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CYFS Kids

Finding Solutions and Making Memories

How did you spend your summer as a kid? Did you spend countless summer nights catching fire flies, or did you ride your bike up to the local ice cream shop or maybe take a run through the sprinkler on a hot summer day? The children and youth we serve are no different; they want these same type of memories. More than anything, these kids- just want to be...kids! And we do everything we can to make that happen.

In this edition of our newsletter, we want to share with you some of our special programs that focus specifically on kids- and how we work with them to find solutions.



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East Peoria Richland Area Kids Gain New Opportunities at Summer Camp

At CYFS, we love giving kids opportunities for new experiences. This is especially critical in at-risk communities where prevention and diversion from juvenile justice and the child welfare system is paramount. Take for instance, our summer camp currently serving the East Peoria Richlands community. The camp is designed as a healthy alternative for kids and the youth are inundated with positive and constructive activities targeted to help them reach their full potential. Bottom line-these kids get to have experiences they may have never had before- like going fishing or to a Peoria Chiefs game or even for many, the first time to the movies. Most importantly, these kids are surrounded by positive role models who work to strengthen how they

feel about themselves so that they in turn want to reach their full potential.

This program simply wouldn't exist without the generosity of donors like you! We'd like to thank the following folks who made the camp possible again this summer: The City of East Peoria, the Fondulac Park District, the Fondulac Park Police, Tazewood Community Services, Trivoli Methodist Church, East Peoria United Methodist Church, East Peoria Public Works, Head Start, Velde Ford, the Brown Jug, Network for Good, Taco Johns, Popeye's Chicken as well as several other individual donors.

Youth, Family and Community Outreach Program Promotes Kids to Find Solutions



When we first heard about a program that teaches kids to solve problems creatively while having fun we knew it would be a great fit with our mission. Odyssey of the Mind is an international program that challenges kids to apply their creativity to solve complex problems involving everything from mechanical devices to literary classics. CYFS

sponsored six teams and 32 students in grades 3-8 from the Peoria area who each selected a unique Odyssey problem, brainstormed a solution to their problem, wrote an original script, built a mobile or transformational set, and assembled costumes, all while raising over \$23,000 so that they could compete at the World Finals competition at Iowa State University.

Not only did these kids have an opportunity of a lifetime—meeting other kids from across the globe, observing other cultures and languages- they represented the USA and CYFS extraordinarily well with 4 of our teams placing in the top 20 in the world - out of more than 800 teams present!! For more information on this incredible program check out the Odyssey of the Mind website at:

http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/learn_more.php

Do you know a child (grades Kindergarten thru 8th grade) who you think would love this activity? Contact Celeste Matheson at cmatheson@cyfsolutions.org for more information about opportunities for the 2016-2017 competition year.



A New Place to Call Home for Guardian Angel

April was a busy month for CYFS as we packed up and moved our Guardian Angel Residential program to its new home in Morton. Guardian Angel is our Residential Treatment program for boys between the ages of 6-18. The 16 boys currently in our care have been the victims of severe abuse, neglect and abandonment and they each need special trauma interventions and structured services to help them heal and cope. The goal for each child is to see them successfully complete services at Guardian Angel and move on to live successfully with a caring relative or adoptive family.

According to Tony Riordan, Chief Operating Officer, "As the lease for the existing facility was up, it was a perfect time to find a new space that would better meet the therapeutic, social and academic needs of the boys."

The new facility was purposefully designed as a home-like living space; each child has his own bedroom, there are living rooms, a kitchen and dining areas, places for the boys to watch movies, play games and do their homework.

This fall, a second building will complete construction and will have space for ½ a gym for recreation, space for group activities and most importantly, classrooms for the boys' on-site schooling.

"We couldn't be more thankful for how welcoming both the Morton community and the school district have been since we moved to town. The boys love being in Morton and this support has really made the difference," says Guardian Angel Home Program Coordinator Jim Kleine.

**You too can be
part of the solution.**

Interested in donating to the the Guardian Angel Program? Be a part of our Help Them Build a Future campaign. All proceeds will go directly to the construction costs of the new buildings. Simply include your donation in the enclosed envelope and specify Guardian Angel Home for your donation.



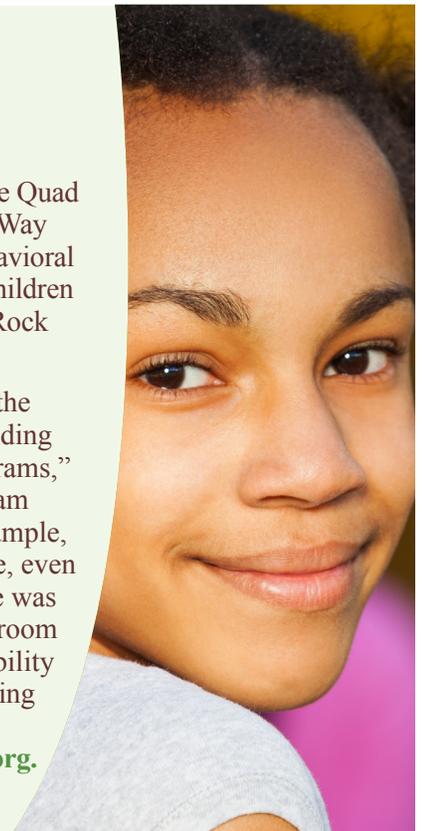
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New CYFS Program Gives Quad City Area Kids with Mental Health Needs a Fresh Outlook.

We couldn't be more excited about our new Therapeutic Respite program we are offering in the Quad Cities to help support emotionally challenged youth. The program, funded through the United Way Health Council of the Quad City area and in partnership with Scott County Kids, provides behavioral guidance, advocacy and education interventions by trained adults to support skill building in children and adolescents with serious mental health issues. The program is available to both Scott and Rock Island County youth ages 8 – 18.

“It can be really trying for families who have a child with severe emotional issues and having the support of trained professionals to assist those families and work directly with the kids in finding solutions is a perfect fit for what we already do in our Youth and Community Outreach programs,” said Therapeutic Respite Services Program Coordinator Nicole Sodawasser. Since the program began taking clients in early April, we have already seen some great successes. Take for example, Haley, who was having such intense anxiety and depression she would rarely leave her home, even for school. We are happy to report that after working with the Therapeutic Respite team, she was able to gain the necessary tools she needed to reduce her anxiety and to get back in the classroom so she could complete her sophomore year of high school. Haley's new found success and ability to see her own potential is just one example of how powerful therapeutic respite can be in helping youth of the Quad Cities. If you or someone you know in the Rock Island or Scott County area could benefit from such a program, contact Nicole Sodawasser at nsodawasser@cyfsolutions.org.



Thank You!

We had an incredible night at our Blues for a Cause concert!

We'd like to thank all of our sponsors who made the evening extra special:

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Get Involved!

Volunteering is a way to share your gifts, gain experience, and give back to your community.

Our volunteers make a difference every day in the lives of our clients. Find out about volunteer opportunities at:

cyfsolutions.org/get-involved/volunteer or call 309-323-6600

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