

A Newsletter from KVC Health Systems, Inc.



# KVC Matters

Spring 2015

## Creating Powerful Child-Parent Connections



*The new KVC Institute, opening May 2015, will strengthen family bonds by providing interactive child-parent therapy and other research-backed approaches to child and family services.*

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with Big Vision

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Foster Parents

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Learn at KVC

Dear Friends of KVC,

As you may know, we have many “KVCisms” or core values. (I must repeat them often because some of our staff call them Wayneisms.) These value statements shape our culture and guide our approach to serving children and families.

One of our KVCisms seems particularly relevant this year. It is, “If you’re not growing, you’re dying.” Growth is such an integral part of life. It happens naturally for plants, animals and people as a result of good health. Many think of growth as increasing in size, but it also means developing, maturing or even gaining in value or knowledge.

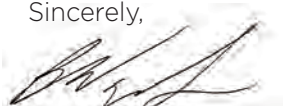
We’re grateful for the many ways that KVC is growing, maturing, and both gaining and giving value in 2015. In this issue of *KVC Matters*, you’ll learn about:

- **The new KVC Institute** (pg. 3), which we are unveiling in Olathe, Kan. this May. Many experts believe that the KVC Institute will positively influence U.S. foster care in dramatic ways and improve how child welfare services are delivered around the world.
- **Our expanding MyLink™ program** (pg. 5), which uses video conferencing on iPads to transform the way we provide care to children and training to foster parents. To our knowledge, as a telehealth program that benefits children in foster care, KVC MyLink is the first and only project of its kind.
- **Our commitment to learning and innovation**, which is experienced by people who participate in seminars from the NYU/KVC Midwest Trauma Training Center (pg. 8) and by hundreds of college students who complete their practicums with us each year (pg. 8), gaining a special level of real-world experience that they can’t get anywhere else.

This constant research and innovation means that KVC remains committed to taking on new challenges. While it may not always be easy, healthy growth will lead us to become better people, a better organization, and better able to serve children and families. And growth that is ultimately about helping others be all they can be? That is maturity indeed.

Thank you for joining us in this mission and exciting growth.

Sincerely,



B. Wayne Sims  
President and CEO



B. Wayne Sims

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KVC is a member of the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, a member of the National Council for Behavioral Health, and a recipient of United Way funds.

## KVC MISSION:

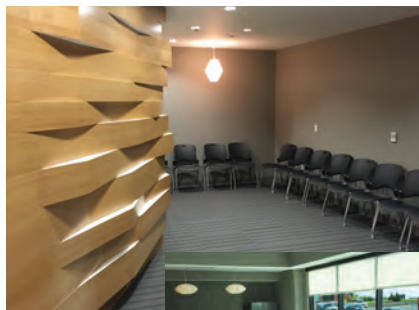
To enrich and enhance the lives of children and families by providing medical and behavioral healthcare, social services and education.





## KVC Institute Opens with Big Vision to Transform Lives

On May 22, KVC leaders and staff will gather with donors, partners, families, media and others to celebrate the historic opening of the KVC Institute for Practice Improvement and Innovations in Child and Family Services in Olathe, Kan. The opening will be marked with a ribbon cutting – an appropriate gesture since the KVC Institute is truly a gift from many generous donors to tens of thousands of children, families and communities around the world who will be positively impacted by its work.



The KVC Institute is a natural next step for this organization known for its track record of innovation in child welfare and behavioral healthcare. Some of the achievements that qualify KVC for this endeavor include significantly increasing the number of children living with foster families rather than in group homes, being a national leader in integrating trauma-informed care in child welfare practice, and pioneering the country's first child welfare public-private partnership with a fearless, transparent commitment to measurable outcomes.



The KVC Institute will work to transform the experience of childhood and improve the wellbeing of children, families and communities. It will focus on developing creative solutions to complex social problems, and translate research into practice by developing practical learning tools for direct service providers, educators and families. By accelerating research and the adoption of evidence-informed practices, the KVC Institute will play a key role in strengthening families, healing children who have experienced trauma, improving the health of those with mental health needs, and creating a brighter future for people across the country and beyond.

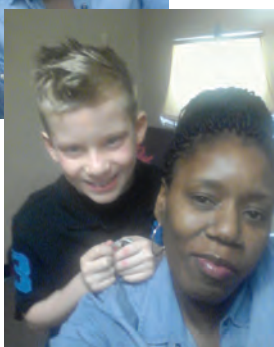
Some of the Institute's features include Wellness Rooms designed for interactive child-parent therapy, an Interactive Family and Adoption Center to match thousands more children in foster care with loving forever families, and an expanded Ball Conference Center and technological enhancements to facilitate conferences, distance learning and learning communities.

Major donors to the KVC Institute include the Ball Family, Mabee Foundation, Hall Family Foundation, Sunderland Foundation, Kelly Family Foundation, Regnier Family Foundation, Dunn Family Foundation, Garmin International, Goppert Foundation, Sosland Foundation and the H&R Block Foundation. See the full list of donors and learn more at [www.kvc.org/institute](http://www.kvc.org/institute).

## KVC Matches Nebraska Siblings with Their Forever Family



Charles and Nancy are a brother and sister who live in Nebraska. When their biological parents were not able to provide adequate care for them, they entered foster care. In June 2009, KVC matched them with foster parent Ms. Eva Marie Powell.



When it became clear that Charles and Nancy needed a forever family, Ms. Powell was asked if she would like to adopt them. She was scared and excited but knew in her heart it was right. On February 26, their adoption was finalized. Charles said with the brightest smile on his

face, "We are a family now!" Nancy agreed by giving Ms. Powell a big hug, and they had a celebration dinner with family and friends. KVC Nebraska Foster Care Specialist, Cecelia Lee, reports that the kids are very happy. Powell says that a hug from the kids at the end of a long day "gives her life."

In addition to providing Charles and Nancy a critical sense of belonging, Ms. Powell has been respectful of their birth parents. They told their children that Ms. Powell could give them the life that they deserved. Ms. Powell encourages the children to draw pictures and send texts and letters so that they can stay connected to their biological parents.

To learn how you can be like Ms. Powell and give children a safe, loving home as a foster or adoptive parent, visit [kvc.org](http://kvc.org).



## Meet Children Who Need a Forever Family

Each of these children is seeking his or her forever family. Watch videos and search additional child profiles at <http://adoption.kvc.org>. To inquire, call 888-655-5500 or email [adoptionspecialist@kvc.org](mailto:adoptionspecialist@kvc.org).

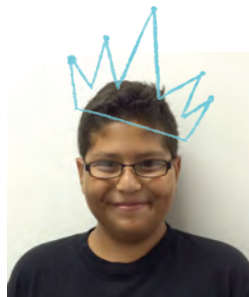


**JEFF (14)**



Jeff is a caring and energetic young man. His hobbies include cooking, reading and shopping for antiques. Jeff does well in school and is proud of his good grades. His favorite class is science, so it's not surprising that

Jeff would like to become a scientist when he grows up. Jeff also enjoys playing sports including football. Jeff would thrive in a family where he is the youngest child. He needs a family who can provide him with the love, nurturing and structured environment in which he can grow.



**MARCO (14)**



Marco likes to cook, enjoys soccer, and is friendly and helpful to adults. He likes animals, especially panda bears. Marco has a great personality and enjoys talking to adults and peers as he can carry

on a great conversation. When Marco trusts someone, he opens up easily. Marco says he is good at video games, bowling, and reading. He would do best with a family who understands and supports the importance of his Hispanic heritage.



**SHEILA (14)**



"One of a kind," Sheila is smart and creative. She's good at organizing, doing her schoolwork, singing and dancing. Sheila is outgoing and independent. She is very sweet and family-oriented and

wants to be active with a family. The ideal family for Sheila would be able to provide consistency, stability, and understanding for Sheila's emotional needs. Sheila needs opportunities for age-appropriate decision-making so she can feel a part of the family while continuing to develop independence.



**JOSEPH (10)**



Joseph has been described as generous, sweet and helpful. He loves to be outside and ride his bike. Joseph also enjoys helping his foster dad work on cars. He does well with his peers and makes friends easily. Joseph also

relates well with adults and needs a family who can support him to manage his emotions. He has services in place at school to help him reach his full potential. Joseph responds well to a nurturing family who can provide him with positive reinforcements.



## KVC Hospitals Enhances Its Electronic Health Records



To stay at the forefront of quality healthcare and patient service, KVC Hospitals is transitioning to a new electronic health record (EHR) at its children's psychiatric hospitals. The digitization of health records makes it easier for patients and their families to access personal health data and allows for increased care coordination between providers and pharmacies.

This also allows for increased data monitoring and analytics. This analysis drives enhancements that improve patient outcomes. Patients can also provide real-time feedback about their experiences at KVC and actively engage their treatment teams.

KVC Hospitals patients and their families will soon be able to access this system, called myHealthPointe. It is a patient portal that contains treatment updates, care coordination documents, and diagnosis and medication information. Through secure messaging, families will be able to provide updates and make medical records requests from home. Learn more about the benefits of these enhancements at [www.kvchospitals.org/blog](http://www.kvchospitals.org/blog).

## MyLink iPad Program Expands, Benefitting 1,000 Foster Families

KVC Health Systems is expanding its MyLink™ telehealth and distance learning program to hundreds of foster families in Kansas and Nebraska thanks to two new grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine program. KVC's MyLink program is a HIPAA-compliant video conferencing program that uses iPads to give children in foster care increased access to therapeutic and crisis intervention services and also delivers enhanced training to foster parents in the home. These benefits are especially important in KVC's rural areas of Kansas, Nebraska, West Virginia and Kentucky.



KVC's MyLink is the only project of its kind in the child welfare sector. This expansion will connect KVC to 850 foster families in the Midwest, which builds upon last year's program launch to 160 foster families in West Virginia and Kentucky. When fully implemented, the MyLink program will provide iPads to more than 1,000 foster families in four states, benefiting thousands of children in state custody who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect or other family challenges.

The iPads have restricted functionality and can only be used for the program's specific purposes. However, KVC plans to partner with foundations and other organizations to build on the platform and offer additional apps to further promote education, including direct connections with teachers and schools, technical skill-building, and health and wellness improvement.

"This MyLink expansion will not only increase access to services for thousands of children and families; but it also has the potential to change the trajectory of some young people's lives forever," said B. Wayne Sims, President and CEO of KVC Health Systems. "This gives each child a direct, immediate link to his or her highly-trained, caring KVC therapist. The technology will also provide foster parents with training that they can access conveniently from home. Through MyLink, we are transforming the way we deliver care."

## KVC's Safe & Connected Model Rolls Out Nationwide

KVC's Safe & Connected™ integrated child welfare practice model provides a structured way to make decisions with and for the children and families served by the child welfare system. Safe & Connected emphasizes organizing information in order to promote critical thinking and collaboration with the family and other stakeholders. This ensures a comprehensive, balanced assessment of risk with the outcomes of improved child safety, wellbeing and permanency. KVC has used this model for a number of years, and Sue Lohrbach, its developer and KVC's Director of Child Welfare Innovations and Research, recently enhanced it.

Lohrbach has spent the last six months training and consulting with staff in multiple states. Lohrbach helped staff fine-tune their knowledge and skills and assisted in critically thinking through difficult child/youth/family casework.

In addition to staff consultation and training, Lohrbach also provided orientations to several community partners. She described how KVC uses Safe & Connected across the U.S. and what its many benefits are such as children being in foster care for shorter amounts of time as well



as increased collaborative practice and decision-making.

If you or your organization is interested in learning more about how KVC uses Safe & Connected or how it can help children, contact Sue Lohrbach at [slohrbach@kvc.org](mailto:slohrbach@kvc.org).



## More Schools Ask KVC to Provide On-Site Therapy

KVC helps children and families in their natural environments rather than in an office because research shows it is more effective. Now, in addition to receiving therapy and other support in their own homes, many children are beginning to receive vital help at school.



### IN KENTUCKY

KVC Kentucky will soon begin providing clinical services, including group and individual therapy for students, targeting problem areas identified by school staff. A KVC clinician will be assigned to each school and will regularly spend time with students and school personnel.

KVC is also expanding its participation in the Kentucky Kids Recovery Program, providing alcohol and substance abuse assessments for students identified as at-risk of substance abuse disorders. This on-site service will lead to early identification and treatment for students who may not otherwise receive services.

### IN KANSAS

After receiving training on how childhood traumatic stress affects student behavior, the Parsons, Kan. public school district partnered with KVC to have a therapist on-site at their schools.

For the last year, KVC therapist Phil Toniger, LCP has been working on-site to help the students KVC serves. With Phil now in the school and working closely with school psychologist Jennifer Tavernaro, he is able to help the students as well as the staff with behavior caused by trauma.

## KVC Foster Parents to Receive Special Gift From Donor



Country music artist Jimmy Wayne was the keynote speaker at KVC's Resource Family Conference in April 2014. At that time, his book *Walk to Beautiful: The Power of Love and a Homeless Kid Who Found the Way* had not yet been released. It hit shelves in October and has since become a New York Times bestseller.



Since the conference, an anonymous donor made a generous gift in order to provide Jimmy Wayne's book to **more than 1,000 KVC foster families in Kansas, Nebraska, Kentucky and West Virginia!** This donor hopes Wayne's book will encourage youth and families who are currently involved in foster care.

### KVC foster parents:

Books will be distributed through the month of May. Please help us show our appreciation for this incredible gift by posting photos of you with the book on social media using the hashtag

**#FindTheWay** and tagging your local KVC. After reading *Walk to Beautiful*, we encourage you to share posts, blogs and reviews about the book online.

**THANK YOU** again to our generous donor! We hope this book provides encouragement and inspiration to all of our foster parents as well as the children and youth in their care.

## KVC Promotes Wellness



As an organization committed to mental, behavioral and physical health for children and families, KVC is equally committed to the wellness of its own staff. Here are a few of the wellness initiatives happening:

- At KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital, staff walk a lap around the campus during lunch each day.
- In Pittsburg, Kansas, staff are holding a Biggest Loser Challenge with 19 participants. They take daily walk breaks, swap fitness videos/equipment, and send out monthly health and wellness tips.
- In Kentucky, staff host a massive Bluegrass Wellness at Work Challenge, which involves companies and organizations throughout the community making health and wellness a priority among their staff. Proceeds from the challenge help families served by KVC.
- In West Virginia, 30 participants are taking part in a weight-loss and water-drinking challenge.
- In Lenexa, Kansas, staff are in a Biggest Loser Challenge, and one person is donating time to do Reiki (spiritually-guided healing).



## Keynote Speaker for KVC's Annual Conference Announced

KVC is excited to announce the keynote speaker for its 2015 Resource Family Conference!

Veteran newsman Dominic Carter, who was in foster care as a child, is one of the most compelling journalists of his generation, and has been described as the best political reporter working in New York television today. Carter has been a fixture in the TV news industry for the last 25 years, currently working as a Political Commentator at Verizon FiOS/RNN-TV.



As a victim of childhood sexual abuse, Carter's life story has been told in *O, The Oprah Magazine* and on the television show of Nancy Grace. He also released a book on his life titled *No Momma's Boy*, which chronicles his triumphant struggle to overcome his mother's mental illness as a chronic paranoid schizophrenic and years of shocking childhood abuse while growing up in the housing projects in the notorious South Bronx, New York.

KVC's 2015 Resource Family Conference will take place December 11-12 at four locations across the country: Overland Park, Kan.; Omaha, Neb.; Lexington, Ky. and Daniels W.Va. The event is a one-of-a-kind training opportunity for foster families who are caring for children who have experienced abuse, neglect or other family challenges and are temporarily in state custody. Resource families, a term that includes foster and adoptive parents and relatives, will learn about topics such as managing behavior challenges, repairing the effects of stress and trauma, and transition planning into adulthood, while children enjoy fun activities like games, bouncy houses and talent shows. More than 2,000 people participate in the conference each year.

Stay tuned for more details and registration information!

## Foster Parents Needed!

At this very moment, a child or teenager in your community is in need of a safe place to stay and support. You can be the one to make a difference by becoming a foster parent with KVC! Foster parents provide a safe, nurturing environment for children who have experienced abuse, neglect or other family challenges. We provide all the training and support you need. Consider opening your heart and home in this special way, and you'll make a life-changing difference in a child's life! Learn more by calling (888) 655-5500 or visit [www.kvc.org](http://www.kvc.org).



## Jodie Austin Named FFTA President Elect



KVC Nebraska President Jodie Austin, LCSW, was recently selected by her peers as President Elect of the national Foster Family-Based Treatment Association (FFTA). In



Jodie Austin

January 2016, she will become leader of this organization, which is the only national association of treatment foster care agencies with over 400 member agencies. FFTA's mission is to strengthen agencies that support families caring for vulnerable children.

Austin brings valuable experience to the group as head of KVC Nebraska, which cares for nearly 1,500 youth in foster families each year. In Nebraska, KVC is known for its remarkably high child safety and stability rates in foster care, unique in-home service delivery model, diverse and engaged foster parent network, and positive reintegration and adoption success stories.

"FFTA has a unique opportunity to set standards for the safety of children in foster care. By working together, we can make changes on a national scale like increasing foster parent recruitment and retention, improving placement stability so children don't change foster homes often, making

foster care a safer and more short-term solution, and increasing the quality of care provided by foster families."

### FFTA



## College Students Get Real-World Experience at KVC

For students, there's no better learning lab than the real world. That's why each year, more than 250 undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D. nationwide students complete their internships or practicums at KVC. These students who learn about and help deliver KVC services like in-home family therapy, youth substance abuse treatment and psychiatric treatment in a hospital setting are working in a unique space where government, nonprofit agency providers and higher education intersect. Few other organizations offer students this diverse experience.



At KVC's children's psychiatric hospitals, medical students from the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences rotate through each month and University of Kansas psychiatry fellows complete their child rotations in four-month placements. Nursing students from eight colleges choose KVC for their exposure to psychiatric nursing. In addition, KVC therapists mentor a new group of social work and counseling students each year.

KVC Kentucky's practicum program is very unique. Staff person Megan Moore is also on faculty at the University of Kentucky and teaches a practicum class on-site at KVC's Lexington office each week. On Fridays, about 20 students gather for group supervision, discussing the work they were involved in that week.

KVC Kansas has 75-80 interns per year working in case management, counseling/therapy, and other social-work-related fields. Each Friday, the students gather for KVC's Grand Seminar and learn about topics ranging from the child welfare system to job readiness.

Social work students intern each year at KVC's Nebraska and West Virginia offices, and they enjoy unparalleled flexibility due to KVC's in-home model. KVC's commitment to meeting with families in their homes leads to evening and weekend appointments that work well for students and families alike, and students learn some of KVC's best practice approaches.

KVC is proud to invest in the next generation of psychiatric, medical, child welfare and behavioral healthcare professionals. To inquire about interning at KVC, contact Stacy Yowell at (913) 322-4962 or syowell@kvc.org.

## NYU/KVC Midwest Trauma Training Center Educates Thousands



Childhood traumatic stress affects many children and families. KVC Health Systems has teamed up with New York University and Dr. Glen Saxe, founder of Trauma Systems Therapy (TST) and Director of The Child Study Center at NYU Langone Medical Center, to create the NYU/KVC Midwest Trauma Training Center. This innovative training center provides expertise to professionals throughout the Midwest, promoting the use of effective trauma treatment and services for children, adolescents and families.

These grant-funded training events are free to participants. Professionals working in physical and mental health, child welfare, and the education and juvenile justice systems are welcome to attend. Participants learn how to recognize traumatic stress, support youth and families dealing with traumatic stress, and develop effective ways of coping with secondary traumatic stress.

The next training takes place Wednesday, May 20 in Parsons, Kan. To learn more about attending or hosting a seminar, visit [www.kvc.org/nyukvcseminar](http://www.kvc.org/nyukvcseminar).





## Gourmet Cakes are a “Sweet Blessing” to Children

KVC Kentucky is proud to partner with Sweet Blessings, a nonprofit ministry specializing in creating happy birthdays for children ages 5-14 who are living in poverty or fighting life-threatening illnesses. For many children, birthdays can be a difficult time rather than a time of celebration. Sweet Blessings changes that by making unforgettable, gourmet birthday cakes. Each cake is designed with a specific child in mind and features his or her favorite colors, hobbies, sports teams or characters.

Over the years, Sweet Blessings has provided weekly cakes for children receiving KVC's in-home services. Many of these children may not have had a birthday

celebration without the wonderful work of Sweet Blessings. All of the cakes are baked and decorated by volunteers and funded through donations. This year, KVC is excited to be a sponsor for

Sweet Blessings' fundraiser, “The Great Cake Race 5K” on May 3. Through this race along with other fundraisers and donations, Sweet Blessings will be able to provide 1,800 children, including many KVC families, with a special happy birthday celebration. To learn more, visit [www.sweetblessingscakes.org](http://www.sweetblessingscakes.org).



## Churches Meet Child Needs Through New Care Portal



KVC recently partnered with the Kansas City-based Global Orphan Project to launch the Care Portal, an online church engagement tool that connects Johnson County, Kan. churches to the needs of children in foster care or otherwise being served by KVC.



KVC workers use the Care Portal when a child or family has a specific need like a crib, bed, car seat or similar. That need is then emailed to the churches that have enrolled. If a church member is able to meet the need, he or she simply replies to the email.

In the Care Portal's first month, enrolled churches have already met more than ten family needs ranging from providing beds to helping pay utility bills. This helps keep families together and children safe.

The Global Orphan Project is working with KVC to expand the Care Portal to other Kansas counties this fall. If your church is interested in signing up to receive an email to help those in need, visit [careportal.org](http://careportal.org) and click Enroll Your Church.

## Kentucky Staff Sharpen Their Skills with Wrap+MAP Training



Numerous KVC Kentucky clinicians and service coordinators recently attended a three day Wrap+MAP training with Dr. Eric Bruns of the National Wraparound Implementation Center and Adam Bernstein of Practice Wise. Wraparound is an intensive, holistic method of engaging with individuals with complex needs so that they can live in their homes and communities and realize their hopes and dreams.

This exciting pilot project, funded in part by the Kentucky Initiative for Collaborative Change grant, is a collaboration of three behavioral health agencies in Kentucky and is supported by the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. Participants learned cutting-edge clinical and service coordination interventions by national experts and will continue to receive consultation for six months following the in-person training. In addition, two MAP Agency Supervisors from KVC attended the training to continue the requirements to becoming certified MAP trainers. KVC Kentucky is excited to have the opportunity to be part of this wonderful initiative in Kentucky.



## Foster Parent Nicole Feltz Hosts Massive Fundraiser



Becoming a foster or adoptive parent is, perhaps, the ultimate expression of support for hurting children. What could be more generous than opening your own home and your heart to a child?

For Nicole Feltz of Overland Park, Kan., being a foster parent is just one part of her life's work to care for, as she says, "Kansas City's abused,

abandoned and amazing children." She also uses her platform as an American Family Insurance business owner and community member to raise awareness and dollars to help children.

For 11 years now, Nicole and her husband have hosted a massive Midwinter Blues Fundraiser. This past February, it was held at KVC's Ball Conference Center in Olathe, Kan. Despite the snowy conditions, hundreds of adults and children showed up to eat and drink, enjoy face painting and a photo booth, bid on donated auction items, and dance the night away. The Feltz family continues to drum up support on Facebook even after the event, working tirelessly to reach their \$15,000 goal.

"Abused children are very close to my heart because I was that kid," said Feltz. "I was in different foster homes. If anyone can understand what these kids are going through, it's me. So my husband and I said, why are we sitting back doing nothing? We have to help. So we started this fundraiser in our home 11 years ago."

Many thanks to Nicole and her family for their big hearts and generosity! To learn more or contribute, find the "Nicole Feltz - American Family Insurance Agent" page on Facebook.



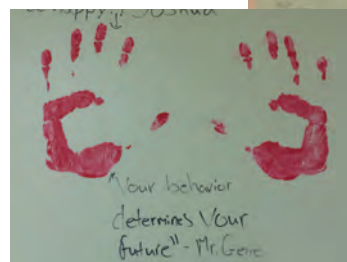
## Wheatland Celebrates Five Years of Helping Children Succeed

In May 2010, KVC Wheatland children's psychiatric hospital opened in Hays, Kan. The next year, a young girl in the psychiatric residential treatment program asked, "Why don't you have a way for us kids to give advice to the other kids?" After some collaboration, Hands of Success was launched - a large wall where children and adolescents who are successfully discharging from the hospital leave their handprints and an encouraging message.

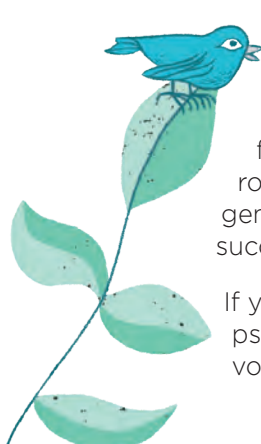
Other youth, staff and all who tour KVC Wheatland read the messages. The Hands of Success tradition has become something the kids look forward to doing because it physically shows that they successfully completed the treatment program.

This May, as KVC Wheatland Hospital prepares to celebrate its fifth anniversary, staff members are taking pictures of the full wall overflowing with bright handprints. Since there is no more room, the pictures will be framed and hung in the lobby and visitation rooms. The wall will start afresh for the next generation of children who want to celebrate their success and encourage others.

If you'd like to help encourage children receiving psychiatric treatment, consider donating or volunteering. Learn more at [www.kvchospitals.org](http://www.kvchospitals.org).



*One youth quoted his teacher and wrote, "Your behavior determines your future."*





## KVC Prairie Ridge Renovations Enhance Healing Environment



KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital in Kansas City, Kan. serves children and adolescents by providing inpatient stabilization and psychiatric treatment. Since children are working through exposure to traumatic events, an environment that enhances feelings of safety is critical to the healing process. “We know families are walking into Prairie Ridge in crisis and experiencing the worst day of their lives,” said Ryan Speier, Vice President of Administration. “It is our responsibility to give them a warm, child-friendly experience and the confidence to know KVC is the right choice and will help their families get through this.”

In 2013, Prairie Ridge began a renovation project, which will be completed in stages over the next few years, to enhance the healing nature of the environment. Stage one is complete and included updating the patient waiting areas, visit rooms and largest acute children’s unit. Stages two and three will include the remaining units, on-site school (KVC Academy) and the cafeteria.

KVC’s business partners were critical to accomplishing this project with minimal disruption to services as well as donating a portion of the time and materials to ensure the renovations were affordable. Those partners are Hoefer Wysocki Architecture, Titan Construction, Canyon Stone, Campione Flooring, Switzer, Faith Technologies, Exhibit Associates and Casework Solutions. Speier noted, “We cannot thank our partners enough for further enhancing our treatment environment and keeping it in line with KVC’s commitment to provide the highest quality of care and further demonstrate that each family’s experience matters to us.”



## Animals, Art, Play and Gardening Help Children Heal

At KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital, a children’s psychiatric treatment center in Kansas City, Kan., treatment is integrated with expressive therapies to help children through the healing process. Programs such as animal-assisted therapy, play therapy, challenge course activities, emotion regulation and horticulture therapy give children and adolescents activities that are fun and tailored to treatment goals.

When not conducting groups on the unit, certified canine Stella sits patiently waiting for her opportunity to help a child in need. Children can request to see Stella

when feeling anxious or nervous or simply desire companionship. Stella and recreational therapist Karen Duarte are both certified to provide animal-assisted therapy. They lead daily groups on relaxation techniques, building empathy and relationship skills.

Play and art therapy allow children to use their creativity to overcome emotional and social skill deficits. Expression through play and art “provides vehicles for the therapist to speak the child’s language and address complicated symptoms and social issues, which would otherwise face resistance and may go unaddressed,” said Astra Garner, Director of Clinical Services.

Prairie Ridge’s 75 acres of outdoor space allow children to run, play and simply be children. The Hidden Creek Challenge Course is a fully



functional ropes course, which helps build self-awareness, courage, trust and teamwork skills. Youth can learn emotion regulation through golf. They can also participate in horticulture therapy, which allows them to learn about wellness and build relaxation and focus skills. Megan Brinker, KVC’s full-time registered dietician, oversees this program and helps children learn to eat healthy and live a well-balanced lifestyle. To learn more about KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital, visit [www.kvchospitals.org](http://www.kvchospitals.org).





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## Save the Date

Visit [www.kvc.org/events](http://www.kvc.org/events) for details on these events and others.

**National Foster Care Month**  
May 2015

**KVC Hero Luncheon**  
June 18 Overland Park, KS

**KVC Kids Classic  
Golf Tournament — Kansas City**  
August 24 Parkville, MO

**KVC Kids Classic  
Golf Tournament — Lincoln**  
September 11 Milford, NE

**The Gala on Fire**  
November 21 Kansas City, MO

**National Adoption Day**  
November 21  
Courthouses Nationwide

**2015 Resource Family  
Conference**  
December 11-12  
KS, KY, NE, and WV



## KVC Hero Luncheon

June 18, 2015 | 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.  
The Sheraton Overland Park Hotel  
6100 College Boulevard  
Overland Park, KS 66211

Get insider sports commentary and get inspired to be a hero for thousands of children in need. Our VIP speakers include University of Kansas Men's Basketball Coach and KVC Board Member Bill Self and Kansas City Chiefs President Mark Donovan.



### Other VIPs include:

Christa Dubill - *41 Action News*  
B. Wayne Sims - *KVC Health Systems*  
Nate Bukaty - *Sports Radio 810*  
Nicole Feltz - *KVC Foster Parent*



Get tickets or become a sponsor today!  
[www.kvc.org/heroluncheon](http://www.kvc.org/heroluncheon)