

HEROES OF HOPE

FALL 2025

The Child is the Center of it All.

Table of Contents

2 From the CEO's Desk

4 Holiday Shop
AutoGlow 2026

6 Hollingsworth: Giving Time,
Changing Lives
Child Welfare

3 When Funding Falls Short, Our
Commitment Grows Stronger
Corporate and Foundation
Partnership

5 Big Fun, Big Impact

7 Legacy Builders

From the CEO's Desk

Dear Friends,

As the leaves begin to change, we take a moment to reflect on the vibrant summer we've shared at The Children's Center—one filled with growth, joy, and new beginnings.

This year's summer camp was especially meaningful. Thanks to our talented clinicians, we introduced a social and emotional learning program that guided children in practicing breathing exercises, building social skills, strengthening emotional regulation, and developing confidence. Outside of these sessions, camp was filled with memorable moments—many children learned to swim for the first time, a milestone that brought smiles and cheers from everyone. Friendships were formed, and memories were made that will last for years to come.

We also hosted our annual Health & Wellness Fair, welcoming over 30 community vendors who provided families with valuable resources to prepare for a successful school year. The energy was inspiring as parents and children left with tools, connections, and hope for the season ahead.

Perhaps one of the most extraordinary milestones of the past quarter is the number of children who have found their forever homes. More than 37 children have been adopted this fiscal year—double last year's total. Behind each number is a story of love, stability, and a future filled with possibility.

This fall, we are thrilled to share that we have launched our participation in the Michigan Central Station Children's Endowment Initiative. Through this effort, we are working to establish a legacy of care and stability that will serve children and families for generations to come.

And while we celebrate these accomplishments, our eyes are already on the season ahead. From our Trunk or Treat, where children enjoy a safe and festive Halloween, to our Turkey Giveaway at Thanksgiving, to the joy of our annual Holiday Shop, we are preparing to ensure every family we serve feels supported, valued, and cared for.

Thank you for walking alongside us in this work. Your belief in our mission fuels every step forward, and together, we are building a future where every child can dream, grow, and thrive.

With gratitude,



Desiree Jennings

President & CEO



When Funding Falls Short, Our Commitment Grows Stronger

Recent federal funding reductions have led to significant changes in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, leaving many families with far less support than before. Across Michigan, families served by The Children's Center are receiving notices from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), informing them of benefit cuts — in some cases, by as much as 50%.



“These reductions have had a profound impact on our families,” says Laura LeFever, Director of Community Projects and Partnerships at The Children's Center. “Many are already navigating financial instability, and these cuts have only deepened the struggle.”

In response, The Children's Center is expanding its efforts through the Tau Beta Family Success Center, where families can access a small on-site pantry with essential items like food, hygiene products, and cleaning supplies. We're also connecting clients to a wider network of support — including mobile food distribution programs and partner agencies offering additional assistance.

But as need grows, so does the pressure on our resources. Food insecurity doesn't just affect the dinner table — it adds stress at home and can intensify emotional and behavioral challenges for the children we serve.

You can make a difference. Donation drives are a simple but powerful way to help us meet urgent needs. For a list of high-priority pantry items or to learn more about how you can support these efforts, please contact cjones@thechildrenscenter.com.

Together, we can ensure families have what they need — even when systems fall short.

Corporate and Foundation Partnership

We sincerely thank United Way for Southeast Michigan for their continued and generous support of The Children's Center. Their partnership is a cornerstone of our ability to provide compassionate, high-quality mental health care and critical resources — including food, clothing, and emergency assistance — to children and families across Detroit and Wayne County.

This ongoing support not only strengthens our mission but uplifts the entire community, helping promote dignity, stability, and healing for those facing the greatest challenges.



Together, we are creating a brighter, more hopeful future — one child, one family at a time.

Holiday Shop



Save the Date: AutoGlow 2026

Mark your calendars! AutoGlow 2026, our premier event held in conjunction with Detroit Auto Show Charity Preview, returns to the iconic Michigan Central with a bold new theme—"Driven to Be Heard." We warmly invite you to join us on Friday, January 16, 2026, for an unforgettable evening of purpose and celebration.

This unforgettable evening begins with a pre-reception featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres and a premium open bar, followed by luxury motor coach transportation to and from the Charity Preview. After the show, guests will return for a post-event dinner, live music, dancing, and a celebration full of heart—all with the ease of on-site valet parking.

More than a glamorous night out, AutoGlow is a night with purpose. Since 1929, The Children's Center has been a lifeline for over 4,000 children and families annually across Detroit and Wayne County. Your attendance and sponsorship directly support behavioral health, child welfare, and community engagement and advocacy services—amplifying voices too often overlooked.

Be part of a night where healing begins, hope takes root, and every child's voice is heard.



Big Fun, Big Impact

At The Children's Center, summer is a season of possibility — a time when our campus comes alive with laughter, learning, and meaningful connection. This year was no exception. Thanks to generous funding from the Tau Beta Association, our children experienced a summer full of opportunity, support, and joy — from exciting field trips and hands-on workshops to vibrant community celebrations.

A Summer Full of Adventures

Through our annual Summer Camp, children and teens explored new experiences and built lasting memories. Weekly outings included swimming lessons at Goldfish Swim School, fishing trips, a visit to the Detroit Zoo, card game competitions, and creative art projects that encouraged self-expression and teamwork. Additional activities brought even more summer fun with indoor tent-building and s'mores making, cooking and dance classes, as well as a Midtown museum scavenger hunt and bowling.



Beyond the fun and games, campers also gained valuable life skills. One special highlight was a financial literacy workshop led by Comerica Bank, where campers learned practical money skills and received books to take home — planting seeds of confidence and independence for the future.

Celebrating Wellness Together

On August 7, our campus transformed for the annual Health & Wellness Fair, welcoming families from across the community. In partnership with DWIHN, Youth United, and Children Trust Michigan, we created a space where families could access vital health resources, connect with service providers, and enjoy a festive afternoon.

Kids enjoyed snow cones, a bounce house, crafting activities, and more — proving that wellness and fun go hand in hand. The event also offered essential health services: the WSU Mobile Health Unit and Walgreens provided physical exams; the Red Cross helped families sign up to receive smoke detectors; and Vision to Learn registered children for free eye exams and glasses. On August 14, 46 exams were conducted, and 26 children qualified to receive a free pair of glasses — a clear step toward success in school and beyond.



Backpacks, Smiles, and a Fresh Start

To help families gear up for the school year, we hosted our Back to School Bazaar, where 2,000 brand-new backpacks filled with essential school supplies were distributed — thanks to the incredible generosity and support of Meijer and the Detroit Tigers Foundation.

Volunteers from all three organizations came together to sort supplies and prepare backpacks, ensuring each child walked away feeling confident and ready for the year ahead.



This summer was a powerful reminder of what's possible when children are given the chance to thrive. Thanks to our partners, volunteers, and supporters, we created moments of joy, learning, and care that will stay with our families long after the season ends.

Hollingsworth: Giving Time, Changing Lives

We are proud to recognize Hollingsworth for their steadfast support and valued partnership with The Children’s Center. As a sponsor of our Power of Possibilities Breakfast and an engaged community partner, their impact goes far beyond financial support.

This summer alone, Hollingsworth team members generously donated nearly 100 hours of volunteer time — an in-kind value of approximately \$3,500. Their dedicated employees made a meaningful difference by supporting enrichment activities at our Summer Camp, organizing clothing in our Boutique, and helping serve families at our Health & Wellness Fair.

Their hands-on involvement reflects not only a spirit of generosity, but a true commitment to the well-being of children and families across our community. We are sincerely grateful for Hollingsworth’s continued partnership and the lasting difference they help us make.

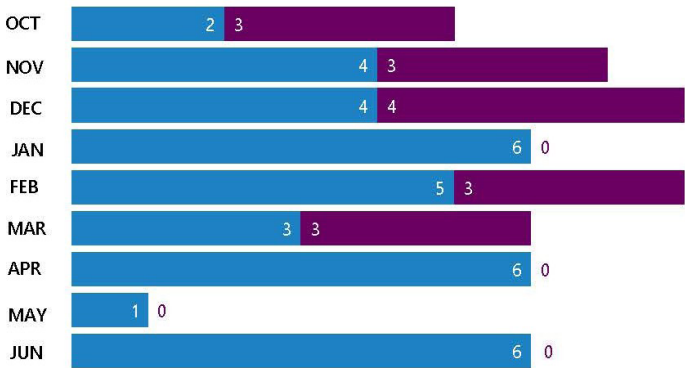
Want to get your company involved? Contact Angela Polk, Director of Corporate and Foundation Philanthropy, at apolk@thechildrenscenter.com to learn more.



Child Welfare



Adoptions and Reunifications that occurred per month during FY25.



53

Children have achieved permanency, fiscal year to date

16

Reunifications

37

Adoptions

Legacy Builders

Some of the most powerful bonds aren't written in blood, but in shared purpose, laughter, and decades of unwavering service. That is the story of Penny, Simone, and Deb—three remarkable women whose steadfast support, friendship, and love for The Children's Center (TCC) have made them pillars of hope in our community.

In a recent heartfelt conversation, these longtime volunteers reflected on the journey that brought them together—and the impact they continue to make. Their connection to TCC began in the early 2000s. Each woman arrived through different doors—friendship, breast cancer support groups, or simply the desire to give back after retirement. What began as occasional volunteering soon blossomed into a legacy of leadership, joy, and generosity.

From chairing holiday events to stepping in wherever needed, these women have done it all—quietly, faithfully, and with open hearts. Through both tears and laughter, Penny, Simone, and Deb shared how TCC became more than a nonprofit—it became a second home. Whether helping a child pick out a warm winter coat or comforting a grieving granddaughter through the bereavement program, they have witnessed the life-changing power of compassion. “TCC was there when my granddaughter lost her father,” Deb recalled. “The support and counseling she received helped bring her back to life.” For Simone, TCC was her anchor through one of life's hardest storms. “When I lost my husband, they picked me up from the Center. Just being able to come back and still serve—it helps me keep going.”



Beyond service, their years at TCC have brought lifelong friendships. They've traveled together, laughed together, and carried one another through seasons of joy and grief. And when asked what keeps them coming back, their answer was simple: the children.

“The need is so real,” Deb said. “We may not have much, but if it means a child has a gift for Christmas, then it's worth it.” Their commitment goes far beyond holidays and special events. Each of these women has given financially when they could, volunteered faithfully for more than 20 years, and raised the standard for what true community service looks like.

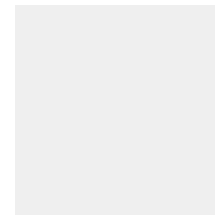
So, what do they hope younger generations will take away from their legacy? Their response was as unified as their friendship: “Don't be selfish. Think of others. Believe in something greater than yourself.” We've lovingly given these women the title of Legacy Builders. To them, it means being part of something lasting, humble, and impactful. To us, it means they've laid a foundation of hope—and others are now following in their footsteps.

If you ask them to describe TCC in one word, they answer together, without hesitation: “Family.” To the families we serve, the children we uplift, and the community we fight for—Penny, Simone, and Deb are the unsung heroes. They are the smiling faces behind the scenes, the steady hands that lift others up, and truly, the heartbeat of hope.

From all of us at The Children's Center: thank you, Legacy Builders. Your light leads the way for generations to come.



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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

October

Save the Date to Host a Trunk:

Trunk or Treat

October 17, 2025

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

*The Children's Center, Parking lot of
Building 90*

January

Save the Date:

AutoGlow 2026

January 16, 2026

Michigan Central Station

Scan the QR to Donate Today!

This fall, help us grow
brighter futures.

Your generosity
transforms lives.



Events are subject to change.

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