



# Our Community, Our Children

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## Winter 2014

### WHAT'S NEW IN THIS ISSUE...

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### 2014 Board of Directors

Lee Richardson, Board Chairman

Amos Gray	Carol Freeland
Pati Trippel	Valerie Claar
Jonathan Martin	Darren Hill
Kate Schaffer	Ann Prince
Martha Rogers	Bob Woodall
Raymond Wright	



### *From the Executive Director Linda Ragsdale....*

Some of my colleagues don't like these shorter sometimes dreary days of winter, but I find the slow down after busy holidays gives one time to reflect on past accomplishments and set goals for the new year, all punctuated by an occasional we-can't-go-nowhere SNOW (!) day—of which we've had almost too many. Clearly there were many remarkable events and achievements this past year—some of which are highlighted in our enclosed OCC Annual Report, but there are many good things to share from the past few months as well.

The Christmas and New Year's Holidays were wonderful times at OCC, thanks to the many community donations and volunteer-led activities for our residential youth. We give thanks to so many amazing friends from groups such as Ouachita Travelers, Woodmen of the World, Creative Life Church, Kirk in the Pines Presbyterian Church, Zeta Chi Sorority, the Southside Lions Club, Defenders Motorcycle Club, Christ of the Hills Naomi Circle, First United Methodist Church of Hot Springs, and a Village Red Hat Society group. We also appreciate the MANY kind and caring individuals...who brought the holiday season to our kids in various ways with presents, special food treats, parties, games, outings, gift cards and more—making sure OCC youth knew this community cares about them!

Another real treat of the Christmas season for our youth was a special trip to Little Rock to attend a live performance of the Nutcracker Ballet, an opportunity made possible by the Community Foundation of Hot Springs Village. Visions of sugar plum fairies danced in their heads for days after! But if you asked the OCC Staff or Board, I think they would say the best part of Christmas at OCC was watching our "all dressed-up" youth enjoy the annual Holiday Party, and oh what a FEEL-GOOD night it was at OCC! See more inside.

Linda L. Ragsdale, LMSW  
Executive Director

## Dare 2 Dream

OCC held our first open to the public mentor informational coffee on January 24th. What a really good turn out...but the most important part is that we actually had mentor applications turned back in! We are excited about this new program headed by our newly appointed Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator: Megan Masone



Research confirms what we know anecdotally and intuitively — that mentoring works.

The 2013 study “The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles,” examined mentoring program relationships, experiences and benefits for higher-risk youth, and among the findings determined:

- The strongest program benefit, and most consistent across risk groups, was a reduction in depressive symptoms — a particularly noteworthy finding given that almost one in four youth reported worrisome levels of these symptoms at baseline.
- Findings also suggested gains in social acceptance, academic attitudes and grades.
- In addition to benefits in specific domains, mentored youth also experienced gains in a greater number of outcomes than youth in the comparison group.

Overall, the study’s results suggest that mentoring programs can be beneficial for youth with a broad range of backgrounds and characteristics. Tailoring the training and support that is available to matches based on the specific risks youth face has the potential to produce even stronger benefits.

At Ouachita Children Center you have an opportunity to change a child’s life and help fulfill their dreams. Join us and Dare 2 Dream! Call Megan Masone for more information.

The Value of Mentoring/Statics and Research. *National Mentoring Partnership*. Retrieved March 7, 2014, from [http://www.mentoring/value\\_of\\_mentoring](http://www.mentoring/value_of_mentoring)

## Employee of the Year



*L-R: Linda Ragsdale-OCC Executive Director, Latoya Randle-Residential Supervisor, Rosie Payton-Direct Care Staff & Employee of the Year for 2013*

Rosie Payton has been employed at OCC for 5 years. She is known for her sweet and contagious personality. If you have never been to New Orleans.....you can get a small feel of it with Ms. Rosie “Hey Baby” slogan. It’s our good fortune that Hurricane Katrina blew one of Louisiana’s precious jewels to OCC. We really appreciate her hard work, consistency, and dedication she gives us. With tears in her eyes, Residential Supervisor, Latoya Randle said “Ms. Rosie is just amazing and it’s a honor to give her this award”.

**CONGRATULATIONS,  
Miss Rosie**

***From all of us at OCC***

# 2013 Annual Report



July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

## BOARD CHAIRMAN

Lee Richardson

## VICE CHAIRMAN

Bart Newman

## TREASURER

Joe Patrico

## SECRETARY

Darren Hill

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sharon Smith

Chris White

Carol Freeland

Jonathan Martin

Ann Prince

Pati Trippel

Danielle White

Gary Troutman

Bob Woodall

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Linda L. Ragsdale

### **Report Includes:**

Mission, Vision and Values

What did OCC do?

What Stakeholders Say ...

Volunteers Make All the Difference

Board Transitions & Fond Farewells

Financial Information

## *Mission*

The Ouachita Children's Center is a non-profit child advocacy organization providing emergency shelter and quality services for youth and families, empowering them to achieve lifelong success.

## *Vision*

Ouachita Children's Center sees itself as a community leader, breaking the cycles of asocial and negative behavior as well as those of abuse and neglect for Arkansas youth, one child at a time. In the future, we envision the OCC facility and programs expanded through success in greater funding as well as the construction of a longer term residential facility. We foresee successful OCC graduates as productive and serving in leadership roles in the community that has sustained them. Their success and that of OCC will be recognized and replicated by other national organizations.

## *Values*



*Collage painted by our very own  
OCC youth under instruction of  
local artist and board member,  
Pati Trippel*

***Our Children, Our Community***

# 2013 IN REVIEW

## *What did OCC do?*

### **CELEBRATED 35 YEARS OF SERVICE**

OCC celebrated 35 years of service to youth in our community and state, with an Open House on November 1, 2012 and for which Hot Springs Mayor Ruth Carney declared Ouachita Children's Center Day while special proclamations of congratulations were presented by Senator Bill Sample and Representative John Vines from their legislative bodies respectively. Guests enjoyed seeing old friends and fellow Center advocates, while touring the improved facilities and enjoying lovely refreshments prepared by OCC kitchen manager Ms. Vickie Davis.



*Celebrated 35 years of service*

### **FULFILLING OUR MISSION THROUGH PROGRAM SUCCESS**

OCC is best known for its emergency shelter which accepts youth—from the Juvenile Courts of Garland and Clark County and other community systems—who may have committed a minor offense, may be involved in a FINS (Family in Need of Services) petition, or may just be having problems getting along at home. Additionally, OCC shelters children ages 6-17 who are in State custody (Dept. of Children & Family Services) due to abuse or neglect. A staff of 5 case managers and 12 direct care workers attend tirelessly to the needs of OCC youth.

***In FY 2013, OCC served 549 youth: 201 in the emergency shelter & 348 through outreach services, of whom 58% were boys and 42% girls.***

Children served through outreach may have received a court-based assessment to help determine most beneficial interventions, case management to help coordinate that intervention, and/or may be attending one of OCC's several Outreach education and prevention groups—such as Boys' Council, Girls' Circle, Responsible Living for Reproductive Health, or Active Parenting Classes. ***Some 174 individuals participated in these various groups in FY 2013***

### **INSTITUTED A NEW BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

To better improve instructional benefits of shelter stays, OCC instituted a new behavioral management system for resident clients whereby youth can earn points for positive behaviors, and a certain quantity of points are required to reach increasing levels of status and independence. Also points can be redeemed at the "Kids Korner Store" for an assortment of gifts, games, toys, snacks or special privileges. Of course what is earned with good behavior can also be taken away with not-so good behavior, so there are known incentives for doing your best! During the FY 2013, nearly 50 % of shelter youth (who were with us at least 22 days or more) progressed from beginning Level 0 to the highest Level 3 during their stay.

### **ON-SITE THERAPEUTIC ASSESSMENTS AND COUNSELING**

Another extremely beneficial service began this year for shelter youth was the new option for on-site therapeutic assessments and counseling by a licensed practitioner, instituted as a result of a collaborative agreement with Community Counseling Services, Inc. (CCS). ***Thanks to the cooperative support of CCS and one very dedicated child advocate and licensed social worker—Angela Moses, OCC now has a therapeutic dimension for shelter***



***"I like the facility and the staff. Y'all are amazing! Thank you guys."***

***- OCC youth***

## 2013 Annual Report

clients that has not previously been available. While good stats are not yet available, it appears this service has clearly improved the emotional adjustment of many of our residents, and reduced the number of disrupted placements—especially for the most vulnerable DCFS-referred children.

### FACILITY AND GROUNDS IMPROVEMENT

If there is one thing staff and frequent visitors agreed upon this past year, it was the noticeable and aesthetic improvements to the OCC facility and grounds. Housed in the 1928 vintage Children's Home, OCC inherited lots of challenges with its historic old building and nearly 9 acres of grounds. But in the past year brown grass turned green, volunteers planted flowers and cleared out dead trees, a very tired basketball court was resurfaced and striped for multiple games, a new parking lot was added, new fencing was erected and a *Serenity Garden* was begun. Inside shelter common areas were painted, several rooms received new carpeting or flooring, and our old house began to look more homelike than it had in some time.



*Facility and grounds improvement*

### COA RE-ACCREDITATION



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***Accredited since 2009***

A very important and consuming effort of FY 2103 was OCC's preparation for reaccreditation by the Council on Accreditation or COA. This is an international organization that conducts agency evaluations across the USA and beyond, measuring agency performance and practices against numerous standards of service, in areas such as governance, financial management, administration, case management, shelter care, risk management, client rights and ethics. With **leadership from veteran employee Sue Legal**, OCC staff and board came together early in the year to be trained in the accreditation standards and process, then developed several committees to review current OCC policies and procedures against the 14 required standards that applied to our agency. Using a team approach for maximum involvement and engagement, committee members read and revised policies and procedures to ensure full compliance with national best practices. Following submission of most all required documents and an anonymous stakeholder survey, a site visit from COA representatives was conducted over 3 days in June 2013. And while the results of this evaluation were not made available until the next fiscal year, we can't stand to keep you in suspense.... We are pleased and proud to inform you: OCC received notice of REACCREDITATION from COA in September 2013. YEAH TEAM!

### ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW & UPDATES

Diligent efforts of the OCC Strategic Planning Committee, led by Board member Pati Trippel, resulted in a newly embraced Vision, Mission, and set of Values for OCC, all listed elsewhere in this report. With these important pieces completed, the committee then led a subsequent initiative to update the OCC Strategic Plan, designed to guide our agency efforts over the next 5 years with measurable goals and objectives.

### OCC INITIATES OUACHITA AREA YOUTH COUNCIL

An outgrowth of early discussions and community surveys during the OCC strategic planning process was the idea of bringing together various youth serving organizations, so as to identify common needs and concerns while possibly leveraging community interest and resources to address these needs. ***An initial meeting held in January 2013 led by Board members Carol Freeland & Pati Trippel resulted in what is now known as the Ouachita Area Youth Council, a collaboration comprised of over 20 local organizations*** that meets regularly to learn about issues affecting youth and their families and identify collective ways to impact those issues. Initial and continuing areas of focus are (1) the shared need for mentors, (2) improved access and communication regarding community resources and (3) enhanced community awareness regarding the Truth of Youth (facts and factors affecting youth development in our community today).

## 2013 Annual Report

### What Stakeholders Say...

OCC is very concerned with responding to the needs of our stakeholders—particularly our youth and their families. All clients served in the shelter are asked to complete a satisfaction survey upon discharge—as well as their parent or guardian. Approximately 75 % completed these surveys in FY 2013 and gave the following compiled responses:

Question	Youth	Parent/ Guardian
Found staff to be friendly, professional, respectful, helpful, and easy to talk to	90%	100%
Indicated general satisfaction with OCC service	81%	94%
Felt their situations/behaviors improved thanks to OCC, would contact again and recommend to others	81%	86%
Thought building and grounds well maintained	82%	94%
Thought shelter very homelike	73%	96%
Liked the food	59%	N/A

### Volunteers Make All the Difference

Of all our assets, OCC's growing number of friends and volunteers is one of which Staff are most proud and appreciative. **And many of the physical improvements listed previously would not have happened, were it not for the support of so many volunteer groups** such as Rotarians, Master Gardeners, United Way Day-of-Caring Volunteers, Brad Lovells's "Cruzin' for a Cause" Friends and Sharefest participants, Triumph Fabrications, Target Stores and more. Other Volunteers from area Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian and Creative Life Churches, the Ouachita Travelers Motorcycle Club, Leadership Hot Springs, Zeta Chi Sorority, Cooks-R-Us of County Extension Office, Oaklawn Rotary Club, Booze Fighters Motor Club, Woodmen of the World, Lions Club, Defenders Motorcycle Club, Fun City Chorus, and Brookhill Ranch Ministries provided our children with a multitude of fun and enriching opportunities throughout the past year. We are so grateful to ALL these wonderful folks! Additionally, we appreciate local businesses like Central City 10 Cinemas, Maxwell Blade and the YMCA who have hosted our youth for many fun outings in the past year.

### Board Transitions & Fond Farewells

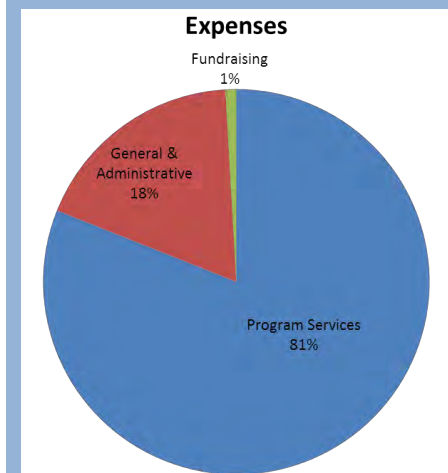
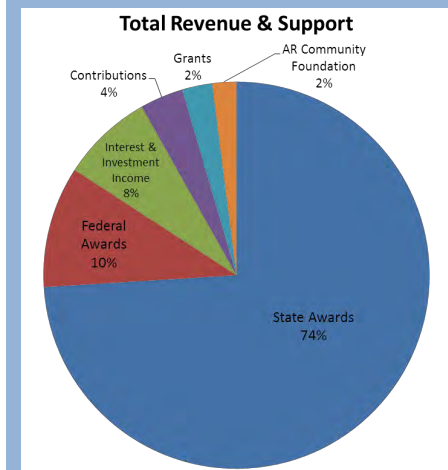
New Board Chairman Lee Richardson convened the FY2013 Board with 15 members, but unforeseen time conflicts resulted in resignations from Bill Cooley, Terry Lawler and later Danielle White, which brought the OCC 2013 Board to 12 remaining and hardworking members (see p. 3). The end of FY 2013 saw the necessary (by-law required) 'roll off' of **longtime, multi-term members and officers, Joe Patrico and Bart Newman**. Additionally Gary Troutman found it necessary to end his official service with OCC due to time constraints. But all of these fine gentlemen remain true friends and strong advocates for this organization and the children we serve. We are most grateful for their service!

### 2013 OCC Financial Information

Total Revenue & Support	\$	1,063,565
Total Expenses	\$	1,043,668
Change In Net Assets	\$	19,897
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$	1,768,028
Net Assets, End of Year	\$	1,787,925

For the Year Ended June 30, 2013

From audited financial reports prepared by  
Jordan, Woosley, Crone & Keaton, Ltd.



### Balance Sheet Comparison

	2012	2013
Total Assets	\$ 1,850,429	\$ 1,874,557
Liabilities	\$ 54,978	\$ 86,632

## OCC Holiday Party



AND WHAT A GREAT PARTY IT WAS!

If you asked OCC Staff or Board Members, they would say the best part of Christmas at OCC was watching our very dressed-up youth enjoy the annual Holiday Party, which included Ms. Vickie's elegant feast with all the trimmings, entertainment by the Fun City Barbershop Chorus, a visit from Santa Claus and—the grand finale--the exciting unwrapping of multiple gifts, all carefully selected for each youth by caring OCC Case Managers! Our community's donations of dollars, gifts, gift cards, and more helps this happen and we are SO GRATEFUL to all of you who gave! What a FEEL-GOOD night it was at OCC!



*Cicely Hicks, Megan Masone, Amanda Garrard*



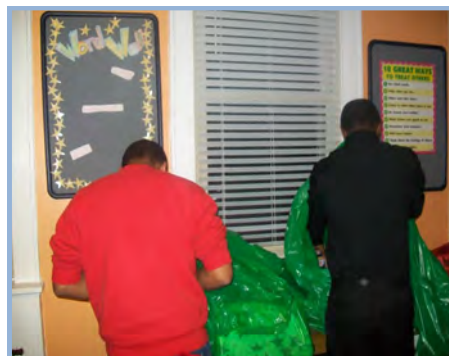
*Lee & Brenda Richardson, Linda Ragsdale, Martha Rogers*



*Gwen & Raymond Wright*



*Vicki Davis, OCC Kitchen Manager*



*OCC youth about to open presents*



*OCC youth playing Santa Claus*

## OCC Bulletin



# YARD SALE

**March 28th at 10:00 am**

339 Charteroak  
Hot Springs, AR



### Ouachita Area Youth Council,

a coalition of concerned youth-serving organizations from across the county and beyond, was hosted by Community Counseling Services, Inc. on January 28<sup>th</sup> and heard CCS CEO Dr. Rob Gershon speak on *Community Mental Health Care: The Next 50 Years*. The Youth Council is looking at some specific needs of our community that would help the youth we all serve, plus planning some community-wide events to increase public awareness of these persistent needs. **The next meeting will be held in April.**

**Contact Linda Ragsdale, Council Chair for more information.**



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## WISH LIST

### Items in Continual Need

Twin size Sheet Sets & Pillow cases  
Bath Towels, washcloths & hand towels  
Lice Treatments  
Shampoo & Conditioner  
Hair Gel  
Lip Balm  
Deodorant (non-aerosol)  
Soap & Body Wash  
Lotions  
Toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, & floss  
Electric shavers & hair clippers  
Anti-bacterial hand soap  
Medicated foot spray or powder  
Female sanitary products  
Hair brushes (both boar bristle & plastic)  
Wide tooth combs  
Hair grease, pomade, pink oil, moisturizer & relaxer kits  
Wave caps, shower caps & head scarves  
Small Black rubber bands, barrettes & ponytail holders  
Men's & Boy's briefs & boxers  
Women's & Girl's underwear & bras  
White t-shirts & sleeveless undershirts  
Socks & shoes (Boy's & Girl's)  
Sweatpants & Sweatshirts, all sizes  
Gift Cards to Wal-Mart, Old Navy, Shoe Stores etc.

School Supplies (pens, pencils, notebooks & paper)  
Backpacks  
Books & Magazines with Youth Appeal  
Art Supplies (brushes, canvases, paint, etc.)  
Sofa set or sectional set  
Area Rugs  
Cat Food & Litter for Tiger (OCC's therapy cat)  
Special event tickets or passes  
Winter gloves, hats and jackets  
Summer bathing suits & Towels  
Flip Flops  
Stainless steel forks & spoons

### Special Items We Currently Need

New Pillows  
Window Treatments (curtains & heavy duty blinds)  
Plastic or Fabric Wall Hangings  
Storage Shelves & Racks  
Outdoor plastic stackable chairs  
Outdoor benches or wrought iron chairs  
Indoor potted plants & outdoor bedding plants  
Correlle or Melamine plates & bowls  
Magnetic wall boards with magnets for resident rooms  
New matching comforter sets  
File Drawer

Bookcases  
Treadmill  
Kid-friendly exercise equipment  
Paint

### Volunteer Opportunities

Adult Mentors for our youth  
Assistance with the OCC Vegetable Garden  
Assistance with OCC Flower Beds  
Academic tutors  
Maintenance assistance  
Construction of a nature trail around the property  
Volunteer barber or beautician services (Haircuts)  
Yoga or Zumba classes  
Dance or Music classes  
Organized sports or games  
Poetry, Writing & Arts & Crafts  
Piano playing volunteers for sing-alongs  
Assistance with painting and organization  
CPR and First Aid Trainers