



a good home

The Campaign for the Children's Center of Northwest North Carolina



children's center
of northwest north carolina



Why the Children's Center is Needed

♥ **FOR JUSTIN**, just an average teen who loves music and working on cars. His mother, after 14 years of parenting her son, drove from Ohio to North Carolina and dropped him off at a local store, telling him to "...go in and find your real dad." She drove away, leaving him alone, with no father in the store.

Home.

It is not a house or even a geographic location. Home is so much more. It is and should be a sanctuary.

For many, the word evokes love, warmth, fond memories and the security that leads ultimately to healthy self-esteem and responsible adulthood.

But for too many of the youngest and most vulnerable in our communities—our children—home is insecure, frightening, unreliable and sometimes non-existent.

And for too many parents who want the best for their children, employment uncertainty, lack of education, health crises, and other circumstances beyond their control diminish the time and nurturing they can offer their children.

Learning to create home requires many skills: empathy, kindness, anger management, impulse control, resilience, household budgeting and management, and coping mechanisms to navigate life's challenges.

This understanding and appreciation of families inspired the creation of the Children's Center of Northwest North Carolina.

Since 1998, the Children's Center has been a beacon for nurturing children and families through proactive, instructive support and encouragement.

On the following pages are four testimonials from the Children's Center.



Why the Children's Center is Needed

♥ **FOR MAGGIE AND MATT**, whose parents were both incarcerated during a meth lab arrest. They had no safe home or family to turn to and were left to fend for themselves.



before and after



Kim Guarda is the Residential Youth Coordinator at the Children's Center. Her primary responsibility as a case worker is to keep everyone connected and informed—as she calls it, “keeping everyone on the same page.” Kim keeps parents, guardians, court counselors, teachers and others up to date on the status of youth who are in the residential program. In addition to her role as a connector, Kim also works to get program participants started in the right direction, including school placement and employment.

Kim shared the story of a young woman named Pam who arrived at the Children's Center for residential care because her family had abandoned her. Pam's name has been changed to protect her identity.

Pam's story as shared by Kim:

Pam came to the Children's Center when she was 16. She arrived along with one of her siblings, a brother, who had been living with their parents and three additional siblings in a hotel room for some time. Pam's family resolved disputes by fighting. For Pam, fighting was the only way she knew to resolve any situation. Fighting was a normal part of life for her. We worked with Pam very closely to teach her ways of dealing with issues other than fighting. It took a while but eventually started working.

Before Pam arrived at the Children's Center, she had lived a largely insulated life. Her parents had disowned her for the most part. At 16, she had never been to school, never had medical or dental care and never had become friends with anyone. While Pam lived at the Children's Center, we taught her basic life skills—how to care for her personal hygiene, how to do laundry, and, above all, how to make friends.

Slowly but surely Pam made progress at the Children's Center. We helped her enroll at Surry Central High School and guided her to the right classes and on testing procedures. Eventually Pam moved out of the Children's Center, but she stayed in touch from time to time. Just before she turned 18, Pam came back to the Children's Center.

Pam told us that she had never had a birthday party before—not even a birthday cake. We pulled a group of her friends together and celebrated her 18th birthday at a local bowling center complete with a birthday cake. Pam told us afterwards that her birthday celebration was the best day of her life.

She later sent us a thank you note that included a picture Pam had drawn to illustrate her life “before” and “after” her stay at the Children's Center. The “before” part of the picture was of a jail cell, and the “after” part was a fairytale castle. Pam, who is still 18, is continuing school and seeking a job. It's a very slow process, but she also is working to rebuild relationships with at least some of her siblings and her parents.



Why the Children's Center is Needed

♥ **FOR SCOTTY, JESSIE AND PAUL**, ages 12, 14 and 16—who were living in a home with no food, electricity or running water. The boys were fending for themselves because their dad had passed away and their mom was incarcerated. They didn't want anyone to know they were living alone. Despite these challenges, they were still attending school every day.



Dale Smith serves as the Director of Behavioral Health Service at the Children's Center. A former Probation Officer in Greensboro, Dale oversees three programs at the Children's Center: 1) Fresh Start, which works with families and juvenile family members who are at risk for out-of-home placement. 2) New Beginnings, a domestic violence program that provides support to victims of abuse ages seven to 17. 3) Outpatient counseling for children on Medicaid and Health Choice.

Dale particularly remembers a young man named Martin who was part of the Fresh Start program at the Children's Center. Martin's name has been changed to protect his identity.

Martin's story as shared by Dale:

Martin was on probation and lived in a mobile home in a very rural area of Northwest North Carolina. He was having trouble in multiple areas, including significant conflict with his parents. Martin was a 15-year-old who didn't trust his parents or any other adult. When he came to the Children's Center, I told Martin that his past is just that—the past—and that he deserved a fresh start.

This young man was as timid as you could imagine and acted like a scared puppy. During our 14-week session, I helped Martin become aware of the how we think, feel and react toward others. Martin remained very reserved, but over time, we developed a very good, trusting relationship. That was something he hadn't experienced with an adult in a long, long time.

Martin was always listing to music on his headphones when we weren't in session. He told me that he wants to be musician when he grows up, and I saw the potential for great artistry in Martin as we continued to build a trusting relationship.

Martin's mother also attended the sessions but in a different class from her son. Toward the end of the 14 weeks, Martin's mother pulled me aside and said, "I want you to know you've made a huge difference in Martin's life because you treated him like a person instead of a criminal." Her comments were completely unexpected and made me reaffirm a belief that people care about others when others care about them.

Now off probation and remaining out of the court system, Martin continues to do well. He's making good choices and has developed a close relationship with his mother—something he didn't have before the Children's Center. Life has dramatically changed for Martin, and I hope he continues towards his goal of becoming a musician.

Why the Children's Center is Needed

♥ **FOR JENNY**, who watched her mom overdose and her dad hang himself—more sadness and trauma than any child should witness.





As Strengthening Families & Incredible Years Coordinator, **Mackenzie Gillespie** spearheads programs at the Children's Center that are designed to help families. She leads two 14-week programs: Incredible Years for ages three to six and Strengthening Families for ages six to 11. Much of Mackenzie's work with the older children is geared toward parents who attend the sessions to help them learn about their emotions and especially how to control anger. The Children's Center provides dinner and transportation to those who attend the sessions, which are often held in local schools. The programs are similar for both age groups, but children in the three-to-six-year-old age group go to childcare while parents learn about skills such as positive praise.

Mackenzie worked with a young woman named Janice in the Strengthening Families program who was a single mother with two boys ages eight and ten. Janice's name has been changed to protect her identity.

Janice's story as shared by Mackenzie:

The Department of Juvenile Justice referred Janice to the Children's Center. After we saw her, we quickly recognized that Janice had both financial and mental health issues. Janice was very standoffish during our first session, and she made it clear that she didn't want to be at the Children's Center. However, within a couple of weeks we developed a trusting relationship with her.

Janice stayed in touch with us after her first 14-week session was completed. However, Janice had no support structure at home at all, and she was likely not taking the medications that she needed. Trouble continued at home, and the Department of Social Services eventually removed her two boys from Janice's home. The Department of Social Services recommended that Janice take another parenting session at the Children's Center, and she agreed.

When Janice arrived for her second group of sessions, she was a completely different person. Janice made friends with others during these

sessions and began to get job interviews. She developed skills like patience and trust and the ability to communicate with her boys. As the second group of sessions continued, Janice got her two boys back, and she got a job.

Janice needed the support of the Children's Center to deal with issues in her life, and we gave her the skills needed to prosper. Since completing her second groups of sessions, Janice has written thank you letters to her employer, the Department of Social Services and to the Children's Center. Janice has overcome numerous obstacles in her life and continues to do well.

Why the Children's Center is Needed

♥ **FOR ANN, SUZIE AND JERRY,**
part of a sibling group of seven living with their
parents in a camper, with no running water
or food. They saved their lunches from school
to feed their younger siblings.





Zach Barth is the Youth Coordinator for the Children's Center. His sessions for youth last ten weeks and are provided as an afterschool program covering a wide range of topics including interpersonal skills, education and resiliency. Those who attend his program are usually referred to the Children's Center by the Department of Juvenile Justice and are comprised largely of middle and high school students who are having difficulty both at home and school.

Zach vividly recalls the story of Sam who came to the Children's Center troubled and hungry. Sam's name has been changed to protect his identity.

Sam's story as shared by Zach:

Sam did not have a good situation at home. When he arrived at the Children's Center, he said there was no food at home. Home for Sam was a hotel room where his family used a coffee maker to prepare what little food they had.

He had been caught fighting at school time and time again. Finally, the Court ordered Sam to attend two sessions at the Children's Center to help identify where the problems were in Sam's life. After attending the two sessions, Sam voluntarily asked for a third session after seeing the progress he was making.

When Sam first arrived at the Children's Center, he always came through the door looking down. After a few sessions, he became the first to eagerly volunteer for tasks. We provided food to Sam, and his hygiene also greatly improved. Our goal was

to equip Sam with the skills needed to cope with his home environment, which remains a troubled one. Today, Sam has a vision for the future. He has confidence. He has a positive demeanor. And he has made friends at school. Sam's guidance counselor said there has been a huge improvement in his behavior at school, where Sam is preparing for college.

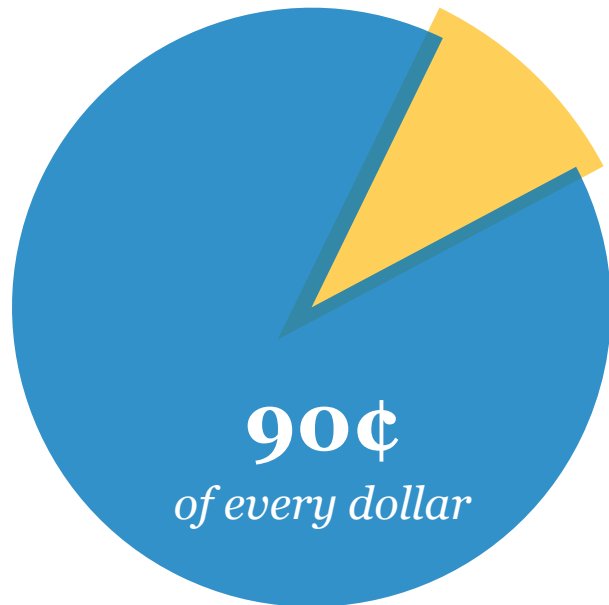
Sam wants to study robotics and has great potential to achieve his life goals. In many ways, he has emerged as a role model for others around him.



Why the Children's Center is Needed

♥ **FOR GABBY AND MARIANA**, whose mother died in a traffic accident on a cold January night. She was a single mom with no local family or support, and the girls were left entirely alone.

building families and community today



go directly to programs that provide
child maltreatment prevention and
intervention services to children and families.

The Children's Center of Northwest North Carolina offers a wide range of programs that support the prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse. In addition, the Children's Center provides services for neglected and at-risk youth. The Center operates two residential cottages—one in Surry County and another in Yadkin County—and serves families from across all Northwest North Carolina.

The Children's Center delivers its vital services by providing:

- Safe, nurturing homes for children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect or are homeless
- Proven, effective, evidence-based programs to help parents grow strong in their all-important jobs of taking excellent care of their children
- Evidence-based programs that empower children and youth by giving them the skills and understanding to navigate their lives and become responsible citizens

Using our Resources Wisely with Increasing Need

All funds for the Children's Center support the Center's mission to prevent maltreatment of children and provide intervention services to children and families in Surry and surrounding counties. Unfortunately, the need for services provided by the Children's Center is ever-growing.

how we serve



Residential Homes

Each of the Children's Center's two residences—one in Dobson and the other in Yadkinville—accommodate nine and six children, respectively, at any given time. In addition to bedrooms and bathrooms, they include kitchen and dining areas, study and tutoring space, and recreational areas. Our programs are modeled, implemented and evaluated in collaboration with Cornell University's CARE program.

Parenting Support

The Children's Center provides a wide range of parenting programs that are research and evidence-based models designed to help prevent child maltreatment through intervention. Throughout these programs, parents increase their parenting skills, knowledge, and relationships with their children and learn how to be their child's first teacher.

Youth Programs

The Children's Center provides evidence-based programs for at-risk or court-involved youth, as well as youth that need extra support during adolescence. Children's Center youth programs operate in partnership with local Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils, Court Staff, School personnel and other stakeholders to best identify and serve the children in each community.

Family Counseling

The Outpatient therapy program is available for children, families and adults who are actively enrolled in Medicaid or North Carolina Health Choice. Services are provided by licensed therapists and include psychological evaluations (comprehensive clinical assessments) and individual/family sessions.

The Children's Center helps clients identify goals and potential solutions to problems that cause emotional turmoil, seek to improve communication and coping skills, strengthen self-esteem, and promote behavior change and optimal mental health.

a growing need

The Children's Center has consistently responded to the ever-growing need for its programs and now assists children and families in Ashe, Alleghany, Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin counties. Clearly, the demand for the Children's Center's expertise and services continues to rise. Emerging societal challenges and family struggles, including opioid addiction and homelessness, drive referrals and requests.

Working with just 40 individuals in 1998, the Children's Center has assisted, nurtured and taught nearly 1,000 children and family members per year. Since its outset, the Children's Center has served approximately 9,000 individuals.

Today, the Children's Center is a sought-after model for similar programs across North Carolina and the nation.

Some of the indicators of success are:

- 100% of families who have completed the Nurturing Parenting Program experienced an increase in the use of nurturing parenting skills, as measured by changes in pre- and post-utilization Subscale Items in the Nurturing Skills Competency Scales scores, a nationally recognized objective evaluation tool.
- 100% of children who participated with their caregivers in parenting programs were able to identify positive social skills and appropriate behaviors.
- 100% of youth participating in the Why Try program in Ashe, Alleghany, Wilkes and Yadkin Counties had a 90% reduction in problem behaviors after completing the program.



The New Pfc. Adam Lee Marion Children's Resource Center



Exterior Rendering



Interior Classroom Rendering



Interior Lobby Rendering

expanding capacity to meet demand

To ensure that residences meet the highest standards and to accommodate the increasing number of children and families referred by the courts or who are homeless, the Children's Center must take key steps now.

Because of the increasing number of children and families who are referred by the courts or who are homeless, the Children's Center must act now to provide additional classes for parents and children and continue to ensure that our residences maintain the highest standards.

The Children's Center has a collaborative, supportive community that provides space for services throughout Northwest North Carolina; but rapidly growing needs have outgrown space capacity.

Today, staff must find available spaces in schools and other public buildings to conduct courses, transporting curriculum materials and equipment over several counties. Moreover, some venues

where children or parents have had negative experiences create obstacles to their attending critical programs. For example, a child's being suspended from school or families' being in a DSS office associated with the removal of a child from the home can discourage them from returning to that site.

For the future success of the Children's Center's programming, a more accessible, larger, and more welcoming space is essential.

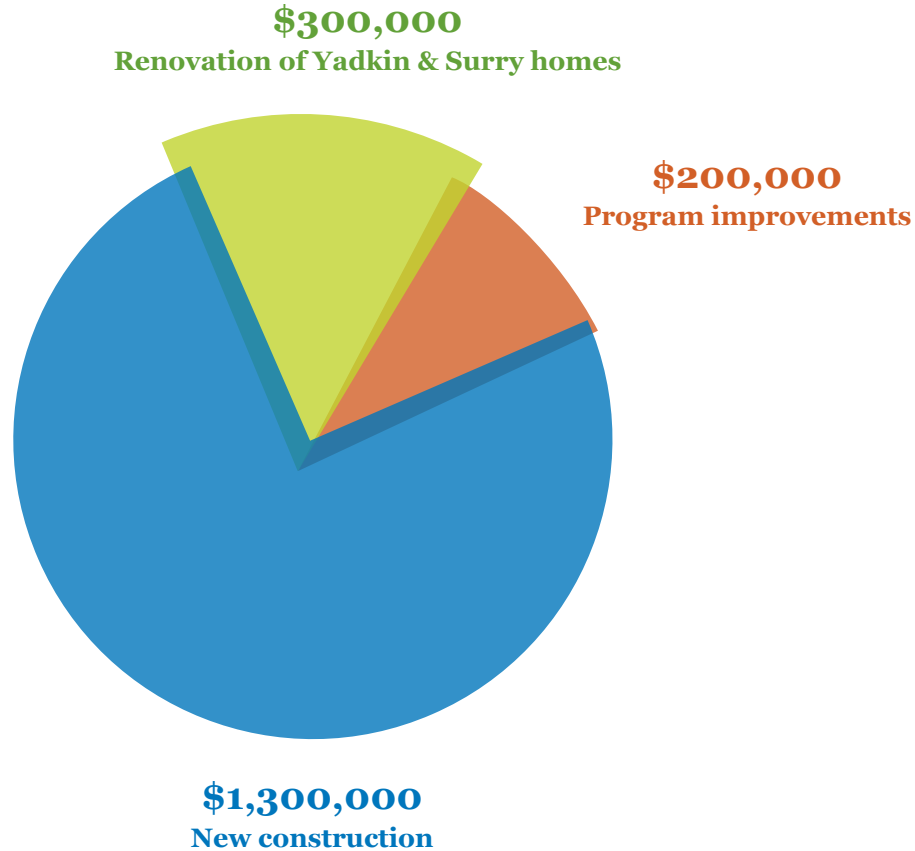


The Children's Center's primary teaching, counseling and administrative building—the Pfc. Adam Lee Marion Children's Resource Center, a 1916-square foot facility in Dobson with an additional small building of 562 square feet—can no longer meet the space needs for courses being taught, privacy required and the necessary storage for course materials and equipment.

While some classes will always be taught across the Children's Center's service area, it is critical to add capacity to the Dobson facility because of its central location and its being perceived as a safe, supportive, and comforting environment by client families. Parenting class size is often as large as 80 people. The ability to divide these groups into manageable teaching and discussion sections is critical to effectiveness.

Further, each of the Children's Center's two residences—one in Dobson and the other in Yadkinville—accommodate 9 and 6 children, respectively, at any given time. In addition to bedrooms and bathrooms, they include kitchen and dining areas, study and tutoring space, and recreational areas. Because of extensive and continuous use, both need substantial renovations to ensure that the children live in an attractive, safe and pleasant environment.

the solution



To enable the Children’s Center to continue meeting its mission, thereby strengthening the communities it serves, the Board of Directors has introduced a \$1.8 million capital campaign. The funds will be used in the following ways:

\$200,000: To expand and provide counseling and supportive services for children and families. Today, the Children’s Center has only one part-time counselor serving 16 children to provide trauma-focused and cognitive behavioral therapy. This portion of campaign funding will underwrite three full-time counselors with the capacity to serve 240 children and caregivers in the first year in trauma-focused treatment options. This seed funding will sustain the first year while the Children’s Center establishes long-term funding reimbursement and pursues new grant opportunities.

\$300,000: To renovate Dobson and Yadkinville homes. Each of the aging homes need renovated bathrooms, plumbing, updated kitchens and bedrooms. This component of the campaign will fund renovations to all bathrooms, a new roof, replacement of windows and new interior and exterior paint for the Surry residence; and renovations of the bathrooms and the kitchen in the Yadkin residence.

\$1,300,000: Construct a new 5,250 square-foot building adjacent to the existing Pfc. Adam Lee Marion Children’s Resource Center. The new building will enable the Children’s Center to serve at least 200 more individuals in its first 18 months of operation. The additional space will facilitate program expansion to include more sections of four critical programs—Nurturing Parenting, Strengthening Families, Incredible Years and New Beginnings. The new building will also offer space for youth coordinators in the Why Try program and social workers for group foster care. An important new space, the Family Visitation Room, will allow children to have a safe and friendly place to support family reunification.

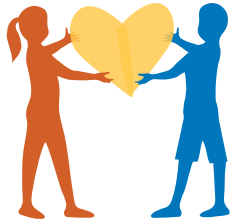
conclusion

The Children's Center has been quietly but effectively making communities in its seven-county service area better places to live and work by creating stronger families and nurturing children whose young lives have been difficult.

Absent this kind of compassionate, evidence-based professional intervention, our communities will certainly face exponentially more extensive and complex challenges as family relationships erode. Social and economic problems will only be exacerbated.

Fortunately, with the benefits that will result from this capital campaign, more children—our most precious resource—can be expertly guided to responsible adulthood; and more distressed families can learn proven strategies and behaviors for a wholesome home life.

Today, the organization asks those who care about this critically important mission to support A Good Home for Every Child: the Campaign for the Children's Center of Northwest North Carolina.





surrychildren.com

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336-386-9144

Yadkin County:
117 South Jackson Street
Yadkinville, North Carolina 27055
336-386-9144

Stokes County:
151 Jefferson Church Road
King, North Carolina 27021
336-983-4026