



SPRING 2025

# Community Voice

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*Partnering for safe and healthy communities.*





## Following a Strategic Path To The Future

**In 2024, Cornerstones of Care launched the first year of a new strategic plan by planting the seeds of supporting children and families through innovative means and exploring diverse funding opportunities to provide care.**

Last year began with the reopening of our renovated Path House, which provides supervised living for teenagers as they transition from foster care, while our Build Trybe program received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to provide marketable skills for youth interested in conservation. The year ended by securing an \$8 million

grant to provide mental and behavioral health services at five Kansas City metropolitan area early childhood education centers. The grant, provided through the Anchors of Tomorrow Fund, creates an opportunity for us to lean into our mission of prevention and support families as they work through trauma at the earliest possible stages.

*As part of our trauma-informed care, Cornerstones of Care adheres to seven key commitments, including social responsibility. It is defined as a nurturing, safe, and caring community fostering shared responsibility in decision-making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Each of the three instances I mentioned above requires collaboration from partners working at a high level to accomplish big goals.*

The work at the early childhood education centers is just beginning through the fund started by the Hall Family Foundation. The project provides therapy and other supports to children, families, and caregivers at the sites. We will work closely with the University of Missouri-Kansas City, which is tracking project results, and coordinating training opportunities with MidAmerica Nazarene University for those working in child education and welfare.

One of the goals of this project is to ensure that children are ready for kindergarten. We are pleased that behavioral and mental health are valued as an important part of school

readiness. When children feel safe and healthy, they have a greater opportunity to learn.

The Path House project required community partners, our board members, and for-profit support to renovate our Midtown house to provide living space for up to 10 youth who are learning to live independently as they become adults. It truly took a village to upgrade the aging house and make it a home for our youth.

Build Trybe continues to teach marketable skills in building, culinary, and conservation trades. Last year's support from the EPA was compounded by additional funding from the Missouri

Department of Conservation, and the project was enhanced through our relationship with the Heartland Conservation Alliance. Through their support, we are working with our youth, who are beginning to appreciate nature and looking forward to careers to preserving wildlife spaces.

As we enter the second year of our strategic plan, we will continue to find innovative ways to support children and families, identify unique funding opportunities to build support, and partner to build safer, healthier communities.

Merideth Rose, President and CEO



## Early Childhood Project Begins at Five Centers

Cornerstones of Care is hiring a few remaining staff positions to lead the Early Childhood Mental Health Collective, a project that addresses the growing community need for mental health services in early childhood settings.

The project is funded through an \$8 million grant from the Anchors of Tomorrow Fund to provide mental and behavioral health services to children and families at five early education centers on both sides of the state line in metropolitan Kansas City. The goal is to build the critical connection between strong mental health and kindergarten readiness, offering supports for both children and their caregivers.

The three-year grant is from the fund established by the Hall Family Foundation. Through the grant, Cornerstones of Care will provide mental, emotional, and behavioral health services at each early childhood center for children at the site, their parents, and caregivers.

Team members are getting to know staff at five early childhood centers: El Centro, Emmanuel, EarlstART, Educare, and Operation Breakthrough. The team members, including some who are bilingual in English and Spanish, will also spend time in classrooms building relationships.

“The work funded through this grant leans into our

focus on prevention and providing trauma-informed care before things become too overwhelming,” said Cornerstones of Care President and CEO Merideth Rose.

.....  
*“This is exactly the work Cornerstones of Care wants to do in support of children and families, and to build a safer, healthier community in metropolitan Kansas City.”*  
.....

As part of the project, early childhood program staff will be trained to identify conditions that optimize or weaken early infant and young child brain development and to recognize conditions that require the assistance of parents and service providers.

Cornerstones of Care will collaborate with the University of Missouri-Kansas City to provide interns and apprentices, technical assistance and support, coaching, evaluation, and endorsements from the UMKC Institute for Human Development.

Cornerstones of Care also will partner with MidAmerica Nazarene University to train a cohort of mental health care providers in play therapy and provide required supervision and certification for Registered Play Therapists. MidAmerica Nazarene University agreed to create the training program for bachelor's level mental health care providers to grow in their profession. ■



## Gift In-Kind Opportunities

Did you know when youth come into foster care, they often only have the clothes they are wearing? Our clothing and hygiene closets provide comfort by offering them new clothes, personal care items, and fresh bedding that bridge the gap until they're settled in with their new families.

Our inventory of hygiene products, new clothing, and new bedding is nearly empty. We need your help restocking these essential supplies.

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Body Wash
- Period Products (feminine hygiene)
- Deodorant
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste
- Sunblock 30 or higher
- Diapers (all sizes)

Scan the QR code to view our Amazon wishlist.



## Volunteers in Action



Top: *Burns and McDonnell* dropping off donations of new clothing, household items, coats, and bedding.

Right: Picking up period products from *Giving Hope and Help* to stock our hygiene closets throughout the metro area.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

APR 25-26

**THYME FOR KIDS PLANT SALE**  
*Cornerstones of Care Ozanam Campus Greenhouse*

MAY 7

**TEE IT UP FORE THE KIDS**  
*Topgolf Overland Park*

AUG 8

**BRIGHT LIGHTS, NEON NIGHTS**  
*Cornerstones of Care Gillis Campus School Gym*

SEPT 20

**DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
*Thornfield Disc Golf Course*

## How You Can Make a Difference: Volunteer with Cornerstones of Care



**Y**ou know the saying—it takes a village! At Cornerstones of Care, we see this in action every day. Volunteers are essential to our mission of creating safe and healthy communities, and we couldn't do what we do without them.

We welcome individuals, families, and groups of all sizes to get involved. With three main locations in the Kansas City metro area, there are plenty of opportunities to volunteer on both sides of the state line. Whether you want to give back for a day or make a long-term impact, we have a variety of ways to get involved.

One of our greatest needs is mentors for our expanding programs on the Ozanam Campus and within the Pathways Transitional Living Program. Our mentorship program is designed to build meaningful, healthy, one-on-one relationships with youths. Mentors are encouraged to visit their mentee at least once a week to provide consistent, reliable, and supportive guidance. Being a mentor is truly a fun and life-changing experience for both the mentor and the young person!



Ozanam Campus Mentors support youth ages 9-18 through activities like games, outdoor fun, or arts and crafts.

Pathways Mentors help older youth (16-23) who are aging out of foster care by teaching them life skills like grocery shopping, career planning, and financial literacy.

A little encouragement and time can go a long way. Mentors play a crucial role in helping young people develop confidence, stability, and the skills they need to build a bright future.

Get Involved Today! You can sign up for our volunteer eNews at [cornerstonesofcare.org/newsletter](https://cornerstonesofcare.org/newsletter).

Volunteer opportunities and mentoring can be coordinated through Lea Loudon, Community Engagement Manager. Email [Lea.loudon@cornerstonesofcare.org](mailto:Lea.loudon@cornerstonesofcare.org), call 913-242-4284, or visit our website via the QR code to sign up. You can also invite us to community events to help spread the word and recruit more volunteers.

Together, we can make a lasting impact. ■



## Volunteer Opportunities

Become a mentor.

Play kickball with youth in residential treatment and share a meal together.

Beautify a campus through gardening, landscaping, or painting projects.

Organize a clothing closet to help ensure kids have what they need.

Support special events as a volunteer.

Become a holiday elf at NASB's North Pole event in December.

Join our Cornerstones of Care Champions young professional program and advocate for our mission year-round.



**JOIN US TODAY!**

Scan the QR code for more information or to sign up.



# A Record-Breaking Night of Impact



Savor the Sound 2025 was an unforgettable evening of music, culinary artistry, and generosity, which culminated in a record-breaking \$261,068 raised in support of Cornerstones of Care’s Build Trybe program.

With the theme Embers, the night celebrated how small sparks can ignite lasting change for the youth we serve. Guests were immersed in a sensorial experience that blended artistry and purpose, fueled by an unwavering commitment to community.

We want to thank our Presenting Sponsor, NASB, as well as our Black Walnut Sponsors, Turner Construction and True North Outdoor, whose leadership and generosity made the night possible. We are also grateful

for the support of additional sponsors, volunteers, and donors, whose contributions fueled this remarkable evening and the mission behind it.

The evening’s culinary excellence was led by Chef Celina Tio, alongside Chef Consultant Katee McLean, and Pastry Chef Darius Thompson, whose creations added depth and flavor to an already extraordinary night.

The event’s magic continued with a captivating performance by Calvin Arsenia, whose talent brought unforgettable energy to the celebration. A special thank you to the incredible musicians who joined him, adding even more beauty and soul to the night.

A night like this wouldn’t have been possible without the generosity, passion, and

strategic behind-the-scenes contributions of Michael Jones and Kirk Kaiser, who played a pivotal role in bringing everything together.

At the heart of it all were the youth of Build Trybe, whose passion and hard work shaped the evening from start to finish. They contributed to the menu, prepared and served dishes alongside top chefs, shared their handcrafted products with guests, and brought the event to life with their creativity and dedication. Savor the Sound is not just for them—it is because of them.

To every sponsor, volunteer, donor, guest, artist, and supporter—thank you. Because of you, these embers of hope will continue to burn brightly, igniting transformation for years to come. ■

# Plant Sale Sponsors Support Programs and Receive Perks



There’s still time to sponsor this year’s Thyme for Kids Plant Sale to help us ensure that youth in our horticulture and Build Trybe programs gain hands-on learning experiences, confidence, and skills to build a brighter future.

Our plant sale sponsors will receive recognition signage in the greenhouse, a special gift decorated by Cornerstones of Care youth, and exclusive early access to make purchases before anyone else. Once sponsors take their sneak peak, the Plant Sale is open to the public starting at 9a.m. on April 25 and 26 at the Ozanam Campus greenhouse, 421 E. 137 St. in Kansas City, Mo. All are welcome to attend and purchase flowers, herbs, and vegetables for their home or garden!

Youth at Ozanam Campus and the Build Trybe Conservation-Landscaping and Seed-to-Plate programs

are involved in growing the plants and preparing for the sale. Horticulture therapy at the Ozanam Campus day treatment school gives students time to spend in the greenhouse and teaches them caring and nurturing skills.

The Conservation-Landscape program teaches youth marketable skills in landscape and conservation trades, including identifying native plants, removing invasive plant species, and caring for the environment. The Seed-to-Plate program provides youth marketable skills in the culinary industry and highlights basic cooking skills and healthy habits. Youth in the program gain an understanding of how the food we grow becomes the food we eat.

Learn more about sponsorship opportunities at [cornerstonesofcare.org/plantsale](https://cornerstonesofcare.org/plantsale) or email [Stefanie.Caravella@cornerstonesofcare.org](mailto:Stefanie.Caravella@cornerstonesofcare.org) for more details. ■

## 2025 GOVERNING BOARD

- Jennifer Seyller, Board Chair  
*Mayo Clinic*
- Mo Awad  
*Evergy*
- Bill Gassen  
*Bank of America*
- Kyle Tritsarolis  
*H&R Block*
- Ryan Bennett  
*VanTrust Real Estate*
- Patrick McCullough  
*Hallmark Business Solutions*
- Nathan Turner  
*Burns & McDonnell*
- Hayley Cacioppo  
*emfluence*
- Dr. Jason Moss  
*MyoCore*
- Claudia Vazquez-Puebla  
*Kansas City Board of Public Utilities*
- Elizabeth Williams  
*Community Volunteer*
- Dr. Yvette Richards  
*St. James United Methodist Church*
- Alexandria Zacny  
*Turner Construction*
- Kim Ford  
*Community Volunteer*
- Darron Story  
*Westminster Presbyterian Church*

## 2025 FOUNDATION BOARD

- Brian Stewart, Board Chair  
*Kansas City Orthopedic Alliance*
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*Somerset Ridge Winery*
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*Community Volunteer*
- Nika Sien  
*Real Broker LLC*
- Christine Leyva  
*Infinitas LLC*
- Marceda Starks  
*Hardwick Law*
- Ryan Miller  
*The Miller Group*
- Bryan Moore  
*MarksNelson Advisors*

## SHARE THE LOVE ALL YEAR

Through our Share the Love monthly giving program, we offer a seamless way to help build safe, healthy communities alongside Cornerstones of Care through automated monthly donations.

Go to [cornerstonesofcare.org/monthlygiving](https://cornerstonesofcare.org/monthlygiving) and sign up today.







8150 Wornall Road, Kansas City, MO 64114

Partnering for *safe* and *healthy* communities.

- Youth & family support
- Foster care & adoption
- Education & training

1-844-824-8200 | [cornerstonesofcare.org](http://cornerstonesofcare.org)

We'd like to thank the following funders without whom our work could not be done:

- Children Services Fund of Jackson Co.
- St. Louis County Children's Service Fund
- Jackson Co. Community-Backed Anti-Drug Tax (COMBAT)
- Jackson Co. Community Mental Health Fund
- Mo. Dept. of Economic Development: Neighborhood Assistance Program
- Mo. Dept. of Economic Development: Youth Opportunities Program
- Children's Services Fund of Clay County
- United Way of Greater Kansas City



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
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Kansas City, MO  
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Requested

  
CORNERSTONES  
OF CARE

YELLOWSTONE NIGHTS

★  
★  
★  
★  
★

SPIRIT  
GALA

NOVEMBER 7, 2025

★★★  
HOSTED BY OUR  
HONORARY CHAIRS  
★★★



Jeff Westmeyer



Scott Hefner

Cornerstones of Care's Annual Spirit Gala is returning to the Overland Park Convention Center this year with a Western-chic theme: Yellowstone Nights.

Whether you choose to wear black tie or your finest cowboy boots, expect an unforgettable evening hosted by honorary chairs Scott Hefner and Jeff Westmeyer of Bukaty Companies.

As dedicated advocates for community well-being, Jeff and Scott are committed to supporting children and families in need. Their leadership and passion for service makes them a vital part of this event, which celebrates those who positively impact the lives of others. Through their work, Jeff and Scott champion the mission of Cornerstones of Care and the transformative work we do for vulnerable children and families in the community.