

# thriving

## Bullying Led My Daughter to a Mental Health Crisis

*How KVC Helped Save Her Life*

 KVC Health Systems

Spring/Summer 2020

*Want Joy and  
Purpose in Life?*

You Can't Imagine  
the Reward of  
Adopting a Teen

To Meet Urgent  
Children's Mental  
Health Needs,  
**KVC Hospitals**  
**Adds 92 Beds**

Tempur Sealy and  
Sleep Outfitters  
**Give Hundreds  
of Beds and  
Thousands of  
Dollars** to Help  
Children in Crisis



# Gain Peace of Mind with Our *Coping During COVID-19* Series

Are you and your family struggling to cope with the coronavirus pandemic's effect on daily life? Check out our new ***Coping During COVID-19*** blog series for short, helpful videos that will teach you how to:

- Make peace with uncertainty and reduce your fear of the future
- Create your own coping toolkit for mental health
- Help your child understand this health crisis and build resilience
- Stay connected to others even if you must be physically apart
- Know when you or your child may need professional mental health support

Visit [www.kvc.org/covid](http://www.kvc.org/covid) today.



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Dear Friends,

2020 is off to a challenging start with the Coronavirus/ COVID-19 pandemic. The KVC team has worked diligently to maintain a safe workplace by encouraging and adopting practices that stop the spread of virus and protect the health of staff, clients, and the communities we serve.

While this is a difficult time, 2020 is positioned to be a very special year. Since KVC was founded in 1970, we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary this October. That marks **50 years of heart-centered service** to children and families in crisis. Throughout 2020, we're reflecting on how far we've come from our humble and heartfelt beginnings.

We've grown from a single home for vulnerable children to being a national leader in child welfare and behavioral healthcare. Thanks to you, we're strengthening families, preventing child abuse and neglect, ensuring each child

is part of a loving forever family, and helping children and adults in crisis achieve mental health wellness.

But there's still much work to do. We want to help eliminate suicide among both teens and adults. We want to help end the opioid addiction epidemic that is ravaging homes and communities. And we want to reduce the increasing number of children in foster care by advocating for greater funding for mental health treatment, substance use treatment and parental skill-building that are proven to safely reduce the number of children in care by as much as *half*.

In this issue of *Thriving*, you'll read these inspiring stories and more:

- In **Bullying Led My Daughter to Depression & Psychiatric Hospitalization** (pg. 6), you'll read how we provided life-saving treatment to an adolescent girl.
- In **Strengthening Families Program Helps Children and Parents** (pg. 13), you'll read how we're teaching parenting skills to help families be healthier, happier and stronger.
- And in **How We're Making KVC an Exceptional Place to Work** (pg. 22), you'll read about the long-term commitment we've made to employee engagement.

Thank you for believing in KVC's mission and supporting us as a team member, client or patient, foster or adoptive family, donor, volunteer or partner. We have big goals to help millions more children and families who are hurting, and your support is central to our strategy.

Sincerely

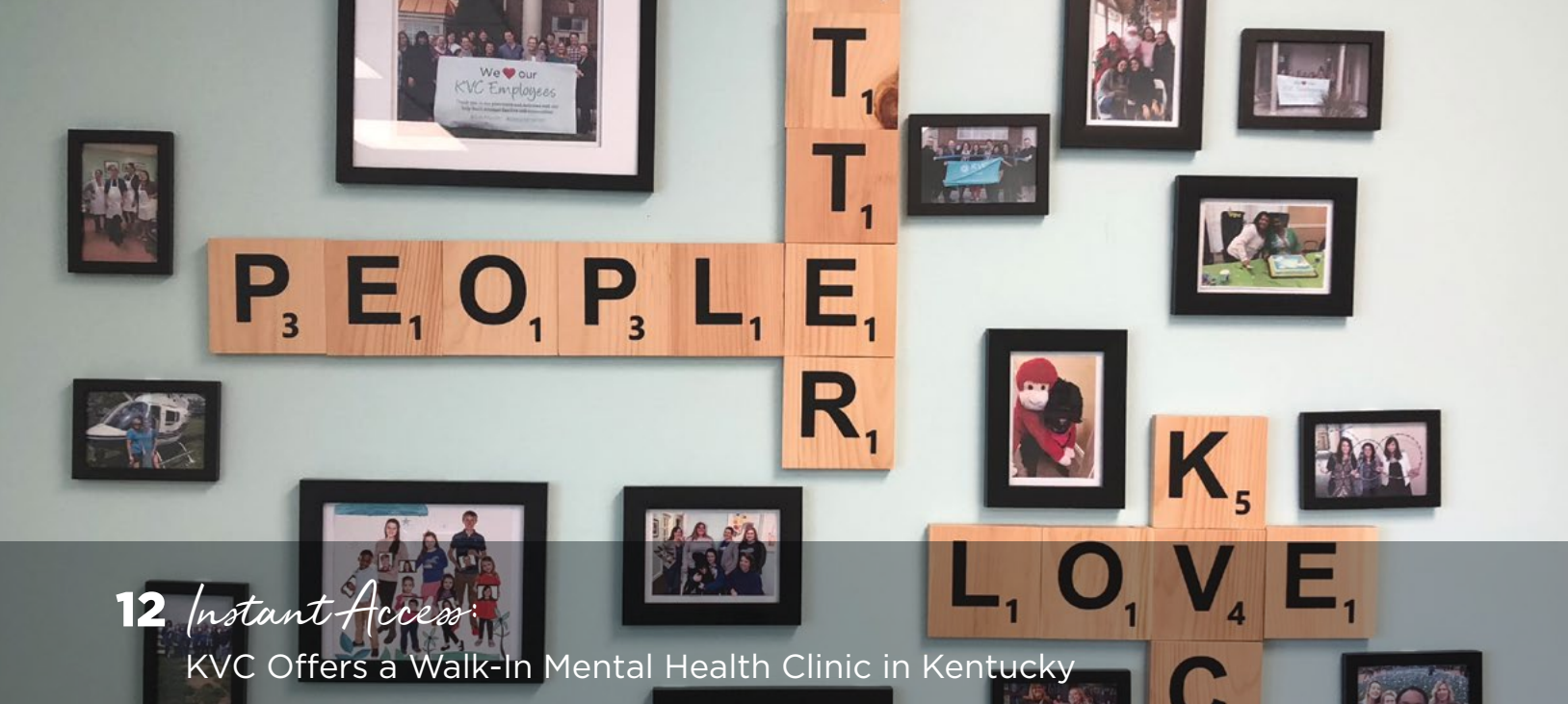
  
Jasor Hooper  
President and CEO



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







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Thanks to Holiday Heroes, we provided gifts to over 5,000 children. If you'd like to support the children, adults and families we serve throughout the year, here are our needs in each state.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# Bullying Led My Daughter to Depression & Psychiatric Hospitalization:

## How KVC Helped Her Achieve Mental Health Wellness



*During KVC's Annual Summer Story Contest, our team member Angela submitted an inspiring story about her adolescent daughter's journey to mental health wellness. Angela's daughter, Anneliese, received treatment at KVC Hospitals Kansas City after a rare disease diagnosis and bullying from classmates led her to experience severe depression. Read their incredible story of strength and resilience and why they hope that sharing their story will help others.*

### Bullying Led to Psychiatric Hospitalization

When Anneliese was 18 months old, she was diagnosed with Blount's Disease, a rare disease that affects the way she walks. Because of this disease, Anneliese has undergone multiple surgeries, impacting her physically, such as the way she walks. At school, children began bullying Anneliese. They were constantly making fun of the way she walks, telling her to kill herself and sending her death threats.

*"KVC Hospitals saved my daughter's life."*

It can be hard for kids to open up about these types of experiences and Anneliese kept her feelings to herself for a while.

Over time, the emotional pain built up inside Anneliese and she experienced a mental health emergency. We went to a crisis center near our home in Wichita, Kansas and they recommended we go to KVC Hospitals in Kansas City. In that time of crisis, I felt lost. I didn't know what to do but at two in the morning, I drove my daughter three hours from Wichita to Kansas City so she could get the treatment she needed.

KVC's team treated us with kindness and respect throughout the whole treatment process. My daughter benefitted from a treatment team that included a psychiatrist, a therapist, a primary care physician, nurses, and other children's mental health professionals.

We received a variety of resources and tools to help us continue with Anneliese's treatment after she was discharged and came home. KVC Hospitals saved my daughter's life.

### Sharing Our Story to Give Others the Courage to Share Theirs

One of the challenges of parenting is realizing you don't always know what your child is thinking or feeling. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in adolescents, but I had never imagined my child's life being at risk.

*"Before I came to my mom and confessed how I was feeling, I just felt so alone—like she wouldn't understand and judge me for it. But after I got the help that I needed, I understood that it's OK not to be OK. You can get the help you need. It's never too late to open up."*

*—Anneliese*



Due to the stigma surrounding mental health, many who struggle are afraid to share their stories. We're sharing our story because we want our experience to help instill courage in others facing similar challenges. Since sharing our story about mental health and our

*continued on page 8*



**Bullying Led to Depression & Psychiatric Hospitalization**  
*continued from page 7*

experience with KVC, many families have talked with us about their struggles.

Through our journey, we started a group connecting families across the U.S. who are managing Blount's Disease diagnoses like us. In the future, we hope to start a nonprofit for Blount's Disease.

We don't want people to be ashamed to share their stories as they can help inspire others. We hope our story can help make a difference in at least one person's life.

**Giving Back to Other Families with a New Career**

After KVC Hospitals helped my daughter, I decided to pursue a degree in psychology and a career in mental health. Soon after this, I learned KVC Hospitals was opening a children's psychiatric hospital in Wichita. I instantly wanted to be part of their work and help other families the way KVC helped mine, so I applied for a job.

My career with KVC Hospitals Wichita has been awesome since day one. I enjoy working with the kids and learning new things along the way. My coworkers are so welcoming, and we feel like a family.

I want to be that shining light for someone battling the darkness of mental illness and I believe all children have a right to lead happy and healthy lives.

Thank you, KVC, for saving my daughter's life and giving me the opportunity to pursue my goals in the mental health field. People matter.

See Angela and Anneliese tell their inspiring story in a new video at [www.kvchospitals.org/clientstory](http://www.kvchospitals.org/clientstory).



**Children's Psychiatric Treatment at KVC Hospitals**

KVC Hospitals is a network of nonprofit children's psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment centers serving Kansas and Missouri. Each year, we help thousands of youth between ages 6 to 18 who are experiencing depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, the impacts of childhood trauma, and other behavioral and mental health needs. Our compassionate team of experts use neuroscience-based treatment resources to help youth understand their brains, develop skills for emotion regulation and build resilience.

Learn more about KVC's inpatient acute hospitals and residential treatment programs at [www.kvchospitals.org/treatments](http://www.kvchospitals.org/treatments).

**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](http://http://adoption.kvc.org). To inquire, please call (888) 655-5500 or email [adoptionspecialist@kvc.org](mailto:adoptionspecialist@kvc.org). To see children near you who need adoptive families, visit [www.AdoptUSKids.org](http://www.AdoptUSKids.org).



**AMIRI (12)**

Watch my video online!

Amiri is outgoing, sporty and very kind to others. He loves basketball and watching sports! He also loves music and enjoys all subjects in school.



**ISIS (16)**

Watch my video online!

Isis is academically gifted and also excels at volleyball and swimming. She deserves a family who will provide her with guidance and stick by her side no matter what.

**JESUS (14)**

Watch my video online!

Jesus is an upbeat, intelligent 14-year-old who loves to make people laugh! He enjoys playing basketball, values academic pursuits and strives to be a police officer when he grows up.



**DARYL (15)**

Watch my video online!

Daryl is an industrious young man who does very well in school and says, "Math comes easy to me, and I also like to do science experiments." He would love a family that is compassionate and able to help him reach his full potential.





# To Meet Urgent Children’s Mental Health Needs, KVC Hospitals Adds 92 Treatment Beds

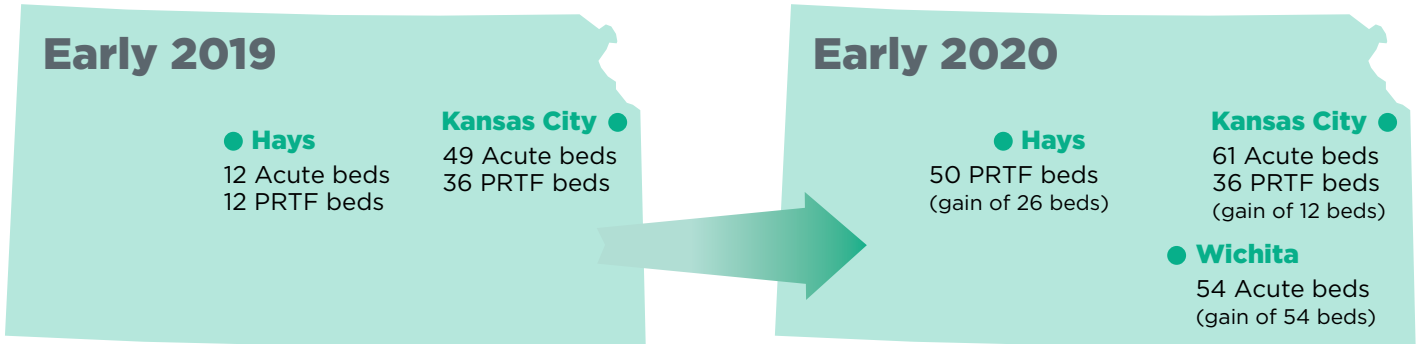
Two out of three youth will be exposed to trauma before age 16, greatly affecting their brain development. Research shows that some of the worst health and social problems arise from childhood trauma.

In addition, suicide is a leading cause of death for teens and adults ages 15 to 34, and there has been an exponential increase in psychiatric visits emergency rooms in recent years. All of these factors create an immediate need for families to have more access to treatment when a child is experiencing a mental health emergency. Children’s mental health can’t wait.

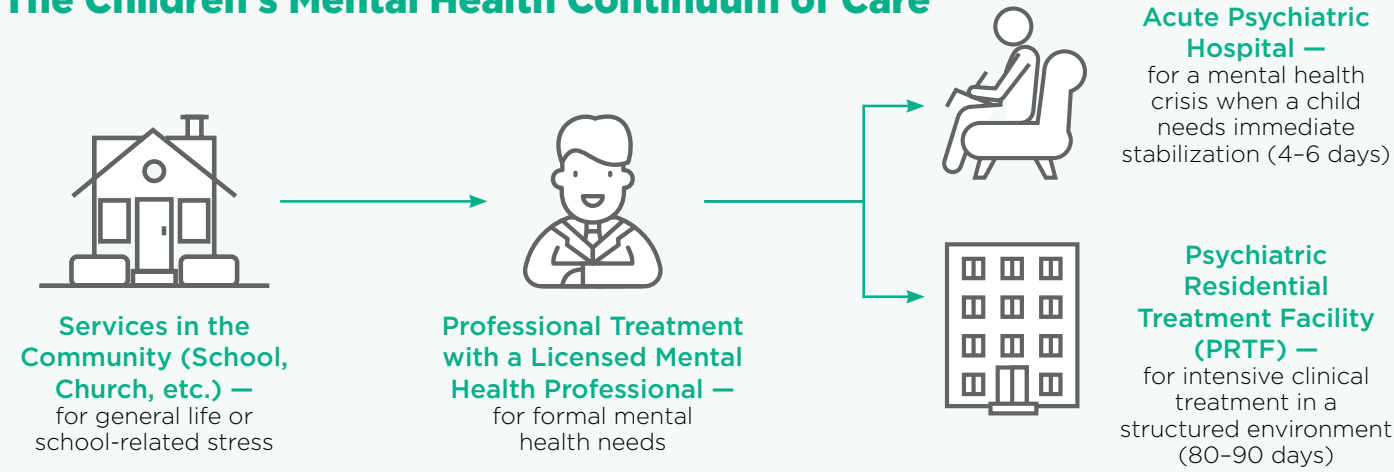
## KVC Hospitals Is Expanding Access to Youth Psychiatric Care

KVC Hospitals, the children’s psychiatric treatment arm of KVC Health Systems, has stepped in to ensure children can access treatment for urgent mental health care needs. The KVC Hospitals team has created 92 new children’s psychiatric beds across Kansas for both inpatient acute treatment and psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs). Since KVC Hospitals is a 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit agency, this initiative has been supported through 100% philanthropic support. We are committed to solving this critical need on behalf of children and families in crisis.

In July 2019, KVC opened a new 54-bed children’s psychiatric hospital in Wichita. Between January and March 2020, KVC added 12 inpatient acute beds in a newly designed unit of its Kansas City treatment center and added 38 PRTF beds in Hays.



## The Children’s Mental Health Continuum of Care



## The System Needs Strengthening

While this expansion means more help for children and families, the overall children’s mental health system still needs more resources and support.

- **Solve Children on Waiting Lists** — More than 120 children in crisis are still on the PRTF waiting list. Operating PRTFs is increasingly difficult due to reimbursement rates. From 2011-19, the number of PRTF beds in Kansas dropped from 780 to 298. KVC wants to work closely with the state of Kansas and other providers to end child waiting lists. As of March 2020, KVC Hospitals added 38 new PRTF beds in Hays for a total of 50 PRTF beds and offers 36 PRTF beds in Kansas City.
- **Restore Acute Treatment in Western Kansas** — KVC Hospitals successfully provided acute treatment in western Kansas for more than 10 years. Due to the end of a dual acute/PRTF license to meet rural needs, there is no longer children’s acute psychiatric treatment in western Kansas. The State recently approved \$4 million in the budget for children’s acute psychiatric beds in western Kansas. As the premier provider of these services, KVC seeks to be a part of the opportunity to return these much-needed services to families.
- **Assure Sustainable Funding** — KVC serves children with the most severe and complex needs, children that other organizations

are unable or unwilling to serve. KVC has a partnership with the State as the state hospital alternative for children through the High Acuity Psychiatric Hospitalization for Youth (HAPHY) grant. It is proven to result in higher quality outcomes and lower costs, but limited funding exists. KVC Hospitals continues to provide this imperative care to ensure no children are placed on a waitlist, even as funding continues to lapse.



Healthcare providers, hospitals, and community mental health centers can schedule a tour of a KVC Hospitals treatment center or request a training from its clinical staff at <http://info.kvc.org/hospitals-request>.



*Instant Access:*

## KVC Offers a Walk-In Mental Health Clinic in Kentucky

Many people in Kentucky and beyond face serious mental health challenges including substance use disorders and addiction. Kentucky is the 5th highest state for drug overdoses and among the top ten states for deaths related to opioid abuse, which includes prescription painkillers and heroin. Over half of people experiencing substance use disorders also have a mental health disorder.

Two years ago, with a growing waiting list for in-home behavioral health and substance abuse treatment services, KVC Kentucky recognized the need to remove barriers to treatment. We created a walk-in clinic to provide immediate access to services for youth, adolescents, and adults. KVC Kentucky's walk-in clinic is open every Wednesday. Individuals experiencing depression, anxiety, thoughts of self-harm/harming others, substance use, or other mental/behavioral health challenges are welcome to walk in without an appointment between 9am and 3pm to receive an immediate assessment. Clinicians quickly assess clients and provide recommendations for ongoing care. Since the walk-in clinic was established in 2018, nearly 150 individuals have received assessments at the walk-in clinic, despite being available only 1 day a week.

### ONLINE THERAPY AVAILABLE

To minimize the spread of coronavirus, we have temporarily suspended walk-in clinic services. We hope to open it again very soon. In the meantime, our high-quality mental health services are available online to help you manage stress, anxiety, and child or family challenges. KVC Kentucky accepts Medicaid and most commercial insurance. Contact us today.

### KVC Kentucky's walk-in clinic is located at

📍 2250 Thunderstick Drive, Suite 1104  
Lexington, KY 40505.

If you have questions about the walk-in clinic or accepted insurance plans, please contact us at (859) 254-1035 or visit [www.kvcky.org](http://www.kvcky.org).



## Strengthening Families Program

### Helps Children and Parents Learn New Skills

The wellbeing of a nation depends on strong and loving families. They have the job of producing the next generation of emotionally healthy, responsible, educated citizens who are addiction-free and prepared to maintain the physical and social infrastructure of society. Research shows well-trained parents help youth avoid substance abuse and have better life outcomes. Yet many families face serious challenges related to communication, family bonding, resolving conflict, mental health and substance use.

This is why the Strengthening Families Program (SFP) was created. It is a 14-session, evidence-based family skills training program for high-risk and general population families that is recognized both nationally and internationally. The program brings children and parents together weekly for a meal and training to focus on improving family communication, parent supervision, healthy child development and overcoming substance use. Already, this program has shown success nationally. Participants report:

- ⬆ Increased family bonding
- ⬆ Increased parental involvement
- ⬆ Increased positive parenting skills
- ⬆ Increased positive communication
- ⬆ Increased family organization
- ⬇ Decreased family conflict
- ⬇ Decreased youth depression
- ⬇ Decreased youth aggression
- ⬆ Increased youth cooperation
- ⬆ Increased number of prosocial friends
- ⬆ Increased youth social competencies
- ⬆ Increased youth school grades

Since its inception in Kansas, Strengthening Families has helped several families overcome challenges and thrive. For example, when Dan found himself struggling with substance use, he knew he was becoming disconnected from his sons and putting strain on his family. He then sought assistance and enrolled in the Strengthening Families Program. While he was anxious at first, he soon found that it was different from other rehabilitation programs in that it included role-playing and real-life interactions with his kids. The comprehensiveness of the course provided him the knowledge and confidence to become the father he knew he was.



Dan became such a believer in Strengthening Families that he even became an instructor in the course! He now provides encouragement to other families who were in a similar situation to himself, reminding them, "You're sitting now where I once was. There is a pathway forward."

KVC Kansas is seeking community partners such as faith-based organizations and civic groups to host the Strengthening Families Program. It is one of the best ways to help at-risk families grow stronger.

Watch Dan and others tell how the Strengthening Families Program has helped them and learn how you can host the program at [www.kvckansas.org/strengtheningfamilies](http://www.kvckansas.org/strengtheningfamilies)





Tempur Sealy and Sleep Outfitters  
*Give Hundreds of Beds  
and Thousands of Dollars*  
to Help Children Through KVC Kentucky



For several years, KVC Kentucky has had the honor of partnering with Tempur Sealy International, the world’s largest bedding provider. Both organizations are headquartered in beautiful Lexington, Kentucky. There is wonderful synergy between Tempur Sealy’s mission to deliver transformative, restful sleep to people and KVC Kentucky’s mission to enrich and enhance the lives of children and families. For many families who are in crisis and involved in child welfare services, a bed makes a profoundly positive, life-changing difference.

Tempur Sealy and their local retail partner, Sleep Outfitters, have demonstrated a deep commitment to helping children and families through KVC Kentucky. They have sponsored several of KVC Kentucky’s annual

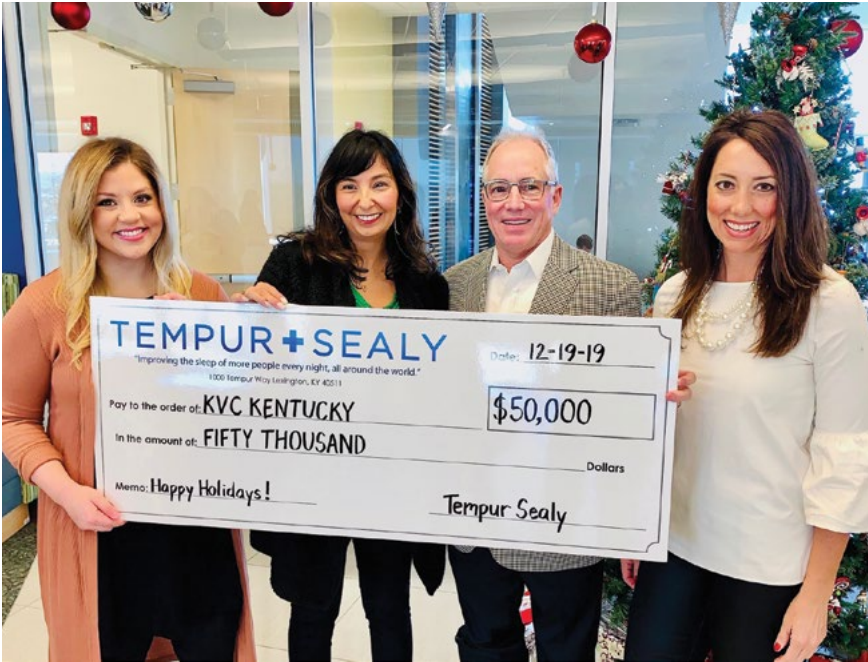
fundraising events through both financial and in-kind donations and have also provided beds for specific children and families in need, ensuring that children have a safe place to lay their heads at night. Through a unique online referral system, KVC staff can request mattress donations for children who may be returning home from foster care, sleeping on a couch or air mattress, or have never had a bed to call their own. The incredible team at Sleep Outfitters works behind the scenes to deliver mattresses directly to clients’ homes, KVC offices, or the nearest Sleep Outfitters location. Some of these children now have their very first bed thanks to the donations from Sleep Outfitters and Tempur Sealy.

In addition, Tempur Sealy’s Emerging Leaders group has been an invaluable partner in our annual back-to-school drive by providing backpacks and school supplies. Last year, their contributions meant that over 150 children were able to walk into their first day of school with all of the materials necessary for a successful start to the school year.

But in December 2019, Tempur Sealy delivered their most unexpected gift and surprise to date. After an invitation for KVC leaders to attend a “meet and greet” with Tempur Sealy President and CEO, Scott Thompson, Tempur Sealy announced and presented an incredibly generous gift of \$50,000 from the Tempur Sealy Foundation to KVC Kentucky.

We are grateful for Tempur Sealy’s commitment to making a difference in the lives of children through KVC Kentucky.

*Thank you, Tempur Sealy!*



KVC Prepares to Celebrate  
**50 YEARS**  
of Heart-Centered Service



In 2020, KVC commemorates 50 years of heart-centered service to children and families in crisis. It’s an ideal time to reflect on the impact we’ve made over half a century, and how far we’ve come from our humble and heartfelt beginnings.

The organization that is now KVC Health Systems began in 1970 as a brick home in downtown Kansas City, Kansas called Wyandotte House. A group of caring women from the Junior League of Wyandotte and Johnson Counties created it to help vulnerable children; victims of abuse who otherwise had nowhere to go except the local juvenile detention center. Wyandotte House grew steadily and in 1994, the name was changed to Kaw Valley Center (KVC). The Kaw Valley is a particular region that surrounds the Kansas River in northeastern Kansas, but today, KVC’s reach extends thousands of miles beyond that. We now serve children and families in five states (Kansas, Missouri,



Nebraska, Kentucky and West Virginia). In 2019, we proudly passed the milestone of 10 years of life-changing work in both Nebraska and Kentucky. Our services now extend even beyond U.S. borders, as child welfare leaders from Canada, Singapore and other countries receive consulting and training from KVC.

This rich history inspires us as we look forward at the next 50 years and beyond. We are now KVC Health Systems, a network of local organizations including KVC Hospitals, KVC Kansas, KVC Kentucky, KVC Nebraska, KVC Niles, KVC West Virginia, KVC Institute and the KVC Foundation. While the letters no longer stand for Kaw Valley, we use them to remind us of the importance of Knowledge, Values and Connections in child- and family-serving work.

We envision a future where every child and adult is safe and connected to a strong family and a healthy community. We hope you’ll join us in the year ahead as we work towards that vision, and commemorate our anniversary at our upcoming events and on social media. Watch for a special 50th Anniversary issue of this magazine coming to you in the fall!



For the latest updates, connect with our **KVC Health Systems** pages on Facebook and LinkedIn and **@KVCkids** on Instagram and Twitter.



# Nebraska Researchers Partner with KVC on \$4M Grant



## Program Will Improve School Engagement for Students Transitioning from Foster Care

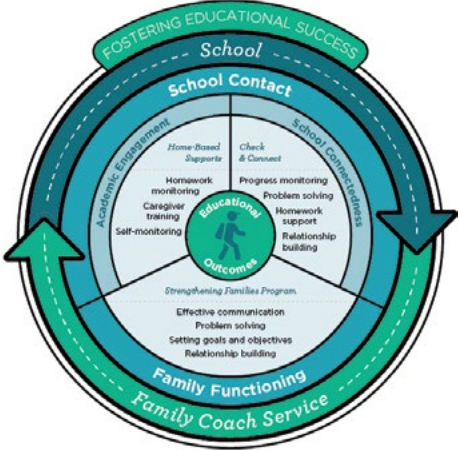
There are over 400,000 children in foster care in the U.S. While most youth are safely reunified with their birth families or adopted rather than aging out of the system, all youth who have been in foster care are at risk of negative educational impacts due to transitions and trauma. From homelessness, to drug and alcohol abuse, to increased school dropout rates, these children often experience hardships later in life as a result of unmet educational needs.

To prevent these devastating outcomes, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Academy for Child and Family Well Being and the University of Nebraska Medical Center have partnered with KVC Nebraska, the largest foster care agency in the state, to create a new program called Fostering Educational Success.

Fostering Educational Success is a home- and school-based program that provides additional support to youth and their caregivers while the youth is transitioning from foster care to a permanent home placement. The primary goal of Fostering Educational Success is to improve middle and high school students’ educational experiences and help them create successful outcomes.

“The opportunity for youth and caregivers who have experienced permanency to receive additional support, advocacy and education is an absolute need. This program will aid in family stability and academic and ongoing success for the youth while also strengthening communities,” said Ashley Brown, KVC Nebraska President.

This 12-month educational program helps guide families toward stability, wellbeing and educational success. Each child has a dedicated Family Coach who works directly with them, their caregivers and their school to serve as an academic resource, advocate and liaison to ensure positive outcomes. Families work with their Coach to keep their student connected and engaged with their education, facilitate school success, and improve family functioning. Coaches also work with community agencies and schools to support positive student outcomes.



Think you or a family you know could benefit from these services? Participants must meet the following criteria:

1. Live within 60 miles of Omaha or Lincoln
2. Attend a participating school
3. Have a child in 6th–12th grade who is transitioning from foster care to a permanency placement
4. Able to speak English

For more information, Visit [kvcnebraska.org/fes](https://kvcnebraska.org/fes). To submit a referral, contact Lucy Ajuoga at (402) 498-4717 or [lajuoga@kvc.org](mailto:lajuoga@kvc.org).

# Nebraska Resource Families Enjoy KVC Conference

Unfortunately, April and May Conferences Canceled Due to Coronavirus Risk

At KVC, we look forward to our Resource Family Conference. 2020 was slated to be our 20th year of offering this fun and unique gathering free of charge to our resource families caring for children or adults in need of support. Unfortunately, to adhere to CDC guidance to limit the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and keep everyone healthy, we’ve had to cancel our conferences happening later this spring in Kansas, Kentucky and West Virginia.

During the March 6–7 weekend, KVC Nebraska held its Resource Family Conference in Lincoln, NE. Resource families, a term which includes foster parents, relatives and other caregivers, heard from guest speakers and networked with families who share their passion for helping others. Our Nebraska conference is unique in that, in addition to KVC foster families, it is also open to non-KVC affiliated foster families, KVC Shared Living providers caring for individuals with developmental disabilities, and industry professionals.

This year’s keynote speaker was Rebecca Bender, a human trafficking survivor and the founder and CEO of the Rebecca Bender Initiative. She is an award-winning, nationally recognized expert on human trafficking, an author and a podcast host who inspires people to reclaim their past for a purpose.

Children, adults and families enjoyed a carnival that included games with prizes, face painting, bouncy houses, a magic show and food. Caregivers learned about topics like helping youth and adults feel safe and connected, promoting healthy brain development and resilience, and partnering with other members of a child and family’s support team.

Alycia Smock Schuler attended with her family. She said, “We had such a blast.

Kids are still talking about it morning and night. My husband and I learned so much. Thank you for being such an amazing company to partner with!”

Thanks to the support of generous sponsors, KVC’s conference — including the training sessions, meals, childcare, activities, and hotel stays — is free to families.





# Want Joy and Purpose in Life?

## You Can't Imagine the Reward of Adopting a Teen



Bob was a 17-year-old in foster care when he began wondering if he was too old to be adopted. After all, adopting a teen is less common than adopting a

younger child, and thousands of youth across the U.S. "age out" of foster care each year without a permanent family or home.

Thankfully, aging out of foster care wasn't Bob's fate. A mother named Keira Jones happened to see a video about Bob one day, highlighting his warm personality and his need for a loving adoptive family. She messaged her husband Jerry Gross, who agreed with her that they could meet the needs — and even some of the wants — that Bob expressed in his video. They contacted child welfare agency KVC Kansas the next day, and several months later, Keira, Jerry and their family adopted Bob.

There are many more teens like Bob in foster care. Specifically, there are 123,000 U.S. children and teens waiting to be adopted. Of the more than 5,000 children in foster care on AdoptUSKids.org, 42% are 15-18 years old.

For this reason, AdoptUSKids chose to focus its 15th National Adoption Recruitment Campaign on the rewards of adopting a teen. The national ad campaign — a partnership of AdoptUSKids, the Children's Bureau, and the Ad Council — includes videos and ads that showcase the many moments that make adopting a teen rewarding and highlights the stories of families who have adopted from foster care. Each public service announcement ends with: **"You can't imagine the reward. Thousands of teens in foster care are ready to make an impact on your life,"** reminding prospective parents that teens in foster care can help them grow in unexpected ways.

The videos they created are deeply moving. Check them out on our website at [www.kvc.org/teens](http://www.kvc.org/teens).

## You May Be the Person a Teen Is Waiting & Hoping For

Have you ever considered helping a local child or teen in crisis? By becoming a foster or adoptive parent, you can help a young person who has experienced child abuse, neglect or other family challenges. You can change a child's life forever, whether you choose the path of temporary foster care aimed at a safe family reunification or choose to care for a teen who is specifically waiting to be adopted. Both paths begin on our website at [www.kvc.org/foster](http://www.kvc.org/foster).

People from all kinds of life situations can foster or adopt 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 qualify!

### At KVC, we guide you every step of the way by providing:

- Free foster/adoptive parent training and ongoing support available 24/7
- A sense of community with other foster parents who share your passion
- Assistance finding local resources
- A fun weekend away at our Resource Family Conference, which provides a fantastic learning experience for parents and children
- And of course, monthly reimbursement to meet the child's needs plus assistance with back-to-school supplies and holiday gifts.

## Meet a Few Teens We Are Serving

Our local KVC community teams are honored to play a role in matching children with loving adoptive families in Kansas, Nebraska, Kentucky and West Virginia. Meet a few of the teens for whom we're searching for the right adoptive family on page 9. Or to see more children near you who need adoptive families, visit [www.AdoptUSKids.org](http://www.AdoptUSKids.org).

# Social Worker Plants Seed of Hope in Struggling Single Mother

By **Angguna Rowe**, KVC West Virginia Wraparound Facilitator

Sometimes youth have had to be removed from their home communities due to safety concerns and a lack of support and resources. As a Wraparound Facilitator, my role is to provide community-based services and supports that "wrap around" a child and their family in their home, school and community to help meet their needs.



While serving my first client, I thought I was a total failure. My goal was to work with a child and his mother to prevent the need for out-of-home care. I was devastated when I found out this outcome wouldn't be an option as the child had to enter a long-term treatment facility.

His mother was a young single mom with six other children in the household. There was no heat, water, and they also didn't have transportation. I would try to secure food and other resources for them, but it was rarely enough. Due to their lack of basic needs, I felt there was very little I could do.

It became apparent that her child would be sent to a long-term care facility and the case would be closed. On my last visit, I gave the mother another copy of the wraparound plan. I told her, "When you have time, please read it. Maybe — just maybe — there is something in here that will be able to help you."

A year later I went out for lunch. By total chance, I met the mother working at the restaurant I chose to go to. She approached me and whispered, "My son is home. I have all my children with me now. I did not just read the wraparound plan, Angguna, I did everything it said to do. It was chaos. I almost gave up, but I pushed through. I am going back to school. I've moved and found a better house, got a job and a new car. I will see you in 4-5 years because I will need you to help me get a job with KVC. I am majoring in psychology."

It took time for me to realize that success is not always instant. From now on, I no longer get caught up worrying about when the seeds of inspiration and hope may take root in the families I serve.

Want to feel a greater sense of purpose and make a life-changing difference in the lives of children and families every day? We're hiring! Visit [www.kvc.org/careers](http://www.kvc.org/careers).

## After Years of Waiting, Young Boy Matched with the Perfect Forever Family

Ro was 4 years old when he entered foster care. For six years he experienced multiple hospitalizations, placement changes and was in desperate need for a loving adoptive home.

Wanting to grow their family through adoption, Erin and Travis Williams began caring for Ro in May 2019. They connected very well, especially through Ro's and Travis' love for cars. On December 20, 2019, the Williams finalized their adoption with Ro! At 10 years old, Ro mentioned that this past Christmas was his first "real family Christmas."

The need is high for loving families to care for children who have been removed from their homes as a result of abuse, neglect or other family challenges. We are constantly recruiting and training foster and adoptive parents from all walks of life.

Interested in learning more? Visit [www.kvc.org/foster](http://www.kvc.org/foster).





# People on the Move

PROMOTION



**Sherri Lohe**  
*Chief Financial Officer*  
KVC Health Systems, Olathe, KS

In January 2020, Sherri Lohe became CFO of KVC Health Systems. She has been with the organization for six years, most recently as Executive Vice President of Finance. She has over 20 years of experience in nonprofit accounting.

“Sherri has dramatically elevated the quality of our accounting team in her six years at KVC,” said Jason Hooper, President and CEO. “She has a proven track record of excellence and brings the ability to tend to the needs of today while anticipating and preparing for what the future might require in the constantly changing landscapes of behavioral health and child welfare.”

FUN FACT



**Matt Arnet, LCPC**  
*Director of Outpatient Services*  
KVC Kansas, Olathe, KS

Matt leads a team of therapists and other professionals providing behavioral healthcare to children and families. But during the NFL season, he also directs the Kansas City Chiefs “Rumble” drumline. Matt was in Miami, FL for Super Bowl LIV and participated in the Chiefs’ victory parade in downtown Kansas City, MO!

PROMOTION



**Erin Connelly Marceau, LCSW**  
*Clinical Director*  
KVC Hospitals, Wichita, KS

Erin Connelly Marceau was recently promoted to Clinical Director at KVC Hospitals Wichita. She was previously a therapist at the hospital and has more than seven years of experience working with children in the mental health field.

NEW ROLE & RECOGNITION



**Erin Keltner, LICSW**  
*Vice President of Clinical Services*  
KVC West Virginia, Charleston, WV  
15 years with KVC

Erin was previously Vice President of Operations. In her new role as Vice President of Clinical Services, she provides clinical supervision, training, and oversight for our West Virginia staff. Erin was also recently elected to the Family-Focused Treatment Association’s Board of Directors.

PROMOTION



**Erin Osborne, MSW, LGSW**  
*Vice President of Operations*  
KVC West Virginia, Charleston, WV  
9 years with KVC

In this role, Erin provides programmatic and administrative oversight for our West Virginia staff and families.

PROMOTION



**Mital Patel, MA, MSW, LGSW**  
*Regional Director of the Raleigh, Wyoming and Mercer Areas*  
KVC West Virginia, Beckley, WV  
4 years with KVC

In this role, Mital supervises the clinical and foster care staff in the Raleigh, Wyoming, Mercer areas.

RECOGNITION



**Juston White**  
*Executive Director*  
KVC Hospitals, Wichita, KS

Juston received two honors this year. The Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce named Juston to their Board of Directors to advance business, leadership and prosperity in the Wichita community. The Wichita Business Journal also named him as a winner in their “40 Under 40” list for his success and leadership.

SOCIAL WORKERS • THERAPISTS  
ALL MEDICAL & HOSPITAL STAFF  
FOSTER PARENTS • DELIVERY DRIVERS

Thank YOU

GROCERY EMPLOYEES • JANITORS  
RESTAURANTS • PHARMACISTS  
AND EVERYONE STAYING HOME!

# Donations Needed

## Children and Families

## Need Heroes Year-Round



Thanks to our generous donors and supporters, our Holiday Heroes program brought gifts and the magic of the holiday season to over 5,000 children served by KVC.

If you'd like to support the children, families and adults we serve throughout the year, we have a variety of needs across our organization. Your donations bring comfort and let children, adults and families know how important they are. We are so grateful for your generosity!

### COVID-19 RELIEF FUND

The coronavirus outbreak has affected drop-off hours and exacerbated child and family needs. Please consider making a gift online at [www.kvc.org/emergencyfund](http://www.kvc.org/emergencyfund).

### KVC HOSPITALS

- Underwear and bras (must be new)
- T-shirts, pants & jackets
- Shoes and socks
- Outdoor items — basketballs, chalk, footballs, kick balls, etc.
- Art Supplies
- Duffle bags for client's belongings

Drop off with receptionist at main entrance. KVC Hospitals has locations in Kansas City, Wichita, and Hays, KS. Sister organization KVC Niles is in Kansas City, MO. More information is at [www.kvhospitals.org/locations](http://www.kvhospitals.org/locations).

### KANSAS

- Socks
- Underwear
- Jogging pants and white tees for teens as well as larger sizes (XL-5XL)
- Deodorant
- Feminine hygiene products
- Toddler size diapers

Donate these and other gently used items directly to our warehouse on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays between 9am-12pm at 1150 W 151st St. Suite A, Olathe, KS 66061. Learn more at [www.kvckansas.org](http://www.kvckansas.org) and please call us first at **(913) 499-8100**.

### KENTUCKY

- Diapers and Wipes
- Clothing and Shoes
- Backpacks and School Supplies
- Household Items and Furniture
- Personal Hygiene Items
- Gun Locks
- Lock Boxes
- Cleaning Supplies
- Storage Containers
- Smoke Detectors
- Baby Items (cribs, toddler beds)

Drop off at any KVC Kentucky office between 8 pm and 5 pm. Learn more at [www.kvcky.org](http://www.kvcky.org) and please call us first at **(859) 254-1035**.

### NEBRASKA

- Tickets and Passes for Local Experiences/Events: Zoo, Children’s Museum, Concerts, Sporting Events, etc.
- Underwear (must be new)
- Socks
- Activewear: t-shirts, leggings, athletic shorts, etc.

Learn more at [www.kvcnebraska.org](http://www.kvcnebraska.org) or call us at **(402) 498-4700**.

### WEST VIRGINIA

First Night Care Bags for youth being placed in foster care. Care Bags come in all shapes and sizes, from a decorated shoe box to a backpack, and can be filled with items such as:

- Healthy Snacks
- Activity Books
- Crayons, Art Supplies
- Personal Hygiene Items (if creating Care Bags for teens, no razors)
- School Supplies
- Blankets
- Socks

Drop off between 8:30-5:00 at the Charleston office at 1510 Kanawha Blvd East, Charleston, WV 25311. Learn more at [www.kvcwv.org](http://www.kvcwv.org) and please call us first at **(304) 347-9818**.



# How We're Making KVC an *Exceptional* Place to Work



*People matter” begins with our team members. At a KVC Town Hall Meeting in February, we kicked off our 50th anniversary year by celebrating employees with a jazz band, pizza, cake and confetti cannons.*

An organization like KVC Health Systems that serves children and families is only as strong as its team members. We employ nearly 1,600 professionals who are social workers, therapists, family support workers, case managers and in other vital roles providing both compassion and expertise.

Yet over the last decade, their roles have become more challenging. In Kansas, the number of children in foster care has surged 50%, or by 2,500 children, placing pressure on staff to find more safe, loving homes. And in Kentucky and West Virginia, the opioid addiction epidemic has had a similar effect, leading thousands more children needing temporary foster care while their parents access substance use treatment. The demand for children’s psychiatric treatment has also gone up, with KVC Hospitals operating at capacity.

To provide greater support to our KVC team members and increase employee retention, KVC has partnered with Gallup on a multiyear employee engagement strategy. Renny Arensberg, Executive Vice President, is leading this work which is centered on Gallup’s research-backed Q12 survey. After each employee shares their voice in the Q12 survey, they participate in a State of the Team meeting to discuss their needs, goals and ideas. Gallup’s Q12 is about empowering each local team to choose what steps they want to take to create a positive, supportive atmosphere.

KVC conducted its first Q12 survey in June 2019 and achieved an incredible 80% agency-wide participation rate. We conducted our second Q12 survey in February 2020 and achieved 90% participation, outperforming even the best practice standard among organizations of all types. Employees are invited to take the survey every six months.

In between surveys, teams meet to review the results and discuss which areas they want to focus on. Some choose to clarify each person’s basic job expectations. Other teams focus on ensuring that employees have the materials and equipment needed to do their jobs. And other teams focus on recognizing employees more frequently or providing opportunities for learning and growth.

**People matter** is more than a tagline; it begins with our team members and means prioritizing their needs. We’re excited to see how this works creates stronger teams providing the highest quality services to children, adults and families.



### KVC Named a Great Place to Work

TalentDesk, a job search platform and career resource provider, has highlighted KVC as a Top 5 Company in their annual rankings:

- Best Companies for Social Work Jobs in Charleston, WV
- Best Companies for Counseling Jobs in Kansas
- Best Companies for Healthcare Jobs in Frankfort, KY



Also Zippia, the career expert site, named KVC one of the 2019 Best Places to Work in Olathe, KS.

We hope to add to this list as we make KVC an exceptional place to work.

## KVC Team Members Go Above & Beyond

Our employees amaze us every day with their kindness and dedication to the youth we serve.

### Mr. Jacoby, KVC Hospitals (Hays, KS)

One of our Hays team members, **Mr. Jacoby**, goes the extra mile to connect with youth by finding common interests and giving them experiences. Since he is a football player at Fort Hays State University, youth enjoy talking with him about sports and what it’s like to play on a college team.



On Jacoby’s days off, he brings in his barber chair and tools to spend time with the youth while he cuts their hair. We’re lucky to have Jacoby on our team and we’re so thankful for everything he does to impact lives.



## Four Foster Care Supervisors, KVC Nebraska (Omaha & Lincoln, NE)

Theresa Goley, Director of Permanency, had this to say: **“Becca Crook, Lauren Parks, Jessica Schuler and Page Welburn** are four of the most compassionate and committed women I have ever worked with. I learn from them every day and wouldn’t want to take on the adventure of child welfare and juvenile justice with anyone else. I feel so blessed to work alongside these amazing women and more importantly, I feel blessed to call them my friends.”

Becca, Lauren, Jessica and Page are committed to ensuring every child and teen KVC Nebraska serves has a safe, loving and nurturing home. Dedication like that isn’t something you learn—it’s a part of who they are as individuals! They model their values with everyone they interact with and strive to make all staff and foster families feel fully supported and appreciated. Thank you all, we feel fortunate to have you as part of the KVC family!



**Note:** Nicole Deere-Anderson, not pictured, has replaced Page Welburn who transitioned to a new opportunity.

Want to join us? Visit [www.kvc.org/careers](http://www.kvc.org/careers)!

## 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](http://www.kvc.org/careers) today!





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## Events Calendar

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

April	<b>National Child Abuse Prevention Month</b>
May	<b>National Foster Care Month, Mental Health Awareness Month</b>
June	<b>National Family Reunification Month</b>
Aug. 31	<b>KVC Kids Classic Golf Tournament – Kansas City</b> (Parkville, MO)
Sept. 18	<b>KVC Kids Classic Golf Tournament – Nebraska</b> (Ashland, NE)
Sept.	<b>National Suicide Prevention Month, National Kinship Care Month</b>

# Want More in Life?

**Here's a way to experience the joy of parenthood and help children**

### Over 400,000

U.S. children are in crisis due to child abuse, neglect or other family challenges. The need for new foster and adoptive parents is greater than ever.

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



Contact us to learn more. [www.kvc.org/foster](http://www.kvc.org/foster)

Please Recycle

