

thriving



Dreams Do Come True

Four Teen Siblings
Adopted by Loving Family

Oprah Calls “Treating Childhood Trauma”

the Most Impactful
Story She’s
Ever Reported

Rising Suicide Rate
Reminds Us to
*Notice, Reach Out
to Others*

Parents Forge
Friendships
with Their Children’s
Foster Parents

KVC Opening
**New Children’s
Psychiatric
Hospital**

Caring Adults Needed

Foster parenting is one of the best ways to help children in crisis

Over 400,000 children and teens in the United States — including in your own local community — have experienced abuse, neglect or other family challenges. Foster parenting provides a child with a safe, loving environment. It will also enrich your life with joy and meaning. People from all kinds of life situations can qualify!

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Contact us to learn more. www.kvc.org/foster

We offer **FREE** training classes and support you every step of the way.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Dear Friends,

Across America, millions of children and families are facing heartbreaking adversity. They're dealing with mental illness, addiction, economic stress, family discord, child abuse and neglect, divorce, domestic violence, parental incarceration, the loss of loved ones, and ultimately, isolation. That last one — feeling alone — is most devastating because we all need supportive friends and family to get through difficult times and make positive changes.

At KVC, our core competency is helping families solve or cope with these problems. We build resilience, which is the ability to bounce back from difficult situations. We connect people to community support. We improve health and wellness, protect childhood, strengthen families, and enable adults to be the parents they have always dreamed of

becoming. We save lives. It's not an overstatement; from our children's psychiatric hospitals to our in-home family support programs, our team members save lives every single day.

There's power in our community of caring people and that became clear during our most recent KVC Story Contest. We received 90 stories from team members and families across the country, real examples of how KVC has made a positive difference in people's lives. Make sure you are following all of our social media channels (www.kvc.org/social) and subscribed to our blogs so you can be the first to read the winning stories.

The common thread is that anything is possible with support from people who care. In this issue of *Thriving*, you can read several examples of caring including:

- In **Dreams Do Come True** (pg. 6), you'll read how we were able to play a role in matching four brothers and sisters with a loving adoptive family;
- Our **new children's psychiatric hospital** (pg. 16) is slated to open in 2019 thanks to many generous partners who want youth in crisis to have treatment options; and
- The moving story of **Brad** (pg. 19), a father who bravely overcame addiction in order to bring his young son safely home from foster care.

Thank you for your support as a KVC team member, client, foster or adoptive family, donor, volunteer or partner. We all need help from time to time, and the help we give one another puts us each one step closer to becoming success stories.

Sincerely

Jason Hooper
President and CEO



www.kvc.org





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thriving

Fall/Winter 2018

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

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Dreams Do Come True

Four Teen Siblings Adopted by Loving Family



Kimberly, Keishaune, Ke'Rel and Keimarla were four siblings ages 3–10. Like all children, they simply wanted the love, safety and security that family provides.

But in 2010, their family was having difficulty meeting their needs. Their mother struggled with substance use, and her boyfriend physically abused one of the children. When the abuse was reported, he threatened the other children, saying he would burn down the house or kill them. For their safety, the courts brought the children into foster care.

While foster care is a necessary intervention to keep a child safe, this began a difficult road for the four brothers and sisters. At times, they were separated from each other or had to move to a different house, which is not the intent of any foster care program. There were not enough foster families in their hometown, and of those families who were available, few had the bedroom space to care for all four children.

After two years, it became clear that their mother was not able to provide a safe home and the courts terminated her parental rights. The children dreamed of being adopted together by a loving family, but as the years went by, that dream seemed more and more out of reach.

As a lead agency on behalf of the Kansas Department for Children and Families, KVC provided foster family care for the children. When they became in need of an adoptive family, KVC worked in collaboration with Adopt KS Kids to help them find a family by listing their profile on AdoptKSKids.org and the KVC adoption website. Driven by the fact that “children grow best in families,” KVC wanted the four children to be among the 4,000+ youth it has matched with adoptive forever families in its history.

By having their profiles on AdoptKSKids.org, the children were in front of the perfect audience: adults looking to grow their families.

Tate and Meriam Thompson of Pratt, Kansas were one of the couples browsing the website. Tate is a high school English teacher and coaches tennis and wrestling, and Meriam works for a state government agency. They already had three biological children: Hogan, Jadyn and Tiger. While they started with the idea of adopting one child, they eventually set their hearts on adopting a sibling group. They specifically

searched for African-American siblings that included teens because Tate and Meriam knew these youth often wait longer to be adopted. They became a licensed foster home through the Kansas Children’s Service League while also inquiring on children available for adoption.

“We always talked about adoption even before we got married because my wrestling coach informally adopted Meriam,” said Tate. “He took her in when she was in high school. So when our daughter said that she wanted a little sister, we told her that can only happen if we adopt. We asked our kids, ‘Are you interested in adoption?’ They were.” In fact, it was unanimous, and the whole family took the required training class together.

Meeting for the First Time

By the time the Thompson family found the siblings’ profile online, the kids had given up hope that they would be adopted. They believed it was their fate to age out of foster care without a permanent family. In fact, the kids’ online profile didn’t include oldest sister Kimberly who was almost 18 and had decided to age out of care. The Thompsons researched to find there were four and invited Kimberly to be part of the adoption.

So when the four heard there was a family that wanted to meet them, they were not interested. “I can remember going to the children’s foster home with their case manager to tell them about the family,” said Jenna Parker, an adoptive resource coordinator at KVC. “Prior to our meeting, the children had written letters to the family saying they did not want to meet them or be adopted by them. As we went over the family’s profile book, one of them actually took notes about the family as he soaked it all in. At the end, when I asked them if they were willing to at least meet the family with no commitment to agreeing to adoption, they all agreed except for Ke’Rel. He let me know he was not willing to meet them, which I told him was fine, but if he changed his mind, he was welcome to come.”

“It would be difficult to put into words **the transformation that occurred** during that visit in watching the children open up to the idea that **this could really happen.**”

“We were able to facilitate a first visit at our office, and thankfully, Ke’Rel decided to come. It would be difficult to put into words the transformation that occurred during that visit in watching the children open up to the idea that this could really happen.”

Tate confirmed there was a little magic at that first meeting as their three children and the four siblings met for the first time. “The four kids were expecting to meet only Meriam and me, but we don’t do things that way in our family. When we’re going to meet someone important to us, we all go. So we brought our kids, too.”

Jenna shared how the siblings processed that unexpected interaction. “The four children asked to go into a room by themselves to talk. Essentially they had a family meeting where they talked about changing their mind about being adopted by them. Soon after, they visited the family’s home, and a month later, they requested to move in with them.”

From there, the adoption process moved along. The kids adjusted well to the new community, which was more rural than they were used to. “They weren’t sure initially,” said Tate, “but really they were just happy to be somewhere where they were wanted. They all made friends easily and got involved in tennis, wrestling, musicals, plays and anything else they wanted to do. They’re thriving with all the activities here.”

Dreams That You Dare to Dream Really Do Come True

As adoption day grew closer, Tate says, “They were excited about it but they weren’t sure because other

possible adoptions had fallen through. So until it happened, they just didn’t believe it would. We kept telling them we were permanent.”

On finalization day, they all wore the shirts that said, “Thompson Family — Get on the bus” and had all nine family members’ names. A TV station reporter came to cover the happy story, and since the court was running about an hour behind, she got to see them interacting positively and even let them take the camera. Their parents say it made the kids feel special.

The parents felt special, too. Oldest daughter Kimberly always wished for a dad. She found that in Tate. “She moved to Pratt for her senior year, which was a big change, but we spent a lot of time together all year.”

Ke’Rel loves his big brother Hogan and wants to do everything he does. The feeling is mutual, as Hogan says the adoption means getting “two best friends” in brothers Keishaune and Ke’Rel. “They’ll be able to be my friends throughout my whole entire life because, well, they’re going to be my family,” he said.

All seven kids understand they are equal. There’s no difference between biological or adopted kids — just seven brothers and sisters.

“Since the first visit, they started calling us Mommy and Daddy,” said Tate. “It felt good because we thought that might be difficult. It turns out, they just wanted a home where they belonged and where they could be loved and supported permanently.”

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Meet Children Who Need a *Forever Family*

We’re honored to play a role in matching children with loving adoptive families in Kansas, Nebraska, Kentucky and West Virginia. Due to our role as a lead foster care agency in Kansas, we’re able to share photos and videos of Kansas children like those below at <http://adoption.kvc.org>. To inquire, please call (888) 655-5500 or email adoptionspecialist@kvc.org. To see children near you who need adoptive families, visit www.AdoptUSKids.org.



ALEXA (17)

Watch my video online!

Alexa is a musical young lady who loves to sing, write music and play the guitar. She does well in school and aspires to be a music teacher when she grows up. Alexa does well with younger children and communicates well with adults. She

would do great in a family that is outgoing, values family time and is, of course, musical!



KAYLYN (11)

Kaylyn is a bright, active and ambitious 11-year-old! She loves participating in gymnastics and karate and loves taking care of animals. She does very well in school, and her favorite classes are science, art and music. When Kaylyn grows up, she wants to be a chef. She needs a family that

can help guide and support her as she grows.



ISABELLA (15)

Watch my video online!

Isabella is very active and likes to have fun! She loves being involved in many different activities, including volleyball, swimming and school work. She has big

plans for her future and wants to become a surgeon when she grows up. She deserves a family that can provide her with guidance, support and structure.



ANDREW (16)

Watch my video online!

Andrew is an active young man who enjoys sports, particularly basketball and swimming, and his favorite class is art. Andrew deserves a loving family that can be there for him no matter what!



Oprah Calls “Treating Childhood Trauma” the Most Impactful Story She’s Ever Reported



An epidemic has been sweeping across the U.S., being passed down from generation to generation and contributing to some of the worst health and social problems. When a Milwaukee, Wisconsin newspaper ran a series about the city’s haunting prevalence of childhood trauma and the link to its high poverty rate, a former resident and well-known public figure decided to investigate further with a *60 Minutes* report called “Treating Childhood Trauma.”

Oprah Winfrey grew up in Milwaukee, and her childhood was full of traumatic experiences. Her family was poor and received welfare benefits. Oprah also endured years of sexual abuse. Dr. Bruce Perry, a psychiatrist and a leading expert on childhood trauma, says that negative experiences such as these are what derail childhood development and wire a child’s brain differently, increasing the risk for physical, mental, social and behavioral health problems.

The idea that childhood trauma is a predictor of later-life health and wellbeing is not a theory; it is a proven scientific fact. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study was the largest investigation conducted that revealed this link. Participants answered 10 questions about their childhoods and current health and behaviors to determine their scores. The higher the ACE score, the higher the risk for problems. You can take the test to find your ACE score at acestoohigh.com.

The ACE Study has driven many organizations, schools and communities including KVC Health Systems to integrate **trauma-informed care** into their programs

and treatment systems. This revolutionary approach has changed the fundamental question from “*what’s wrong with you?*” to “*what happened to you?*” According to Perry, “It is crucial to understand what has happened to traumatized children before trying to ‘fix’ their behavior.”

Overcoming childhood trauma and living a healthy, successful life is entirely possible. The key is to ensure children have positive adults in their lives who can buffer those negative experiences. For Oprah, her school teachers provided the love and connection she needed to feel valued.

This report on treating childhood trauma has been so life-changing for Oprah that she has changed the way she interacts with people and operates her business and school. She even claims that this is the most impactful story she has ever reported on. Treating and preventing childhood trauma should be a top priority to address the many major public health issues in the U.S., and we all play a role in ensuring all children develop healthy brains and have positive connections with adults.

Learn more about what KVC is doing to treat and prevent childhood trauma and ensure all children have the opportunity to build a healthy brain at www.kvchospitals.org/trauma.

You can also download our free guide, “5 Things Every Child Needs for Good Mental Health” at www.kvc.org/free.



KVC Releases 2018 impact report and Honors Partners

On October 18, KVC Health Systems commemorated a year of positive impact in the lives of children and families during its 2018 Annual Celebration in Olathe, Kansas. KVC released its 2018 Impact Report and presented awards to eight partners.

Values-Driven Partner Awards

KVC honored six partners who demonstrate its closely-held values like authenticity, compassion, family connection, collaboration, urgency, innovation and diversity:

- Westside Family Church
- Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools
- Ashley and Sean Grippando, a family KVC served
- Kansas Legislature’s Child Welfare System Task Force
- Bill Wood, Chair of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce and partner at Foulston Siefkin, LLP
- Stacie Prosser, Kansas City Business Journal



Garmin leaders accept the KVC Hero Award presented by President and CEO Jason Hooper.

KVC Hero Awards

KVC also presented two Hero Awards for helping KVC achieve its mission:

- Mayor Sly James of Kansas City, Missouri, whose support of Niles’ youth behavioral health programs helped ensure Niles’ legacy in the Kansas City community.
- Garmin, a long-time supporter of KVC, for sponsoring major fundraising events and actively participating on KVC’s Board of Directors and advisory boards.



Bill Wood, Chair of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce and partner at Foulston Siefkin, LLP, receives a KVC Values-Driven Partner Award.

In the 2018 fiscal year, KVC:



- Safely prevented **12,233** children from entering foster care
- Matched **454** children with adoptive families and passed the milestone of facilitating over **4,454** children’s adoptions in the agency’s history
- Supported **6,869** children in relative and foster families
- Supported **28,182** children and adults with in-home therapy, skill-building and other services
- Treated **2,869** youth and adults at its psychiatric hospitals

View the 2018 Impact Report to see full details and read real stories of children, youth and families at www.kvc.org/2018report.



Niles—135 Years of *Healing & Hope* for Children

Niles is a nonprofit organization that provides compassionate behavioral health programs for youth in the heart of Kansas City, Missouri. Following Niles' entry into the KVC Health Systems family, renovation and grand reopening in 2017, it recently reached another exciting milestone. This year, Niles is celebrating its 135-year anniversary and its amazing history of helping youth and families.

At the 135-year celebration in September, Mayor Sly James read a proclamation recognizing the work of Niles. He praised the Niles team for helping kids who are "at war" in their own neighborhoods, comparing the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that many soldiers experience with the traumatic stress that some children experience due to adversity at home. Judge Artie Bland also shared that children receiving services

from Niles become healthier adults who won't stand in front of him in mental health court.

Niles began as a safe haven for children in 1883 when Samuel Eason, an African-American bricklayer, began caring for homeless and orphaned children he found in his neighborhood near the historic 18th and Vine area. Today, Niles serves children and adolescents with day treatment and residential programs using innovative approaches to ensure each child's safety and wellbeing.



Judge Artie Bland, Victor Hammonds, Niles President Astra Garner and KVC Health Systems President and CEO Jason Hooper



Niles President Astra Garner helps as Kansas City, Missouri Mayor Sly James reads a proclamation regarding Niles.



KVC Hospitals and Niles team members Annmarie Arensberg, Sharon Sanders, Sara Schlagel and Latisha Smith.



Some of the children Niles has helped in its 135-year history.

Learn more about Niles' history, mission and values by visiting www.kvchospitals.org/niles.

MEET SOME OF OUR *Amazing* West Virginia FOSTER PARENTS

During May and June, in honor of Mother's Day, Father's Day and National Foster Care Month, we use the KVC West Virginia Facebook page to highlight a foster mom or dad nearly every single day. This gives us an opportunity to feature many of the wonderful families that care for children in crisis. Due to all the likes and comments these foster parents receive, the posts also raise awareness about the need for more adults to become foster caregivers. Here are just a couple of many foster parents we highlighted.

Amber and Steve Pursley

Amber and Steve have been KVC foster parents since 2014. They have one biological son Owen, adopted twins Elizabeth and Ivy, and are on the way to adopting two sisters. Amber is a bubbly mom who likes to be involved in different activities. She is active and on the go all the time. She ensures that all of her kids get to participate in activities they choose such as sports or dance and is involved in the PTO. Amber and Steve provide a loving and stable home and are wonderful role models for their children and others around them. They love being around children and being hands-on parents. They will do whatever is best for kids.



Darlene Hardwick

Darlene began fostering children with KVC in 2015. She has welcomed five children into her home! As a Head Start teacher, she has a long history of working with youth in her community. She is always willing to learn new techniques to grow as a caregiver and teacher. Darlene is passionate about providing youth with new learning experiences, a lot of love, patience and consistency. She enjoys watching children flourish, and it is clear that those in her care appreciate the attention they receive and the effort she puts forth. Darlene genuinely loves being a foster mother and is always looking for ways to improve the lives of children.



The number of children in foster care in the U.S. has risen in recent years. Learn more about how you can make a world of difference in the life of a child or teen at www.kvc.org/foster.

Rising Suicide Rate Reminds Us to Notice, Reach Out to Others

If you know someone struggling with depression or thoughts of suicide, contact our psychiatric hospitals at **(913) 890-7468** or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255**.

Suicide is a topic many people shy away from because of its seriousness and the stigma surrounding mental health and self-harm. This makes it difficult for people to speak out about their mental health struggles and get the treatment they need. Thankfully, in recent years, people have started speaking more openly about their personal struggles with mental illness. They encourage people to be honest, ask for help, and not be ashamed because mental illness is like any other medical condition.



Anyone Can Experience Thoughts of Suicide

The public has also been shocked and saddened by the news of beloved celebrities taking their own lives, such as Kate Spade, Anthony Bourdain and Robin Williams. Though they aren't the first celebrities to die by suicide, these tragic losses have continued to spark discussions about the suicide epidemic. Society is beginning to understand that suicide isn't a taboo topic that can be ignored, and anyone can be at risk.

Become Your Child's Friend

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that suicide is the second leading cause of death for teens and young adults ages 10-24. With increased pressures on youth, it's critical that families have open and honest discussions. According to Dr. Vishal Adma, Medical Director for KVC Hospitals, "There comes a point in your child's life when it is OK to be their parent and their friend." Discussing feelings and understanding the risk factors is vital to prevention, and often, loved ones are unaware that a victim of suicide was struggling.

"We hear many parents say, 'If my child needs something, they'll come to me.' An alternative approach is to ensure, not assume, that a child feels safe and comfortable reaching out to their parents when they need help."



Risk Factors for Suicide

- Family history of suicide
- Exposure to traumatic experiences
- Family history of mental illness, depression or substance abuse
- Chronic pain and certain medical conditions



Warning Signs of Suicide in Teens

- Talking about suicide or wanting to die
- Feelings of hopelessness, anxiousness or anger
- Extreme mood changes
- Increased alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Withdrawn from family, friends and/or activities
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain

Read our full interview with child psychiatrists Drs. Vishal and Jyotsna Adma on "How to Help Your Teen Cope with Anxiety" at www.kvchospitals.org/teenanxiety.

Croney Focusing on Public Policy to Benefit Children and Families



Every child and family KVC serves is affected by the federal and state policies and funding related to mental health, foster care and other critical services. To help advocate at the highest levels for the children and families we serve, KVC Health Systems recently named Elizabeth Croney, past President of KVC Kentucky, as Executive Vice President for Clinical Advancement. This newly-created position will help KVC influence and align with public policy related to child welfare and behavioral healthcare.

In her new role, Croney will focus her work on policy issues such as the Family First Act that was signed into law on February 9, 2018. This important legislation offers states the chance to opt-in to federal funding for preventative services that keep families together

and choose evidence-based practices to guide their services. She'll also research and advance strategies to combat the opioid epidemic that is affecting adults across the country and causing negative impacts on children and teens.

Learn more about Elizabeth Croney and her work at www.kvc.org/leadership



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

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!



KVC Opening New Children's Psychiatric Hospital

No parents want to imagine their child in pain, and they never expect a day may come when they will need to admit their child to a psychiatric hospital. But for many parents, this fear is becoming all too real as more children are diagnosed with mental illness and psychiatric disorders. While the number of youth suffering from mental illness and thoughts of suicide continues to increase, inpatient treatment options remain low.

Inpatient Bed Shortages

In the Midwest, there's a need for more mental health professionals and a shortage of beds for inpatient treatment. KVC already has two children's psychiatric hospitals in Kansas yet had to decline admission to over 2,000 youth last year due to lack of capacity. While people in crisis are safely routed to other facilities for immediate help, the waitlists and long drives from home create hardships for families already going through unimaginable stress.

Finding the Solution

Last year, KVC served 3,492 youth between the ages of 6-18 at our psychiatric hospitals, with 700 of those clients traveling from Wichita, Kansas and surrounding communities. Our team saw a large gap in care for families in Sedgwick and adjacent counties and seeks to fill this need by opening a new hospital in Wichita. This hospital will make psychiatric and behavioral healthcare services available to more families. It will also provide treatment to about 2,500 patients annually and create 150-200 new jobs.

The **HOPE LIVES Campaign** seeks to raise \$7 million to help fund this new youth psychiatric hospital to serve children in need. As of today, \$3.2 million has been contributed thanks to generous donors in 11 different communities. The Sunderland Foundation of Overland Park, Kansas provided a lead gift of \$1.5 million to launch the **HOPE LIVES Campaign**. The JE & LE Mabree Foundation of Tulsa, Oklahoma has also issued a \$1 million capstone challenge grant toward the project.

Learn more about the new Wichita hospital and the **HOPE LIVES Campaign** at www.kvchospitals.org/wichita.



Dreams Do Come True
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Encouraging Others to Foster or Adopt a Child

To those considering adopting a child from foster care, the Thompsons say, "Keep pushing and working at it and it will happen. It can be a long process, but try to be positive. It's worth it in the end."

They also want to dispel the myth that adopting from foster care is expensive. "On social media, I always see people talk about the expense. Yes, you will pay more for food! But the adoption itself is essentially free, which is different than a private adoption. There are so many kids in need, so if you want to make a difference, this is something you can do right now."

Today, about six months after the adoption, the Thompsons are doing well. Their house is abuzz with all the energy you'd expect from seven happy, flourishing teenagers, and all are feeling the love of a family that they needed for so long.

Red Door Woodfired Grill & Bank of Blue Valley
Present

the Gala

AT THE STATION

NOVEMBER 2, 2018

Benefitting children & families served by

www.kvc.org/gala

The Heart of Our Work Is Helping People

Every child deserves to be part of a loving family. Join us in strengthening families through in-home family support, behavioral healthcare, foster care, adoption, children's psychiatric hospitals and more.

Visit www.kvc.org/careers today!

 **KVC**
Health Systems

Do you lead a business that cares about people? Sponsor KVC's Gala at the Station presented by Bank of Blue Valley this November 2 at Union Station. Learn more at www.kvc.org/thegala.

Parents Forge *Friendships* with Their Children's Foster Parents

Ashley and Sean's Story



When Ashley and Sean began to have problems with substance use, their three children had to enter foster care. While working toward a safe reunification, they formed a wonderful bond with the foster parents who were looking after their children. During Ashley and Sean's recovery, they allowed their youngest child to be adopted by the foster parents since he had been with them since birth.

After recovering, they were able to safely reunite with their other two children, and they remain very close with the foster parents, describing their relationship as "One family under two houses." Since reunifying, they've celebrated a wedding, and Ashley has been accepted into nursing school!

Ashley and Sean are active in KVC's Engaging Parents workgroup, will be on a panel at our Resource Family Conference later this year, and have given community presentations. Ashley has even gone back to her old high school to talk about the impact of substance use on families. Thank you, Ashley and Sean, for your courage, your openness, for inspiring other parents to succeed and showing that anything is possible with support!



Baby Bradley's Story

From Alissa Rieth, KVC Foster Parent



The phone call came on a cold January morning from a KVC worker. Bradley, a two-month-old baby boy who had severe medical needs that would require frequent doctor's appointments, had been removed from his home and needed to be placed in a foster home. I agreed to care for Bradley.

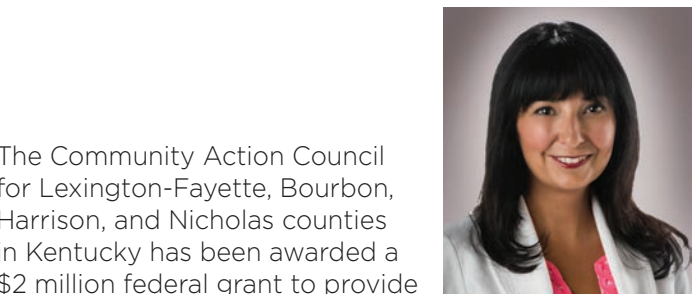
When I met Bradley, the nurses had warned me that he was not very interactive — no smiles or coos for them in the week he had been there. So I wasn't ready for what happened when they put him in my arms. I looked down into his beautiful deep brown eyes and said, "Hello, baby boy." He broke into a huge grin that brought tears to my eyes and to the caring nurses who were standing there in disbelief.

After five days of caring for Bradley, I was with a KVC case worker waiting to meet his mother for the first time. I was a bundle of nerves.

As soon as we met, she embraced me and whispered, "Thank you for taking care of my baby. Only God will ever repay you for what you are doing for my family." We both immediately started to cry. I would soon learn that Rose was the one who had been trying to hold her family of six together for so long. She worked hard to provide and care for her four children, but one day while she was at work, something happened at home. The baby was rushed to the hospital, and soon, all four of her children were in foster care.

During her visits with Bradley, his mother and I began to form a bond and to build a lifelong friendship. On the day that Bradley safely returned home, our families came together and shared a meal in celebration of their reunion. As the night drew to a close we stood in a circle — two different families, two different cultures — and prayed for the future and also in gratitude of all God had accomplished through this little baby.

KVC Helping to Address *Opioid Crisis* in Kentucky



The Community Action Council for Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, and Nicholas counties in Kentucky has been awarded a \$2 million federal grant to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness across 16 counties. As a program partner, KVC Kentucky will join five other nonprofits in providing outpatient mental health and substance use treatment to help people affected by the opioid crisis.

"Responding to the substance use epidemic requires an innovative, collaborative and multi-systemic approach," said Gina Klyachkin, President of KVC Kentucky. "That is why we are so excited to be a part of this important initiative with the Community Action Council and our fellow partners!"

In 2014, the KY Kids Recovery Program awarded KVC \$2 million to expand substance abuse treatment for teens. In 2016, Attorney General Andy Beshear awarded KVC \$400,000 to continue treating adolescents with substance use problems. This latest Community Action Council grant will ensure that even more action is taken to combat this epidemic.

KVC Kentucky offers behavioral health services including a walk-in clinic for individuals struggling with depression, anxiety, thoughts of suicide or other behavioral health challenges. Open every Wednesday, the walk-in clinic gives clients access to our master's-level therapists with no appointment needed.

Learn more at www.kvcky.org.

Father Brings His Son Safely Home from Foster Care

Brad and his son's mother struggled with drug and alcohol use. For this reason, 11-month-old K.C. was brought into foster care. Though he was upset that his son was in state custody, Brad attended every meeting and visitation and completed all the requirements to bring his son safely home.

That encouragement helped him accept that he needed help, and he checked into an inpatient treatment center. He says he turned his life over to God and started living for God. Brad stayed in contact with his support team and realized everyone was there to help him.

Brad made enormous strides in maintaining his sobriety and providing a safe environment for his son. Soon after, K.C. was safely returned home to his father's care. Brad embraced KVC aftercare services — up to 12 months of in-home therapy and family support — to ensure his family continues to succeed. When he celebrated his son's 6th birthday, it was also his 1,000th day without alcohol or drugs. He says, "I owe a lot of this to my KVC case manager who never once gave up on me."

Brad and K.C. have faced tremendous challenges, but with help from caring professionals, they are now stronger than ever.



People on the Move

PROMOTION



Ashley Brown, L.C.S.W.
President
KVC Nebraska, Omaha, NE
9 years with KVC

Brown, who previously served as Vice President, leads a team of 60 child welfare and behavioral health professionals serving thousands of people each year. She succeeds Jodie Austin whose role as Executive Vice President of the KVC Institute expanded to full-time. As KVC Nebraska's President, Brown will continue to support child welfare reform, focusing on safety, permanency and wellbeing by assisting in the oversight of KVC's child welfare, juvenile justice, developmental and intellectual disabilities and prevention programs.

PROMOTION



Gina Klyachkin, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.
President
KVC Kentucky, Lexington, KY
13 years with KVC

Klyachkin leads a team of over 200 professionals serving over 12,000 children and adults each year. KVC Kentucky provides in-home behavioral health services, substance use treatment, foster care, and family preservation and reunification. Klyachkin's areas of interest include child welfare programming, clinical social work, staff development, and organizational implementation of new programming. She presents on leadership, teamwork and behavioral health at national conferences and participates in public/private sector workgroups dedicated to improving child welfare.

NEW ROLE



Astra Garner, L.P.C., L.C.P.C., R.P.T.
Vice President of Clinical Advancement
KVC Hospitals, Kansas City, KS
9 years with KVC

Garner, previously serving as President of Niles, now leads KVC Hospitals' clinical initiatives.

PROMOTION



James Smith
Associate Director of Program Services
KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital, Kansas City, KS
12 years with KVC

Smith is responsible for hospital program innovation and improvement, education of employees and overall campus safety.

PROMOTION



Pete Barndollar
Director of Human Resources
KVC Hospitals, Kansas City, KS
5 years with KVC

Barndollar is the lead HR professional for KVC Hospitals' nearly 400-member team in multiple locations.

PROMOTION



Jarrod Dungan
Vice President
KVC Kentucky, Lexington, KY
9 years with KVC

Dungan, past Director of Business Technology, focuses on business development, financial management and innovation.

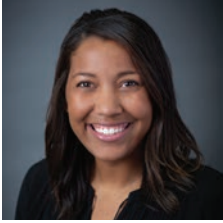
PROMOTION



Erica Herzog, L.M.F.T.
Director of Intensive In-Home Services for East Region
KVC Kansas, Topeka, KS
12 years with KVC

Herzog oversees in-home family preservation and aftercare to safely prevent children from entering foster care.

PROMOTION



Brynn Williamson
Associate Director of Program Operations
KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital, Kansas City, KS
1 year with KVC

Williamson oversees facility operations to ensure a safe, therapeutic environment that meets the needs of children served.

PROMOTION



Krista Bundy, L.M.S.W.
Director of Family Preservation for KC Metro
KVC Kansas, Kansas City, KS
2 years with KVC

Bundy leads the team that provides in-home support to strengthen families and safely prevent children from entering foster care.

PROMOTION



Bobby Eklofe, M.H.S.A.
Vice President of Behavioral Health Operations
KVC Hospitals, Kansas City, KS
29 years with KVC

Eklofe fosters a culture focused on customer care and achieving targets for safety, risk, quality assurance and cost control optimized operations.

PROMOTION



Malinda (Mindy) Kufahl, L.M.S.W.
Director of Permanency for East Region
KVC Kansas, Topeka, KS
1 year with KVC

Kufahl leads a team of case managers and other professionals caring for hundreds of youth in foster care.

NEW ROLE



Kelly Young, L.M.S.W., L.M.A.C.
PMTO/PMT Manager
KVC Kansas, City, KS
7 years with KVC

Young supports staff with parent management training, coaching, fidelity rating (PMTO) and certification support (PMT/Parent Empowerment Program).

NEW ROLE



Elizabeth Croney, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.
Executive Vice President for Clinical Advancement
KVC Health Systems
19 years with KVC

Croney, past President of KVC Kentucky, is focusing on how policy and legislation impact KVC's clinical approach with families.

NEW HIRE



Karyn Finn
Program Director at Niles
KVC Hospitals, Kansas City, MO

Finn will direct Niles' behavioral health programs for youth including psychiatric residential treatment and day treatment.

NEW HIRE



Chris Scott
Director of Finance
KVC Hospitals, Kansas City, KS

Scott manages finances for KVC Hospitals' behavioral health and psychiatric treatment programs.



What It's Like to Work in a Children's Psychiatric Hospital

KVC's youth psychiatric hospitals provide treatment to children in crisis to help them heal from trauma and manage psychiatric disorders. These aren't the stigmatized psych hospitals of the past; they are peaceful, child-friendly environments for healing. For hospital staff, it's important to remain compassionate and calm no matter what situation may arise. Though there can be difficult emotions and behaviors, the rewards and personal fulfillment that come from working with youth far outweigh the challenges.

Helping Youth Heal is Rewarding

People often wonder why someone chooses to work in a psychiatric hospital. For KVC staff, the answer is simple — *we care*. Our staff members work hard

to leave a lasting impression, and there's no greater feeling than seeing a child's eyes light up as you discuss his or her goals and dreams. You see firsthand that the child has more confidence and a renewed sense of hope for their life.

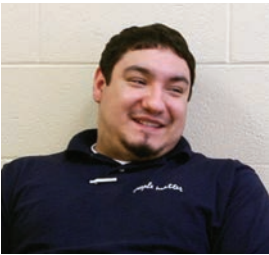
According to James Roberson, Vice President of Programs and Innovation for KVC Hospitals, it's

motivating to realize you're intervening with a child's brain development to help that child heal and manage his or her feelings. "As you map out a child's treatment,

you see the trajectory of their life and become part of that journey," said Roberson. It's an overwhelming feeling when you look back and compare a child's growth from the day they arrived to the day they leave. Employees feel a sense of purpose and joy each day as they experience these successes.

Changing a Child's Life

Our goal is to change the way youth experience treatment and to change the stigmatization around mental health. We view psychiatric and behavioral disorders through a trauma-informed lens, and our highly-trained staff help youth strengthen their brains and build resiliency. It's amazing but true: the brain can change and that changes *everything*.



Watch a short video to hear from real employees on why they applied to KVC and what they like about working with kids at www.kvchospitals.com/kvcrewards.

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



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Events Calendar

Visit www.kvc.org/events for details on these events and others.

- Nov. 2018 **National Adoption Month**
- Nov. 2 **The Gala at the Station**
Union Station —
Kansas City, MO
- Nov. 9–10 **KVC's Resource
Family Conference**
Lexington, KY
- Nov. 17 **National Adoption Day**
- Nov. 27 **Giving Tuesday**
- Nov. 30–
Dec. 1 **KVC's Resource
Family Conference**
Overland Park, KS;
Lincoln, NE;
Daniels, WV
- Mar. 2019 **National Social Work Month**
- April 2019 **National Child Abuse
Prevention Month**



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