

OUR LITTLE NEWS





The fall season has arrived at Our Little Haven, bringing new opportunities and exciting updates across all of our programs—Community Family Services, Our Little Academy Day Treatment, and Keystone Mental Health Services. As the leaves change and the air cools, our commitment to nurturing children and families remains steadfast. This fall, we are thrilled to share news about our programming that continues to empower families through early intervention. Our dedicated team is working hard to ensure that every child and family we serve receives the highest quality of care and support they need to thrive.

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ON THE COVER

Together, we can make this fall season a time of growth and healing for children and families in our community. The cover photo used is a stock image, utilized to protect the privacy of those we serve.

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Visit ourlittlehaven.org homepage and click to join our newsletter!



Text [ourlittlehaven-donate](https://www.ourlittlehaven.org) to (833) 504-7815 to make a donation.

THE HAVEN
COMMUNITY

We believe that when we're born, God gives us a **Cookie Jar** and with each positive experience – every hug, each lesson learned, every positive interaction – we get a cookie in our Cookie Jar.

At about ten years old, the ending of our formative years, what we have in our Jar is what nurtures us for the rest of our lives.

The Haven Kids Jars are empty. Through our services – we provide the support, tools, and care to fill them, as well as give them the recipe to make their own cookies for the rest of their lives.

Thank you for helping us fill these **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 Emerita
- Michael P. Bahlinger**
Director of Finance & Operations
- Dr. Lizette Smith, PhD**
Director of Clinical Programs
- Brittany Brown**
Director of Development
- William Newbold**
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

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- | | |
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A Celebration of Hope: Congratulations to the Our Little Academy Day Treatment Graduates



Every year, a beautiful tradition unfolds at Our Little Academy, as we celebrate the graduation of our young clients who are ready to take their next big step into kindergarten. For 17 years, this event has been a highlight. It's a time for reflection, pride, and joy—both for the children who have worked so hard and for their families, who stand alongside them through every milestone.

At the heart of the celebration is the much-anticipated "End of the Year Movie," a cherished compilation of the year's moments. As the lights dim, and the first pictures flicker on the screen, the room fills with excitement and emotion. This movie is more than just a collection of memories; it's a testament to the progress, the joy, and the growth of each child. Throughout the year, the kids have had adventures that will stay with them for a lifetime—making Halloween costumes, crafting gingerbread houses, watching the eclipse, tie-dyeing shirts, and planting flowers with Ms. Jeanne from Missouri Botanical Gardens. The kids even built a special bond with a local sanitation worker, who became a hero to them as she honked her horn every day in greeting.



And then there are the dance parties—the soundtrack of their days. The movie is set to their favorite songs, the ones that sparked countless impromptu dances. Every year, the kids insist on watching the movie twice, and we always do.



The room is packed, with families coming together to share in the celebration. Grandparents, siblings, parents, and guardians all gather, eating popcorn and laughing as the children excitedly call out the names of their friends in every photo. It's an event that feels like a homecoming, a reminder that this is not just a day treatment program but a family—a place where every child belongs.

One of the most touching moments comes when each graduate is handed a backpack filled with everything they will need for kindergarten. It's not just a practical gift; it's a symbol of the journey they are about to embark on.

Tucked inside each backpack is a personal note from the OLA staff, expressing how proud they are of the child's growth and achievements. The parents and guardians receive letters of their own—words of encouragement, support, and helpful tips for the transition ahead. This year's celebration was particularly special, as a family with three Our Little Academy graduates came to celebrate their fourth.



Program Manager Sarah Thomas reflected on the significance of the End of the Year Movie, saying it serves as a visual reminder of how far the children have come. "It's wonderful to watch their smiles get brighter and brighter as the photos move from the beginning of the year to the end," she said. "The early photos often show kids standing alone, but by the end, they're together—smiling, laughing, and connected. They've bonded together and built friendships, something that can feel out of reach for the family when their child first arrives."

The progress each child makes is nothing short of remarkable. On average, the children spend 12-15 months at Our Little Academy, and during that time, they undergo tremendous growth—mentally, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. The movie doesn't capture the hard days, but Sarah is quick to remind us that those challenges are part of the journey. "What we focus on are the joyful days, the shared moments of connection, and the bright futures these kids are heading toward."

The OLA staff makes sure to remind the graduates that they are always welcome to come back and visit, and many do. As we celebrate this year's graduates, we can't help but feel immense pride. These children have overcome so much, and we know that they are ready to thrive in kindergarten and beyond. We are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of their journey, and we can't wait to see what the future holds for them.



As the fall season approaches, we prepare to welcome new clients and families into Our Little Academy. It's a time of transition and hope, and we are ready to continue our mission of helping children grow, heal, and succeed.

To learn more visit
ourlittlehaven.org/programs/our-little-academy/

Community Family Services at the Taylor Family Care Center



After providing foster care case management services to the St. Louis Region for almost 20 years, Our Little Haven made the tough decision to step away from the Foster Care Case Management contract with Missouri’s Children’s Division as of October 1, 2023. This decision came about after many difficult situations and conversations regarding changes in the child welfare system that were impeding our ability to help children and families. We made a strategic decision to take a proactive approach so that we can do the most good for those we serve.

There is a silver lining to being in the trenches and seeing all the darkness of the system. Previous work in the foster care case management field has given us the experience and knowledge to pivot, and positions Our Little Haven to provide support and prevention services – ultimately allowing us to become an agent of change toward a solution, all the while continuing to serve the child and families in the community.

We currently have 3 services that are being offered at Community Family Services:

Diligent Ongoing Relative Search (DORS):

Diligent Ongoing Relative Search provides immediate relative search services for children entering foster care in St. Louis County, St. Louis City, and Jefferson County focusing on placement and ongoing support. This service aims to identify family and kinship providers for all children in foster care as early as 48 hours after entering alternative care but continuing those search efforts up to and beyond 30 days when necessary. In addition, DORS services will be available for those cases that have been open for longer periods of time with no family or kinship identified. The service will support case managers in assisting them with meeting the Child Placement Diligent Search expectations of Children’s Division.

Accelerated Permanency Support (APS):

Accelerated Permanency Support will assist the case manager, the legal representative, and the caregiver to complete the needed permanency paperwork accurately and timely. The APS service is available to help with documentation regarding Guardianship and Adoption paperwork as well as having conversations with permanent resources about what Guardianship and Adoption entails, including support services after guardianship or adoption has been granted.

Coordination of Medical Services (COMS):

Coordination of Medical Services (COMS): Coordination of Medical Services is a comprehensive nursing service provided by a registered nurse responsible for identifying foster children’s medical, dental, behavioral, and developmental needs and assisting caregivers and case managers in getting these needs met per Children’s Division’s guidelines and best practices according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. COMS is clinically based, child-centered, and serves foster children and their families by helping to close gaps in medical care for these high-risk children.

To learn more visit
[ourlittlehaven.org/programs/
community-family-services/](http://ourlittlehaven.org/programs/community-family-services/)

BEFORE and AFTER COMS for a 7-year-old girl:

Before Coordination of Medical Services (COMS):

- Prior to and during her first time in foster care, a Primary Care Provider (PCP) was never established. Therefore, all her medical health care was received through Urgent Care clinics and Hospital Emergency Departments for the better part of 7 years.
- One of the results of not having a PCP was that she received no immunizations since birth, including during the first time she was in foster care.
- Her medical records were scarce and had not been collected or reviewed by any caregivers.
- She had no dentist identified and therefore received no dental care.

After Coordination of Medical Services (COMS):

- When she came into foster care for a second time, she was assigned to Our Little Haven and enrolled in COMS.
- All medical records were requested, reviewed, and filed to create a complete medical record, including her birth records from out of state.
- A review of these records helped in determining an ongoing birth medical condition, a failed hearing test at birth with no follow-up, and no dental care to date.
- COMS established her with a dentist. Unfortunately, by this time, she required crowns, extractions, root canals and fillings, all under general anesthesia.
- COMS arranged vision testing and established her with an optometrist. She now wears corrective lenses to help her succeed in school and life.
- Upon disenrollment from COMS and case closure, COMS worked with her biological mother to continue quality healthcare for her daughter.



“We’ve had opportunities to identify areas of need where support services can be provided. Community Family Services is a home for new and growing services to offer to the foster and adopt community.”

-Nicole Pashia, Program Director



“I am passionate about partnering with community health care providers so we can serve our children and families TOGETHER with quality and coordinated care.”

-Shari Sullivan RN, BSN
Coordinator of Medical Services

Incredible Dedication: The Staff at Keystone Mental Health Services

Keystone Mental Health Services at Our Little Haven is an outpatient practice that assesses and treats mental and behavioral disorders. Our goal is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of persons, many with limited access to care, by reducing symptoms and increasing functioning, through early intervention. Our range of services promoting continuity of care are individual and family psychotherapy, comprehensive psychological evaluations, mental health assessments, psychiatry, parenting and bonding assessments, and community and professional training and education. Within this range are our specialties: treating the very young child, treating persons with complex conditions, providing play therapy, offering psychological testing, and cultural responsiveness. Our licensed psychologists, clinical social workers, registered nurse, and contracted psychiatrist rely on current, research-based methods to provide a high quality of care tailored to the individual needs of each client. Our team consists of compassionate professionals committed to providing accessible, high-quality care to children and families. Keystone Mental Health Services staff's dedication is evident in everything they do.

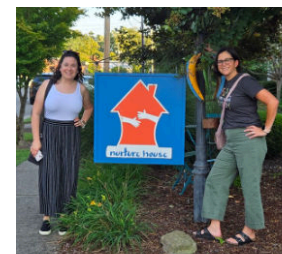
Raising Awareness for Mental Health: All Year Round

In May, during Mental Health Awareness Month, our team went above and beyond to spread awareness about mental health and wellness. Through community events, onsite education, and social media campaigns, Keystone made sure that the conversation around mental health was not only amplified but also accessible. However, our efforts to raise awareness don't stop in May; throughout the year, the team continues to champion mental health, helping to break down barriers and ensuring people feel empowered to seek support and treatment.



To learn more visit
ourlittlehaven.org/keystone/

Keystone Therapists Expand Expertise with Specialized Training in Nashville



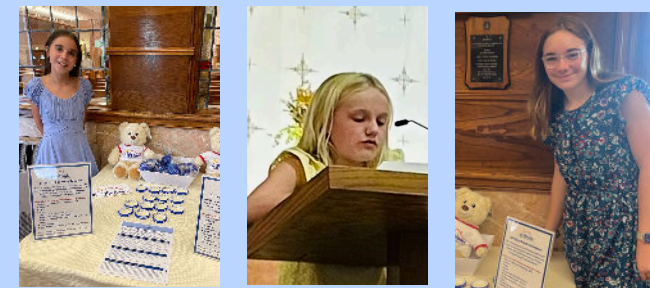
This August, Keystone psychotherapists Emily Salmieri and Amelia Sotnyk traveled to Nashville, TN, to attend a 3-day training in TraumaPlay™, a flexibly sequential play therapy model for treating children who have experienced extreme stress related to chronic maltreatment, discrete traumatic incidents, interpersonal trauma, or attachment disturbances due to caregiver disruptions. The training was facilitated by Paris Goodyear-Brown, MSW, LCSW, RPT-S™, who developed the TraumaPlay™ model, and is an internationally renowned speaker, prolific author, and a master clinician with more than 25 years' experience working in the field of treating trauma, attachment disturbances and anxiety disorders. This was a unique opportunity for Emily and Amelia, who are both Registered Play Therapists, to get additional specialized instruction in their area of expertise that they can immediately apply to their work with the children and families on their caseload.

While in town for the training, Emily and Amelia also had the opportunity to visit Nurture House in Franklin, TN, the mental health treatment center founded by Paris Goodyear-Brown, where she currently serves as the Clinical Director. Emily and Amelia enjoyed touring the bright, welcoming space that is thoughtfully designed to create a safe and nurturing therapeutic environment for children and families. In fact, they noticed many similarities between Nurture House and The Haven. Our Little Haven emphasizes the importance of continuous staff training as an essential investment in innovative approaches that strengthen the mental health services we provide to children and families.

SUPPORTER IMPACT STORY: 7TH GRADERS AT ST. GABRIEL'S SHARE OLH MISSION

This summer, 7th Graders at St. Gabriel's, Mary, Kate, Bella, and Elizabeth participated in the Mary the First Disciple Award. They chose to support Our Little Haven as their service project, and we are so grateful for their incredible support. They worked on a project and asked their parish to help by providing much needed gift cards for the families we serve at Our Little Haven. Gift cards are a wonderful way for us to provide immediate and tangible support for our client families. This allows us to better meet each family's specific needs rather than providing a one-size-fits-all solution.

Mary, Kate, Bella, and Elizabeth spoke at St. Gabriel's Masses and invited their parish to support by donating gift cards. They had a table set up at the back of the church to share more about Our Little Haven's mission. We were in awe of the remarkable number of gift cards they delivered to Our Little Haven thanks to their hard work and the generosity of their parish.



Visit ourlittlehaven.org/wish-list/ to learn more about supporting through gift cards or wish list donations.

Welcome to Our New Board Members

We are thrilled to welcome our newest members to the Executive Board of Directors and Board of Trustees at Our Little Haven! Each of these incredible individuals brings a wealth of experience, dedication, and passion. Thank you to our new board members for their commitment to furthering our mission. Your leadership will help us continue making a lasting impact, ensuring that the hurting stops, the healing begins, and the love lasts—one family at a time.

“As part of our strategic plan to transition various leadership roles within the Board of Trustees and the Executive Board of Directors at Our Little Haven, we have welcomed new Directors as part of our plan to bridge the gap between legacy members and the inclusion of the next-generation leaders of OLH. Our goal is to ensure the leadership of OLH from a Trustee and Director perspective; and to allow an ample transition period from experienced members to newer members. Along with the positive catalyst of transitioning these entities within the organization, these efforts also recognize the talent within our Trustee and volunteer pool and allows us to elevate their role in a more impactful way for the organization. The new members to the Executive Board of Directors and Board of Trustees possess the skill sets, energy, and passion that will be necessary for the organization over the long term.”

-Bill Newbold, Chairman of the Board

NEW MEMBERS TO EXECUTIVE BOARD



PETER BERNES
RSM US LLP



ADAM IRACE
Packaging Concepts, Inc.

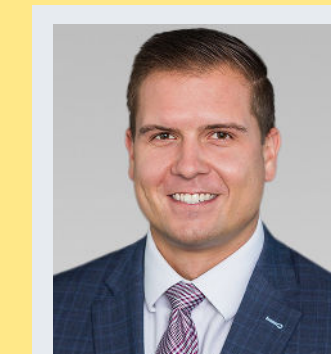


MANDY KAMYKOWSKI
Kamykowski & Taylor

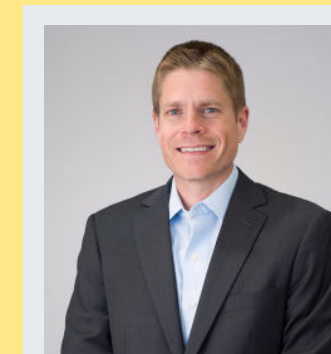


RAY WAGNER
Thompson Street Capital Ptrs.

NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS



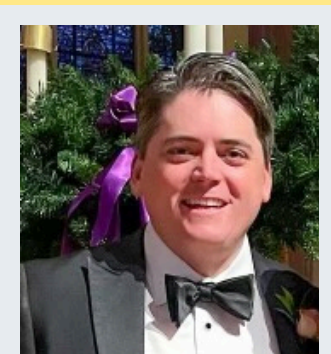
ANDREW EVOLA
Renaissance Financial




MICHAEL HOTZ
Asset Consulting Group



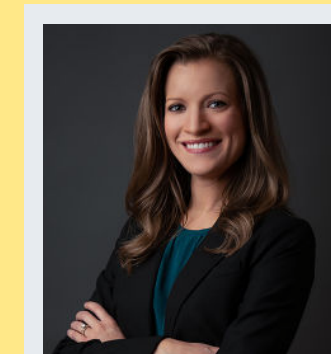
SARAH HUMMEL
Series Six



MICHAEL KEMP
Oak Tree Products



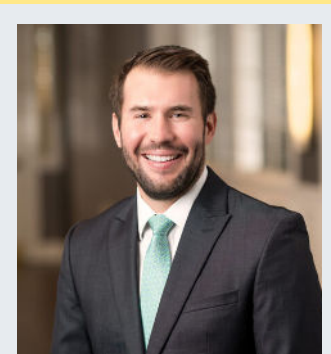
TRACEY OUNANIAN
Transform St. Louis



KELSEY RENNER
Baker Tilly



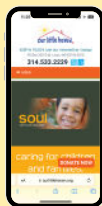
SCOTT TOMAN
Daikin Comfort



JUSTIN WELPLY
Carmody MacDonald

HOW TO SUPPORT OLH ONLINE

1

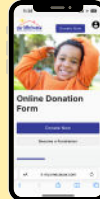


When you visit our website ourlittlehaven.org on a computer or mobile device, you'll see a "DONATE NOW" button on the bottom right corner of the screen.

DONATE NOW

2

Once you click this button, you'll be taken to our General Donation Page, where there are several different ways to provide support! Click the blue "Donate Now" button at the top or bottom of the screen.



3



Choose whether you'd like to make a **one-time** or **monthly donation**.

- Enter your donation amount.
- Complete the necessary payment and contact information. You can also choose to make a gift in honor or memory of someone.
- Review your donation summary and confirm by clicking "Donate." You will receive an emailed receipt confirming your donation.

BECOME A FUNDRAISER FOR OUR LITTLE HAVEN

By becoming a fundraiser, you can take your impact even further! When you raise donations on behalf of Our Little Haven and share our mission with your family, friends, and groups, you're not only helping us raise essential funds, but you're also expanding awareness of our mission. Together, we can help more children and families in need receive the care and support they deserve.

Here are the step-by-step instructions for how to become a fundraiser:

1. On the General Donation Page, click the "Become a Fundraiser" button.
2. Enter your email address, phone number, name, and the verification code you receive via text message.
3. Upload an image to help donors recognize that this is your fundraising page. Enter a personal message describing why you're fundraising and why the cause is important to you.
4. Enter a goal for how much you'd like to raise and click "Create My Page."
5. You'll receive a text message with your Personal Fundraising Page link. Share this link with family, friends, and on your social and professional networks. Any donations made through your link will count towards your fundraiser.

Join us today and help spread the word – let's build a larger community of caring individuals and give even more families hope for a brighter future.

Your generosity allows us to provide critical care to children and families. With your help, we can continue to offer early intervention services that make a lifelong difference—creating a brighter, healthier future for the children in our care. Thank you for being a part of this meaningful work and for believing in the power of early support. Your kindness truly makes a lasting impact!

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 9th, 2024

Chic Boutiques

St. Nicholas Family Life Center

NOVEMBER 23, 2024

OLH Pickleball Social

Creve Coeur Racquet Club

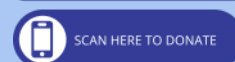
NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2024

Holiday Hugs for the Haven

Our Little Haven

APRIL 26th, 2025
Our Little Haven Gala

The Big Top



P.O. Box 23010 St. Louis, MO 63156-3010 ~ 4316 Lindell Blvd St. Louis, MO 63108 ~ (314) 533-2229

www.ourlittlehaven.org ~ bbrown@ourlittlehaven.org