



VONNA'S STORY

“About ten years ago, I adopted three boys who are biological brothers, Trevel, 16; Jeleel, 12; and Jacario, 10. Now, I am fostering a little girl, who is five. When I first adopted my sons, a lot of people doubted my commitment. They said I would want to give them back because they had too many problems. But that made me even more determined to show that with the right intentions and tools, you can change a child's life for the better.

The boys were easy to please at first. I took them to the Salvation Army to buy all new clothes and they had a blast picking everything out. It may not have been

name-brand clothes, but they finally had things to call their own and that was exciting for them.

At the same time, I was noticing some real problem behaviors that I didn't know how to deal with. The boys were stealing and hoarding. They didn't realize these were bad things because that's what their parents taught them to do to survive. They would steal food in the grocery store and hide food all over the house. I knew I needed more help to break these habits, so I brought the boys to The Children's Center for therapy in the **General Behavioral Health program**.

When we came to The Children's Center, everything changed. Trevel, the oldest of the three, had a breakthrough after several months of

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VONNA'S STORY CONTINUED

therapy and revealed that he was sexually abused while in the care of his biological mother. He had a lot of pent-up anger that he released, and from there everything was different for him. He started getting better grades in school and making more friends. And the younger two learned coping skills for their stealing and hoarding habits. I also went to groups about parenting children with ADHD and parenting kids who have experienced sexual abuse and trauma. The groups taught me different ways to manage their behaviors and understand their motivations.



The Children's Center made a huge impact on our lives. They taught my boys how to deal with their past trauma, and they taught me how to love and care for them in the ways they most needed. The most important piece that I want people to understand is that what these kids go through is not their fault. Some children think it's their fault that they are abused, mistreated, or taken from their parents, but it is the parent who is supposed to nurture and protect their children. I decided to adopt because I knew I could love and care for these children in a way they hadn't been before. I hope that anyone who decides to be a foster parent or to adopt is going into it with the same intentions. It is not an easy process, but **if you love them for who they are and give them the right resources like what the Children's Center provided us, you can make a huge difference in a child's life.**"

Vonna McMickel is a TCC parent, as well as regular volunteer. This year, she received the Lisa V. Ford Heart and Soul Award for her dedicated volunteer service. We thank her for sharing her family's inspiring story and for showing all children unconditional love and care. It is because of donors like you that Vonna's family was treated here at The Children's Center, and that she pays that forward every day with her service to our agency.

WE ACHIEVED INCREDIBLE HEALING RESULTS, THANKS TO YOU!

Trauma hurts. Many of the children we see are scarred by it, their pain rearing its head in the form of challenging behavior that isolates them from others like in the case of Vonna's family. Our General Behavioral Health program provides treatment, enabling children to function more appropriately and reach their full potential socially and intellectually.

Last year, you made it possible for 2,379 children to be served in the General Behavioral Health Program. More than 35% experienced improved behaviors in one or two areas in six months! That's a significant improvement.

General Behavioral Health services can help a family in many different ways. Services include:

- trauma-informed therapy
- case management
- parent support groups and training
- skill-building groups for youth
- substance use disorder services

It is because of **your** support that children in our program receive the services they need to heal, grow and thrive.





LIFTING UP DETROIT FATHERS!

On June 21, at Greater Grace Temple Church, we held the Sixth Annual Wayne County Fatherhood Initiative Forum in partnership with the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority and the Wayne County System of Care Fatherhood Initiative.

The focus of the day-long event was to help dads and male caregivers become strong role models for their children and families.

Sessions included topics such as role modeling, active parenting, a father's role in supporting the breast-feeding process, and how communities can help develop and encourage strong fathers.

Attendees included male caregivers, fathers, and professionals working with fathers. John Miles, Wayne County Fatherhood Initiative Coordinator, said of the event: "There are numerous events dads can attend but few are put together based on the voice of the "everyday dad." Our workshops are designed to connect with dads on their level, looking at their everyday struggles and the barriers that they are trying to overcome."

We are grateful for the Fatherhood Forum planning committee and you, our supporters, for making this programming possible. Thank you for your dedication to supporting Detroit fathers and male caregivers.

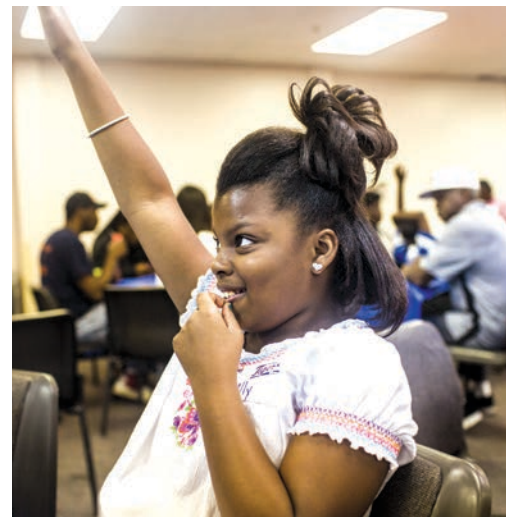
ADVOCATING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

With the urgency to fight the stigma around mental health, on June 15, The Children's Center hosted a "Mental Health and the Community" forum. This half-day event welcomed city leaders to participate in an open discussion around mental health in our city. Panelists included:

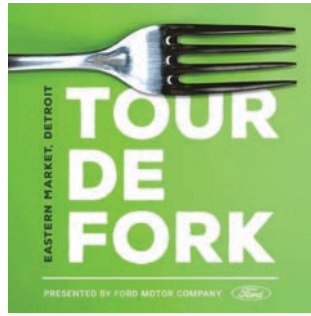
- Brenda Jones, City of Detroit Council President
- Roy McCalister Jr., Detroit City Councilman
- Willie Brooks, CEO, Detroit Wayne County Mental Health Authority
- Dr. Deborah Hunter-Harvil, Detroit Board of Education Member
- Crystal Coleman, Clinical Director, The Children's Center
- Tyanna McClain, Youth United Specialist, The Children's Center

The event gave our families, staff, and community guests the chance to ask questions around mental health access within schools, police services, and throughout the city as a whole.

Guests shared their concern for the lack of consistency in mental health services, as well as those services that involve youth voice and choice. The group shared the opinion that all areas of city government, schools, and police must work together to support awareness and ease of access. The Children's Center welcomes these conversations so that, with your generous support, we continue to heal more and more children, and in turn, heal Detroit.



RAISE YOUR FORKS FOR CHILDREN!



Our 5th annual Tour de Fork event is around the corner, and it promises to be the most delicious event yet. More than 30 of Detroit's hottest restaurants, from Sister Pie to Brome Modern Eatery, will be creating tantalizing morsels for you to try, all in support of our critical services.

Every ticket goes toward the healing we provide to more than 7,500 Greater Detroit children and families annually. What better way to celebrate Detroit than leading the effort to heal children and strengthen our next generation of leaders.

Tour de Fork

Thursday, September 13, 2018 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Eastern Market – Shed 3 • 31145 Adelaide, Detroit, MI 48207
Buy Tickets at www.thechildrenscenter.com/tourdefork!

LEGACY GIVING IS ABOUT LIFE, NOT DEATH

You've already made a difference for children and families in your lifetime. A hundred years from now, you could still be making a difference in the lives of Greater Detroit children. Would you consider including The Children's Center in your estate plan?

People often think they aren't wealthy enough to include a bequest in their estate plan or will. Truth is, the average U.S. estate is worth over \$1M when you include property, remaining retirement funds, investments and other combined assets built over a lifetime. You'll likely find there is more than enough to take care of family and contribute to your favorite charitable passion.

Let us know if you'd like to learn more about our James Couzens Legacy Society while you're alive and well! It all begins with a conversation about what you want your life to say about you.

Contact Tammy Zonker, our Chief Philanthropy Officer by calling 313.262.0930 or emailing tzonker@thechildrenscenter.com.

JULY WISH LIST

We're in need of the following items for our clients, and the clinicians who serve them. Will you consider making a donation?

For our children heading back to school:

- Webster's Pocket Dictionaries
- Scientific calculators
- Backpacks

For our readers:

- Books on grief and loss for any reading level
- Poetry books
- Comic books

For our clinicians in the field:

- Whistles and noisemakers
- First aid kits
- iPhone car chargers



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