



FALL 2023

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The True Impact

Another summer is gone, and school is back in full swing bringing the bustle of homework, Friday night football, and extra-curricular activities. For most kids, facing the challenge of becoming more independent with each passing year is both exciting and stressful. For the youth in our care, there is an additional unimaginable layer of stress on top of the normal anxiety of moving to the next grade, puberty, or even the first date. For children who are removed from their homes, there are unique challenges that come with simple everyday life. They have to explain why they can't ride to the game with their peers, why people can't come over after school, or in many cases, before they even get to that point, they have to explain where they came from and what brought them to the school in the first place. These challenges don't begin to touch the challenge of navigating childhood, while processing and overcoming abuse and neglect.

As we entered the new school year, all HCFC residents had been promoted to their next grade. All of the seniors this past Spring graduated, with two going on to college and one accepting a paid internship in a government office. Three of our youth have positioned themselves to purchase cars, and two of those bought their cars before the school year began. The many successes of the youth show their resiliency. We seek to encourage that resiliency by running Hope Center programs as close to living in a home as you can get. Our staff are busy supporting our kids by taking them to school, to games, shopping, and attending school functions just like any other household. Youth engage in "family" discussions and debrief their school days, and all get together around the table, as schedules allow, for family breakfasts and dinners. They also help with chores, learn to cook, learn to budget both their money and time, and embark on a path to independence.

At the start of the school year Julie* stopped by Hope Center for Children to say hello. Julie is a former resident from several years ago who had her share of challenges during her time at Anchor House. Julie overcame her many challenges and eventually was able to

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Building stable, healthy families and providing children a safe place from abuse and neglect.

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The True Impact (continued)

maintain a part-time job in the community. Not only was she successfully employed as a high school student, she was able to buy her first car while still in the program. With guidance and a lot of advocacy and budget discussions from her Family Teachers in Anchor House, Julie navigated the difficult steps of car buying. Upon graduating high school, she was able to move with her company from a part-time position into a full-time role. This eventually gave her the means to live independently in the community. Julie is still successfully employed with the same company and has now moved into a management position. When she stopped by in August, she wanted to show-off a new car she recently purchased. On those days when we wonder what is the true impact that we are making, we can remember Julie's words as she left: ***"The first time I bought a car it took a lot of help and learning from staff. This time I was able to speak up for myself and do it all on my own."***



For all those who help us teach, advocate, and normalize childhood for our youth through various means of community support...Thank You!

**Name and image changed to protect privacy.*



YOU can make the holiday season extra special this year for a child in need!

- ❄ Sponsor a holiday wish list for a child or family in our care.
- ❄ Give money or gift cards for the holidays, and we'll ensure each child has a memorable experience, even if they arrive in our care a few days, or even hours, before a holiday.
- ❄ Donate a meal during Thanksgiving or Christmas breaks.

For wish lists, contact Beth Exford at becford@hopecfc.org or (864) 583-7688 ext. 136.

For holiday volunteer opportunities, contact Phyliss Skuba at pskuba@hopecfc.org or (864) 583-7688 ext. 102.

Telling Their Own Stories

A couple of residents in HCFC's Transitional Living Program recently shared their stories with us in their own words and art:

They say not to feed a stray cat because they will never leave ... but if everyone thought that way wouldn't the cat starve?



I often wonder what would have happened if I didn't have TLP to come rescue me. I was in my sophomore year of college about to go on break when I was told that I had no home to come back to. I was homeless and hopeless. How is it that I am doing everything that I felt I'm supposed to do with my life and yet, I end up in this type of situation? I had no idea what I was going to do. I reached out to a professor of mine who just so happened to have known an employee who worked at HCFC. She reached out to her to ask if she knew of any resources and she made her aware of the Transitional Living Program.

I was fortunate. I was accepted into the program and allowed to return during every break. I was able to focus on my studies without worrying about where I was going to sleep during each break. I successfully completed my sophomore year and with the help of TLP staff, I am on my way to an awesome University (shh ... Go Tigers). Being in TLP has allowed for me to possibly receive free room and board at this

University. An opportunity that I know I wouldn't have been given had I not been accepted into the program. A stray cat came onto Lindsey House* property and I help with feeding her daily, we named her Rosemary!

**TLP is based in the Lindsey House on our Ellen Hines Smith Campus.*

The saying goes, "The EYES are the WINDOWS to your SOUL".

If that's true, how is it that while looking into my eyes, my pleas for help went unnoticed? How is it that when you looked into my eyes, while violating me in every way possible, you didn't find an ounce of empathy to stop? What did I ever do to deserve the endless abuse. I cried, I begged, I wished for it all to end. I woke up every day and saw the world as a place not meant for me. My hope for being saved was dwindling. I felt my heart turning into stone but I couldn't let you take that away from me.



ENOUGH!!!! I found my strength and I will no longer take the abuse. When you look into my eyes you will know that the evil you did to me did not break me. You thought that you controlled me but NO, I have ALL the control now and I am going to become EVERYTHING you said I couldn't be. With the help of TLP, I have graduated high school and am off to start my freshman year at a wonderful University here in Spartanburg. I have been gainfully employed for over 6 months and I have been able to save money to help me maintain throughout my freshman year. I'm starting to see a little more clearly, from the windows of my own soul.

Current Needs

- Paper towels
- Tissues
- Toilet paper
- Deodorant (male & female)
- Cleaning supplies (sponges, sprays, etc.)
- Toothpaste
- Mouthwash
- Dental floss
- Laundry soap pods

If you would like to organize a donation drive to benefit HCFC, please contact Beth Ecxford at becxford@hopecfc.org.

Join the HCFC Team

Hope Center for Children is looking for caring, talented people to join our team. Positions and application process may be found here:

<https://hopecfc.bamboohr.com/jobs/>



Special thanks to all who attended Tailgate Trot 2023 and to all of our sponsors! Your support at events like this makes it possible for Hope Center for Children to continue to provide care for the families and children we serve.

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Save the Date!
November 28, 2023

#GIVINGTUESDAY

Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, Cyber Monday ... Giving Tuesday!

Giving Tuesday is a global movement that encourages people to use their individual power of generosity to collaboratively support their communities. Be sure to like/follow Hope Center for Children on Facebook or Instagram and celebrate Giving Tuesday with us!

For more information or to get involved early, contact Andrea Payment at apayment@hopecfc.org.