



the  
**VOICE**  
FALL 2020



# HERO iSSUE!

This issue of the VOICE is dedicated to recognizing all of the DCCH heroes who have worked on the frontlines and behind the scenes to help change lives.



FALL 2020

No cape. No big muscles. No superpowers. You won't see any of those things here at DCCH. But that doesn't mean we aren't surrounded by heroes. **"Heroes that Change Lives".**

We are blessed with so many heroes across our employee ranks and from the community at large. They are average, everyday folks who have stepped up to do truly heroic things for those in need.

Never has this been more evident than during the coronavirus pandemic. Whether it's our dedicated staff who find alternative, creative ways to ensure our kids and families get the care they need, or our legion of donors and supporters in the community who have gone out of their way to remember our organization, even in the midst of these challenging times, the Heroes of DCCH have come through to save the day. It has been amazing and inspiring to see the best in people come out in the worst of times. In this edition of our newsletter, you can see for yourself just a few examples of our heroes in action. I wish we could share all of them. But there are so many, it would take Superman to deliver something that huge.



On behalf of our children and all our clients and staff, thanks to everyone for their hard work, donations, time, thoughts, prayers, and advocacy.

*Bob Wilson*

Bob Wilson  
Executive Director

**LEARN MORE ONLINE**



## Our Executive Staff/Directors

**Robert J. Wilson**  
Executive Director

**Tim Lucas**  
Director of Finance/Operations

**Amy Pelicano**  
Development Director

**John Ross**  
Director of Programs

**Ron Bertsch**  
Director of Therapeutic Foster Care/Adoption

**Emily Burch**  
Director of Residential Treatment

**Eric Varner**  
Recreation Supervisor

**Joelle Seibert**  
Training Director

**Lisa Cline**  
Food Service Director

**Dan Townsend**  
Facilities Manager

**Sr. Jean Marie Hoffman, S.N.D.**  
Director Emerita



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## Join Us For Happy Hour... with Pumpkin Spice!

Fall is approaching and that can only mean one thing....it's pumpkin spice time! Grab a latte (or your favorite pumpkin treat) and join your fellow DCCH supporters for a virtual happy hour on **November 12 from 5-6pm**. Catch up with us to hear what the kids have been up to all Summer and connect with other friends of DCCH. Be sure to join the Zoom call by 5:15 for a "group photo"! We can't wait to see you!

Please email [Info@DCCHCenter.org](mailto:Info@DCCHCenter.org) to request the link to the call.





**Imagine** feeling like you are less than something – that you are worthless.

**Think** about how you might feel if you were abandoned or neglected.

**Envision** a life where verbal, physical, or sexual abuse is part of your daily life.

Jessica is 13 years old and arrived at DCCH back in May. She was timid, more than shy; she flinched if you came near her. She wouldn't speak above a whisper, if she would speak at all. She was withdrawn, pale, and afraid.

What you imagined a moment ago was the world in which Jessica lived until May when her dad was arrested for suspected child abuse. Her mom died of an overdose three years ago and life had been hell since then. She had come to believe her life would be like this forever and covered in fear, loneliness, and shame.

The Heroes who work in our Residential Treatment Program have been lovingly providing Jessica with care that is both compassionate and trauma-informed. Understanding what she's lived through, they listen carefully and approach her in ways so that she feels safe and secure. Her therapist seeks out light in the darkness of Jessica's memories when her mom was alive and things were not hopeless. She works closely with Jessica to help her see that light still exists inside of her. She now feels something she hasn't in years – hope.

Over the course of the past four months, Jessica has blossomed. It wasn't easy, but through intensive therapy and hard work, Jessica is on a path toward a healthy, safe, and happy future. What was lost has been found, and the hope she feels is like a burst of sunlight on a cloudy day.

We are thankful to YOU for **imagining** what Jessica's life was like; **thinking** about how you can help; and, through your generosity, providing the means by which Jessica can find hope and **envision** a brighter tomorrow. These fragile children need our community and your contributions allow us to give them a safe place to live, clothing, food, education, comfort, much-needed therapy, and hope. **Her heroic efforts have paid off.**



BE A  
HERO

## DCCH **HEROES** Circle

You can join DCCH's Heroes Circle by signing up to make monthly donations to DCCH. It is super easy and you'll be part of a distinctive group of folks dedicated to sustaining the important programs that provide healing and hope to so many children and families in our community. But do not just take it from us!

### **Hear it from some of our current Heroes Circle members:**

"Why do I keep donating? I feel my monthly donation makes a difference. I like helping kids and think you are doing a good job with that and wish I could do more. I like feeling like I'm part something and helping people locally." – *Mike Mays*

"Supporting DCCH is a logical progression of our pro-life support, because DCCH cares for very vulnerable, high-risk children who are dealing with traumatic emotional and behavioral problems. These children are wounded and suffering through no fault of their own. DCCH's wrap-around services address the children's needs.

While most of us are not spending our time and talent to help with the children, we can help by donating some of our treasure. Providing the wrap-around services is expensive. DCCH is totally non-profit. There are no highly paid executives, or slush funds. The employees are dedicated individuals willing to make less money than they could probably make elsewhere. Some workers are volunteers. The children at DCCH are our symbolic and actual neighbors. We have a responsibility to them.

Making a monthly commitment does not require you to be well-off; it simply requires giving a regular amount that DCCH can count on when budgeting. The sky is the limit, but one way to budget can begin with a monthly commitment equal to your average cost of a dinner out. If your meals out are limited to an occasional meal at McDonalds or Arby's, then that can be the amount of your monthly donation. When your kids get out of school and the budget is not so tight, you can increase your commitment. If your income is reduced, just contact the DCCH about a change in your commitment.

There is a saying: 'You'll spend all the money in your pocket, and you'll fill all the space in your house — you never have enough no matter what you have.' So as not to spend 'all our money in our pocket' each month and have nothing left to donate, we simply have our donation automatically put on our credit card each month. This method of giving is as much a blessing to us as it is to the DCCH." – *Heroes Circle Member wishing to remain anonymous*

"Being raised and having spent most of my career in Northern Kentucky, I was fortunate to serve on many boards in the area, including Notre Dame Academy where I met Sister Jean Marie. She introduced me to DCCH and I could tell what a wonderful person she was and what a special organization DCCH was with so much to offer the community. In these days of "Lives Matter" I sincerely believe that children lives in particular matter and all children deserve love and affection.

Many have been helped by DCCH and I am happy that I can continue to support their efforts. After moving to Arizona in 1996 and being a part of several organizations here, I still have a special place in my heart for DCCH and it will continue to be a priority for my gifting.

Northern Kentucky is a special place with special people. I wish all of you health and happiness." – *Joe Middendorf*

**You are encouraged to sign up today!** Visit our website or call Sister Pamela Mae Geiger at 859/331-2040 Ext. 8413.



## Real Life **HEROES** Give Hope

The number of Kentucky children in out of home care is staggering. As of August 2, there were **9,625** children waiting for a safe foster home. **Over 1,300 of these children live right here in Northern Kentucky.** In May, June, and July alone we received 476 child referrals for placement with a foster family. The majority of children in need are older; in fact, children over 12 make up nearly a quarter of all referrals.



### That's where you come in!

DCCH is looking for real life heroes to open their hearts and homes to a young person in foster care. There are so many reasons to consider fostering or adopting an older child.

- They are active participants in their care and are able to express their needs and emotions in ways young children cannot.
- You get to play a huge role in helping prepare them for adulthood, sharing your wisdom and life experiences.
- There are still lots of “firsts” and milestones: first day of high school, first date, learning to drive, first job.
- You provide a much-needed example of a loving, responsible adult.
- No diapers or car seats required.
- Older children in a foster home often do better in high school and are more likely to attend college than those who age out. They are also less likely to face homelessness, unemployment, addiction, or incarceration.

### Can you give hope by becoming a real-life hero to an older child in foster care?

The DCCH Foster Care Team is training heroes to become foster and adoptive parents. For your safety, trainings are being conducted online. Foster parents receive 24/7 support from our dedicated Team. The need is great; you CAN do this...cape not required.



HERO families who've adopted or fostered-to-adopt.



**LEMONADE STAND**



**LEMONADE STAND**



**RAISING MONEY FOR OTHERS**



**OLYMPICS DAY**



**GLOW PARTY!!!**



**STAFF WITH MASKS**



# HERO

## Snapshots

**The McGuire children** sold lemonade and cookies from their stand this Summer to raise funds for DCCH! They were so proud to deliver their donation to Director of Foster Care, Ron Bertsch. We're so grateful for these young philanthropists!

**Glow Party:** Our Staff found creative ways to keep the fun flowing while taking care of our Residents. This party got "glowing" reviews.

**Olympics:** Staff put on the DCCH Olympics this Summer to keep our Residents active during the pandemic.

**Masked Heroes:** DCCH is committed to the health and wellbeing of our Residents and Staff. Thanks to generous supporters, like the Sisters of Notre Dame, every child and Staff member received homemade masks to wear while indoors.

**New Shoes:** Children often arrive at DCCH with shoes that are falling apart or don't fit. Recently, the Charities Guild of NKY and Joe's Shoes donated brand new shoes for each child in our Residential Treatment Program. Happy feet all around!

**Remembering Mr. Miller:** Tom Miller, son of beloved DCCH icon Bill Miller, dropped off an amazing painting created by his longtime friend, Karen Gibson. Mr. Miller was an enormous part of DCCH, and we're so pleased to hang his portrait in the Welcome Center where he volunteered every week.





VS



## Child Abuse Does Not Pause for **Pandemics**

He sits alone in the quiet. He is hungry. He is so afraid. He is waiting because he knows it will come. And then he hears the keys in the door and winces. Here it is - maybe some food, but definitely some pain.

It's September 4th and Jacob is 11 years old. He has been left home alone every day for the last 171 days since his school closed in March. He scrounges for food, roams the neighborhood, and tries to do his schoolwork. But he needs help, and his mom just is not there to help.

His mom was laid off from her job in April, but she still leaves the house for long periods of time. She started drinking, a lot. Jacob thinks maybe drugs too. When she does come home, she is always angry about something and he is the only target she has. Jacob suffers beatings and verbal abuse daily. He does not tell anyone because he would be embarrassed with his friends, and he is not around other adults he trusts during the day. So, he just takes it in silence.

There are so many children like Jacob who are suffering silently during this pandemic. The COVID-19 response has had unintended consequences – like children being left home alone, stress building up and parents lashing out with verbal or physical abuse, children without the two meals a day they got during school, parents at the end of their rope, children in harm's way.



Jacob's life changed quickly and unexpectedly when the virus hit town. Before "THE VIRUS" hit, his mom would lose her temper sometimes, but nothing like this. The stress of losing her job led to her drinking to "make it all go away." And Jacob's world has been jarred as a result. In a matter of months, everything he knew to be good and safe has turned to sad and scary. Hidden within the walls of Jacob's home, the abuse and neglect he is experiencing may not be identified by an authority until he is physically back in school. With children at home, it is more difficult for a neighbor, caregiver, teacher, or school counselor to report suspected abuse because they just are not around to identify at-risk children. According to the Brookings Institute, "...[because of] the shutdown of daycare facilities, after school programs and activities, and doctors' offices operating on a limited basis, children are essentially cut off from most, if not all, of the professionals who are responsible for detecting and reporting suspected maltreatment."

Not surprisingly, the numbers of reported child maltreatment allegations have plummeted, dropping in April by 54% over the same month in 2019. Experts believe it is not because child maltreatment has decreased, merely that it is not being reported. Some experts say the actual incidence of maltreatment has likely risen because of stressors being placed on parents and children because of the pandemic. There is an expectation that, once children are back to normal routines in school and outside activities, reported incidences will skyrocket.



### What can you do?

**Use YOUR VOICE.** Advocate for victims of child abuse and neglect like Jacob. Keep a keen eye out and, if you see something suspicious, report it. And pray for children and parents alike. These are unparalleled circumstances which can bring out the best, and worst, in humans. We pray that families find peace in their hearts, patience with each other, and solutions to daily problems they face.





## COVID Stress Syndrome – yes, it’s a real thing

### Coronavirus stressing you out?

You’re not alone. A study reported in June by *Psychology Today* says “the COVID-19 pandemic is causing unprecedented psychological distress, threatening a ‘crashing wave’ of mental health problems.”

**So, what’s on your mind?** Months of quarantine, school closures, school openings, being an essential employee, having to work-from-home, job loss, isolation, illness, information overload, fear of getting sick, mask anger, missing family and friends. We could go on but you know those the things that have you feeling anxious, depressed, or just plain awful.

Each of us is unique and we respond to stress in our own, personal ways. Some people are able to cope with stress better than others. They may have a higher tolerance for stress or have developed healthy ways of managing it. For many others, it’s not that easy and can lead to irritability, anger, and even violence.

Fortunately, **The Therapy Center at DCCH** is open for business and taking new patients. Visits are available in person, in a safely sanitized space using appropriate COVID precautions. You may feel more comfortable having a session via telehealth, and we are equipped for that as well. To make a confidential appointment, please call 859-331-0821.





## Our Unsung Heroes

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It is our pleasure to highlight some of the unsung heroes of DCCH. The third shift residential treatment employees who quietly and diligently care for our children overnight play a unique and special role. Read on to learn more and meet our dedicated **Third Shift Supervisor, Jennifer Justice:**



DCCH Hero Jennifer Justice

Here at DCCH, each staff member is a hero in their own way, wearing different capes to get the job done for our wonderful kiddos. Third shift staff are a bit different from the other two shifts. Because they work overnight with fewer additional staff than first and second shift, they rely on de-escalation skills, their rapport with the kids, and each other to address behavioral issues when they arise. Third shift staff are truly a close family. On night shift, staff face many challenges others don't understand: staying awake all night when your body wants to sleep; falling asleep or staying asleep when the shift is over; and finding coverage when staff is sick, because not many people want to work at night. In addition to helping the kids get to bed each night, third shift finishes up important paperwork and reports, and helps keep the living spaces clean and safe. It may be quiet most nights, but it is never slow.

Jennifer says, "I have been on third shift here at DCCH for four years; three and a half of those years as a Supervisor. I love my staff and the bond they have with each other and the kids. Truth is, I don't have some big degree like others have, but my heart is here. I came here as a Mom of three looking for a new job. Here I am four years later absolutely loving what I do and the time I get to spend with the amazing kids at DCCH. The kids we see come through our doors now are much harder to reach compared to when I first started, but we are still making a difference every day, and that's what matters most. The kids who come to DCCH need compassion and support so they can make it through the tough days. ALL staff do that, and they're ALL are heroes in their own way."

## Grants

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DCCH is so grateful for the support received from our community. Foundation grants play a huge part in our fundraising efforts, and we'd like to thank the following for their generosity:

Butler Foundation  
Charles and Ruth Seligman Family Foundation  
Charles H. Dater Foundation, Inc.  
Crosset Family Fund  
Daniel & Susan Pfau Foundation  
Delta Dental of Kentucky Foundation  
Dr. George E and Delores A. Renaker Charitable Foundation  
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Horizon Community Fund of Northern Kentucky  
Jack J. Smith Charitable Trust, PNC Trustee  
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Kentucky Speedway Children's Charities  
Magnified Giving  
Marge and Charles J. Schott Foundation  
Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project  
R.C. Durr Foundation, Inc.  
Sisters of Notre Dame  
The Andrew Jergens Foundation  
The TMC Community Impact Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation  
W.H. Albers Foundation



## Swing Into Spring!

To protect the safety and health of our donors and volunteers this spring, we made the decision to make “**Swing Into Spring 2020**” a virtual event. On Saturday June 27, “attendees” were able to bid on amazing auction items right from the safety of their home. Special thanks to our financial sponsors. Their funding has a significant impact on the services we provide. Without these wonderful businesses and agencies, we would not be able to change so many lives. Likewise, this night would not have been possible without the incredible Swing Into Spring Committee volunteers. They are the heart and soul of this event and work tirelessly to make everything perfect – and incredibly successful!



Save the date of **April 24** for **Swing Into Spring 2021** and visit our website for the latest updates!

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& laughter.*

*Teach about  
trust & love.*

*Read bedtime  
stories.*

*Give hope.*

*Provide care  
& comfort*



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