

# OUR LITTLE NEWS



S P R I N G 2 0 2 2

## 1993-2023 A YEAR OF CELEBRATION



I N T H I S I S S U E :

**MY SPOT AT THE FAMILY TABLE**

**FORMER OLH STAFF MEMBER  
FOLLOWS CALLING TO SERVE**



Read about James and Tiffanie Fowlkes-Comninellis and their work with Our Little Haven on pages 6 & 7.

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# KIDS, COOKIES, & COMMUNITY

Our Little Haven believes that when we're born, God gives us a Cookie Jar. With each positive experience – every hug, each high-five, every success – we get a cookie in our Cookie Jar.

At about ten years old (the ending of our formative years) our Cookie Jar gets sealed up. And, what we have in our Jar is what nurtures us for the rest of our lives. Now, most of our Cookie Jars are pretty full. The Haven kids do not have any cookies in their jars and it's our honor to invite the community to fill them.

That's what YOU do - YOU help fill Cookie Jars!



## OUR MISSION

*Our Little Haven is relentlessly committed to providing early intervention services for children and families. Our community of professional caregivers create a safe, secure, and healing environment for those impacted by abuse, neglect, and mental or behavioral health needs. We make the hurting stop, the healing begin, and the love last, one family at a time.*

# OUR LEADERSHIP

**P. Scott Hummel, MSW, PhD (HON)**  
Executive Director

**Kathleen Hummel, MSW, PhD (HON)**  
Therapeutic Director Emeritus

**Michael P. Bahlinger**  
Director of Finance & Operations

**Dr. Lizette Smith, PhD**  
Director of Clinical Programs

**Chris Muñoz, MA, CFRE**  
Associate Director

**William Newbold,**  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

## BOARD MEMBERS

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- |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Robert and Anne Golterman | Matthew McGrath   |
| Maleen Corrigan           | Christine Newbold |
| Maureen Heitmann          | Kent White        |

## IN MEMORIAM

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Dr. Peter Hummel | John Seiler            |
| George Kloster   | Rev. Robert Weiss S.J. |

# THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

## PROFESSIONAL GUIDES FOR THE OLH MISSION

Since 1993, Our Little Haven has relied on the guidance and leadership of our community leaders to help direct the Mission and efforts. Our Little Haven is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who seek counsel and advice from a volunteer Board of Trustees. To further advance the work of the OLH Mission, Directors and Trustees, OLH developed an Advisory Council. The Advisory Council members are community leaders from diverse backgrounds and professional careers who are willing to lend their time and talents. The Council is in place to help guide the OLH Staff and Volunteer Leadership in regard to the numerous issues that arise from the business of delivering care for OLH's kids and families: operations, accreditation, governance, advocacy, finance, marketing, and human resources. By sharing their expertise, the Advisory Council helps OLH provide the professional early-intervention services our children and families are seeking.

### Meet the Our Little Haven Advisory Council:



#### Keith Creech

Keith is the Vice President for Investments at Stifel. His knowledge of financial advising and planning assists Our Little Haven as a member of the Planned

Giving Committee, supporting a sustainable future for Our Little Haven.



#### Rosalind Early

Rosalind is the Editor-in-Chief of the Riverfront Times. She assists Our Little Haven in crafting our message and promoting our Mission in both internal and local publications.



#### Michael Hotz, CFA

Mike is a Director with Asset Consulting Group. He serves on the Our Little Haven Administration and Development Performance and Quality Improvement

Committee as an external member offering advice and insights to agency operations.



#### Gretchen Keller, LCSW

Gretchen is a Care Coordinator with Parkway Schools. Her experience as a counselor helps Our Little Haven implement practices that create an environment

where our team can provide the best care.



#### Michael Kemp

As the President of Oaktree Products, Michael shares his experience in the management of a small business and advises Our Little Haven in management and human resource efforts.

He serves on the Our Little Haven Golf Committee helping to plan and promote an event that raises significant funds to support the mission.



#### Christina Knuckles

Christina is a Vice President of Fund Management for Key Bank. Christina has supported Our Little Haven in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts and strategic planning initiatives.

**"Our Little Haven has always invited community leaders to work hand-in-hand with the OLH staff to make a powerful impact on the people we serve. OLH does not happen without the leadership and support of the community."**

– William O. Newbold, Chair  
OLH Board of Directors and Trustees



#### Tracey Ounanian

Tracey is co-owner of Wealth Agents, Real estate Investment Advisors. Tracey shares her expertise in Marketing and Communications with the Development team, helping

shape OLH's communication efforts.



#### Christian Regan

Christian is a Syndications Project Manager for US Bank Community Development Corporation. Christian and his family are foster parents in the St. Louis community and share

their experiences which help provide services at OLH's Taylor Family Care Center.



#### Justin Welpy

Justin is a Commercial Litigation attorney at SmithAmundsen. As a member of the Planned Giving Committee, he helps shape the message and process

surrounding Legacy Giving, securing a strong future for Our Little Haven.

## ATTENTION YOUNG PROFESSIONALS!

Our Little Haven has a unique approach to combining fun, fellowship, and philanthropy in support of the mission. For nearly 20 years, the group leading that charge is the Our Little Haven Young Professionals: The Haven Club. Over the past several years the Young Professionals have made even the dirtiest jobs look fun! Revamping the family kitchen at the Taylor Family Care Center, creating the Family Room at Our Little Academy, and most recently painting the entire first floor of the Robert F. Weiss, SJ Administration Building.

Interested in joining and leaving your mark on OLH? Know someone who may be interested in the Young Professionals? Visit our website where you can find out more and how to join.



# MY SPOT AT A FAMILY TABLE

It was pizza and leftover birthday cake for dinner the night I visited James and Tiffanie. There was my chair at their dinner table placed between the 5-year-old twins, SanTearr and Shamirr, across from 3-year-old Naomi, and 3-year-old Montrell. We held hands as the family sang their dinner song, a blessing James' mother used to sing at her family table long ago. I didn't know the song, but those kids didn't miss a beat.

This could have been pizza night in my family home. Pizza crusts piling up on little paper plates, the occasional spilled water, and plenty of extra napkins. Soon every kid previously excused from the dinner table quietly returned to their chairs when the cake appeared. Funny how dessert brings everyone back to the Table.

The love in that room was evident. The bond that James and Tiffanie built with these four small and energetic children is a gift to witness. This amazing couple are foster parents working with the foster care case management program

at Our Little Haven's Taylor Family Care Center. The family has received support and encouragement from the team here at Our Little Haven for over five years and through 14 foster placements.

In their "spare" time, Tiffanie is a biology teacher at Central High School in the Hazelwood district while James is a Coordinator for the Office of Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs at the Archdiocese of St. Louis. We talked about the children in their home, the role they play in their lives, and the impact Our Little Haven has had on their experience as foster parents.

Each program at Our Little Haven touches the lives of James, Tiffanie, and the children. Not only have they been working with our foster care program, but the children have also received care through Keystone Mental Health Services at Our Little Haven and attending Our Little Academy; where three of the young children have worked with our team each day.

"Taking care of higher needs children can be isolating because we have to approach our kiddos differently compared to other parents. Their behavior can be shocking to others at times. But when we talk to the team at Our Little Haven or Ms. Sarah at Our Little Academy, we know the children and our challenges are understood. We have rarely felt so affirmed in our parenting as when we have worked with the team at Our Little Haven."

For James and Tiffanie, the decision to become foster parents was easy. They like to share credit with the team at Our Little Haven for making it a special experience each time they welcome a child into their home. From their first visit with a case manager to their weekly check ins with Ms. Sarah at Our Little Academy, they know that Our Little Haven is there every step of the way.



**"We have rarely felt so affirmed in our parenting as when we have worked with Our Little Haven."**

– Tiffanie Fowlkes-Comninellis

My dinner that night with James, Tiffanie, SanTearr, Shamirr, Naomi, and Montrell was truly special. I couldn't wait to share their story with you. While there were a few slices of pizza left over for lunch the next day, we finished the cake.

James, Tiffanie, and the children will be joining us at the 2022 Our Little Haven Spring Gala. This year's theme is "Come to the Table" in honor of the Family Table in our homes where memories are made, stories are told, and love is shared. We invite you to join us on Saturday, April 30th at the Chase Park Plaza in celebration of Coming to the Table and the mission of Our Little Haven.

## INTERESTED IN FOSTERING?

Becoming a foster parent is a rewarding experience filled with ups and downs, good days and bad. All the while knowing you are caring for a child who truly needs all the love you have to share. Along the way, Our Little Haven is there with you. Should you be interested in becoming a foster parent or want to learn more about this rewarding experience, please contact Nicole Pashia at the Taylor Family Care Center at (314) 531-3183 Ext. 234 or npashia@ourlittlehaven.org

Our Little Haven works together with Saint Louis Partners, a consortium of four local child serving agencies, to recruit, train, and license foster homes. Foster families are always needed for sibling groups, older children, children of minority heritage, and those with special needs.

The Taylor Family Care Center at Our Little Haven welcomes families considering foster care and encourages you to visit [www.ourlittlehaven.org](http://www.ourlittlehaven.org) to learn more.

## Saint Louis Partners

Saint Louis Partners is a partnership made up of four child serving agencies and has been investing in the strength and stability of family through compassionate, comprehensive foster care and adoptive services.

Our primary goal for each child is to create a bridge home to permanence, anchoring a child in the rich and trusted love of family. Our primary partner in this effort is you, the foster parent.



# LEGACY GIVING

This Spring at Our Little Haven, the flowers planted will bloom, the garden flourish, and we will be ever grateful to our Charming Gardeners who help make our mission possible.

Legacy Giving at Our Little Haven is supported by individuals in our community who we affectionately refer to as our Charming Gardeners; friends who have identified Our Little Haven as a part of their estate and planned giving goals. Through these gifts, Our Little Haven will be able to sustain the compassion and care our team provides to numerous children and families for years to come.

There are several ways that our Charming Gardeners have designated the future of Our Little Haven as a part of their legacy. For more information or to notify Our Little Haven of your estate plans, please contact Chris Muñoz at [cmunoz@ourlighthouse.org](mailto:cmunoz@ourlighthouse.org) or (314) 669-9386.



Types of Gifts	Donor Benefits	The Impact Your Gift Makes
<b>Gifts that help today</b> Appreciated stock, IRA Distribution, Donor Advised Funds, Property	Remove taxable assets from your estate. Immediate tax deduction, and avoid capital gains tax.	Gives Our Little Haven immediate support that contributes to current needs and organization goals.
<b>Gifts that help Tomorrow</b> Will, IRA, Life Insurance beneficiaries	Donations made are exempt from federal estate taxes. Heirs will avoid income taxes. Allow donors to keep resources that may be currently needed.	Ensures the future strength of Our Little Haven
<b>Gifts that return an income</b> Charitable Gift Annuity, Charitable Lead Trust, Charitable Remainder Trust	Receive a steady income for a fixed period for life or fixed period of time.	Ensures the current or future strength of Our Little Haven while putting the assets to immediate use.

*This chart is provided to illustrate various giving options and benefits, and does not constitute tax advice. Consult your tax advisor or financial planner to learn what is right for you and your family.*

**"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."**

– Marcel Proust

# HOLIDAY HUGS AT THE HAVEN

Hugs at Our Little Haven have always been important as simple gestures that offer comfort, welcome, farewell, empathy, support, affection, calmness, and compassion. A warm hug can calm a crying child; can mend a broken heart; and, can build a bond of trust.

This is why all the magical things that happen around Our Little Haven during the Holidays are affectionately known as *Holiday Hugs at the Haven*.

This past Christmas and Holiday Season, over 500 children and families were able to celebrate the Holiday wishes that were granted by you. A new outfit, new bedding, household supplies, a new car seat, and lots and lots of toys were just some of the wishes our team delivered to families for the Christmas and Holiday Season.

*Holiday Hugs at the Haven* invited families, neighbors, companies, clubs, sporting teams, and students to come together and make the Holidays special. The invitation to help was met with a remarkable response allowing OLH's special touch to extend even further.

On behalf of the children and their families who are helped by Our Little Haven each day, we want to express our sincere gratitude to our community. Thank you for making this a special year for so many kids and families.



## U P C O M I N G E V E N T

# ANNUAL SPRING GALA 2022

Our Little Haven invites you to *Come to the Table* on Saturday, April 30th, 2022 at the Chase Park Plaza Khorassan Ballroom. The evening of celebration features drinks, dinner, dancing, and auction fun.

**Tickets are available now at [www.ourlighthouse.org](http://www.ourlighthouse.org)**

Sponsorships and specialty packages are available. Contact Chris Muñoz at [cmunoz@ourlighthouse.org](mailto:cmunoz@ourlighthouse.org) or (314) 669-9386 to find out more and reserve your spot today.



# CALLED TO SERVE

## EMILY'S STORY

We never tire of the stories that make up our colorful history here at Our Little Haven. On several occasions, we have been the catalyst for someone who joins the OLH Mission through their own personal and professional lives.

Emily Nienhuis joined Our Little Haven's teams in the early 90's. As her family's home also served as a foster home, her experience with foster care long preceded her time with Our Little Haven. She first served as a volunteer then as a House Parent.

As a volunteer for Our Little Haven, while attending nursing school, Emily was a big part of the lives of many children she worked with each week during her visits. Soon after, she heard her calling to become a foster mom and has never looked back.

Emily now serves as the Executive Director for One Heart Family Ministries, which allows her to share her years of experience as a foster parent. One Heart Family Ministries recruits, supports, and assists in training of foster parents and their families. One Heart Family Ministries, like Our Little Haven, recognizes the challenges foster parents face and provides the support they need.

Meet Emily, Monaeae (19), Myah (16), Evelyn (15), Ruby (13), and the twins; Estelle and Vivian (11)



One Heart Family Ministries is a trusted partner of Our Little Haven and our foster care program at the Taylor Family Care Center.

With her extended family, Emily continues to follow her calling that started with her own family and her time with Our Little Haven almost 30 years ago. We are proud to call Emily a trusted friend in our community and to share her story with you.



**"I cherish the memories I have from my time at OLH. My experience working as a House Parent paved the way for me to become a foster parent for little ones with medical needs. "**

– Emily Nienhuis



Our Board of Trustees are not afraid to get their hands dirty. Glenn Heitmann supervising a rehab project a few months before we opened in March of 1993.



Together we marked our 20th Anniversary Celebration in true OLH fashion.



Young Anthony Bedford with a house parent circa 1993. Now a Our Little Haven Board of Trustee Member welcoming fellow Trustees at our 30th Anniversary celebration.



THIS SPRING, OUR LITTLE HAVEN KICKS OFF A YEAR OF FESTIVITIES CULMINATING IN OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY GALA IN 2023. KEEP AN EYE ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES TO CELEBRATE SPECIAL MOMENTS IN OLH HISTORY.

Co-founder and Therapeutic Director Emeritus, Kathleen Hummel recognized for her work through Our Little Haven in 2005 by *Traditional Home* magazine.



A quarter century old and still going strong. Happy 25th to our friends and family.





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## U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

**SATURDAY, APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2022**

Annual Spring Gala, *Come to The Table*  
The Chase Park Plaza

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2022**

icon Mechanical Clay Day  
St. Louis Skeet and Trap

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2022**

Enterprise Bank & Trust Golf Tournament  
Sunset Country Club

**DECEMBER 2022**

Holiday Hugs at the Haven



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