

HEROES OF HOPE

SUMMER 2025

The Child is the Center of it All.

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From the CEO's Desk

Dear Friends,

As summer arrives at The Children's Center, we find ourselves reflecting on the meaningful progress made in recent months and preparing thoughtfully for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. This season brings the joy of our summer camps, a time when children and families come together to learn, heal, and grow. We are grateful for the financial support that helps make these experiences possible.

This summer also marks my first year as CEO. It's a meaningful milestone that has deepened my gratitude for our team, our mission, and this incredible community. I'm honored to lead alongside our newly appointed Board Chair, Dennis Edwards, whose passion for this work brings added strength to our shared vision.



Together, we have hosted successful events such as the Power of Possibilities Breakfast, which inspired our community and renewed our shared commitment. We were especially proud to host the first staff Power of Possibilities Breakfast since COVID, a testament to the deep dedication of those who serve our children and families, with many choosing to deepen their support through monthly giving.

As we move forward, we are mindful of the evolving landscape of care and the changing policies that impact the families we serve. In response, The Children's Center remains grounded in our mission and values. We are committed to protecting the dignity of every child and family, rooted in equity, guided by compassion, and driven by hope. Through ongoing advocacy and steadfast care, we will continue to ensure families have access to the support they need.

Looking ahead, we embrace the future with optimism and enthusiasm. There are new opportunities on the horizon to connect with our community and expand our impact. We are energized by the possibilities and are deeply thankful to have you alongside us on this journey.

Thank you for your continued belief in our mission and for being a vital part of the work we do every day. Together, we inspire hope and build lasting change for children and families.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Desiree Jennings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Desiree Jennings

President & CEO

Buddy's: Pizza with a Purpose



PIZZA WITH A *purpose*



THURSDAY, JULY 24TH

**20% OF PROCEEDS GO BACK
TO THE CHILDREN'S CENTER***

**ORDER ONLINE &
USE PROMO CODE:
GIVEBACK**

FARMINGTON HILLS LOCATION ONLY
31646 Northwestern Hwy.
248-855-4600



*exclusions may apply

Champions for Children

On June 4th, we were honored to celebrate a powerful year of transformation under the leadership of our President & CEO, Desiree Jennings, and to welcome our new Board Chair, Dennis Edwards—two bold champions guiding our mission with heart, vision, and unwavering dedication.

The night was filled with reflection, connection, and a renewed commitment to building brighter futures for every child we serve. None of it would have been possible without you.

Each one of you is an advocate. A voice. A champion.

As our needs continue to grow at The Children's Center, so too does the power of community. Your support fuels our work and uplifts the lives of children and families who need us most.

Thank you for standing with us. Together, we are building a stronger, more hopeful tomorrow—for every child.



Faces of Trauma

On May 31, 2025, The Children's Center proudly hosted its 11th Annual Faces of Trauma event—an empowering and heart-centered gathering dedicated to helping families better understand their trauma, reconnect with hope, and reclaim their inner strength.

This year's theme, “Understanding ACEs and Embracing Hope,” guided a day full of healing, learning, and community connection. Attendees explored the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through educational sessions and interactive experiences designed to inspire resilience and renewal.

The event featured an inspiring keynote presentation by Kris Armstrong, who brought clarity and compassion to the conversation around trauma and healing. Cindy Read introduced a captivating interactive art presentation titled *Healing the Wings*, which empowered participants to share their experiences and emotions through visual storytelling. The beautiful butterfly wings created during this event are currently showcased in Building 90.



The event was deeply educational, interactive, and engaging, leaving participants feeling seen, supported, and empowered. Faces of Trauma continues to be a vital space for healing and understanding, and we are honored to walk beside families on their journey toward wholeness.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who attended and contributed to the success of this transformative event.

Lead with Heart, Fundraise with Purpose

Turn birthdays, bake sales, and block parties into brighter futures! Hosting your own third-party fundraiser is a fun and effective way to engage your friends, family, and coworkers with The Children's Center while supporting our mission. Whether it's a casual get-together or a large community event, your efforts help raise awareness and funds that directly impact the lives of children and families. When you lead with heart and fundraise with purpose, you become a true champion for those we serve. Anyone can create their own unique fundraising opportunity—every idea counts, and every effort makes a difference.

Contact Carin Jones, Donor Relations Specialist, at cjones@thechildrenscenter.com or visit <https://www.thechildrenscenter.com/third-party-events/> to learn more and get started today!

A Story of Hope

I walked through the doors of The Children's Center ready to fight for my girls. And from the moment we arrived, I felt something I hadn't felt in a while: hope.

My name is Vivian and my three girls and I came to The Children's Center in a really hard season. Our journey started with a referral from my pediatrician. One of my daughters was showing signs that she was struggling with anxiety and showing signs of Sensory Processing Disorder. I didn't hesitate, I knew I had to do whatever it took to get her the help she needed.

It didn't take long before all three of my daughters were receiving services - therapy, activities, extra support. And me? I was right there with them, taking advantage of every resource available to grow as a mom, and as a person. The therapists here didn't just treat my kids, they saw them. They listened to them. They created a safe space that allowed my daughters to open up and begin healing. I watched my oldest daughter, who had been harming herself, start smiling again. Laughing again. Coming back to me.



The Children's Center didn't just support my girls, they supported me. They helped me see that my daughter's struggles weren't a reflection of my failures, but a sign that she needed help navigating a world that had shifted for all of us after their father and I separated. A few years ago, I went through a divorce. And like so many families, it rippled through our home. I watched my girls change, their joy dimmed, their energy shifted. It affected everything: how they learned, how they interacted, how they coped. The Children's Center stepped in to help us rebuild.

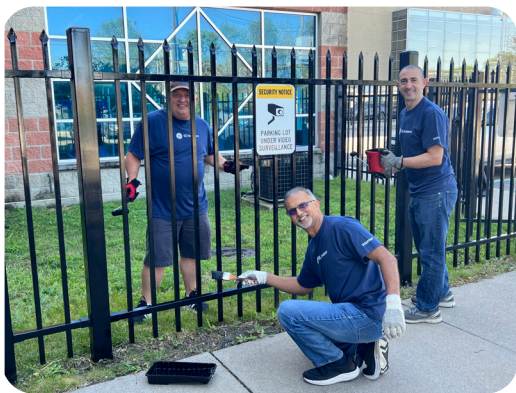
There's a moment I'll never forget: my daughter had a day where her emotions were running high. Normally, that would have turned into a meltdown. But instead, she looked at me and said, "I'm doing my breathing, Mommy." That's the kind of transformation we've seen. That's the kind of strength this place helps children tap into. Through therapy, parent cafés, and special events that let us bond and express ourselves - like art therapy and family nights - we began to heal. We began to laugh again. My daughters found their voices. And in the process, I found mine, too.

I'm a single mom, doing my best every day. And thanks to The Children's Center, I don't have to do it alone. We are just one family. But there are so many others like us in this community - families who are doing their best, and just need a little support to get through. The Children's Center truly is a magical place. And I hope our story reminds you why spaces like this matter. Why hope, compassion, and community can change lives.

Because of people like you, my babies are thriving. We are thriving. And we are filled with hope for what's next.

Corporate and Foundation Partnership

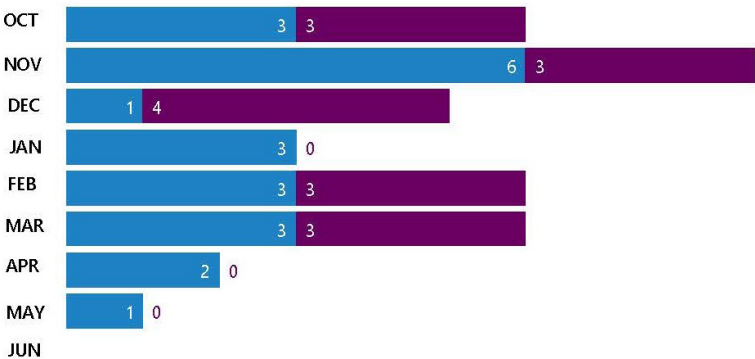
We extend our deepest gratitude to the team at GE Aerospace for their invaluable support of The Children’s Center! In May, nearly 50 volunteers participated in their annual GE Aerospace Workday at our agency. Volunteers worked in teams throughout the campus, planting flowers, repairing the gazebo, cleaning up our playgrounds, and weeding numerous areas, creating a significant visual transformation! Additionally, one team sorted and organized several bags of donated clothing in the Boutique, restocking our racks to make it easier for families to shop for clothing items. Their annual involvement is crucial in enhancing the beauty of our campus each spring and supporting the Boutique in our Tau Beta Family Success Center, ensuring that our client families feel warmly welcomed when they visit the TCC campus. Thank you, GE Aerospace!



Child Welfare



Adoptions and Reunifications that occurred per month during FY25.



38

Children have achieved permanency, fiscal year to date

16

Reunifications

22

Adoptions

Bringing Stories to Life

At Readers and Creators, stories come to life. This monthly event held in our Tau Beta Family Success Center provides children with connection, learning and creativity. Each month focuses on a particular topic and in May we dove into mental health awareness as we explored emotions, compassion, love, empathy and self-care.

Our group of readers and creators arrived with their families, and we gathered together to enjoy a meal – an opportunity that many families with schedules consumed by work, activities and appointments, often miss out on. We laughed, talked and relaxed, and as children finished their meals they settled into the reading area. Children eagerly volunteered for the opportunity to pass out copies of the day's books to their fellow readers. Generously sponsored by Comerica Bank, our Readers and Creators program provides each registered participant and their parent or caregiver with a free copy of every book read at that session, allowing them to build and grow their own home library.



Guest reader Elizabeth Agius, immediate past Board Chair, read two books including “Listening With My Heart” by Gabi Garcia and “I Am Enough” by Grace Byers. The group listened quietly to the story, siblings snuggled next to one another on the couch, students following along in their books word by word. All together they read the words “I AM ENOUGH!” to end the second story and the room burst into applause, a grin on every face. Kylie Zorn, Family Success Center intern, finished off the story time with “Sometimes I Need” by Gabi Garcia, touching on the importance of community, acknowledging feelings and focusing on what we can do to care for our mental health.

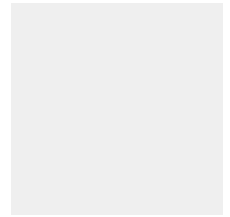
At each Readers and Creators session, an activity is offered that draws on the topics taught through the presented stories. This evening, children and their families created their own stories, using words and art to talk about their experiences, thoughts and feelings. As children shared their stories amongst peers, friends and family, a sense of community could be felt. As parents, grandparents and caregivers read and create alongside their children, we are reminded that the work we do is for children and their families.

Readers and Creators is free and open to the public! Registration required.

Interested in being a guest reader? *Contact Andrea DeShields-Thomas for more information at adeshieldsthomas@thechildrenscenter.com*



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The Children's Center of Wayne County, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, IRS tax I.D. number 38-1359505.
No goods or services were provided in consideration of this contribution, which is tax-deductible as allowed by law.



The Children's Center | 79 West Alexandrine, Detroit, MI 48201 | 313.831.5535 | TheChildrensCenter.com

Future Events

August

Save the Date:
Health and Wellness Fair
August 7, 2025
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
The Children's Center

Scan the QR to Donate Today!

Share the sunshine this
summer.

Your gift makes a huge
impact in a child's life!



Events are subject to change.

If interested in Volunteer Opportunities, please contact the Volunteer Engagement team to sign up at Volunteer@thechildrenscenter.com.