

HEROES OF HOPE

YOUR IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT THE CHILDREN'S CENTER

AUGUST 2020



**BASKETBALL
SAVED
MY LIFE**

“What my family put me through is a big deal, but it’s not worth throwing my life away.”

Kalum's Journey to a Bright Future

At 14, Kalum found out that the woman who raised him, who he thought was his mother, was actually his cousin. Everybody in his family had known the truth – except for him. “I felt betrayed, like I wasn’t really part of this family,” he said. “At such a young age, it’s really hard to take in something like that and process what it means for your life.”

Kalum was angry. He stopped caring about school. “I almost failed 9th and 10th grade,” he says. “I kept living with my family for a year, but we fought all the time. I ended up getting in a physical altercation with my biological mother. My face was completely swollen and the blood vessels in both eyes burst.”



Kalum stayed home from school for a month because his face was so battered. His school was concerned and called Child Protective Services. That’s when he was removed from his home and entered foster care.

Eventually, The Children’s Center was able to place Kalum in an independent living setting with a mentor named Mr. Arbuckle. Mr. Arbuckle became very involved in Kalum’s life and helped him get on the right track. “Mr. Arbuckle was like a dad to me. He helped me with school. He helped me save money and get a car. He helped me with a lot.”

Kalum is now 20 years old and is excited about his future. In the fall, he’s planning to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and will play point guard on the basketball team. He has dreams of getting a degree in criminal justice and working in the FBI one day.

When Kalum reflects on his experience, he has a tremendous amount of gratitude. “If I never went to Mr. Arbuckle’s, I wouldn’t think the way I think now. I live by this mantra: ‘There is always someone in a worse predicament than me.’ When I learned that, I stopped complaining and being angry about my situation, and began to succeed. What my family put me through is a big deal, but it’s not worth throwing my life away.”

Let’s Go on a Virtual Tour!



JUST IN: The brand new virtual tour of The Children’s Center is ready for you! Join this 60-minute interactive experience to learn about the amazing services you make possible. Even if you’ve attended a tour previously, you’re sure to learn something new and be even more inspired. Contact tours@thechildrenscenter.com to sign up today!



Summer Fun is on the Way— Thanks to You!

Every child deserves a big slice of summer fun, especially during the pandemic. Thanks to Tau Beta Association and the Kiwanis club, we have sent over 300 Summer Fun Care Kits filled with toys, books and hygiene items—all the ingredients for a great summer!



Remember When You Were 18?

Imagine aging-out of the foster care system at 18 and not having a family to turn to. These courageous young people are often not prepared with the skills or the resources to live independently. Many of them haven't yet graduated high school.

Here is the fate for young people aging out of the foster care system*:

- 20% immediately become homeless
- 40% will experience homelessness within a year of aging out
- 50% will be unemployed by age 24
- 97% will not earn a college degree

It's heartbreaking, but you are changing those numbers through supporting the Young Adult Self Sufficiency Program (YASS).

YASS is committed to setting up young adults for a successful future.

This program pairs youth with mentors and supportive foster care placements like Kalum and Mr. Arbuckle (*see Kalum's story, left*).

Mr. Arbuckle taught Kalum about saving money, getting a car, applying to college, and having a positive outlook despite everything he's been through. He's a shining example of how a mentor can have an impact on a teen's life.

In addition to working with supportive mentors, YASS participants also attend life skills classes and meet with their foster care workers at The Children's Center to set and achieve their goals.

Because of your support:

- 85% of YASS youth graduate high school
- 84% live independently or with family two years after program completion
- 83% are in school, have graduated, or are employed two years after completion

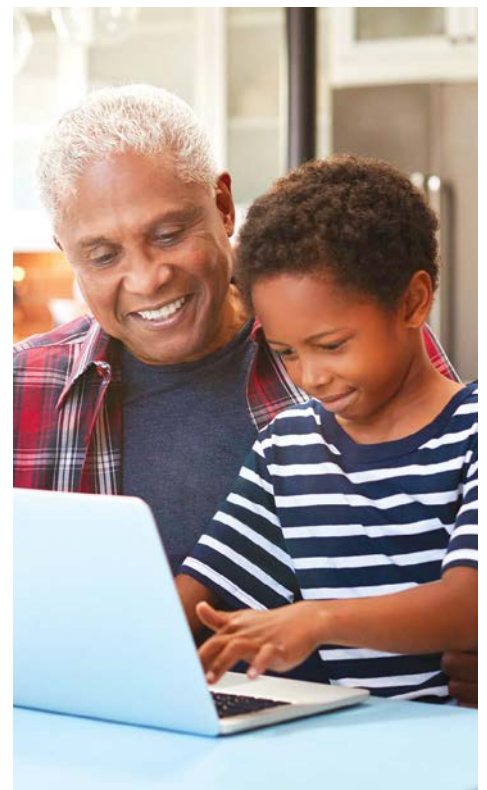
The future's looking brighter already, thanks to you.

*Source of all statistics: National Foster Youth Institute

Summer Day Camp Goes Virtual!

We weren't going to let COVID-19 stand in the way of a summer camp to remember. Thanks to your support, this July we held Virtual Summer Day Camp Monday through Thursday. Staff and volunteers led fun, engaging, and educational activities including Spanish lessons, cooking lessons, yoga, Zumba, basic money management, reading, music and scavenger hunts.

Camp provides structure to children's long summer days and makes sure they are engaging in learning and activity every day. Thanks for helping us make it happen for our children and families.

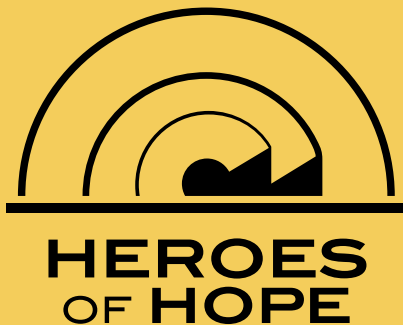




Be a Virtual Volunteer!

Don't forget! We have virtual volunteering opportunities if you find yourself with an extra hour or two during the week. Whether you want to tutor a child, help with game night, or create art projects—we need you! Contact Jon at jcarolin@thechildrenscenter.com to sign up today.

In Tough Times, We Need You Even More



Kalum felt like he didn't have anyone who believed in him. Until Believers like you showed him that we believe in his amazing future. Help show other young people like Kalum that you believe in them by signing up to be a Believer and making a monthly financial donation at any amount. Even better—under the CARES Act limitations on charitable donations, tax deductions have been lifted for 2020! You can receive tax benefits and make a difference at the same time. **We need you now more than ever. Our children and families need you now more than ever too.**

TheChildrensCenter.com/believers



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