

SAINT FRANCIS COMMUNITY SERVICES

HILITES

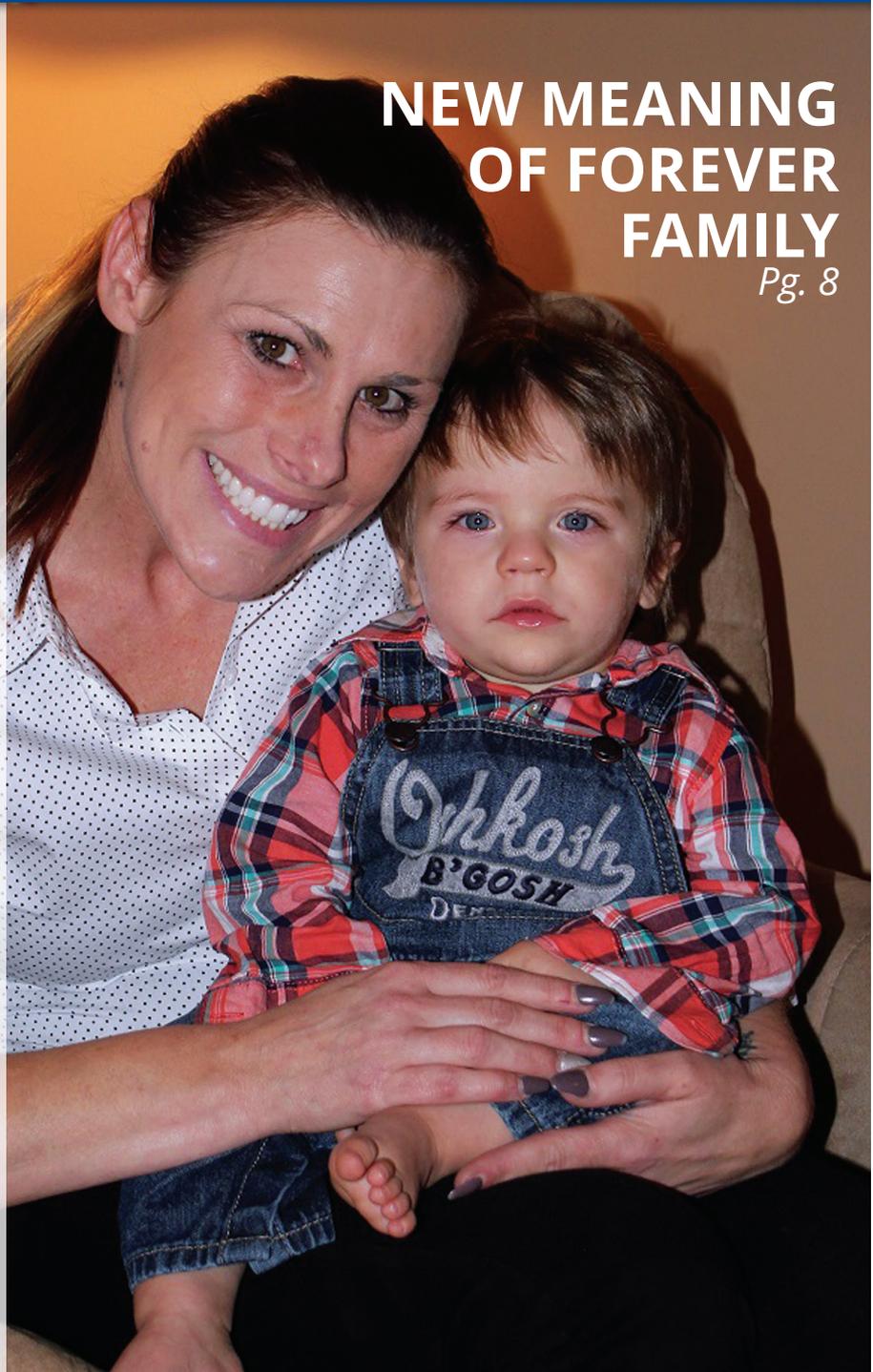
WINTER 2017

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NEW MEANING OF FOREVER FAMILY

Pg. 8





OUR MISSION

Saint Francis, providing healing
and hope to children and families.

Saint Francis Community Services publishes the Hi-Lites newsletter four times a year.
To receive future copies of Hi-Lites, subscribe online at
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A MESSAGE FROM FR. BOBBY



The Very Reverend
Robert Nelson Smith
.....
Dean, President, and CEO

Saint Francis has a long history of service to children and families. Since our founding more than seven decades ago, we have dedicated ourselves to the needs of struggling children and youth. Advocating for them. Supporting them. Working to protect them. Helping them heal. Doing everything possible to ensure that every person we serve gets the best chance for a happy fulfilling life.

Yet we know that even the most well-intentioned and effective ministry cannot sustain itself without maintaining an eye towards the future. There will always be children in crisis and Saint Francis must be prepared to help them.

That's why I'm proud and excited to announce the formation of The Saint Francis Foundation, which will support the mission of Saint Francis Community Services by building relationships across our communities, the nation, and the world, so we can collaboratively continue to serve children and families both now and into the future.

Foundation leaders are already sharing our story with individuals, communities, congregations, and church leaders, so together we can bring healing and hope to the lives of those who have experienced trauma, with compassion, action, and connection.

By supporting the Foundation, you serve people in the greatest need through Saint Francis programs that save, enrich, and restore lives.

The Saint Francis Foundation offers a unique opportunity for all of us to

be the healing hands of Christ in a broken world.

I hope you'll consider supporting the Foundation. You can learn how by visiting our new website at TheSaintFrancisFoundation.org.

To learn more about the many inspiring ways Saint Francis is serving the deepest needs of children and families, visit TheSaintFrancisFoundation.org or call 800-898-4896 to arrange a personal visit. Fr. David Hodges and the rest of his staff (you'll learn about them in this issue) would be thrilled to meet you and to share our story with you.

Thank you for your friendship to Saint Francis, and thank you for caring so much for those we serve.

You remain always in my thoughts and prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Bobby". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Saint Francis FOUNDATION

Good stewardship requires a thoughtful, experienced, and energetic team that is passionate about providing healing and hope to children and families. Meet the people of The Saint Francis Foundation:



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www.TheSaintFrancisFoundation.org

AWARD-WINNING SERVICE AT BRIDGEWAY

Bridgeway Apartments has been named the national winner of the 2016 Community of Quality® Award by the National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA) in the category of Exemplary Development for Residents with Special Needs. Located in Picayune, Mississippi, Bridgeway provides supervised living and supported employment to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Earlier in the year, Bridgeway earned NAHMA's Community of Quality® (COQ) designation following an extensive and lengthy review process. Announced in December, the national award identifies Bridgeway as the best COQ in the nation among other residential communities in the same category. Bridgeway staff will travel to Washington, D.C., in March to attend an awards luncheon honoring their achievement.

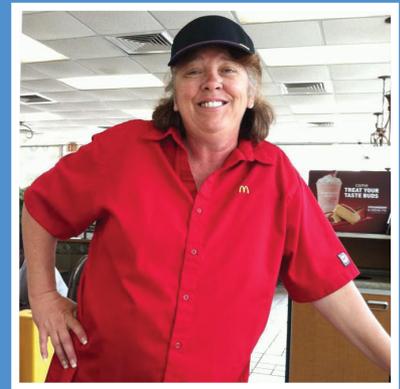
The Mississippi Department of Mental Health has also awarded Bridgeway two grants to help expand supported employment services to adults with IDD. Bridgeway already provides supported employment to its own residents, but the grant awards will allow Bridgeway to expand those services to other persons with IDD living within the broader community of Picayune and Pearl River County.

One award, a continuation grant, will help fund Bridgeway's existing Supported Employment program,

which helps adults with IDD find and maintain employment through ongoing on-the-job supervision and support. A second grant permits expansion of those services, particularly through "Community Calendar," a program designed to enhance the quality of life for persons with IDD through recreational and leisure activities. Bridgeway helps persons served create a personalized activity plan based on their interests and options within the community. That plan can include recreation, fitness, entertainment, hobbies, or spiritual activities. Or, it might simply involve shopping for groceries or taking part in a community event.

The point is to help employed persons with IDD discover and participate in fulfilling and stimulating activities to fill the rest of their day after work. Eligible participants are referred by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and the South Mississippi Regional Center.

"These grants will help us sustain and build on the successes of Bridgeway's Supported Employment program, which provides enormous benefits to persons with IDD, their employers, and their community," said Jason Kirkland, director of operations. "It's an important program that helps adults with IDD live happy, self-sufficient lives with dignity."



*Want to support
Bridgeway residents
in their effort to live
with dignity and
independence?*

\$30 per month/\$360 per year

Sponsors recreational activities for one resident for a year so they can interact socially with others, build friendships, and gain acceptance within the community.

\$50 per year

Sponsors a resident on their birthday and holidays by giving them a special celebration.

\$100 per year

Pays for transportation costs for one resident for a year so they retain their job and maintain independence.

\$200 per year

Sponsors social activities like cookouts, crawfish boils, parties, and other events for Bridgeway residents.

Learn more by calling
(601) 749-4848 or by visiting
www.sfcmssissippi.org

**To make a gift, please visit
TheSaintFrancisFoundation.org**

THE CARE PORTAL

EVERY CHURCH DOING A LITTLE

“Sometimes, it’s easy to feel like no one else is willing to fight for our kids,” said Saint Francis Foster Care Worker Amy Tyson. “It inspires me to know that others in the community care about our kids and families as much as I do.”

Hallie Cable understands that sentiment. Ten years ago, she was a Saint Francis family support worker. She left to become a Mennonite youth pastor and missionary, serving in Kansas and West Virginia before she and her husband moved to Illinois to adopt a niece in foster

youth pastor, and adoptive parent makes her the ideal liaison for an initiative that has energized and excited social workers and church congregations with unprecedented opportunities to help others.

“The churches were so ready to step up and do this,” said Cable. “They’ve known about fostering and adoption, but for most of us that’s jumping off the deep end. And it’s scary in the deep end. So we said get your feet wet by delivering a bunk bed, and it just exploded.”

in ten states including Oklahoma and Kansas, both served by Saint Francis. Since 2015, 268 churches have signed up in Oklahoma and 141 in Kansas. Ninety of those Kansas churches are located within the 8-county South Central Region Cable manages. And the South Central Region has the highest percentage of needs met in all the other states – well over 90 percent.

According to Osborne, Care Portal churches have met needs for more than 220 Saint Francis children and families since July 2015. Help has come in the form of carbon monoxide detectors, exterminator services, bunk beds, washers and dryers, gift cards, school clothes and supplies, dressers, groceries, gas cards, medication, car seats, diapers, blankets, and more. Some churches have even paid rent, utility bills, and car repairs.

One church paid a \$425 apartment deposit so a 1-year-old child could be reunited with her mother. Another gave a \$400 gift card to build a wall in a house that enabled a teenaged girl to move in with her grandparents.

Results like that thrill social workers, and some Saint Francis employees

Through relationships accelerated by technology, The Care Portal empowers local churches and agencies to partner and establish a culture of Church Centered Child Welfare

care. Years earlier, a mission trip to a Haitian orphanage sponsored by Global Orphan Project impressed her so much that she stayed connected with the organization even after the family returned to Kansas a couple of years ago. And when the Global Orphan Project started the Care Portal in 2015, Cable immediately volunteered to help get it off the ground in south central Kansas.

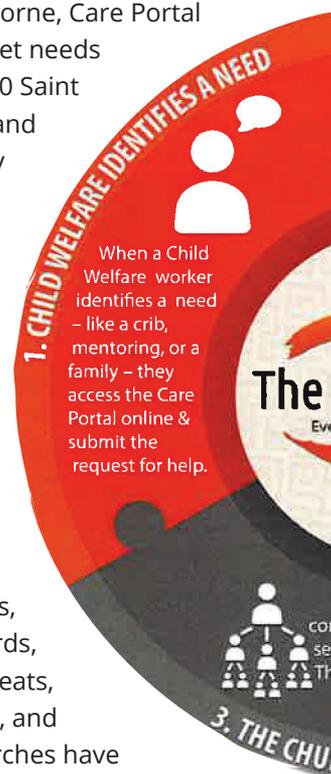
Essentially an email exchange, the Care Portal connects churches with child welfare agencies to quickly meet the needs of children and families in crisis within a community.

Saint Francis Customer Care Director, Holly Dean Osborne, says Cable’s experience as a foster care worker,

Churches support the Care Portal through participation and – as they are able – a monthly financial contribution. Once they enroll on the Care Portal website, Cable, assisted by her team of 10 volunteer coordinators, provides training to one or two “point persons” designated by the church. Point persons receive requests for assistance from Saint Francis staff on behalf of foster, adoptive, and birth families in need. They then relay those requests to the rest of the congregation.

Most churches respond immediately, and it’s not uncommon for a need to be met within minutes of posting.

The Care Portal currently operates



regularly tear up while sharing stories about how the Care Portal has helped children they serve.

“The response is absolutely amazing,” said Kinship Support Worker Lisa Borntrager. “It’s a blessing to our organization and to our families.”

Requests originate with a Saint Francis worker who then sends it to a supervisor for approval. Once okayed by the supervisor, it’s sent to Osborne and her team for further vetting. Cable also sees each request.

“We work hard to ensure staff understands what constitutes an appropriate request,” said Osborne. “Essentially, it’s anything that will keep a child in the home or get a child back home. Help comes from individuals within a congregation who work hard and live on a budget. We always ask ourselves, ‘How will that person in the pew view this request?’ That’s why each one has to be valid.”

Once a church responds, the Saint Francis worker contacts the point person to arrange delivery. But that delivery is just the beginning. Ultimately, Cable says, the Care Portal is about building relationships and sharing the love of Christ – among churches of different denominations, between the churches and Saint Francis, and between churches and the families they help.

“These days, we don’t know our neighbors as well as we used to,” said Cable. “Since we started the Care

Portal, people have told me ‘I never realized this much need existed.’ They’re learning about poverty and the toxic stresses many families deal with every day. I’ve met people who are now taking classes to become foster and adoptive parents.

“Churches really do want to help meet these needs, to build relationships with families in the community. Our long-term goal is relational. It’s about serving as the hands of Christ and supporting these families.”



From left, Saint Francis’ Holly Dean Osborne and Breanna Stroman, along with the Care Portal’s Hallie Cable, welcome guests to an appreciation luncheon provided for Saint Francis staff by Care Portal churches at the Hutchinson, KS office.



1008 Churches
23 Active Agencies
Have Already Impacted
7,875 Children in 10 States!

Because every
community has children
and families in need.

careportal.org

GETTING A BROTHER BACK

AN ADOPTION STORY



It was the hug that troubled her, tugging at her thoughts that February day. It was both unexpected and uncharacteristic. Although Michael deeply loved and depended upon his younger sister, he rarely hugged her. When Christine Blaine returned home from work that evening, he was gone. And he remained gone until March 24, 2015, six weeks later, when Wichita police pulled a body from a pond at 31st and Broadway, just blocks from Christine's house.

"As soon as I heard the news, I knew," she said. "I had a gut feeling."

For Michael, life was more often a burden than a joy. Diagnosed with schizophrenia and dealing with alcohol addiction, he turned to Christine for safe harbor. Six months prior to his disappearance, he'd tried to kill himself in her garage. He spent seven days in the hospital before being admitted to Via Christi Good Shepherd for psychiatric care. They treated and later released him with medication, and he had been staying with Christine about six weeks when the unraveling began. Michael had stopped taking his medication. Then that hug.

The day he disappeared, Michael



left everything at her house but his wallet. Frantic, she called police, Good Shepherd, anybody she could think of. She stayed up all night, calling his friends, checking his Facebook posts, and looking through his phone for clues. In the intervening weeks, she and friends posted fliers and organized search parties with dogs and more than 50 people combing nearby neighborhoods and several small ponds in the area. Nothing. Until that day she heard the news report that a body had been discovered in Go Lake.

She left work and hurried to the scene where she told the detective in charge that she thought the body might be her missing brother, Michael Baird. She gave a description and within an hour, police had a positive I.D. Christine felt broken. Nevertheless, following Michael's memorial service and still grieving, she tried to get on with her life. She had to. A single mother, she still had her daughter and son to raise, teenaged Kylie and 9-year-old Taylor. Then, in June, she noticed that her brother's ex-girlfriend had posted a picture of a sonogram on Facebook. And she had tagged Michael.

"Of course, I asked why I was just finding out now that my deceased brother has a baby on the way," said Christine. "She said she'd just found out herself. They'd split up before his death, so I didn't want to get my hopes up about anything."

The mother told Christine her due date was September 25th. But in August, Christine learned about Facebook photos taken in the hospital of both the mother and a newborn boy, Payton Nathaniel.

"She'd had him on June 11th, three days after posting the sonogram,"

she said. "He was born three months premature and weighed only one pound, nine ounces." At his birth, Payton tested positive for methamphetamine.

"Then I started fighting for him," said Christine. "Nobody would give me any information. They couldn't, of course. We didn't even know for sure that he was Michael's. I called DCF (Department for Children and Families) daily asking for

"...But then Payton happened, and my thinking has changed. God took something bad and made it good. He gave me my brother back."

information. They were sympathetic, but just told me to wait. After two weeks, Payton was placed in state custody. I immediately contacted Saint Francis to put in my name for kinship care. Already, in my mind, he was Michael's and I was his aunt."

The paternity issue had to be resolved before Christine could even think about seeing Payton – let alone caring for him. The court ordered a DNA test from Michael's autopsy. Then everyone waited. Christine called Saint Francis adoption support worker Martha Pennington every day. Finally, one day, Martha called her, and when Christine answered the phone, Martha said, "Hi, Aunt Christine."

"I just lost it and started crying," said Christine. "This was in October, and from that point, I was allowed visitation at the hospital, through Saint Francis. The first time I saw him, he was five months old, still in ICU. As soon as I saw him, I knew he belonged to me. I just held him and adored him."

Since Michael's death, Christine had worn around her neck a cross containing her brother's ashes. On that first visit, as she cradled Payton, his tiny hand reached up and clutched the cross. He held it as Christine held him.

Unable to complete court-ordered requirements to regain custody, the birth mother relinquished her parental rights on February 5, 2016 - one year to the day Michael disappeared. Immediately, Christine began the process to adopt Payton and take him home to his family. On November 19th, Christine formally adopted Payton at Saint Francis' National Adoption Day celebration. Surrounded by Kylie and Taylor; Christine's ex-husband

Tim Blaine and his parents (they all remain close); and other family, Payton received a new name – Payton Michael Baird.

"It's funny," said Christine. "Growing up, I didn't believe in God. Only because there are so many bad things that happen in life, not just in my own. I thought that if God existed, he wouldn't let those things happen. But then Payton happened, and my thinking has changed. God took something bad and made it good. He gave me my brother back."



FROM REBEL TO LEADER

Zach Reed could think of a hundred other ways he'd rather spend a Saturday than attend a meeting with a bunch of foster kids in Hays, Kansas. Angry and frustrated, he told Saint Francis' Todd Hadnot that he would never attend another one. That was five years ago, and Zach hasn't missed a meeting since.

"They pushed me to go to this RYAC (Regional Youth Advisory Council) meeting," said Zach. "I didn't want to do it, and when I got there I thought, 'This is stupid, I don't want to be here. No one here is my friend.' But Todd helped me work through it. He mentored me and helped me to come out of my shell and speak to people."

At 14, Zach had a lot to be angry about. His mother left for prison when he was four, and he ended up in the Oklahoma home of an aunt and uncle where he suffered extreme abuse and neglect. Eventually, he was removed from that home and entered the care of Saint Francis Community Services in Kansas in 2010. That's when he met social worker Crystal Schumacher.

"He was a bit rebellious," she said. "He didn't have much family, and

the experiences he'd had with them weren't positive. He also had high needs with a disability (childhood spina bifida), so we worried we'd have difficulty placing him. But we found a home in Russell, which allowed him to remain within the community."

Zach's birthday was celebrated for the first time in his life in that home. His foster mother, Margaret Mach, cared about him deeply. But he still had his anger and often lashed out. And he ran away – a lot. Always patient, Mach tried to help him, but a family member's illness forced her to give up fostering. So Saint Francis placed Zach in a home near Topeka. Experienced in caring for kids with disabilities, the Drakes gave him a stable, loving family. That placement proved pivotal for Zach.

"I had a lot of time to think on the drive up there," he said. "I thought about not messing it up, about not running anymore. I thought, 'I don't need to be doing this, I have a chance to make my life better. Why keep doing this stuff?' My grades weren't good, so I started thinking about doing better in school. I started thinking about my future. Those two homes helped me see my potential,

to see where I'd been going and what I could become. They made it possible for me to see high school graduation as an option and success as a possibility for me."

Zach remained with the Drakes until he aged out of foster care at 18. He'd stayed in just two foster homes and had the same caseworker (Schumacher) during his entire time in foster care. That's rare.

Julie Kelley likes to tell him, "Zach, everybody loved you so much, they couldn't give up on you."

A Saint Francis Independent Living Coordinator, Kelley met Zach in 2012 when she worked for another agency and he was on the Kansas Youth Advisory Council (KYAC). After she joined Saint Francis a year later, they reconnected through the Regional Council. Kelley led the monthly Western Region RYAC meetings in which current and former foster youth (ages 15-21) learn independent living and leadership skills to prepare them for the transition out of foster care into adulthood. Zach attended every meeting.

"I think he enjoyed the peers he worked with," said Kelley. "He saw how they came through their own experiences and what they did with that. It didn't matter if he had to spend four hours in a car driving there, he was going to be at those meetings. He'd found a place to belong."

He also found mentors. Kelley gave him friendship and encouragement. Hadnot encouraged him to run for office on the State Youth Council, which he did – first winning an



"They made sure I kept going forward. Without their help, I could never have become the happy guy I am today."



RYAC

Regional Youth
Advisory Council

.....
Helps young people
like Zach move
from foster care
into independent
and responsible
adulthood.

Zach found a friend and mentor in Saint Francis' Julie Kelly through their work together on the Kansas Youth Advisory Council.

election as Historian, then as Vice President, the office he currently holds. Through KYAC, he met another mentor, Bubba Dowling, an Independent Living Coordinator with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

"Bubba is my best friend," said Zach. "He was the guest speaker at the first KYAC meeting I attended. The Kansas Advisory Council is starting a mentoring program, and he wants to be my mentor."

Through his participation in KYAC, Zach has become a leader and advocate for youth in foster care and the issues that affect them. Current and former foster youth from the four regions served by the state's child welfare contractors make up the State Youth Council, which

advises the Kansas State Legislature and DCF on policy related to foster care. KYAC members have met with legislative committees, public panels, federal assessors, and the governor's office, providing insight and input about legislation affecting youth in foster care.

"Over the summer, Zach and I conducted a foster parent training together in Wichita to teach them how to help foster kids feel a stronger sense of belonging," said Kelley. "He really has a heart for other kids in care. He has found where he belongs, and he wants to make sure other kids do too."

"Zach is miraculous," added Schumacher. "He's been through a lot, he's resilient."

Zach grins when he hears such compliments. For someone so long denied praise, he could easily let it all go to his head. But he doesn't.

"Everyone in my life who saw what I'd gone through and knew what I could become sustained me," he said. "They made sure I kept going forward. Without their help, I could never have become the happy guy I am today."

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE, GIVING THEM VOICE

The transition from adolescence to adulthood can seem frightening, even forbidding, under the best circumstances. But what if you have no one to guide you through all those messy day-to-day details, requirements, and responsibilities that define adult life? How would you even begin to find a job, a place to live? That's what youth in foster care face as they approach their 18th birthday and begin to consider what life will be like once they've "aged out" of the system.

Saint Francis Independent Living (IL) Coordinators like Julie Kelley help them make that transition. She and her colleagues provide practical guidance in applying to college, finding an apartment, managing money, and similar challenges. They start early because what many of these youth often need most is confidence in their own voice.

"The Regional Youth Advisory Council (RYAC) gives kids a say in their own care, and that's an independent living skill," said Kelley.

RYAC teaches young people the skills they'll need to function as self-sufficient, capable adults. More importantly, participants form friendships with other foster youth and discuss concerns they share about the foster care system. It empowers young people by valuing their voice and giving them the tools to succeed both as adults and as leaders.

There are four Regional Youth Councils in Kansas, two for Saint Francis youth and two for youth in

eastern Kansas served by another organization. Young people ages 15-20 can participate, which means current and former foster youth attend meetings.

Kelley helps organize monthly RYAC meetings for the West Region, while IL Coordinator Nancy Jones handles the Wichita Region. Together, with IL Program Managers Jennifer Walters and Kellie Henderson, they plan the topics.

"In RYAC, we practice independent living skills in a group setting," said Kelley, "dealing with subjects like college preparation, employment, housing, suicide prevention, self-care, money management, and healthy relationships. Often we'll have guest speakers. I've learned, though, that if the presenter is a peer the kids listen better. Especially if that peer has aged out and been released from custody. They can speak from experience."

Meetings aren't mandatory, but case workers encourage attendance. Those who show interest and ability can join KYAC, the Kansas Youth Advisory Council. An initiative of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), KYAC empowers youth to advise and offer recommendations to state officials about the child welfare system. Selected by their peers on the Regional Councils, KYAC members have appeared before legislative committees and provided input and insight to DCF, Saint Francis leadership, the Kansas Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, and the



Governor's office. They also present annually at the Governor's Conference for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Their collective voice has contributed to the passage of legislation that directly affects foster youth, such as college tuition waivers and the medical card extension that allows them to keep a medical card until they turn 26. Even now, KYAC is crafting a mentorship program for young people transitioning out of foster care into adulthood.

For Kelley and Jones, the self-confidence and leadership skills kids learn through the Youth Councils are the most important independent living tools they'll need to succeed as adults.

"You see kids who were so quiet come out of their shells and become great leaders," said Kelley. "Rather than focus on problems, we help them find solutions."

"I'm always amazed at some of the ideas they come up with," added Jones. "RYAC gives them a sense of worth, and they learn that they're not alone. They meet kids just like themselves and solve problems together."

COMPASSION AND HOPE

EMPLOYEE PROFILE



Kenneth Faulkner says he's not a "sit-still person," which works to his advantage when serving lunch, bussing tables, and visiting with guests at the Kansas City Community Kitchen. That's where he puts in four days a week, helping the Episcopal ministry serve more than 300 hot lunches each day to homeless and unemployed persons in downtown Kansas City, Missouri.

"Over the summer, I supervised the young volunteers, mostly kids from youth groups and church groups," said Faulkner. "I like working with kids, it's familiar to me."

Faulkner's work with young people started decades ago as a Special Olympics volunteer in Hays, Kansas, where he attended Fort Hays State University on football and track scholarships. After Fort Hays, he moved to Missouri to work in a residential home for youth with physical and intellectual disabilities. In 1994, he applied to Associated Youth Services (AYS), a nonprofit child and family services agency based in Kansas City, Kansas, that

was acquired by Saint Francis Community Services earlier this year. Starting out as a youth counselor, Faulkner eventually became overnight coordinator at the juvenile residential home, a position he's held for about a decade.

"He's fixed cars, performed household repairs, mowed the grass, worked extra shifts – you name it," said Debra McKenzie, director of Saint Francis' Kansas City office. "Kenny's caring nature comes through naturally, and our youth sense that and gravitate towards him. He's all about straight talk, so young people know they can trust him when they're feeling down and need to talk."

The acquisition of AYS is enabling Saint Francis to expand and enhance care to at-risk children and youth within Kansas City and other parts of the state. Because the success of that effort will depend in part upon the relationships Saint Francis develops with local community partners, Faulkner was asked to play a role in building those

relationships by helping out at the Community Kitchen.

A ministry of Episcopal Community Services (ECS), the Kansas City Community Kitchen is just one outreach effort among many that ECS provides to the homeless and hungry in the Greater Kansas City area. Faulkner started in June and says he's found the work deeply rewarding.

"I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, a fairly large city, so I had an idea what to expect," he said. "It's different from working with juveniles, but I know what many of these people are going through. I was pretty sure it didn't involve just having a roof over their heads."

Faulkner spends each day serving food and talking with diners. He says they're ordinary people who often just want to talk. He has compassion for those going through a hard time, whether they're juveniles in care or diners at the Community Kitchen.

"I had a rough childhood," he said. "I wasn't abused, but we didn't have a lot. My mom struggled with alcohol problems until one day she just stopped. I mean, she just stopped. She stayed sober until her death from cancer in 2012. I think of her all the time, so when I meet people who are also struggling, I try to go out of my way for them. I just want to give them a little hope."

"Kenny's gracious spirit extends to everyone," said McKenzie. "The more he talks about helping people at the Kitchen, the more his face shines."

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR TEENS



All eight beds of Saint Francis' Youth Residential Center (YRC II) for girls have remained filled since the cottage opened in 2016. The boys' residence, slated to open before spring, will have the same capacity and is expected to also stay mostly full. Both cottages will provide residential care, in a group home setting, for youth ages 12-18.

Saint Francis opened the YRC II in response to a gap in service for youth with behavioral and mental health issues. Because Kansas state law limits stays in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities to 30-60 days, young people are often released unprepared to function in the community within a family setting. They may no longer seek to harm themselves or others, but they still have difficulty following directions, avoiding disruptive behaviors, communicating with others, and building relationships. Because they can stay in the YRC II for up to 12 months, they have more

time to work on those issues.

By locating the YRC II on the campus of Saint Francis' own residential facility near Salina West, staff can provide a quality of care that goes beyond the minimum standards required for a typical youth residential center.

"Salina West is considered a treatment facility, with specific federal and state requirements concerning doctors, nurses, clinical treatment plans, etc.," said Cheryl Rathbun, vice president of clinical services. "The standards are different when it comes to group homes. They simply require a director and an individual plan of care that a non-licensed person can write."

"Saint Francis, however, always goes above and beyond basic requirements. We do that because our Joint Commission accreditation requires it and because we know kids need more than basic services."

That means Saint Francis can provide youth with on-site psychiatric and nursing care, along with access to the ropes course and equestrian, gardening, expressive arts, and spiritual programs. They also attend school on campus, but in classrooms separate from those used by youth at Salina West.

"We actually partner with the Central Kansas Mental Health Center to provide case management and therapy," said Rathbun. "They send a therapist out to the campus who works closely with our team and provides individual and group therapy. It's been a good collaboration between community partners and by utilizing their services, along with our own resources, we can pull everything together on campus to help kids at the YRC II begin to heal in spirit, mind, and body."

A SHARED LOVE FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

THE BROWN FAMILY CHAPEL



From left: The Rev. David Hodges, Col. Joseph Brown, The Rt. Rev. Michael Milliken, Bishop of Western Kansas, and The Very Rev. Bobby Smith

Afternoon sunlight poured through a stained-glass representation of “The Good Shepherd” as The Rt. Rev. Michael Milliken, Bishop of Western Kansas, consecrated a sacred space within Saint Francis’ Salina West Campus. The Brown Family Chapel, dedicated in memory of Sylvia Brown, will support the spiritual needs of staff and youth at the rural campus near Salina, Kansas.

Saint Francis clergy, employees, and guests joined Salina West youth and the Brown family in prayer and thanksgiving for the Chapel which will serve as a place of peace and retreat for young people dealing with trauma and behavioral issues.

Sylvia Brown first heard of Saint Francis one Sunday in church back

in 1969. For nearly four decades, she and her husband, retired Air Force Colonel Joe Brown, have passionately supported Saint Francis’ mission of service to children and families. After Sylvia passed in 2007, Col. Brown continued to support the healing ministry so dear to his wife’s heart.

Col. Brown traveled from his Austin, Texas, home to participate in the Chapel consecration. Although his son, David, was unable to attend, his other son, Dr. Mark Brown, made the trip. His daughter Zoe Lawson also attended, along with her husband Kirk and their children Andrew and Anna Katheryn.

“My daughter wanted the kids to go so they could see what people can do when they choose to help others,”

said Col. Brown. “There are lots of people who need help in this world, and Saint Francis does a really good job at providing it.”



From left: Col. Joseph Brown, Zoe, Andrew, Anna, and Kirk Lawson, and Dr. Mark Brown



Saint Francis Community Services®

Serving Children and Families Since 1945

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WHAT IS MATCH MADNESS?

Match Madness is a one-day only event designed to generate new gifts to the Saint Francis endowment, for long-term support, with matching gifts to help us with our immediate needs.

Every gift made to Saint Francis during the event will be matched proportionally up to 50%! Plus, bonus dollars will be awarded hourly from the donations made at the event.

Can't make it? Live outside the area? No problem. Online donations will also be accepted from 12:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. March 14, 2017.

Donate online at www.matchmadnessgscf.org

For more information call Amy Cole at 785-823-2036 EXT 1912 or email amy.cole@st-francis.org. All donations are tax-deductible.

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