



Michigan Central Station Children's Endowment Initiative

For Children.
For Families.

Forever.



from the ceo

Dear Friends,

For nearly 100 years, The Children's Center has walked alongside Detroit's children and families—through hardship, healing, and hope. Today, we have a remarkable opportunity to safeguard this legacy for generations to come.

Through the Michigan Central Station Children's Endowment Initiative, we've received a \$500,000 award—and the opportunity to double it with your help. Every dollar you give will be matched, allowing us to build a \$1.5 million endowment that ensures long-term, reliable support for the children who need us most.

This is more than a campaign—it's our shared legacy. A promise that care, opportunity, and healing will always be within reach for Detroit's most vulnerable kids.

We invite you to be part of it.

With heartfelt thanks,

Desiree Jennings
CEO & President

the urgency of now

Across Detroit and Wayne County, children face overwhelming barriers to opportunity. Poverty, trauma, and limited access to mental health care make it difficult for many to thrive.

Every day, families navigate the weight of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, neglect, and violence—challenges that have a lasting impact on mental, emotional, and developmental well-being.

Over 70% of Detroit’s children are exposed to trauma before age 18.

Trauma and poverty often go hand in hand, and in Detroit, the numbers are staggering. More than 40% of children in Detroit and nearly 30% in Wayne County live in poverty—compared to 16% nationwide. These children are significantly more likely to experience abuse, neglect, and violence, which elevate the risk of learning delays, mental health disorders, and long-term challenges that can follow them into adulthood.

Children in foster care or living with disabilities face even greater risks. Their unique vulnerabilities often lead to more intense and persistent trauma—yet their access to services is even more limited.

And while the need for mental health support has never been more urgent, too many families still can’t get care. Barriers like cost, stigma, provider shortages, and transportation make it nearly impossible for many to get the help they need.

The consequences are heartbreaking. In Michigan, suicide is now a leading cause of death among children ages 10–14. **Without early intervention, these challenges don’t go away—they deepen, repeat, and become generational.**



our mission

To help children and families shape their own futures.

where futures begin

For nearly a century, The Children’s Center has been a trusted partner to children and families across Detroit and Southeast Michigan. We specialize in serving those who are disproportionately affected by poverty, trauma, and adversity. Our holistic model of care meets families where they are—with the tools, compassion, and community they need to heal and grow.

We focus on three core service areas:



Behavioral Health

Trauma-informed therapy and behavioral health services that help children overcome challenges like anxiety, depression, PTSD, and behavioral disorders. We provide specialized support for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and comprehensive autism assessment.



Child Welfare

We provide safe, stable homes for children in foster care, offering vital support for those who have experienced abuse, neglect, and abandonment. When reunification is not possible, our adoption services help children find permanent, loving families. For older youth, our transitional living programs offer guidance and resources as they prepare for independent adulthood.



Community Engagement and Advocacy

Programs that wrap around families to meet every day needs. From clothing and hygiene items to parenting workshops and advocacy training, we strengthen families so children can thrive.



Vivian is a proud mother of three girls—Olivia, Kendall, and Camille—each creative, resilient, and full of potential. But when her children faced anxiety, trauma, and emotional strain, she knew they needed support.

She found it at The Children’s Center.

Today, all three of her daughters are thriving in therapy, and Vivian is actively involved in parent support groups, art nights, and family events that help them grow stronger together.

Thanks to The Children’s Center, her girls are smiling, learning, and gaining tools for the future. And Vivian? She’s confident, empowered, and proud of the mom she’s become.

Families like Vivian’s are still writing their stories—and with your support, their future remains full of possibility.

“It wasn’t just about therapy. It was about finding strength—for them and for me.”
-Vivian

Pictured: Camille, 5 years old, “small but mighty and full of fire”

legacy in action

Results from the 2024 Fiscal Year



5,637
families accessed basic needs support



3,399
meals served through our pantry



2,244
children received trauma-informed therapy



1,686
children received holiday gifts



800+
children attended enrichment events



82%
of children aged 7-17 no longer had serious mental health concerns after receiving services



37+
children were adopted and found their forever homes*

*From October 2024 through July 2025





the power of endowments

Expand Access to Care

- Increase clinical capacity
- Reach more children with early intervention
- Deepen outreach in underserved neighborhoods

Strengthen Innovation & Quality

- Invest in trauma-informed, community-led programs
- Equip staff with advanced training and tools
- Drive system change through data and partnerships

Ensure Long-Term Stability

- Sustain vital services during economic shifts
- Adapt quickly to emerging community needs
- Keep care consistent, regardless of external change



a moment to multiply impact

The Children's Center was chosen for a rare opportunity—one that validates our impact, amplifies your generosity, and secures our future.

- **Recognized for Impact:** One of only 11 nonprofits chosen for the Michigan Central Station Children's Endowment Initiative
- **Community-Chosen:** Selected through a competitive process shaped by Detroit youth and civic leaders
- **Powered by Visionaries:** Backed by The Children's Foundation and Bill & Lisa Ford
- **Every Dollar Doubled:** \$500,000 already awarded — all new gifts matched dollar for dollar up to \$500,000
- **Built for the Future:** Together, we'll create a \$1.5 million endowment for Detroit's children



*Based on an estimated 5% interest payout

Together, we can build something permanent, for every child.



example gift



Join the Legacy. Shape the Future.

We invite you to consider a gift to The Children's Center Endowment—
an investment that supports children and families
not just today, but for generations.

Every contribution is matched. Every gift is invested with care. Every
donor is recognized with lasting gratitude and ongoing stories of the
lives your support touches.

You can give now, include us in your estate plans, or create a named
fund in honor of someone you love.

Help us reach our goal today.
Contact a Philanthropy team member
philanthropy@thechildrenscenter.com
or visit our website



