

# thriving



## Family is Everything

Michael and Kassi embraced change and brought their girls safely home

 KVC Health Systems

Fall/Winter 2017

Want to Be a Better  
**PARENT?**

Learn to Identify and  
Regulate Your Emotions

How the  
**Opioid**  
EPIDEMIC  
is Literally Changing  
Kids' Brains

The **Lydia**  
TREE

How Unconditional Love  
Helped One Girl Heal from  
a Traumatic Childhood

Are  
**Smartphones**  
and **SOCIAL**  
**MEDIA**  
Behind the  
**SUICIDE INCREASE?**

**HELP YOUTH AND**  
**PREVENT SUICIDE**

# Worried about your child's moods or behaviors?

Download these new FREE eBooks to find out what your child's behavior might mean and how you can help.



Learn what you can do to support your child's mental health and find out whether he or she might benefit from counseling or therapy.

Download at [www.kvc.org/free](http://www.kvc.org/free)

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Dear Friends,

What does it mean to have an impact? Impact is a buzzword frequently used by businesses and nonprofit organizations alike. We care deeply about impact at KVC — in fact, this is the time of year when we release our annual *impact* report and celebrate how we've made a difference.

But many misunderstand impact. It's not simply the number of people served, years of existence or geographical footprint. Those things set organizations up for creating an impact, but they don't guarantee it.

Making an impact means creating **positive, lasting change** in individual lives or communities. There has to be real change or transformation and it has to be enduring.

That's what we desire and pursue each day — whether strengthening a family in crisis by teaching new healthy skills, helping a child heal from adverse experiences, or supporting someone on their journey to overcome addiction.

Thankfully we're not alone. We have hundreds of partners, an army of caring people and organizations including you, who carry this work forward as team members, foster and adoptive families, donors, volunteers, clients, and other partners.

In this issue of *Thriving*, you can read about some of the people and groups we're helping to experience this positive difference including:

- **Michael and Kassi**, parents whose children needed short-term foster care while they battled addiction and other obstacles (pg. 6). Their story is inspiring for any individual or family that faces seemingly insurmountable challenges.
- **Sierra**, an amazing 11-year old girl who endured abuse and neglect, but is now thriving after her loving foster family adopted her and became her forever family (pg. 12), and
- **Niles**, a much-loved behavioral health organization for youth in the heart of Kansas City, Missouri. Thanks to the KVC/Niles merger and many partners, the future of this community asset has been secured for years to come (pg. 22).

Thank you for your support of KVC. It means so much to our team members and to every person we have the privilege of serving.

Sincerely,

  
Jason Hooper  
President and CEO



[www.kvc.org](http://www.kvc.org)





## 16 Big Leap Forward: KVC Takes Possession of College Campus in West Virginia

## NEWS & EVENTS



### 13 KVC Releases 2017 Impact Report and Honors Anne Roberts

At its Annual Celebration, KVC recognized Anne Roberts who served as Chief Operations Officer for 35 years. Her love for children, dedication to quality, and skill for strategic planning made KVC into a national leader.



### 16 Big Leap Forward: KVC Takes Possession of College Campus in West Virginia

For nearly five years, KVC Health Systems has been developing the nation's first ever college campus designed specifically to support youth transitioning from foster care.

### 19 Business Forum on Workplace Diversity Features KVC Leader

By increasing diversity, equity and inclusion, KVC hopes to expand engagement and unlock innovation, helping the organization fulfill its mission in a robust, energizing and sustainable way.

### 20 People on the Move

See our leaders across the country who were recently hired, promoted or recognized for their accomplishments.

### 21 Thank You for Helping Children by Supporting KVC's 2017 Events

Events in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and West Virginia were successful thanks to generous partners.



### 22 Niles Celebrates Opening of Renovated Campus for Youth Behavioral Health Treatment

# thriving

Fall/Winter 2017

## HEALTH

### 8 The Lydia Tree: How Unconditional Love Helped One Girl Heal from a Traumatic Childhood

Ongoing exposure to abuse and neglect left Lydia angry, aggressive and thinking of suicide. The persistent, trauma-informed care she experienced at KVC's "no eject/no reject" children's psychiatric hospital changed her life forever.

### 14 Everyone Must Play a Role in Suicide Prevention

Smartphones, social media and other changing dynamics have given rise to an increase in teen suicide. Find out what you can do to help.



### 18 How the Opioid Epidemic is Literally Changing Kids' Brains

When abuse of prescription painkillers or heroin impairs a parent's ability to engage with his or her children, it causes devastating effects on the child's developing brain and lifelong health.

## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

### 6 Parents Embrace Change, Safely Reunite with Daughters After Foster Care

Learn how these parents embraced change in order to bring their two daughters safely home.

### 10 Want to Be a Better Parent? Learn to Identify and Regulate Your Emotions

When children don't obey, it's common for parents to get upset. But identifying and regulating your emotions is a research-backed approach for more effective interaction with your child.

## CREATING FAMILIES

### 11 Meet Children Who Need a Forever Family

Autumn, Kenya, Maliyah, and brothers Tylor and Elijah need families to provide them with safety, a sense of belonging and unconditional love.

### 12 Sierra's Story of Hope, Healing and Resilience

At 11 years old, she lived in a home with no electricity or running water. Her mother and stepfather used drugs and severely neglected Sierra and her siblings. Those are distant memories now, replaced by the love and safety provided by her adoptive family.



### 21 2017 Events a Success



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- David F. Ball — Co-Chair
- B. Wayne Sims — Co-Chair
- William H. Dunn, Jr. — Vice Chair-Finance
- John N. Barnes — Vice Chair-Development
- Mayor Michael E. Copeland
- Patrick Desbois
- Teresa Markowitz
- Bill Self

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Jason R. Hooper, L.M.S.W. — President & Chief Executive Officer
- Erin Stucky, L.S.C.S.W. — Chief Operations Officer
- Marilyn Jacobson, J.D. — Chief Financial Officer & General Counsel
- Chad E. Anderson, L.S.C.S.W. — Chief Clinical Officer
- Lonnie Johnson — Chief Information Officer
- Danielle Bartelli, L.P.C. — President - KVC Kansas
- Ryan Speier, L.M.S.W. — President - KVC Hospitals
- Elizabeth Cronney, M.S.W., L.C.S.W. — President - KVC Kentucky
- Brent Lemon, L.C.S.W., L.I.C.S.W. — President - KVC West Virginia
- Jodie Austin, L.C.S.W. — President - KVC Nebraska
- Executive Vice President - KVC Institute
- Astra Garner, L.P.C., L.C.P.C., R.P.T. — President - Niles
- Vishal Adma, M.D., M.S., C.M.O., C.P.E. — Medical Director - KVC Hospitals
- Suzanne Lohrbach, Ph.D. — Executive Director - KVC Institute
- Renny Arensberg, M.A. — Executive Vice President
- Thomas Bailey — Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
- Rita Holmes-Bobo, M.B.A., C.D.E. — Executive Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Michelle Lawrence, C.F.R.E. — Vice President of Development
- Sherri Lohe — Vice President of Finance
- Jenny Kutz — Director of Communications



Thriving is published at KVC Health Systems, Inc., 21350 W. 153rd St., Olathe, KS 66061; 913-322-4900. Please send comments, change of address and duplicate copy notices to the attention of the Development Department.

KVC is nondiscriminating in its admission and employment practices. KVC is accredited by The Joint Commission.

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.

# Parents Embrace Change,



Visit our website at [www.kvc.org](http://www.kvc.org) to learn more about our reintegration and aftercare services, watch more success story videos or read how KVC has helped strengthen families in multiple states.

## Safely Reunite with Daughters After Foster Care

All families face challenges, and sometimes those challenges can impact a family's ability to safely stay together. Kassi and Michael are the parents of two girls: a ten-year-old and a nine-year-old who has special needs. Both parents felt overwhelmed with parenting, finances and family relationships, which led to their daughters' needs not being met. A court decision was made to remove the girls from the home and have a family member care for them while Kassi and Michael learned healthy skills to help them manage stress and be successful, both as individuals and as parents, so that they could safely reunite with the girls and create a better life for their family.

"Our issues were substance use and arguing," said Michael. "My wife and I had no one to turn to and, in the moments when we tried to reach out for help, we were told that our problems weren't significant enough to get it."

The loss of their daughters devastated them and they immediately began working to bring them safely home. Their church was their greatest source of support.

"Thank God for our church. They encouraged us, telling us that we were in the fire. If you know anything about precious metals, you know that a natural piece of gold is ugly. But when you put that gold into the fire, all the impurities come out. When it gets pulled out of the fire, it's a beautiful, shiny piece of metal. That truth saved me. I was in the fire but I wasn't alone."

Michael said he leaned on words of encouragement that he and his wife were on the right path. They drew strength from people telling and also showing them that they believed in the couple and their ability to succeed.

The journey to reunifying their family was challenging, but Kassi and Michael were committed to making a change. Through their own hard work and with the support of KVC professionals, the girls were able to safely return home. KVC provided aftercare services to

ensure the family continued to succeed. Michael recalls his first meeting with Bailey Grey, a KVC Intensive In-Home Therapist. "She wasn't focused on filling out paperwork or telling us what we needed to do. She genuinely wanted to get to know us and build a relationship. She made me feel like I mattered."

Kassi and Michael's family is now stronger than ever. Both parents are passionate about helping other families involved in the child welfare system succeed and hope their story can be a source of hope and encouragement. They are active members of KVC Kansas' Engaging Parents/Developing Leaders Workgroup that started in 2016 and has over 40 members.

Through our partnership with the Kansas Department for Children and Families, KVC was able to help safely reunify 993 Kansas children with their 590 families after foster care last year. We are proud to play a role in strengthening families and coming alongside them during their time of crisis. We applaud the hardworking families that have achieved a safe reunification or are currently working toward it.



Watch a video about this family's story at [www.kvckansas.org/MKstory](http://www.kvckansas.org/MKstory).

# The Lydia TREE

## How Unconditional Love Helped One Girl Heal from a Traumatic Childhood



*This winning story was received during our 2017 summer story contest by Alicia Armstrong, MA, LMFT, Clinical Manager for KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital.*

Lydia is a 17-year-old girl who had experienced severe trauma throughout her entire short life. She had been born outside of the United States and lived in an orphanage until she was adopted and brought to America at 18 months old. While with that family, Lydia was physically and sexually abused by her adoptive mother and was removed from that home at the age of nine. The ongoing exposure to trauma led to unsafe behaviors in Lydia like struggling to control her emotions, lashing out at everyone around her, becoming untrusting of people and even being physically aggressive toward others, harming herself and having thoughts of suicide.

When she walked through the doors of our children's psychiatric hospital, Lydia was depressed and had feelings of hopelessness. She had no joy and rarely smiled. She thought that this was just another place that she wouldn't like and only a temporary place to stay. However, with time and dedication from our behavioral health technicians, therapists and entire staff, she was able to realize that KVC was a safe place where she wouldn't be rejected or shamed for her struggles or trauma. She was able to make big changes. Lydia built bonds with our team members and expressed that she felt truly loved for the first time in her life. We helped her to realize that she was caring and loving and beautiful. It was hard for her to see that at first, but she was able to find those strengths. She was able to see that she had the power to make her life completely different.

Through skills she learned in the KVC Learning Lab, Lydia was able to control her emotions and understand her triggers for when she became angry. She learned through virtual reality how to communicate and visualize a safe space that's uniquely hers. She also learned about the different ways that both her trauma and her mental illness affect her brain and how she acts, and how the things that happened to her are not her fault.

Lydia came to be a leader among her peers and everyone on campus. She became a strong and confident young woman and was no longer the depressed and hopeless person we first saw. Lydia even had some outstanding goals while at KVC, including learning how to give back because she likes working



with kids on the autism spectrum and has also talked about opening up a group home for girls to support those who have gone through the same things she has.

When it was time for her to leave us and move on to a more independent living setting, we made sure to celebrate all that she had accomplished. All of the KVC employees gathered and planted a tree in her honor on our campus to symbolize the growth and strength she had acquired here. We placed a stone beneath the tree that reads The Lydia Tree as a reminder that everyone can grow, no matter the circumstances. In this way, she will always have a place on our campus and we will always remember her and everything she has accomplished.

# Want to Be a Better Parent?

Learn to Identify and Regulate Your Emotions

Erica Herzog, LMFT | Supervisor of Family Preservation, KVC Kansas



What would life would be like if emotions did not exist? Would we have meaning in our lives? What would our relationships look like? Would we appear to be nothing more than robots simply existing? Although emotions can be complex and difficult to manage at times, they can also be positive and motivating. Emotions play a significant role in how we experience life, create relationships and form our individuality.

Interpersonal relationships, such as between a parent and a child or between adults, can either be hindered or enhanced by the emotions we have. Regulating, or adjusting, our emotions affects how we're perceived by people around us.

Identifying your emotions is the first step to regulating them. The next time you find yourself responding to an emotional situation involving your child's behavior, answer these questions about your own emotions:

- 1. What are you feeling physically in your body?** (heart is racing, face is getting hot, decreased breathing)
- 2. What specific emotion is this?**
- 3. Why did this emotion come up for you?** (such as a new situation or a memory of an earlier experience)
- 4. On a scale from 0 – 10** (0 being the least intense, 10 being the most intense), **how would you rate the intensity of your emotion?**
- 5. What can you do in the moment to bring your emotion to a regulated state?** (such as take a walk, think of a positive memory, call a friend, play with your child)

When you are experiencing intense emotions, try to bring yourself to a regulated state using these strategies:

- 1. Count deep breaths**
- 2. Disengage from the situation until calm**
- 3. Respond, don't react**
- 4. Tell yourself, "I can manage this"**

While you may feel the urge to focus on your child's behavior instead of your own emotions, it's very important to check yourself first. Responding to each situation calmly will help you think more clearly and creatively solve problems. It will also change the way your child responds to you and has a better chance of leading to the positive outcome you want.

*Emotion identification and regulation is one of twelve skills taught in the Parent Management Training-Oregon (PMTO) model. PMTO is developed on forty years of research and practice with the core belief that parents are their children's best teachers. KVC teaches this empowering evidence-based practice to parents and caregivers involved in the child welfare system, but the lessons learned from this model can be beneficial for any parent or caregiver. To learn about PMTO in Kansas, visit the Kansas Department for Children and Families' website at [dcf.ks.gov](http://dcf.ks.gov).*

Get tips on all 12 skills at

[www.kvc.org/parenting](http://www.kvc.org/parenting)

# Meet Children Who Need a Forever Family

Each of these children needs and deserves a 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).



## AUTUMN (14)

Watch my video online!

Singing is what makes Autumn happy! It's no surprise Autumn's favorite class in school is choir, and her ultimate dream is to be a professional singer.

Autumn loves to make people laugh and sing silly songs. She has many hopes and dreams and deserves a family that can give her guidance and provide her with unconditional love.



## KENYA (11)

Kenya is a very bright girl who loves the outdoors. She is very knowledgeable about numerous types of birds as well as herbs in the garden, and some might say she is an expert. Her favorite subjects in school are reading and

spelling. Kenya is also a great artist and enjoys beading projects and being creative. Kenya enjoys playing in her room and prefers things to be more laid back and quiet rather than being in loud or busy places. A family that has outdoor space for a garden and animals would be a bonus for this resilient, nature-loving child. Kenya says, "I want a family who will let me be myself." Only families living in Kansas will be considered at this time.



## TYLOR (11) and ELIJAH (10)

Watch our video online!

Brothers Tylor and Elijah are an energetic sibling set that would like a family with a mom and a dad. In school, Tylor's favorite class is science because "it is

fun and you do experiments." When he grows up, Tylor would like to make the world a better place by creating toys. His younger brother Elijah enjoys drawing, reading and playing football and basketball. At home, Elijah enjoys gardening, keeping his room clean and "making my foster mom happy." When he grows up Elijah would like to be a caseworker. Both Tylor and Elijah would benefit from a patient, loving, and structured environment where they can continue to grow and expand their social and educational skills.



## MALIAH (13)

Watch my video online!

Maliyah is a very sweet and loving child. She enjoys swimming, riding roller coasters and playing with dolls. She is proud of the progress she has made in school with math and now

considers it a strength of hers. It is important that Maliyah's adoptive family have the time and the ability to provide her the necessary commitment to help assist her with her special needs. Having contact with her birth sibling is important to her and will need to be maintained.

## SIERRA'S STORY

# of Hope, Healing and Resilience



Sierra's story debuted at the 6th Annual KVC Hero Luncheon on June 15, 2017 in Overland Park, Kansas. The event drew over 550 guests and raised over \$160,000 to help KVC support hundreds of children just like Sierra who are experiencing abuse, neglect or other family challenges.

even assure the other children being cared for in the home that "things were different here." KVC provided Sierra with therapy and counseling support to help her cope with and heal from her traumatic childhood experiences, and the Pattersons made sure she got to experience just being a kid.

Sierra's mother continued to struggle with her addiction and eventually made the difficult decision to relinquish her parental rights. This paved the way for the Pattersons to begin the process of adopting Sierra. Her two half-siblings were safely reunited with their father who successfully completed rehab and family reintegration services. The three children remain in close contact and see each other often. Kelly and Rick finalized their adoption of Sierra in October, adding immense joy and love to their family.

In every community, there are families experiencing crisis. Children just like Sierra are living in darkness, experiencing abuse and neglect and feeling broken and hopeless. They need heroes in the form of foster parents who can provide love, give support and build their resilience. We can each do something to help a child and family in need. Consider becoming a foster parent or making a gift today!



Visit [www.kvc.org/sierra](http://www.kvc.org/sierra) to watch a video of Sierra's story.

Sierra is an 11-year-old girl whose mother and stepfather used and sold drugs. The home had no electricity or running water. With no one making sure her needs were being met, Sierra decided she needed to take care of herself and her two half siblings. She carried big, heavy buckets of water back to the house for drinking, cooking, and cleaning clothes and dishes. When there was nothing to eat, she would find what little food she could from others and take it home and cook it. Strangers were constantly coming in and out of the home to buy drugs or for other reasons. Sierra's mother was frequently absent and her stepfather physically abused her, leaving bruises on her body. It was not a safe environment, and an investigation resulted in a court decision to remove Sierra and her siblings from the home and place them in foster care.

Sierra and her siblings went to live in the home of Kelly and Rick Patterson. The couple were excited to meet the children and when they arrived, Kelly and Rick could see how scared and neglected they were. Over time, Sierra began to open up and feel comfortable in the Pattersons' home. She would smile, laugh and

## KVC Releases 2017 Impact Report and Honors Anne Roberts

KVC Health Systems board members, staff, donors, partners and other friends gathered at KVC's 2017 Annual Celebration on October 19 in Olathe, Kansas. Attendees reflect on and celebrate the positive impact KVC has had in the lives of children, adults and family over the past fiscal year.

**"Today we thank Anne for her many years of service and for helping improve the lives of thousands of families."**

In addition to releasing its 2017 Impact Report, KVC presented its 47th Hero Award to Anne Roberts who served for 35 years as KVC's Chief Operations Officer. Roberts joined the organization in 1982 and has been an instrumental force in developing

KVC's programs and services, overseeing decades of strategic planning and organizational growth.

Roberts served as a special education teacher prior to working at KVC. Her love of children, particularly those with special needs, and her commitment to quality helped KVC create one of the nation's broadest continuums of care for children and families. The KVC Education Center inside KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital, a children's psychiatric hospital, was recently dedicated to Roberts with a plaque in her honor. This fall, Roberts is transitioning to retirement opportunities which include teaching cooking skills to preschool children (check out [cookingwithyaya.com](http://cookingwithyaya.com)) and travel.

"Anne has always led with quality and she's always led with mission and cause," said Jason Hooper, President and CEO, at the



ANNE ROBERTS

dedication ceremony in her honor at KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital. "It's meaningful that we are able to honor her service to KVC in a place where we serve children and adolescents healing from depression, anxiety, trauma and many other struggles. Today we thank Anne for her many years of service and for helping improve the lives of thousands of families."

— continued on page 15

## Foster parents needed!

### Help children who have experienced abuse, neglect or other family challenges

#### Do I qualify to be a foster parent?

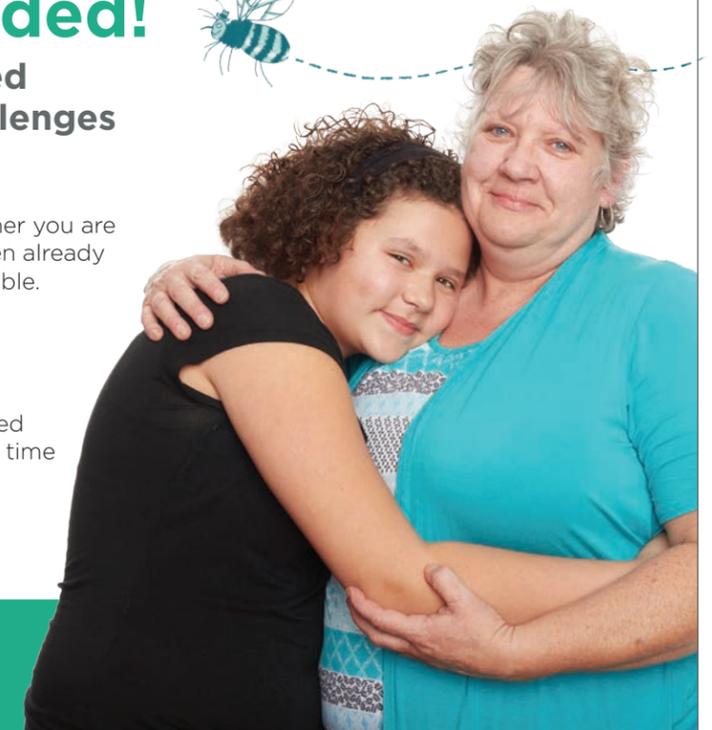
All kinds of people can qualify to foster a child. Whether you are single or married, own or rent your home, have children already or don't, work full-time or stay home, you may be eligible.

#### How will I handle saying goodbye to the child if and when it's safe for them to go home?

This is no doubt difficult, but any sadness is outweighed by the safety and love you will give to a child during a time of crisis. Plus, you're encouraged to maintain life-long connections with the child and family. Thousands of children in your community are in need of caring foster families. If not you, then who?

Contact us to learn more. We offer **FREE** training classes and support you every step of the way.

[www.kvc.org/foster](http://www.kvc.org/foster)



# Everyone Must Play a Role in SUICIDE PREVENTION

Teenagers today are growing up in an entirely different climate than the one in which their parents grew up. The economy, national tragedies, technology and social media are playing major roles in their development, and as a result, the number of young people experiencing anxiety and depression is on the rise.

According to the National Institute for Mental Health, **suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15-34.** Conformity is one of the biggest struggles teenagers face, and this type of social pressure can be destructive. A great deal of a teenager's emotional life is lived digitally, and while the internet offers many positive opportunities, it also opens up areas of risk. Even though young people are a tech-savvy age group, that doesn't mean they possess the judgment necessary to use smartphones and tablets safely and responsibly. It's important for adults to use controls, monitoring and modeling to teach youth how to conduct themselves in today's digital world.

Teen suicide is preventable and the best thing that parents and caregivers can do is have open discussions with youth about bullying, issues with friends, how to process difficult emotions, mental health and suicide. Youth need to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, feelings and ideas with people they trust.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for young people ages 15-34.

## Visit our website for more articles on preventing teen suicide:

- Is My Teen Exhibiting Signs of Depression?
- 4 Ways Parents Can Protect Their Teens from Depression and Anxiety
- Exposing the Connection Between Social Media and Teen Suicide
- Therapists Discuss "13 Reasons Why" and Help Parents Address the Series with Teens

## WARNING SIGNS of a person at risk for suicide:

- Talking about wanting to die or kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

- Take suicide seriously and don't minimize it
- Know the warning signs
- Approach the person
- Be direct and ask, "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- Listen
- Be genuine
- Help them eliminate access to ways to harm themselves
- Convey hope
- Help them connect. They can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

KVC Releases 2017 Impact Report and Honors Anne Roberts continued from page 13

KVC impacts over 60,000 people's lives each year through in-home family support, behavioral healthcare, foster care, adoption and children's psychiatric hospitals. It also provides training and consultation on best practices to agencies around the world.



## In the 2017 fiscal year, KVC:

- Directly touched **63,795** people's lives
- Helped strengthen **5,925** families to remain safely together
- Matched **449** children with adoptive families and passed the milestone of facilitating over **4,000** children's adoptions in the agency's history
- Supported **6,909** children in relative and foster families
- Supported **21,590** children and adults with in-home therapy, skill-building and other services
- Treated **3,456** youth and adults at its psychiatric hospitals

The 2017 Impact Report provides more detail on how we were able to achieve these positive outcomes and features real stories of children, youth and families.

View the full report online at [www.kvc.org/2017report](http://www.kvc.org/2017report).

# KVC Once Again Expands Services in Nebraska

KVC Nebraska has been chosen to help implement Systems of Care by expanding its services to include Parents and Children Together (PACT) and Youth Peer Support. These two new programs are intended to reduce the need for further system involvement by providing early intervention to children with Serious Emotional Disturbances and their families in five counties. These services were awarded by the Nebraska Systems of Care Expansion & Sustainability Grant SM063392 and are funded through Region 6 Behavioral HealthCare, an organization that works to provide mental health and substance use services in the community with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services.



Areas served with PACT & YPS Programs.

## About Parents and Children Together (PACT)

The PACT program aims to improve outcomes for children and adolescents who have a serious emotional or behavioral disorder. PACT works with youth who are at a high risk for struggling in school or encountering the juvenile justice system or public child welfare services. The program provides home-based therapy, parenting skills, emotional and social skill building, and concrete supports.

Early intervention with families through programs like PACT is designed to help prevent abuse, family struggles and neglect, and to improve child and family well-being.

## About Youth Peer Support

The Youth Peer Support program is designed to help a child or teen participating in the PACT program maintain ongoing wellness and recovery. This program is provided through a Youth Peer Support Specialist who has experience with mental health in the youth service system. The Specialist will use his or her experience with wellness and recovery to empower other children and teens to lead a healthy life.

With expanded services, KVC aims to ensure that more children are safe and that families in every community can have the support they need. As we grow, we need more dedicated professionals to join our team.

Visit [www.kvc.org/careers](http://www.kvc.org/careers) to view open positions and apply today!

# BIG LEAP FORWARD:

## KVC Takes Possession of College Campus in West Virginia

For nearly five years, KVC Health Systems has been developing the nation's first ever college campus designed specifically to support youth transitioning from foster care. The idea began as an intriguing and promising solution to the national tragedy of 30,000 youth aging out of foster care each year without a permanent family or home. While states pay college tuition for these youth, the students often lack something critical to translate the state dollars into a degree: a support network.

What makes KVC's college campus concept unique? The degree programs are in high-demand career fields, ensuring students leave with a valuable skill. They will also be able to benefit from first-class behavioral health and wraparound services, helping them heal from childhood adversity and develop healthy skills for a successful adulthood.



In July 2017, KVC took possession of the 118-acre campus of the West Virginia University Institute of Technology (WVU Tech) in Montgomery, WV. Through a 25-year lease purchase agreement, KVC began repurposing the campus into a fully-capable educational environment with subtle wraparound supports to create a safe, nurturing environment for young adults transitioning from the foster care system.

The KVC college concept includes the use of existing state and federal foster care resources already allocated for each participating youth and applying those resources to the operations and maintenance of the facility. However, the authorization for application of traditional support dollars to nontraditional programs takes time.

That's why KVC is implementing a strategy for pursuing funding from all available avenues. That includes grant funding wherever possible, as well as conducting a capital campaign to generate resources for operational programs and the establishment of an endowment for scholarships.

To be clear, while research and data identify this as a gap in the child welfare system, KVC is assuming risk in launching this innovative concept and it will take time to become fully sustainable.

For KVC, the impact of helping thousands of young adults better transition into meaningful employment and self-sufficiency is worth the investment. Each successful student that graduates from the campus and achieves self-reliance will not only save federal and state tax dollars, but also produce a staggering positive economic impact on the community and region.

### Youth need your support. Get involved today.

KVC has the vision, plan, and expertise to transform the lives of youth transitioning from foster care and bring hope to this region of West Virginia. The next step is to secure necessary resources.

Quoting from the Dave Thomas Foundation, **"If a child ages out of care, ask: Who is taking this personally? Who feels responsible? To whom can the child look and ask, Why don't I have a family?"**

KVC is taking this personally and wants to make a difference for thousands of these young adults. But we need your help.

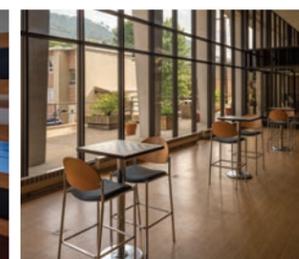
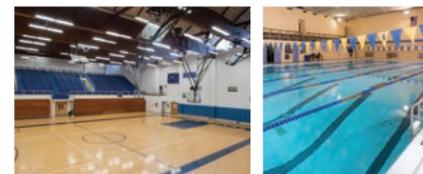
We're actively seeking partners of all kinds and giving levels — individuals, businesses, foundations and other organizations — to make this life-changing college a reality. Will you make a gift

toward our capital campaign? Contact Thomas Bailey, KVC's Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, at [tsbailey@kvc.org](mailto:tsbailey@kvc.org) or (304) 542-4698.



THOMAS BAILEY

More photos and updates are at [www.kvc.org/college](http://www.kvc.org/college).





# How the **OPIOID EPIDEMIC** is Literally Changing Kids' Brains

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris is a pediatrician whose discovery of the **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study** was the key to explaining why many of her patients were not developing at a normal rate. She has since become a leader in the movement to transform how we respond to, treat and prevent childhood adversity. Nonprofit news organization Mother Jones recently interviewed Dr. Burke Harris to discuss the developmental and physiological effects that parental opioid abuse, which includes dependence on prescription painkillers and heroin, is having on children. Below are some important responses to note. (The questions have been modified to show highlights.)

## How does parental drug use affect a child's development?

**Dr. Nadine Burke Harris:** "One of the very most important foundations of brain development is a phenomenon of serve and return. Babies look at their parents' faces, and they coo or they babble or they make facial expressions. A healthy caregiver will return that, and that actually serves a critical function for infant brain development. If it doesn't happen, that really harms infant brain development. So you could imagine that a parent who is impaired or clouded or blunted by heroin is not going to be doing as much of that serve and return."

"Scary or dangerous situations activate a stress response in the brain, and repeated activation of this stress response is called toxic stress. Toxic stress creates long-term changes to not only brain structure and function, but also to the hormonal system, immune system, and even all the way down to the way our DNA

is read and transcribed. And these changes lead to increased risk for mental health and behavioral health consequences—depression, suicidality, anxiety and substance dependence."



## How do trauma and toxic stress affect a child's brain?

**NBH:** "What we could expect to see is the activity and possibly the size of the amygdala (the brain's fear center) would be increased. We would also expect to see decreased functioning of the brain's pleasure and reward center and impaired executive functioning: difficulty with a lot of the things that kids need to be able to sit still in class and pay attention. Impulse control, judgment, the ability to weigh and balance a bunch of different inputs at a time—and then figure out which one you're going to do and follow through on that. Those are all executive functioning tasks that

reside in the prefrontal cortex, so we might see decreased prefrontal cortical activity."

## Are trauma and parental drug use linked?

**NBH:** "Often times, as a society, we look at the parent who is addicted and we say, "Oh my goodness, how could you do this to your kid?" But if you go back far enough in time, you're going to find that parent when they were a kid, they were experiencing all the same things. And we know that an individual with four or more adverse childhood experiences is ten times as likely to be an IV drug user as someone with zero adverse childhood experiences. When we look at the folks who are using, we have to understand that this is a cycle."

The good news is that **the brain can change, and it's never too late for change to occur.** The human brain is developing every second of every day, long into adulthood. It has the ability to grow stronger, learn how to solve complex problems and develop resiliency to bounce back after difficult situations. Many health, education and social work professionals are working to put science into action in order to change lives. We need to commit more resources towards treatment and prevention, which will require creating infrastructure and environments that give all people better, healthier options.

Learn more at [www.kvc.org/brain](http://www.kvc.org/brain).

# Business Forum on Workplace Diversity Features KVC Leader

The Kansas City Business Journal featured Rita Holmes-Bobo, KVC's Executive Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, as part of its August 31 event on diversity in the workforce. Along with executives from Honeywell, Turner Construction, and The Women's Foundation, Holmes-Bobo served as a panelist addressing a range of questions.



The breakfast meeting, called "Women and Minorities in the Workplace," was the latest in the KVCBJ's Diversity and Inclusion Series. KVC Health Systems is proud to sponsor the series due to its commitment to ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion both inwardly

with team members and externally with the children, families and communities it serves.

While diversity efforts in recruiting and management have advanced, the KVCBJ reports that women in the Kansas City area still make less on the dollar than their male peers and minorities even less so. A recent Harvard Business Review article stated that companies with more women in executive positions are more profitable. But among the Fortune 500, just 32 companies are led by women. None are led by female minorities.

While Holmes-Bobo is in the first year of her position, she has moved quickly to engage staff and communities in the work. She developed a written business case for diversity, a publication that helps people at all levels understand the importance and advantages of the initiative. This year will include the launch of diversity-related online articles and resources, interactive lunch and learn discussions, and emotionally compelling videos featuring staff and clients.



By increasing diversity, equity and inclusion, KVC hopes to expand engagement and unlock innovation, helping the organization fulfill its mission in a robust, energizing and sustainable way.

Stay informed by visiting [www.kvc.org/diversity](http://www.kvc.org/diversity).

(Photos by Adam Vogler, visual journalist, Kansas City Business Journal)

# People on the Move

PROMOTION



**Annmarie Arensberg, L.S.C.S.W.**  
*Associate Clinical Director*  
 KVC Hospitals, Kansas City, KS  
 4 Years with KVC

Arensberg oversees the admissions and utilization review teams at KVC's children's psychiatric hospitals. She also provides clinical team support.

PROMOTION



**Thomas Bailey**  
*Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives*  
 KVC Health Systems, Charleston, WV  
 2 Years with KVC

Bailey is leading the effort to create the nation's first college campus for youth emerging from foster care in Montgomery, WV.

PROMOTION



**Tiffany Danneman, LMSW**  
*Director of Integrated Services*  
 KVC Kansas, Kansas City, KS  
 6 Years with KVC

Danneman oversees Permanency and Child Placing Agency teams in the Kansas City area. These teams care for hundreds of children and families interacting with the child welfare system.

PROMOTION



**Kristi Ferrell, L.S.W.**  
*Director of Marketing and Human Resources*  
 KVC West Virginia, Charleston, WV  
 16 Years with KVC

While Ferrell has long managed human resources, she now also oversees teams responsible for foster parent recruitment, fundraising, marketing and more.

PROMOTION



**Shannon Hallauer, LPC**  
*Director of Clinical Services*  
 Niles  
 7 Years with KVC

Hallauer oversees the clinical aspects of Niles' two youth behavioral health programs: day treatment and residential treatment.

PROMOTION



**Lonnie Johnson**  
*Chief Information Officer*  
 KVC Health Systems, Olathe, KS  
 17 Years with KVC

Johnson is the organization's technology leader and first CIO. He oversees three teams focused on improving healthcare delivery through technology.

PROMOTION



**Lauren Lueck**  
*Director of Strategic Initiatives*  
 KVC Hospitals, Kansas City, KS  
 3 Years with KVC

Lueck helps develop new business and community partnerships, advances strategic goals, and assists with marketing and communications.

PROMOTION



**Danielle Martinez**  
*Director of Policy, Training and Data Management*  
 KVC Kansas, Pittsburg, KS  
 4 Years with KVC

Martinez provides support and leadership to KVC Kansas' 700 employees throughout the Eastern half of the state.

NEW HIRE



**Lindsey Russell, M.S., Ed.S.**  
*Niles Prep School Administrator*  
 Niles, Kansas City, MO

Russell leads Niles Prep, a state-approved therapeutic day treatment program for students grades K-12.

# Thank You

for Helping Children by Supporting KVC's 2017 Events

## KVC Hero Luncheon

Overland Park, KS

On June 15, over 550 people gathered in Kansas City for the 6th Annual KVC Hero Luncheon featuring University of Kansas Men's Basketball Coach and KVC board member Bill Self and former Jayhawk, NBA player and TV star Scot Pollard. The event raised over \$160,000.



Holmes Murphy presented the event which highlights the need for caring individuals to rally around and support children and families experiencing crisis. Audience members were inspired to join KVC's Everyday Hero monthly giving program after hearing from 11-year-old Sierra who, despite having endured a traumatic childhood, is happy and thriving with the help of her foster parents.

Television news anchor Christa Dubill (41 Action News) emceed the event for the fourth year in a row and radio host Nate Bukaty (Sports Radio 810) facilitated a lively discussion about sports, kids and heroes.

## KVC West Virginia's "Home Hope Heroes"

Charleston, WV

On June 28, individuals and organizations came together at the West Virginia State Museum and Culture Center in Charleston, WV for an evening of food, fun and friendship. KVC West Virginia's "Home Hope Heroes" event raised funds and awareness of the need to increase community-based services for children and teens in order to keep them in their home communities and prevent them from ending up in group homes.

Attendees included State Senator Ed Gaunch, State Senator Mike Hall, and representatives from the offices of U.S. Senator Joe Manchin, U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito, and U.S. Congressman Evan Jenkins. The evening included musical performances by the West Virginia Treble Makers and pianist Barbara Nissman.

## KVC Kids Classic Golf Tournament

Parkville, MO

On August 21, over 160 golfers witnessed the total solar eclipse on one of the nation's most beautiful golf courses while raising funds for children and teens living in darkness, experiencing abuse, neglect and other family challenges, at the 16th Annual KVC Kids Classic Golf Tournament in Kansas City. Even though the afternoon flight was cancelled due to rain and flooding, everyone enjoyed this once-in-a-lifetime experience and made the event a huge success.



The event, which takes place at The National Golf Club of Kansas City in Parkville, Missouri, was made possible by Susan and Scott Asner who have been title sponsors and tournament chairs since the tournament's inception. Tournament sponsors included Bank of Blue Valley, Holmes Murphy, IMA and Netsmart. The event raised over \$120,000.

## KVC Kids Classic Golf Tournament

Ashland, NE

On September 15, golfers participated in the 5th Annual KVC Kids Classic Golf Tournament in Nebraska. The tournament is held at the beautiful, semi-private Ashland Golf Club in Ashland, NE, which is halfway between KVC's offices in Omaha and Lincoln. Funds raised help children in foster care and their foster families attend our Resource Family Conference, an annual weekend of training and fun.

### Don't Miss the Next Event!

Find an upcoming event near you — check out our list on the back cover!

Learn more about becoming an event sponsor at [www.kvc.org/sponsor](http://www.kvc.org/sponsor)

# Niles Celebrates Opening of Renovated Campus for Youth Behavioral Health Treatment

Earlier this summer, Niles leaders, partners, donors and the community celebrated the re-opening of the recently renovated facility in Kansas City, Missouri with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house. Niles, which has had a strong presence in the heart of downtown Kansas City for 134 years, is a nonprofit organization that provides residential and day treatment behavioral health programs for children and teens.

We are thankful for the enormous community support shown at the ribbon-cutting ceremony in July. Participants included Joe Reardon, CEO of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce; Kansas City Mayor Sly James; U.S. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II; Kansas City Municipal Court Judge Ardie Bland; Jackson County, MO Executive Frank White Jr.; and Kansas City Councilman Jermaine Reed. The ceremony was followed by self-guided walking tours of the renovated campus.



The Niles Prep day treatment program focuses on helping children and adolescents who have struggled in mainstream classrooms due to educational, psychological or behavioral concerns. The residential treatment program is designed to support youth with intensive clinical services in a structured environment. These programs help enrich and enhance the lives of individuals and families with mental health needs, therefore creating stronger, healthier communities across the state of Missouri.

## Improvements to the Niles facility include:

- **Renovated dormitory and recreation space** — improvements to the common spaces and living area will help youth feel that Niles is a place of hope, healing and safety.

- **Learning Lab** — this dedicated space for interactive activities will help engage youth in treatment through virtual reality and emotional regulation drills.

- **Visitation & Consultation Suites** — these rooms are a place for families and supportive caregivers to meet with the children and teens in care.

- **Renovated entrance** — this updated entrance provides a warm and inviting area for children, families, friends of Niles, volunteers and our community.



Kansas City Mayor Sly James

Thank you to these generous organizations for collectively contributing \$1.38 million to help Niles open its doors to serve more youth and families: The Sunderland Foundation, The Goppert Foundation, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Neighborhood Stabilization Program, JE Dunn Construction Company, Sarli Family Foundation, Hall Family Foundation, Gary Dickinson Family Foundation, The H&R Block Foundation, UMB Trust, Sprint Foundation, The Curry Foundation, and the Dunn Family Foundation.

Both day and residential treatment programs are now accepting referrals.

Contact us to learn more by visiting [www.nileskc.org](http://www.nileskc.org).



# Be a Holiday Hero for a Child in Need

For thousands of children in foster care or involved in the child welfare system, living away from home during the holidays can be an unsure time. Kids may wonder, “Will Santa find me?” or “Will I have gifts to open?”

Make the holidays bright for a child or teen in foster care by becoming a **Holiday Hero!** Individuals, families, businesses, and organizations of all kinds can donate gifts to children and teens this holiday season.

**We need Holiday Heroes in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Kentucky and West Virginia!**

Sign up at [www.kvc.org/holidayhero](http://www.kvc.org/holidayhero)

You'll even be able to specify the age, gender and number of children you wish to collect holiday gifts for.

We know the holidays are a busy time, so if you don't have time to shop, please consider helping by making an online donation using the link above.

*Thank you!*



# We're Hiring! Join Our Team

Looking for a career where you can make a positive difference in the lives of children, teens and families? We're looking for smart, caring professionals like you in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Kentucky and West Virginia. Open

positions include Case Manager, Therapist, Behavioral Health Technician, Registered Nurse (RN), Youth Care Transporter, and many more.

KVC Health Systems is an international leader in providing innovative, effective and compassionate care. Our team members enjoy a competitive salary, a robust benefits program with excellent healthcare, and opportunities for professional advancement.

Learn more and apply at [www.kvc.org/careers](http://www.kvc.org/careers).

*KVC is an Equal Opportunity Employer*





21350 West 153rd Street  
Olathe, Kansas 66061  
www.kvc.org



Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Kansas City, MO  
Permit No. 1996

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# Events Calendar

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

## 2017

November **National Adoption Month**  
Nationwide

November 10 **KVC Gala at the Station**  
Union Station  
Kansas City, MO

November 18 **National Adoption Day**  
Courthouses Nationwide

November 28 **Giving Tuesday**  
Nationwide

## 2018

February 9-15 **Random Acts of Kindness Week**  
Nationwide

March **Social Work Month**  
Nationwide

April **Child Abuse Prevention Month**  
Nationwide



Please Recycle

