adults with serious mental illness.

Anonymous
City of La Crosse
Guy Comer
County of La Crosse

Joan Niebuhr
River Hills Dental
St. Nicholas Day Donor
Russell L. and Vera M. Smith
Foundation, Inc.
WA Group
Wieser Brothers General
Contractors, Inc.

HEALING PARTNERS

Gifts of \$1,000 to \$4,999

Expand services to respond to
needs for our youngest generation.

Anonymous
David and Muriel Arnold
Janet Beckwith
The Benevity Community Impact Fund
Brian and Barb Benson
Michael and Mary Bottcher
The Don and Cheryl Brenengen
Family Fund
BK5K Youth Fund
Chart Energy and Chemicals, Inc.
Gerry Cichanowski Family Fund
Robert Cieslak
Diane and Pete Conway
Creative Screen Print
Eva Dahl and Barry Blomquist
Jim and Sue Dillenbeck
Frank and Carol Drasler
Joseph Endrizzi
Phyllis Ernst
Frozen River Film Festival
Mark Garrels and Pamela
Maas Garrels
Dan Gelatt
Sue Anne Gelatt Foundation
Will and Jennifer Gibson
Sr. Mary Ann Gschwind, FSPA
Jeanette Hammes
John and Amanda Hardy
John R. Hirsch Trust
Henry Gund Sr. Trust
Ardith Hoff
John and Diann Honadel
Brad and Ellen Hongerholt
David and Sarah Hughes
Dale Jacobson and Wendy Stachowitz
Jay and Dawn Jaehnke
Daniel and Katherine Kern

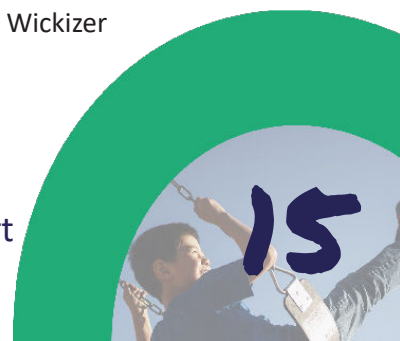
Mary Kessens
Jeff and Sara Kessler
Patty Koch
Mary Mother of the Church
La Crosse Community Foundation
Warren and Denise Loveland
Family Fund
Laurie Lucas
Dustin and Dominique Luecke
Bob and Jean Marck Family Fund
Barbara and Edward Martinez
Minnesota Early Childhood Mental
Health Grant
Mike and Sally Moran
Dr. Mary Morris and James Killoran
Marlene and John Mulrooney, M.D.
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OPTUMServe
JC and Arlene Pfeiffer
Rahn and Judy Pischke
Practically Posh
Rob and Diane Reinhart
Sr. Linda Riesberg
James Ringstrom
Thomas B Roberts
Daniel Schraith
Kurt and Julie Schroeder
Lila and Glenn Seager, MD
Josi Severson
Jack and Marti Schwem Fund
Lana and Eugene Smithart
Jean and John Sterling, OD
The Storm Trail Race Series
TD Ameritrade Institutional
Three Sixty Real Estate Solutions
Torrance Casting, Inc
Sr. Julie Ann Tydrich
Waldera Giving Account
Chris and Beth Weiss
Dare L. White and William F. White
Foundation
Brian and Kathy Wieser
Kristy Wiltrout
Winhaven Court Residents
Winona Community Foundation
Winona Eagles Club
Winona Elks - Lodge 327
Nathan and Becky Woodworth
Xcel Energy
Tita Yutuc
Dr. Dawlat A Zaky

SUPPORTIVE ALLIES

Gifts of \$500 to \$999

Nurture healthier families.

Altra Federal Credit Union
Chris and Sara Battison
John Bender
Mr. and Mrs. William J. Beres
Blessed Sacrament Women's Club
James Crigler
Dairyland Power Cooperative
Faith Lutheran Church
Diane Foust and Jim Nelson
Chris and Erin Gervais
Gift of Grace Lutheran Church
Linda C. Groom, MD
Chuck and Carmen Gustafson
Andrew and Dawn Guzzo
Amanda Hoefling
Holmen Lions Club
Peter and Susan Hughes
Christopher Huiras and Krista Coleman
Jean Knutzen
Mary Boniface Kriener
Robert and Debra Leaf
Ron and Donna Luethe
Milo and Beverly Mayer Mach
Family Fund
Debra R. and Todd A. Mahr, MD
Richard and Eleanore McLoone
Marie Miller
Damian and Jeanne Miller
Alexandra (Eddy) Moore
James Munn
Ed and Corine Neuman
PEO Sisterhood Chapter BI
Kathy Reinolt
River Valley c/o Lee Enterprises
Cory and Jennifer Roupe
Jack and Judy Rusch
Schilling Family Fund
Mark and Kim Schneider
Vanee Songsiridej, MD
Bernadette Teff Family Fund
Mary Thompson
Thrivent Choice Points Program
Walzcrafft
James and Jo Wickizer



BETTER TOMORROWS

Margaret and Daryl Wood
Mary Zaky, MD and Prem
Rabindranauth, MD

FRIENDLY ADVOCATES

Gifts up to \$499

Every dollar counts as Family & Children's Center works to help more individuals in our communities.

Fe C Abellera
Marilyn Adam and Ralph Tauke
Donald V. Addington
Ben Addington
Ben and Julee Agar
Nancy Allen
Amazon Smile
Alyse Ambrosini
Brittany Ambrosini
Ron and Terry Amel
Barbara and Thomas Ames
Dr. Hans and Margaret Anderson
Heather E. Archer
Nancy Arens
Dick Art
Joyce Arthur
Richard Auby
Donald and Debra Bahr
Curtis Bakkum
Sandie Balduzzi
Balduzzi Lumber
Rich and Kathy Barclay
Kenneth Barilani
Howard and Christine Barlow
Terry and Julie Bartels
William and Marsha Bateman
Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Lora Benacci
Bethel Lutheran
John and Rosanne Betz
Richard and Catherine Beyers
Ken Birnbaum
Jerome and Beverly Bjornstad
Douglas and Kathleen Bloemke
Anthony and Melissa Boltik
Greg and Beth Bonney

Nancy Bowell
Jessica Breese
Bill and Betty Brendel
John Brevik
Brice Prairie Conservation Association
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Francis and Dolores Brown
Nicholas Brown
Sandy and Stephen Brubaker, MD
Mark and Jennifer Brumm, MDs
Lisa Bucher
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John and Barb Burgess
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BETTER TOMORROWS

(Continued from page 10)

But eventually those numbers grew. Guests attended meetings from all over Vernon County and sometimes traveled for over an hour to participate.

Ethan says, "I kept coming back, and I stayed until there were 30 of us regularly attending NA meetings...talking at length about life, love and how we could help one another grow." He also became involved with the mental health wellness programs offered at The Other Door. The Recovery Through Sharing group helped Ethan work on his substance abuse recovery while also getting a sense of his mental health and how to integrate the processes. He recounts, "One year, when I was really struggling, I went to approximately 180 meetings in 180 days, almost all of them at The Other Door."

Today, Ethan is an honor student with a 3.9 GPA. He received a full-ride academic scholarship as an Adult Outstanding Student. Now living in Madison, Ethan acknowledges that he misses the friendships and comradery he experienced at The Other Door. He knows he is on a positive path now, but he hopes that sharing his story will help others. In his words Ethan expresses, "I hope, and write, for the

next 'me' out there - homeless, addicted, scared, lonely, suicidal, depressed, 'broken.'"

Lynn Prestwood also came to the drop-in center in 2014 based on her therapist's recommendation. She thought it would be a good way to meet people. Lynn began participating in the Recovery Through Sharing support group. After attending for several months, she was asked to co-facilitate the group.

It was through these meetings that Lynn learned more about the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), joined the organization, and participated in a course to become a facilitator for the Family Support group at The Other Door.

Working at The Other Door has taught Lynn to have more patience with

people and not to judge people so quickly. No one is perfect.

In 2019, Lynn was hired by FCC to work at the drop-in center. Today she is a Certified Peer Specialist. As a member of the staff, she helps schedule the groups, works, along with the other staff, to make the place neat and clean, and keeps a monthly events calendar up-to-date. On Fridays she serves a meal to the clients that come to the drop-in center, and she usually shows a movie. Lynn tries to meet the needs of the groups and clients that are welcomed at The Other Door.

In 2022, The Other Door hosted 3,124 individual guests. These guests received individual support and participated in over 500 groups including:

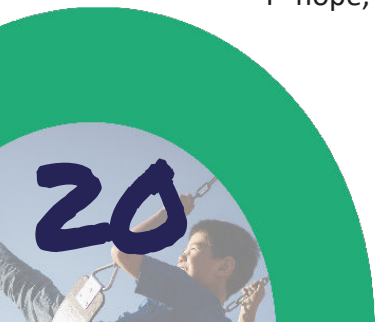
- NAMI groups (Recovery Through Sharing and Family to Family)
- Alcoholic Anonymous
- Narcotic Anonymous
- Women's 12-Step Group
- Overeaters Anonymous

Staff at The Other Door have lived experience in recovery and utilize this experience to support guests in their recovery journey.

One of the best experiences Lynn had was the very first time that she came to The Other Door. The staff was welcoming and very nice. They listened and tried to help her in any way that they could.

"With the help of The Other Door and the groups that we have, I have watched people change and become successful people in the community."

-Lynn Prestwood, FCC Peer Support Specialist and National Alliance on Mental Illness board member



BETTER TOMORROWS

But the very best experience is seeing guests improve and turn their lives around. Lynn states, "I can tell you a few stories where people have hit rock bottom, but with the help of The Other Door and the groups that we

have, I have watched people change and become successful people in the community."

She has learned a lot from the various clients that come to the drop-in center, and she also loves to see people change

and succeed. Through her experiences, first as a member of support groups, to facilitator, to Certified Peer Specialist, Lynn shares, "Get to know people first, let them tell you their story. You might have more in common than you think."

The Other Door drop-in center offers a range of programming and spaces for socializing.

There is no fee to attend programming and insurance is not required. Guests do not need to provide a reason for attending or personal information.

Appointments are not required.

The Center is open Monday through Friday, 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

1321 North Main Street, Viroqua, WI 54665

UPCOMING EVENTS

Catch up on the latest events as they are added to our online events calendar! Head to fcconline.org to see the latest additions from our calendar to add to your calendar.



Family 2.0 Class

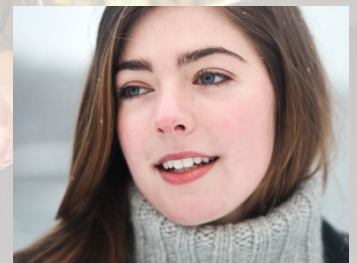
2023 Dates: April 1, June 3, August 5, October 7, and December 2

Family 2.0: Evolving with the Family is a peer support group led by two trained facilitators. The program seeks to help children identify feelings related to divorce. Coping skills are introduced as ways to work through those feelings. For more information, contact Carrie Bailey at (608) 785-0001 or by email at cbailey@fccnetwork.org.

Pregnancy Loss and Infertility Support Group

First Wednesday of each month.

Family & Children's Center is hosting ongoing sessions to provide support and community to people on their family-building journey. Costs are \$10 per session, which will be held at 1707 Main Street, in La Crosse, WI. For more information, or to register, contact Sydni Durrstein at (608) 785-0001 ext. 2127 or by email at sdurrstein@fccnetwork.org.



Bridges to Better Tomorrows

Wednesday, November 1, 2023, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Join us for an inspiring event at the Weber Center for the Performing Arts in La Crosse, WI. The social starts at 5:30 p.m., with the program beginning at 6:45 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Turn to page 8 and 9 for more information. Register today on fcconline.org or by calling Ellen Hongerholt at (507) 459-1959 or (608) 668-2132.



Treatment Foster Care

Serving a Need in Our Area

FCC's Treatment Foster Care program serves youth with significant emotional, behavioral, and medical needs across both Wisconsin and Minnesota, with foster homes located within an hour of La Crosse.

At the end of 2021:

- **6,887 Wisconsin children were in out-of-home care**
- **About 12,400 Minnesota children were in out-of-home care**
- **21.7% of these youth had at least 1 documented disability**
- That number is likely higher because disability status is unknown for over half of children in out-of-home care

In La Crosse County, there were as many as 267 youth in out-of-home care in 2022. During this time, there were only 68 homes licensed to provide foster care. This shows the need for treatment foster care providers.

According to Louise Campbell,

of Treatment Foster Care, "Because these youth have higher needs, FCC's Treatment Foster Care providers go through an enhanced screening and training process during the licensing process. Once licensed, they received regular opportunities to build their skills through ongoing training and education."

Knowing that the need is so great, we are always striving to expand the reach of our program. Interested in getting involved? The licensing process usually takes three to four months to complete and consists of the following:

- Submit your interest to the program staff, who will schedule a phone consultation to answer any questions.
- Complete paperwork for your application and return to staff.
- Staff will perform background and reference checks.
- Complete a home study consisting of interviews and 4-5 home visits.
- Complete required training.

Foster families are supported by program staff, including social workers, mental health professionals, respite care providers, and other service providers. Foster parents also benefit from regular support groups with other local foster families, in-house training, access to a 24/7 phone line, and financial compensation.

"Because these youth have higher needs, FCC's Treatment Foster Care providers go through an enhanced screening and training process..."

**-Louise Campbell,
Treatment Foster Care
Program Coordinator**

BETTER TOMORROWS

Treatment foster parents play an essential role as part of a child's treatment team, working with other service providers, school staff, social workers, and sometimes a child's biological family. Foster youth flourish with care, patience, and guidance in our foster homes. Occasionally, they even find a forever home when it is not possible to return to their biological parents.

These homes are essential to maintaining as normal a childhood as possible for these youth because they allow youth to remain in a family setting rather than being placed in group homes and residential treatment centers. At present, there is a serious shortage of qualified and capable foster homes to provide care for these youth.

Applicants must be 21 or older and have a stable income, but need not be married, own a home, or have experience with fostering. We are happy to discuss specific licensing requirements with any interested parties.

For more information
or questions, email
lcampbell@fccnetwork.org.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022

Open House Tours in La Crosse and Winona



Contributions from our amazing communities



Editor's note: Better Tomorrows is published annually as a stewardship report to generous donors, partnering organizations, agencies and friends. The annual report is produced by the Advancement and Marketing staff: Ellen Hongerholt, MA, Director of Advancement & Marketing and Editor; Kevin Hennessy, Grants Specialist and contributing writer; Greg White, Marketing Specialist, contributing writer and graphic designer; Katrina Scoville, MA, Donor Engagement & Events Specialist and contributing writer. FCC staff Louise Campbell, Treatment Foster Care Program Coordinator, Danielle Swedberg, Stepping Stones Program Coordinator and Destiny Ziel, Social Worker with Treatment Foster Care and Host Homes contributed to this publication.

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Sparta
 920 West Wisconsin Street
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 (608) 269-0567

Black River Falls
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**JOIN US FOR THE RETURN OF
 BRIDGES TO BETTER TOMORROWS**

November 1, 2023

5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Weber Center for the Performing Arts
 428 Front Street South
 La Crosse, WI 54601



You won't want to miss Family & Children's Center's **inspiring** news!
 Registration is required by October 10. The FREE evening includes complimentary
 hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Join us and help build Bridges to Better Tomorrows!

Learn more on Page 8-9