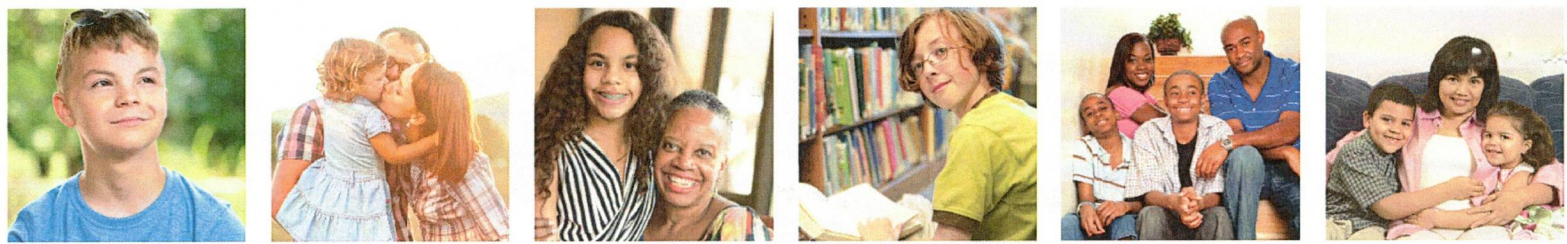


Home for children. Hope for families.

FY24 Impact Report

860 NW Vaughn Road
Bentonville, AR 72713
nwacs.org

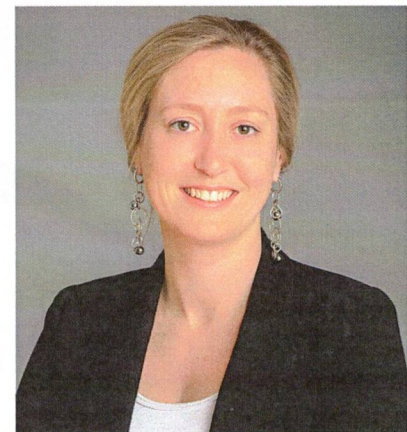


Home for children. Hope for families.

At the time of our opening in 1993, our mission was simple: protect and support children. Over the past 30 years, that protection has expanded from a safe place to sleep to three specialized programs that cater to the unique needs of each child and teen who walks through our doors.

As the needs of the children change, NWACS continues to grow and adapt - offering residential, trauma-informed care; education; mental health services; medical and dental care; life skills training, and opportunities for typical childhood experiences. These programs are designed to end the cycle of child abuse and create a brighter future for our most vulnerable children and their families.

In 2023, we embarked on a strategic planning process, to determine how we can best serve children, from throughout the state, who have experienced significant trauma. Through this process, we reflected on our past success, leveraging our legacy as a cornerstone and looking ahead to revise our vision. Our new tagline, "**Home for children. Hope for families,**" embodies our aspiration to refine our brand and multi-generational approach.



Rebekah Mitchell, CEO
Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter

State and federal legislation supports the ideal that every child should be raised by family - and we certainly agree. For the majority of the more than 4,000 Arkansas youth currently in the foster care system, returning to their family of origin is the absolute priority. However, for children who have been physically, sexually or mentally abused by a parent or caregiver, reunification may not be safe.

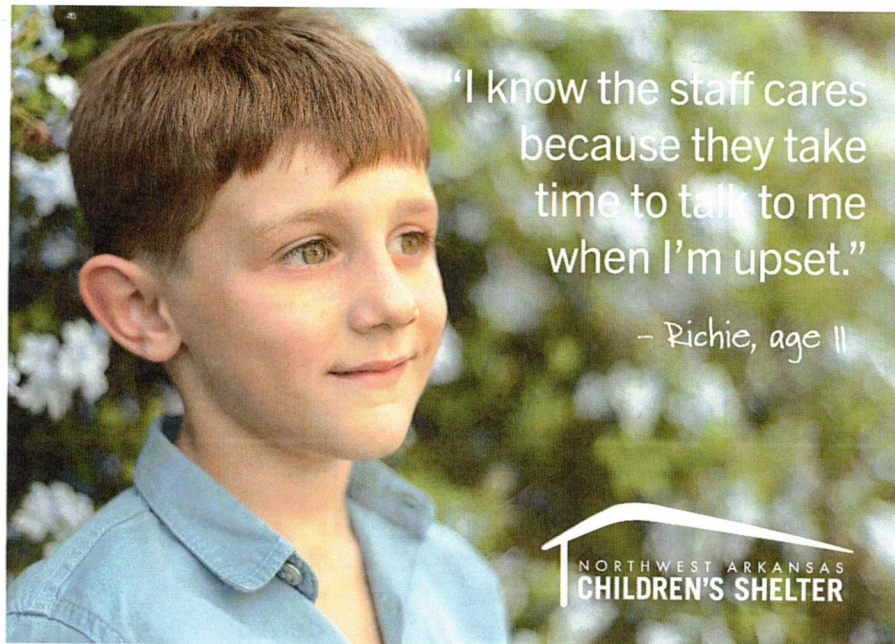
We exist for these children.

For youth currently in the foster care system with no foster home available.
For youth aging out of foster care who face adulthood without the benefit of any support or guidance.
And for those families who are struggling with generational trauma, or those who are striving to support the children they are currently fostering or have adopted.

Thank you for standing with us to support these families. Your gifts, your time, your advocacy allow us to do the heavy work of ensuring every child in Arkansas receives the love and support they deserve.

Your partner in this mission,





"I know the staff cares because they take time to talk to me when I'm upset."

- Richie, age 11

Richie

Richie* came into foster care after it was discovered that his school attendance was irregular. His homework was never complete, his clothes were dirty and he was very hungry. Upon further investigation, it was found that Richie's mother was struggling with addiction and was unable to care for him. He was alone in the home most of the time, with easy access to drugs, alcohol and weapons. He frequently left the house, unsupervised, for hours at a time. He was doing his best to take care of himself and survive so he wouldn't get his mom in trouble.

He was only 9 years old.

Richie is now in the care of the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter where he receives three meals a day, a safe place to sleep, counseling, medical and dental services and a caring staff who are available 24/7 to meet his needs. He attends school on-site at Horizon Academy where he receives individualized instruction to help make up for years of educational neglect.

Richie loves being outside, listening to music and playing video games. His favorite food is chicken fingers and he has a smile that lights up the room. His future is much brighter - thanks to you!

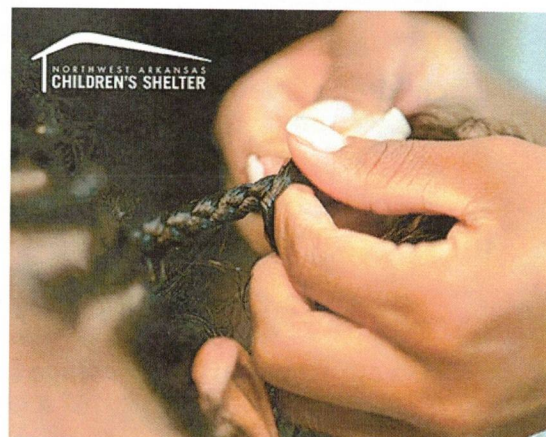
Your generosity provided a safe haven for Richie, Tori and hundreds of children just like them last year. Since 1993, more than 13,250 children and teens have found hope at the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter. It's not possible without **you**.

*names and photos changed to protect the privacy of our youth

Tori

After years of exploitation, Tori* was rescued from a life of child trafficking. When Tori arrived at the Shelter, her braids had been glued to her scalp, and the back of her head was completely matted. Because her traffickers had required her to look and dress a certain way, she had little control in her appearance and her hair had not been taken care of properly. Frustrated and embarrassed, Tori told our staff they could just cut it all off.

Instead of cutting it, our staff worked for hours to remove the knots and give her fresh new braids - encouraging her to choose the style she wanted after a lifetime of being told how she should wear her hair. Thanks to the generous donations of braiding hair and multicultural hair care products that we received from our generous donors, our staff were able to help Tori begin to regain the confidence she had lost. She has a long way to go, but this is one small step on her path of healing.

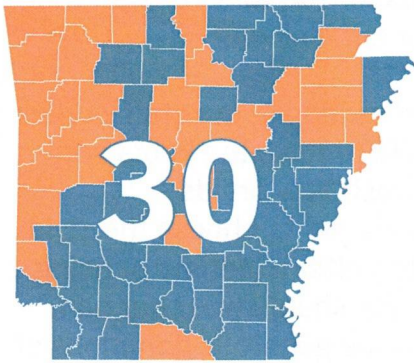


NORTHWEST ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S SHELTER



July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

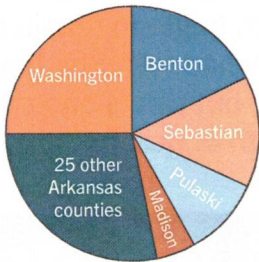
Residential Services



counties served by NWACS in FY24



143,160



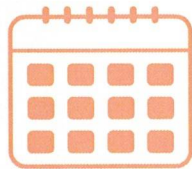
children served by county



4,908 volunteer hours



25 birthday parties



25.5 average length in days of a child's stay

Nutrition and Health Services



32,963 meals



597 medical appointments



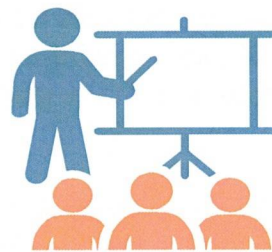
164 dental appointments

Training and Education

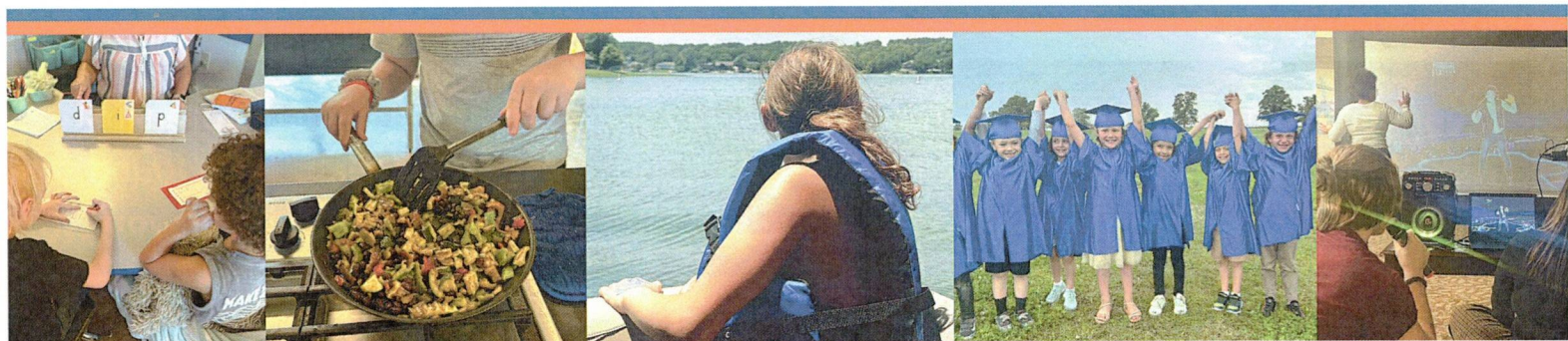


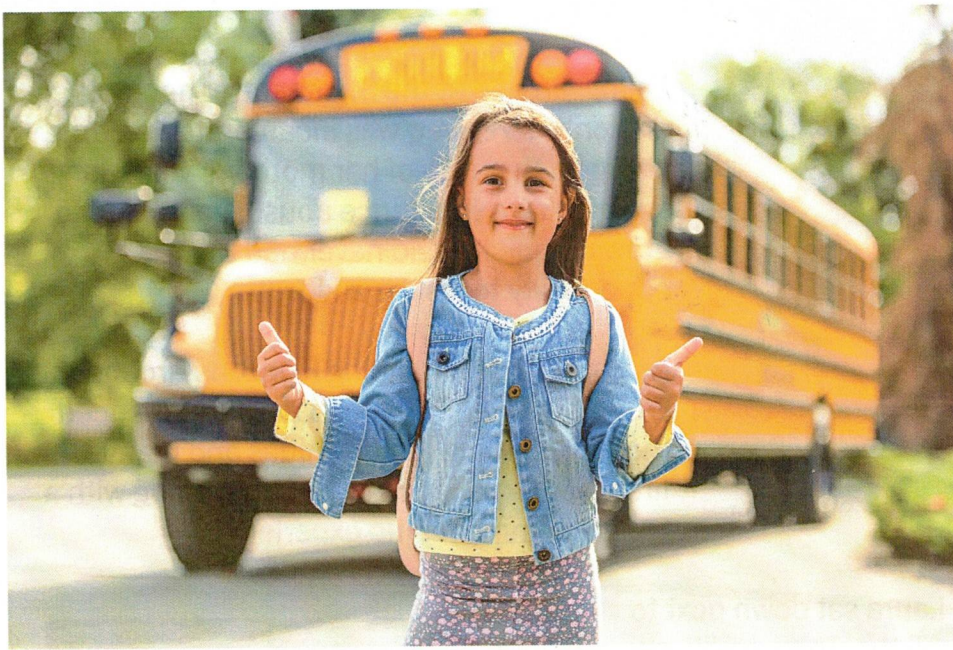
263

students received trauma-centered education at Horizon Academy and Hope Academy



2,997 hours of training provided for NWACS employees





Clara

Generational trauma within her family causes Clara* to struggle with healthy attachment and anxiety. School has been a challenge for her since her very first day of Kindergarten. She would often react to school with a fight or flight response, usually the former, refusing to get out of her car in morning drop off line. Frequent absences led to her family being assigned a probation officer.

Then, her mother discovered Hope Academy. Despite past disappointments, and the fear that her child would forever be labeled as a problem, Clara's mother took a leap of faith. She was promised that her child would be safe, loved and understood at Hope Academy. However, she still dreaded dropping Clara off on the first day of school.

But Hope Academy was different. With a staff fully trained in trauma-centered education, they understood that Clara just needed some gentle persuasion, a little extra time, and a few cheering staff members to guide her into her new classroom. Recognizing her teacher from a previous meeting, she joined her classmates in her new classroom and settled in. Her mother left for work but carried a heaviness in her heart - just waiting for the inevitable phone call from the school.



209

hours focused on family engagement events and activities

Instead of a phone call, Clara's mother received a photo - it was Clara, smiling and standing tall next to her teacher. Her mother confessed that, due to her daughter's struggles, she had never had the chance to capture a first-day-of-school photo. With this small gift, the Hope Academy team gave her a glimpse of hope and the knowledge that she was no longer alone in advocating for her child.

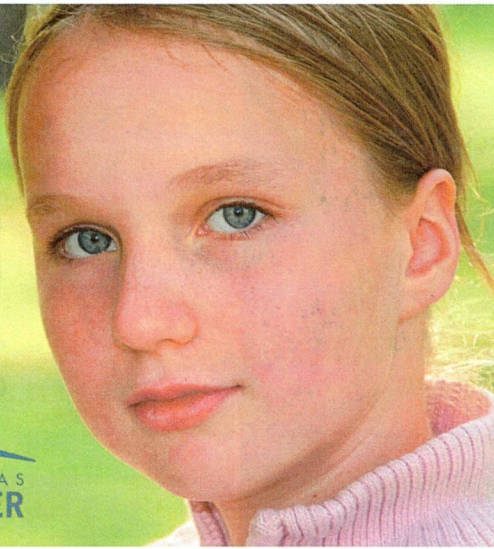


"The staff are amazing at communicating and being there to support your child as well as the parents. The love they poured into my child during his hard times totally shows still to this day. My son is now thriving at his public school after finishing Hope Academy. I couldn't be more thankful for the staff at Hope Academy as they continue to check up on us even though we no longer attend there."

-Desirae, mother of Hope Academy graduate

"I've never felt safe and cared for the way I do here."

Laura, age 11



Laura

Laura* arrived at the Shelter after her mother, and only caregiver, was incarcerated on drug charges. Because of her mother's years-long struggle with substance abuse, Laura had to grow up quickly and never had the opportunity to just be a kid.

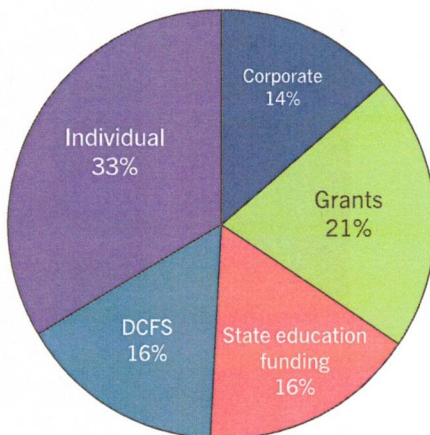
As part of our Expanding Horizons Around the World Summer Program, Laura experienced the fun, learning opportunities and many first-time experiences that come along with a typical summer camp experience.

At a recent volunteer appreciation cookout, Laura sat down next to our volunteers and began thanking them for all that they do. "I've never felt safe and cared for the way I do here. I've only been here one week and I've had lots of firsts already! I got to go on a boat on the lake for the first time, I went tubing, I saw a waterfall, I went camping and I'm having my first cookout right now. Thank you for coming out and doing volunteer stuff here. Thank you for making time for kids like me."

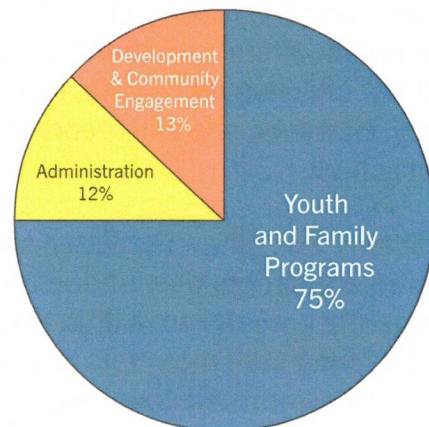
"Thank you for making time for kids like me."

- Laura

*name and photo changed to protect the privacy of our youth



Revenue



Expenses

Since 1993, the Northwest Arkansas community has given hope to thousands of Arkansas' children by supporting the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter through financial gifts, volunteer time, advocacy and event support. Because of you, the Shelter is available for these kids when they need us the most. To learn more about how you can help, visit nwacs.org or scan the code.

