

This Is Why Children's Haven Exists; To Help Families In Need.

What kind of mother was I? I finally had everything I ever wanted, but now all I wanted to do was to get away from it all - at any cost.

I found out shortly into my marriage that children weren't going to come easy. My body didn't produce the correct hormones for everything to take place as it should. Over the next 4 years we tried the all simplest forms of infertility treatment - Clomid, IUI's, and hormone shots. Every month was an emotional rollercoaster; every negative pregnancy test was heartbreaking. In the 5th year I developed a cyst on my right fallopian tube, causing it to be removed. "Great," I thought to myself, "whatever slim chance I had before has now been cut in half." After healing, we were back on the fertility treatments. Still no luck. I was so disheartened after years of failure that had begun trying to imagine and come to terms with what our lives would be like without children. In the fall of 2010 my husband made a comment that got my wheels turning. "With all the money we've spent trying to get pregnant, we could have done In-Vitro by now!" I started doing some research and found a Doctor and Clinic with a very good success rate. After deciding that this was the only way we would be parents, we scraped, begged and borrowed to get the money we needed for the IVF. The 3 month process was very intense and demanding. But, we were blessed that it worked, the first time. Not only did it work but, we were having twins! We couldn't be happier!

I had a good pregnancy, except for a mild case of gestational diabetes toward the end, chalk it up to my crazy hormones not knowing their job. I had read every pregnancy/birth book I could get my hands on, I wanted to be prepared. My boys were born in early August via C-Section. Neither my husband nor I had any experience with babies. I did not feel the connection to the babies that I thought I would. One moment they were inside me and I knew them and loved them; and the next, they were these two helpless strangers that I was responsible for now. Over the next month my husband and I worked together as a team, feeding, changing and taking care of their basic needs. We knew it would be very tough and a big lifestyle change, and it was. He began to bond with them, but for me it was more of a chore. I started feeling trapped. Like I had not known what I was getting into and now I didn't want

any part of it. I likened it to a prison sentence - for the next 18 years, I am a slave to this bad decision. Sadness seemed to be dominating my emotions. I thought that I had a bit of the baby blues. My reading had suggested that every new mom goes through some degree of hormonal adjustment after having a baby. I was sleep deprived, I was constantly in tears and my outlook on life was getting darker and darker. I was beginning to have flashes of "bad thoughts" as I referred to them; thoughts and scenes of things accidentally happening to the babies. I confided my fears to my husband that maybe this was more than the baby blues. At his suggestion I called my OB and she started me on an anti-depressant. The nurse told me to be patient that the medicine can take up to 3 weeks to start working. A few days later my "bad thoughts" became more serious. Instead of accidents happening to the babies, my thoughts were of me harming the babies. This really scared me, I didn't think I was capable of carrying out such actions but then again I didn't think I was capable of having these thoughts either. I knew that if I actually did do something to them that I would not be able to live with myself afterward and therefore the thoughts included my demise as well. I just wanted my life to go back to the way it used to be, before the babies, when I was happy. My depression and sadness was so strong it physically hurt. I left the boys with my mother and went for a drive. I was crying uncontrollably as I drove to nowhere. I couldn't take it anymore! There had to be something modern medicine can do to make me feel better, and to make these "bad thoughts" go away, and sooner than 3 weeks, I need it now! I decided to go to my OB's office. I couldn't even say anything to the receptionist I was crying so hard, she immediately understood and ushered me back to speak with the nurses and soon the Doctor. I told them everything. They said I did the right thing to come to them, and that everything would be okay. The nurses took me across the street to the crisis counselor. I told her everything. They put me on a 96 hour hold, fearing that I could be a danger to myself and my babies. I had severe Post-Partum Depression. Children's Division was called in, too. During my 96 hours I began to feel better, but as soon as I was back at home, the feelings started coming back. The medicine still had not kicked in; it was just because I was away from the babies that I was feeling somewhat better. Children's Division

...Continued on page 2



...Continued from page 1

had set in place a Safety Plan with my husband and myself. I was not allowed to be alone with them, not allowed to make their bottles, not allowed to bathe them. I was useless, unable to care for my new children. My husband, god bless him, tried his best to take care of our twins and take care of me. But his strength was beginning to wane. When my husband and I felt as if we were drowning and all roads led to tragedy, I remembered from my employer's United Way presentations that a place called The Children's Haven existed, a place that assisted families in crisis. I looked them up on the internet, and called. They did not ask many questions, they did not pry or judge, they immediately opened their arms and hearts for my two little boys just 8 weeks old. The boys stayed at The Children's Haven for a week while my husband took care of me and I sought the help and medication I needed to correct my newfound chemical imbalance. I realized that I had been very sick. The person with those "bad thoughts" was not me. We visited every day, all the staff and volunteers were very caring and supportive, and we could easily tell that our children were well taken care of. When we were sure that the medicine was working and we were able to care for our boys again, we brought them home. The staff, again incredibly supportive, assured us that we were always welcome there. Anytime we needed help, they would again be our ray of light in a dark cave, as they had already been. Knowing that option exists lifts a great deal of stress from our situation.

Now I know I am back to my normal, happy self. I love my children more than I can say and they bring me great joy. I look back and shudder to think of what could have happened without the help of The Children's Haven. They truly provide an invaluable service to our community.

Executive Director Report

Holidays are a time when families strive to be together, reconnect, and enjoy each other's presence. For some, the holidays can also be the most stressful time of year. Who will protect the children when the stress becomes too much? Children's Haven is here 24/7, 365 days a year providing service to our community's greatest asset – the children. If you know of anyone who can use a little assistance with their "little wonders" this season, please be sure they are aware of the services we provide.



From our family to yours, Happy Holidays!

Stephanie Theis

Stephanie Theis, Executive Director



Employee Spotlight

Meet Our New Shift Leaders

Jen Busick began her employment with Children's Haven as a Child Advocate in October 2009. For the past two years our kids have enjoyed Jen reading stories, organizing creative recreational activities and preparing some of their favorite meals. She takes great pride in ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for the children during their stay. In October of 2011, Jen was promoted to Evening Shift Leader and will continue to be a familiar and friendly face to community members and families.



Briana Main began her employment at Children's Haven in August of 2011. Briana is a very hardworking, patient and dedicated employee. In addition to working at Children's Haven, she is currently pursuing training in Cross Cultural Ministry. Briana was promoted to Overnight Shift Leader in November 2011. Her kind and loving personality warmly welcomes area families in need.

Sam Short is a familiar face to weekend visitors, working most Saturdays and Sundays since February 2009. Sam is always calm and collected no matter how hectic the situation becomes. Also a full-time student at Missouri State University, he returns to Joplin every weekend to continue to provide nurturing and supportive care to our children. Sam was promoted in October 2011 to Weekend Shift Leader. His dedication and perseverance will continue to be an asset for area children and their families.



Helping Hands

Thank you to the following Helping Hands who have donated time, money and wish list items to Children's Haven. Every gift is appreciated.

If we've forgotten to list your name, please accept our apologies and more importantly, our thanks for your help!



- Access Family Care Pediatrics
- ADK Teachers Sorority
- Ambiance-Kerrie England
- American Family Charities, Inc.
- Angel Haggard
- Anne Sharp
- Anthony & Jennifer Warmoth
- Barry & Angela Sanborn
- Beimdiek Insurance
- Ben Sloma
- Bess Spiva Timmons Foundation
- Best Buy Employees
- Bethel Worship Center
- Bonnie Miller
- Brent Baker
- Buddy Benson
- Candy House Gourmet Chocolates
- Cardinal Scale Manufacturing
- Carol McDaniel
- Chad & Rachel Hensley
- Cheryl Calhoon
- Cheryl Glass
- Chick-Fil-A
- Children's Trust Fund
- Chinowth & Cohen Realtors
- Choice Marketing
- Church of the Nazarene Webb City
- C.J. Huff
- Clifford Carr
- Cloyd A. Carlin Charitable Trust
- Colleen Black
- Community Clinic of Joplin
- Community Foundation of the Ozarks
- Community Foundation of Southwest Missouri
- Con-way Truckload
- Cornerstone Physicians
- Crosslines Churches of Joplin
- Danielle Blizzard
- David & Naomi Meinershagen
- Deffenbaugh Industries
- Dixie Printing, Inc.
- Don Bennett
- Eagle Picher
- Edgar Freund-State Farm Insurance
- Elizabeth Dumm
- Emilie & Terry Keeton
- Empire District Electric Company
- Erie Community Foundation
- Eunice Leroy
- Faith Fellowship
- Finish Line Youth Foundation
- First Christian Church
- FOX 14-KFJX
- Four State Village People
- Freemans Auto Salvage
- Gary & Gretchen Jackson
- Gary McConnell
- General Mills
- Gerry Weaver
- Hiland Quality Checked Dairy Products
- Hillcrest Church of Christ
- Hometown Bank Employees-Carthage
- House of Hope
- Isabel's House
- Jarden Consumer Solutions
- John & Dorothy Vanderbol
- John & Geraldine Earwood
- Jonathan & Megan Sabo
- Joplin Area Welcome Club
- Joplin Elks Lodge #501
- Joplin Family Y
- Joplin Leased Housing Corporation
- Joplin Lions Club
- Joplin Supply Company
- Joy Spiva Craigin Charitable Trust
- Kayleen Seidl
- Keller Williams Realty
- Kelsey Norman Elementary School
- Kim Clements
- Kim & Ryan Flanagan
- Kim Higdon
- Kirk Williams
- KOAM-TV
- KODE
- KSNF
- Kuhn Foundation
- Larry & Cathy McDonald
- Lemons Charitable Trust
- Les Gagnantes Investment Club
- Leslie & Keith Henning
- Lube-N-Oil West 7th
- Maggie Tate
- Matt Trumbore
- Michael & Bernice Robinson
- Mike & Vicki Hensley
- Miss Missouri Sydney Friar
- Missouri Foundation for Health
- Missouri Prayer Global Mission
- Missouri Recorders of Deeds
- Nancy Yust
- Norma Walsh
- NUK USA LLC
- Olive Garden Restaurant
- Outlaw Restaurant
- Ozarks Center-Healing Joplin
- Ozark Community Hospice
- PJC Insurance Agency Employees
- Pat & Cate Loch
- Pat & Sharon Meredith
- Patsy Hopper
- Paul Kahn
- Phyllis Morgan
- Project Linus
- Pro100 Realtors
- Racine Christian Church
- R.C.W.W. & Associates
- R&S Heating
- Recorder of Deeds-City of St. Louis
- Rev. Linda Pagel-United Methodist Church
- Richard Krause
- Rhonda Knuckles
- RockTenn
- Ronald McDonald House
- Ronald O. Thomas Foundation
- Ronald Robson
- Round It Up America
- Disaster Relief
- Route 66 Carousel Park
- Sam's Club #6415
- Salvation Army
- Sarah Meador
- Save the Children
- Schrell Hopkins
- Second Chances-Lafayette House Resale Store
- Shelly McIntyre
- Sonic Drive-In - 7th & Maiden Lane
- South Joplin Christian Church-Christian Women's Fellowship
- Stacy Moss
- Steve Junkins
- Susan Burke
- Susan Wray
- Taylor Chapel United Methodist Church
- Ted & Dee Sager
- Theresa Carver
- The Alliance of SW Missouri
- The Church of God of Prophecy
- The Lettershop
- The TJX Foundation, Inc.
- Town & Country Quilters
- Tri-State Human Resources Association
- Union High School-Union, NJ
- United Community Fund of Neosho
- United Way of SW MOSEK
- Voices Youth Program
- Wal-Mart #13 (Carthage)
- Wal-Mart #59 (15th & Range Line)
- Wal-Mart #79 (7th Street)
- Wal-Mart #267 (Webb City)
- Wal-Mart Foundation-State Giving
- Wayne Martin
- Weaver Family Foundation
- Wendy's Restaurant
- Wendy Wright
- Whitney Gallagher
- William L. Abernathy Charitable Trust
- William Perry III
- Winger Auto Repair
- Xpedx
- Zuckerman Community Outreach Foundation



701 South Picher • Joplin, Missouri 64801
417.782.4453 • 866.594.2836 childrenshaven@att.net

Return Service Requested



If you are receiving duplicate copies of this newsletter, please contact Amy at 417-782-4453, so that we may update our mailing list.

OUR MISSION
Children's Haven will provide temporary shelter to children in a safe, secure environment while their parents resolve a family crisis.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul Kahn, President
Cardinal Scale Mfg.

Kelly Wilson, Vice President
Missouri Southern State University

Bryan Davis, Secretary
General Mills

Charlie Davis, Treasurer
Baker Davis Roderique

Cindy Weaver Campbell, Past President
St. John's Mercy Regional Medical Center

Brent Baker, *Empire District Electric Co.*

Eric Day, *Freeman Health System*

Leasa Frye, *Vatterott College*

Michael D. Landis, *Landis Construction*

Brian Lorimer, *Arvest Bank*

Garen McMillian, *Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC*

Jeff Meredith, *Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce*

Lisa Nelson, *Freeman Health System*

Lisa Paugh, *Department of Social Services - Children's Division*

Stephanie Theis, MSW, LCSW - Children's Haven Executive Director

Wish List

ITEMS NEEDED ON A REGULAR BASIS:

- Pajamas
- Socks
- Underwear
- Individually wrapped snacks
- Batteries (all sizes)
- Household supplies (toilet paper, paperplates, cleaning supplies, etc.)
- Gift cards (for individual child's needs, fuel for vehicles).
- Monetary donations of any size are also much appreciated.
- Volunteers to donate casseroles ready to heat.
- Your warm thoughts and prayers as we fulfill our mission.

Check out our Wish List registries at your local Wal-Mart, Target or Toys R Us stores (also available on their websites) for updated children's wish lists throughout the year. Search us by using **Children's** as first name and **Haven** as last name.