

Follow Your Impact

Head Start and Private Pay Childcare Programs Complement Early Learning at Washington Park

The Washington Park Child Development Center opened in September 2021, continuing Family Services' mission to provide children in Forsyth County and their families with programming to build a solid foundation that will enhance each child's readiness for school and beyond. The center serves around 80 children through Head Start and Early Head Start programs, as well as, private pay childcare. Staff members guide children from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds through a common curriculum that is focused on cognitive, social, and emotional development.

"My first love is the classroom," says Center Manager Erica Long. "Having one-on-one experience with the service population and witnessing growth throughout their time spent with us is truly important." Vice President of the Child Development Program Vivien Stearns echoes this sentiment. "I love welcoming children and families to our Centers. I love the laughter and the children at play, and I love seeing our staff—some new and some seasoned—working together and engaging with the kids."

While Stearns and her staff create the same level of engagement and care across all of Family Services' Child Development Centers, Washington Park is unique in its combined approach to offering both Head Start programming and private pay childcare.

Family Services has been the provider of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Forsyth County since 1965. These programs are federally funded and are offered free of charge for income eligible children.

Private pay childcare appeals to middle-class families who desire a school readiness approach for their young child's care.

First piloted at the Winston-Salem State University Child Development Center, private pay offerings began at Washington Park after their first year in operation.

Offering private pay childcare allows us to serve the community with more available and quality services," says Long, noting that the income helps to fund supplies, materials, and other opportunities for the children—such as gardening and community field trips—in addition to accessing special services, like speech therapy, and having training for teachers.

While the incorporation of private pay childcare has supported the Center's operations, the benefits are even more meaningful for children and their families.

"Children are innocent. They only come in with biases from their own families. If we continue to nurture that innocence, think of the greatness of how much they can learn from each other."



-Vivien Stearns

The staff's goal is for every child to be offered the same service. "If I'm offering a violin lesson, I want every child to receive a violin lesson. If we're taking a field trip, every child will be able to attend," says Stearns.

And this method is working. The Heights, Family Services' newest Child Development Center recently opened with Head Start and Early Head Start programs. It's likely that private pay childcare will be incorporated into existing classrooms in the future.

"Children don't realize a difference," says Stearns. "It's on us to set aside our biases so we can come together and learn from each other without being fearful or making assumptions. It's a learning opportunity for all."

FROM CONVERSATION TO SOLUTION:

Family Services Inspires Change



Family Services has been moving the community forward for nearly 120 years, working to help children, families, and individuals make positive, lasting changes in their lives. Our intentional programming in the areas of child development, safe relationships, and counseling help to strengthen families, build a healthier, more stable community, and create a better future for all of us. The catalyst for this work is the important conversations happening every day across Forsyth County. Family Services is often found leading the discussion by hosting the individuals, agencies, and partners most impacted and best equipped to develop solutions. Through conversation, ideas begin to germinate, then lead to action —with the power to create true and lasting change.

"We are community conveners," says Traci Ross, President & CEO of Family Services. "A strength of ours is that we gather people together to discuss the challenges our community is facing and how best to address them."

"I see so much homelessness in our community," says Ross. "We see children — thousands who do not benefit from childhood learning experiences because resources aren't available. And I see a system where women are leaving their homes because of domestic violence. We provide safe shelter and numerous additional resources but even then, we're only touching a small number of individuals at a time."

Ross estimates that around 11,000 individuals benefit from Family Services' programming each year, but that footprint expands greatly through collaboration with other agencies.

One such example is the Pre-K Priority. Convened in 2014 by Family Services, the coalition educates, advocates, and engages community input to help expand high-quality Pre-K education in Forsyth County. "In our community we have child care centers, private daycare, Head Start, Early Head Start, and NC Pre-K. And we're all serving four-year-olds very differently," explains Ross. The coalition recognized that the existing disjointed approach to early childhood education could be a contributing factor in the lack of state and local funding received to enroll four-year-olds in Pre-K programs.



"We are community conveners."

-Traci Ross

Initially, a core group of early childhood education organizations and advocates began to hold critical conversations around the need and resources for a Pre-K system to serve all children in Forsyth County. Out of that, a coalition of 80+ individuals, including the Steering Committee, and six focused work groups moved the work forward. Importantly, they devoted time to researching and understanding our local Pre-K educational opportunities compared to what is publicly funded in neighboring counties. In April 2019, the coalition released a report that included recommendations for high-quality Pre-K expansions, including quality standards, projected cost, and a timeline for rollout. The coalition then returned to conversation—engaging individuals through multiple public awareness campaigns—including a series of conversations that convened community, education, and business leaders.

Last fall, the Pre-K Priority received its first public funds in support of local classrooms and educators. A \$3.7 million ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) grant given by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners is enabling a two-year pilot program that will impact 30 Pre-K classrooms and educators with high-quality resources that are currently limited or nonexistent. In February 2023, a \$350,000 ARPA grant from the City of Winston-Salem further backed the pilot.



Continue on next page...

Family Services Inspires Change **cont.**

This fall marks an exciting next step for the Pre-K Priority—the pilot is underway. Coalition members are taking ownership of various parts of the pilot to ensure it not only creates positive outcomes for participants, but also yields the data required to make a case for long-term public funding. Family Services is working in the family engagement space, while other partners are leading training, data analysis, translation services, and more.

These partnerships are also prevalent in Family Services' other programs, where conversations have connected organizations and paved the way for them to unite and share services for a common goal.

"Family Services has a long history of convening important stakeholders toward ensuring that all children and adults are safe in their homes and relationships," says Chief Operating Officer Michelle Speas. The Domestic Violence Community Coalition was convened more than 20 years ago. SART, the Sexual Assault Response Team has recently reconvened after taking a hiatus during COVID. A multidisciplinary team working with agencies responding to child abuse and neglect is led by Fulton McSwain Jr., Director of the Children's Advocacy Center. These groups are regularly in conversation about the best ways to continually improve services and support. Most recently Family Services has engaged in the Triad Rapid Response Team, a multidisciplinary team that collaborates across Guilford, Forsyth, and Davidson Counties to identify and rapidly respond to victims of human trafficking.

Discussions are happening now to address necessary improvements to the Domestic Violence Shelter, as well as the transition from Shelter to permanent, safe housing for survivors. A grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust is funding an exploratory assessment around these issues, to be concluded in the spring. "I'm excited to imagine future possibilities for these critical resources," says Speas. "The information we glean from the assessment will help us to highlight the need for a more modern shelter that can better serve survivors of interpersonal violence and trauma. As we continue to address these challenges with other local agencies, we can turn that need into action, and that action into a solution."



The path from conversation to solution can be long, but Family Services is up to the challenge.

"I encourage staff to convene or participate in community conversations whenever they can," says Ross. "It's through this engagement that we can better understand the unique challenges our community faces and work together to create momentum for change."



RISE 2023 Host Committee
(pictured above and listed by row):

- First Row (L to R): Katie Jorgenson, Kim Wells, Traci Ross, Jenifer Vance, Anne Rainey Rokahr
- Second Row (L to R): Abi Porter, Karen Cash, Sarah Burns, Billie Feather, Jelaina Frelitz, Michelle Speas, EJ Cardenas, Ashley Givens, Rachel Parker, Danna Wortman
- Third Row (L to R): LaVonne Russell, Tricia McManus, Clare Fader, Peggy Reingold, Joy Truluck, Erin McCulley, Alicia Johnson, Lucia Higgins, Lauren Hernandez, Lisa Wright, Margaret Scales

Safe Housing Exploratory Assessment Receives Support from **Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust**

Early in 2023, Family Services was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. It provides critical funding to address the housing safety net for survivors of domestic violence and their families in the Winston-Salem community.

"Domestic violence is one of the primary causes of homelessness for women and their children," says Traci Ross, President and CEO of Family Services. "We continue to see an increased need for this housing, and this generous grant will help us facilitate much-needed research of understanding, planning, and initiating the safe housing process."

Those experiencing intimate partner violence often continue living with an abuser because they cannot afford housing on their own. Family Services' Domestic Violence Shelter has served the Winston-Salem community for more than 40 years and provides a confidential and safe space for victims, regardless of gender, and their children to seek refuge from interpersonal violence. However, victims often encounter challenges as they end their shelter stay.

"We have deep experience in serving survivors of domestic violence and helping them on their path to recovery and safety," says J. Nelson-Weaver, Vice President of Clinical & Community Services, "but one of the biggest challenges they face is affordable housing."

As soon as a survivor or survivor and children stay at the shelter, they qualify as homeless—because they have fled a home that is not safe. While some survivors have resources to secure housing after their stay, many face barriers including lack of money for housing expenses, bad credit (often due to economic abuse), previous eviction, or criminal charges associated with defending themselves from an abusive partner.

A year-long exploratory assessment, made possible by the grant, will assist in reimagining how safe shelter and affordable housing can be offered for domestic violence survivors in Forsyth County. The listening and planning process will center survivor voices, while exploring new ways of providing safe shelter and opportunities to integrate with other affordable housing safety net efforts underway in Forsyth County.

An independent consultant is facilitating the assessment, which includes conducting interviews with survivors, reviewing domestic violence shelter case studies from other North Carolina communities, and analyzing local efforts already in place to address the affordable housing shortage in Forsyth County. The assessment will conclude in spring 2024 and a final report will include recommendations to address this critical community need.

Ross hopes that the report and its recommendations will spark continued conversation between Family Services and other local agencies: "We're constantly looking at what the need is in the community, where there's a disconnect, and asking ourselves how we can adjust."



Summer Intern **Lily Robins** Shares Her Family Services Experience

Walking through the double doors of the Gateway office in May, I knew only a fraction of what Family Services did. As a Winston-Salem native, I had heard of the organization. I understood that they had counseling services and a Domestic Violence Shelter, but that was the extent of my knowledge. During the first week of my summer internship, I dove in headfirst. I started on Monday and our annual spring fundraiser, Raising Every Child (REC), was on Thursday. It was a busy first week, from meeting former Surgeon General Jerome Adams to seeing all the last-minute work that goes into putting on a successful event. After REC, I expected things at the office would be calmer, but I was very wrong. I quickly saw how Family Services is constantly moving, always looking for ways to grow outreach and give even more to the community. Even though it had just been a few days, I already felt part of something important.

Over the coming weeks, I observed each staff member's genuine passion for their work. After a day volunteering in a Head Start classroom, I saw the teacher's compassion and patience for each child—but wow, I was exhausted. While touring the Domestic Violence Shelter for the first time I was shocked at how much it reminded me of college dorm life. I realized how desperate the victims and their families are for help when they come to the Shelter. I also had the opportunity to shadow the staff at the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), where I heard a victim's story of abuse and watched how the staff interacted with professionalism and care. I am amazed at the resilience of the Shelter and CAC staff who continue fighting for victims, even when the road to justice is long and not always satisfying.

Behind the scenes, I watched the work that goes into keeping Family Services funded so that we can continue serving the community. The development and PR office is always looking for new funding sources and finding ways to show donors our appreciation. Though there is some tedious work (putting donation receipts in order by date, for example), I've enjoyed creating Facebook posts, making phone calls, and getting to know my coworkers. As the internship comes to a close, I have learned how much work goes into a successful nonprofit, and am grateful for my experience with Family Services.

"I quickly saw how Family Services is constantly moving, always looking for ways to grow."

-Lily Robins



The Heights Child Development Center Opens in East Winston-Salem

Family Services' latest Child Development Center is now serving the community! The Heights, located at 1472 Felicity Lane in Winston-Salem, opened its doors in August and offers Head Start and Early Head Start programming for children in East Winston-Salem.

"The momentum that has developed for this new facility is great," says Vivien Stearns, Vice President of the Child Development Program. She is thrilled to have a new space in which to serve more children and families. Approximately 80 children spread across four preschool classrooms and two infant and toddler classrooms focus on school readiness—with an emphasis on social skills, language, literacy, math, science, self-help, and creative arts—through the Head Start and Early Head Start programs.



The location of The Heights was selected following a feasibility study that indicated a childcare desert in East Winston-Salem, an area with high demand for childcare but low affordability.

A former business park provided an ideal space and a unique opportunity for the new Center. Family Services purchased two buildings on the campus. Both have been fully converted to meet the needs of the programs. The two buildings are connected by an outdoor space with a playground—and there's room for a garden.

"My goal is that each Center is consistent across the board. Expansions can and should happen across all of our sites," explains Stearns. "But The Heights will have the first garden and a larger food preparation area to focus on farm-to-table learning."

The Heights is also well-positioned for potential partnerships with its neighbors, something that Family Services President & CEO Traci Ross is eager to explore. There is a United Health Center beside the new location that has been operating for several years. "We offer health screenings for the children in the programs," she says, "but parents could take advantage of making appointments for their own health services when they already plan to be in the area."

And parents will be welcomed at The Heights, too, as they are encouraged to become hands-on in their child's education through volunteer work. "It helps to build their skills as a parent," Ross explains. "If they're learning what their children are doing, they can carry that over at home."

In operation for nearly two months, The Heights is welcoming children from some of the community's most vulnerable populations and helping them to build a solid foundation for a lifetime of learning. To learn more about Family Services' Child Development Centers, along with Forsyth County Head Start and Early Head Start programs, visit familyservicesforsyth.org/child-development.

Join Us to RISE Against Domestic Violence this October

Following a successful year in which generous supporters helped to exceed the RISE fundraising goal, this year's goal is \$150,000. Ashley Givens, who served as a RISE Chair in 2022, is eager to continue bringing attention to this need: "What we did last year was so amazing and so impactful in the community. We must continue that momentum now, and every year." She underscores the idea that in order to attain considerable goals, there is collective power through individual commitment: "This is a small, tight-knit community," says Givens. "I love it, and I feel a responsibility to understand my community and its challenges and invest my time where I can make an impact."

The 2023 An Unmasquerade will be held on Saturday, October 21, at 6:30 p.m. at 751 W. 4th Street in Winston-Salem. The evening promises to be memorable with beautiful rooftop views of the city skyline, music, cocktail buffet, silent auction, and other fun surprises. Tickets are limited, and may be purchased by visiting RISEforsyth.org.

Next month, Family Services will host the fifth annual RISE Against Domestic Violence campaign and An Unmasquerade event. The mission-critical RISE campaign raises both awareness and funds to combat domestic violence, directly supporting Family Services programs: the Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence, the Children's Advocacy Center, crisis counseling, and more. The An Unmasquerade event, to be held on October 21, is named for the power and support created by raising awareness—which removes the need to feel hidden in an unhealthy relationship and the stigma of getting help.

RISE acknowledges the prevalence of domestic violence in all communities, and for all ages, socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations, genders, races, religions, and nationalities. Home is often the most dangerous place in America for women and children. The systemic patterns of dominance and control show up in the home as emotionally abusive and controlling behavior.

A Host Committee of community members is helping to spread the word about domestic violence awareness in Winston-Salem. "Once you know the statistics and the reality in our community you can't look away," says Anne Rainey Rokahr, who served as Chair for the first RISE fundraising event in 2019 and has returned each year to help garner support. A particular area of concern for Rainey Rokahr is the Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence. The Shelter is in dire need of funding not only to improve the building's conditions for its residents, but also to continue operating at high capacity while providing individualized care. On top of needed structural repairs, daily operational expenses, and staff salaries, the average cost to house one woman or child for their stay at the Shelter is \$5,000.



ON THE MOVE: Children's Advocacy Center Expands in New Space

The Family Services' Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) has long been a staple of community services offered in Forsyth County. Jointly established in 2000 by several local departments and agencies, the CAC employs a multidisciplinary approach to responding to allegations of child abuse. During an initial visit, child survivors of abuse or sexual assault meet with a forensic interviewer and are carefully guided through trauma-informed, non-biased questioning. At the same time, staff members share resources with non-offending family members that will help them to navigate the aftermath of the abuse with their child.

While the former location provided a comfortable space to engage with children and their families, it was no longer able to sustain the growing demands for services. Opened in August, the new location at Family Services' Gateway building allows for more space, privacy, and collaboration with essential teams.

"Confidentiality is of utmost importance in our work," says Fulton McSwain Jr., Director of the Children's Advocacy Center. "Shared spaces at our previous location sometimes made it difficult to ensure a discreet environment for our clients. With the move to the Gateway location, we can focus solely on the unique needs of each child, in turn fostering an environment of trust and comfort."

The former location's single point of entry provided challenges. If one family's meeting ran long, another family could arrive and be without a private waiting space. Law enforcement officials arriving through the same entrance as the child survivors could inadvertently incite fear or nervousness prior to an interview. At Gateway, a separate entrance for staff and a common waiting room with a receptionist will mitigate these issues. Additional space at Gateway also allows the team to dedicate specific rooms for their intended purposes, so that each room can be matched with an essential function.

The Gateway location offers a significant advantage: a shared space with the counseling team will now offer a more comprehensive and holistic approach to healing.

"Having the Children's Advocacy Center in the same building as our counselors is a natural fit, because CAC staff members make daily referrals to the counseling staff," says J. Nelson-Weaver, Vice President of Clinical & Community Services. "For many survivors, engaging in counseling sounds scary. But having them return to the same location as their initial interview can help to remove the stigma they may associate with counseling... it's a setting that will feel familiar because they've been there before."

The Children's Advocacy Center served 199 children in 2022, and will see that number increase with expanded services made possible by the new space at Gateway. The move was supported, in part, by the National Children's Alliance who provided \$19,000 to cover the cost of recording equipment for the forensic interviewers, and by the NC Human Trafficking Commission, who disbursed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that helped to purchase new furniture and paint for the interview rooms. A City of Winston-Salem Community Development grant will also aid in the expansion of the CAC at Gateway.

"The most exciting thing about this change is that it has allowed Family Services to better respond to and care for those children in our community who someone has victimized," says Nelson-Weaver. "We just want to do absolutely the best that we can."

"We can focus solely on the unique needs of each child."

-Fulton McSwain Jr.



RISE AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Community Events List

Fact-A-Day, October 1-31

Follow local advocates on Family Services' social media as they highlight a domestic violence fact each day of the month.

Domestic Violence Support Group, each Wednesday in October

The Family Services Domestic Violence support group meets each Wednesday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. online. For more information or to schedule an appointment contact 336-776-3255 or email advocates@familyservicesforsyth.org.

Day of Unity, October 6

A commemorative celebration honoring survivors and remembering the victims of domestic violence homicide. 12:00 p.m. at Bailey Park.

Silent Witness Exhibit, October 6

A visual representation consisting of life-sized, red laminated silhouettes of the women, men, and children murdered in acts of domestic violence in Forsyth County. At Bailey Park.

A/perture Cinema Domestic Violence Film and Panel Discussion, October 9

Free viewing of "Alice, Darling". Rated R. A panel discussion with local experts will follow the film. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., film begins at 6:00 p.m. Please RSVP at RISEforsyth.org.

Safe Space Series – Domestic Violence: Navigating the Legal System, October 12

Family Services will present a Community Engagement and Education Series in partnership with the Forsyth County Public Library from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Central Library Auditorium.

Candlelight Vigil at Next Step Ministries, October 20

Visit NextStepDV.org for more information.

RISE An Unmasquerade Fundraising Event, October 21

Our mission-critical limited, ticketed event focused on raising funds to combat domestic violence. Purchase tickets at RISEforsyth.org.

Safe Space Series – Domestic Violence: Navigating the Legal System, October 26

Family Services will present a Community Engagement and Education Series in partnership with the Forsyth County Public Library from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Southside Library.

VWISH - Virtuous Women in Sisterhood Domestic Violence Workshop, October 27

Visit VWish.info for more information.

Various FemFest NC Events

Follow FemFest NC on Instagram and Facebook to stay informed of events planned for October and their annual concert to raise funds for the Family Services domestic violence program.



FamilyServicesForsyth.org

INTRODUCING THE FAMILY SERVICES FOUNDATION: FORTIFYING OUR FUTURE

family services foundation

TO PROVIDE PERMANENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILY SERVICES, INC. BY STEWARDING ASSETS IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE ORGANIZATION TO CONTINUE TO BE THE BEDROCK OF SAFETY, SECURITY, AND SUCCESS FOR ALL CITIZENS OF FORSYTH COUNTY AS IT HAS BEEN SINCE 1905.



1905 SOCIETY CHARTER MEMBERS

These individuals have made a legacy gift to Family Services through planned giving.

- Anonymous (3)
- Sarah Austin*
- Woody Clinard
- Sallie J. Cooke
- Sally Glenn Blanco*
- Jane R. Kennedy*
- Louis* and Gretchen* Klaff
- Peggy Reingold
- Anne Rainey Rokahr
- Michelle Speas
- Paul Swantko
- Barbara Taylor
- J.C. Tise*
- Edna Wooten*

*deceased

FAMILY SERVICES FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Anne Rainey Rokahr, Board Chair
- Peggy Reingold, Vice Chair
- Matt Carey, MBA, Treasurer
- Virginia Pleasants, JD, Secretary
- Penn Broyhill, JD
- EJ Cardenas
- D. Elwood "Woody" Clinard
- J.K. Givens, JD
- Nick Gonzalez
- Lauren Hernandez, JD
- Audrey Johnson, CFTA, CAP
- Obi Ikwechegh, MD
- Xuejiao (Katie) Jorgenson
- Ernest Logemann, CPA
- Teneshia Miller
- Christy Cox Spencer
- Julia (Julie) Townsend, MBA
- Danna Wortman
- Lisa Wright, JD

THE FAMILY SERVICES FOUNDATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2021 WITH A FUTURE-FOCUSED MISSION TO THOUGHTFULLY STEWARD ASSETS THAT CAN SUPPORT, SUSTAIN, AND EXPAND COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES.

The Foundation builds upon Family Services' nearly 120 years of charitable work in Forsyth County providing education, training, and support to help families achieve financial stability and emotional independence; creating child development programming to prepare young children to succeed in school and life; addressing immediate needs for safety and shelter; and offering specialized services that deal with interpersonal violence, conflicts in family relationships, and emotional health.

aftermentioned gift of real estate, an office building: "My gift conveys my purpose in life—to help kids succeed, which they can't do without education. If they get an early start, they will be better off in their education." Clinard is focused on sustainability through his planned gift. "The income will benefit Family Services for years to come," he explains. "When fully rented, the income should produce \$100,000 a year!"

The Foundation's early success will continue through loyal and committed donors who create or participate in an outright endowment, or who designate a charitable gift through a bequest or planned gift to the Foundation as a member of the 1905 Society (1905 Society Charter Members are listed to the left).

"Planned giving creates a beautiful opportunity to make a lasting impact in our community," says Anne Rainey Rokahr, Chair of the Foundation Board of Directors. "I joined the 1905 Society to underscore my commitment to the incredible work Family Services is doing to support women, children, and families in our community."

Speas sees the Foundation as the next iteration of Family Services' philanthropy program. "We must be responsible stewards of these assets and invest them strategically in order to create a sustainable revenue stream for the agency," she says. "Doing so will create a true culture of philanthropy here so that long past our tenure we've left a viable, strong organization that will be well-positioned to continue serving our community as it has done since 1905."

"We have concentrated our efforts around storytelling to help the community better understand the range of services we provide," says Michelle Speas, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director of the Family Services Foundation. "And in turn, they've offered us tremendous support."

The wellspring of the Family Services Foundation was two planned gifts from generous donors—an undesignated retirement asset of \$965,000 and a commercial property asset valued at \$1.5 million. "I started thinking about the magnitude of these investments," says Speas, who worked to gather support for the Foundation from donors, board members, and senior leadership at Family Services. Together, they envisioned a mechanism to attract significant gifts and, most importantly, to invest them in perpetuity.

D. Elwood "Woody" Clinard, who has supported Family Services in many capacities for nearly 70 years—including as an Emeritus member of the Foundation Board of Directors, reflects on his decision to make the

\$10 MILLION WITHIN 10 YEARS

Within the next 10 years, the Foundation intends to raise \$10 million in endowment funds. Learn more about the Family Services Foundation and opportunities for planned giving at familyservicesforsyth.org/planned-giving

