



## Summertime Fun!!!

Thanks to a grant received from the Arkansas Community Foundation, the OCC kids had a WONDERFUL summer. This year's summer enrichment was a collaborative project between OCC, The Hot Springs Family YMCA and Hot Springs School District. OCC was only one of five programs selected by the ARCF to receive a grant as part of the Summer Learning Initiative. Each week a lesson was planned and a field trip followed to carry out what was learned in the class. Trips included visiting:

- The Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce
- Bath House Row tour by Park Ranger
- Army National Guard
- Mid America Museum
- Clinton Library
- Bank of the Ozarks
- The Fish Hatchery
- Gangster Museum



There were also several fun trips to Camp Charleston, Wild River Country, National Park Aquarium, Emergent Arts, The Wax Museum and Escape Hot Springs. Our kids were actually excited about getting up and going to school this summer! OCC is very thankful and fortunate to have been awarded this opportunity.

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## Back to School

We are officially Back to School and busy! As we began preparing for the return to school we realized that most of our kids were not only in a new school, meeting new friends but they were also away from family. We couldn't help but look back at our own "Back to School Days" and remember how instrumental our parents were in easing our anxieties during the first few days back to school each year. Since we like to consider ourselves a family and we wanted to help these kids adjust as smoothly as possible. Residential staff prepared back to school gift bags each morning with candy and an inspirational message to assist in starting their day off in a positive way. These bags were a huge hit with the youth and they got up each morning looking forward to going to school with positive attitudes.

## Needs and Costs UP while Funding Goes DOWN

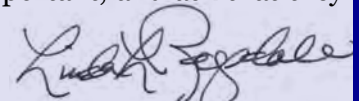


Ouachita Children's Center has been caring for youth in our emergency shelter since 1977. We provide this shelter primarily through our renewing contracts with two divisions of the Arkansas Department of Human Services: the Division of Youth Services (DYS)—which addresses the needs of delinquent and other at-risk youth, and the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS)—which is responsible for the care of children removed from their parents or guardians due to abuse or neglect. The average cost allowance from DHS for sheltering a youth is \$ 115 per night, and the average cost reimbursement from DCFS is \$98.81.

In 2015, our organization completed a lengthy financial analysis to calculate the actual cost of our shelter services. We determined that the real cost of housing and caring for one child for one night was actually \$157.92. This disparity between the true cost and state reimbursement was no surprise to many of our long-time staff and even board members, who have seen the increasing level of physical and emotional needs of our youth based on the incredible trauma and family disruption that so many of our children face daily. This simply became our new reality at OCC: it takes more to properly care for these children than the State of Arkansas can allow. Hence, our Board of Directors has diligently sought to find and promote more ways to raise community support so as to bridge this funding gap. And we so appreciate all of you in the community who help!

But as if this gap wasn't enough of a challenge already, we were totally unprepared for and dismayed by the recent decision of DHS to reduce our FY 2016-17 funds—along with those allocated to 12 similar youth service providers across the state. The “Commitment Reduction” contracts—designed to enhance community-based services and thereby reduce the need for commitment to more costly state juvenile lock-up facilities—were cut by one and a half million dollars. These cuts result in a loss of \$73,224 for OCC which serves juveniles in the Judicial Districts covering both Garland and Clark Counties. As you might imagine, this translates into staff cuts and program service reduction at OCC. Yet the needs of our community and its children continue to grow.

If children are indeed “our future”, we need Arkansas to give a higher priority to the needs of our children now. Please let our Governor and Legislators know what you think is important, and ask that they restore the commitment reduction funds across our state.



Linda Ragsdale, LMSW  
Executive Director

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## OCC Block Party & Family Fun Fair



To help address the growing concerns of substance abuse by our youth, Ouachita Children's Center joined the statewide Partnership for Success Project and is now in its third year of funding from Arkansas Department of Human Services - Division of Behavioral

Health to focus on education and prevention of substance abuse in our community. As part of our *Drinks? Drugs? NAH!* campaign, OCC held two events to help raise awareness in the community — the OCC Block Party, held at our Arkadelphia location on June 25<sup>th</sup> & the Family Fun Fair, at the main OCC facility on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Youth from both communities enjoyed a day of fun scavenger hunt activities, which included a bouncy house, dunking booth, face painting, climbing a rock wall, plus plenty of raffle prizes & giveaways!

**THANK YOU to all of the volunteers and donors who helped bring these two events to life!**





## New Residential Services Director



**OCC is very pleased to announce the appointment of  
our new Residential Services Director!!**

Ms. Megan Goldman has been selected to succeed Latoya Randle for this most important and demanding position at OCC. Megan has been part of the OCC "Family" for the past year in her role as a Mental Health Paraprofessional for Community Counseling Services (CCS) and assigned exclusively to OCC. Megan brings much relevant experience to this position and our agency as a result of her 4 year association and various positions held with CCS, and also as a mental health staff member with a youth-service agency-Concern for Kids-in Pennsylvania, also a special-needs group home in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and before that with Abilities Unlimited in Jonesboro also. Her professional career goes back some eight years; she holds a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies with Emphasis in Communication Disorders, Psychology and Sociology from Arkansas State University.

## Upcoming Events & Reminders



*Save the Date*  
*for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual*  
*Mystic Krewe of*  
*Liberi Ball*  
**February 18, 2017**  
*at the*  
*Historic Hamp Williams*  
*Building*



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 First United Methodist Church  
 Forest Path Gallery  
 Forget Me Knot  
 Fountain Lake Middle School  
 Freedom United Salon  
 The Gangster Museum of America  
 Garvan Woodland Gardens  
 The Glory Barn Church - Ladies Ministries  
 Greater St. Paul Baptist Church  
 Hardman Lumber Company  
 Historic District Antiques  
 Hot Springs Documentary Film Institute  
 Hot Springs Fraternal Order of Police  
 Hot Springs Giving Circle  
 Hot Springs Masonic Lodge No. 62  
 Hot Springs Sunrise Rotary  
 Hot Springs Village POA  
 Junior Auxiliary of Hot Springs  
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 Road Riders For Jesus  
 Rock Hill Christian Church  
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 The Wine Rack & Spirits Shoppe  
 Woodmen of the World

Thank You!



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## WISH LIST

### Items in Continual Need

Twin size Sheet Sets & Pillow cases  
Bath Towels, washcloths & hand towels  
Lice Treatments  
Hygiene Products (shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, etc.)  
Fingernail polish  
Flat Irons  
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  
New Men's & Boy's briefs & boxers  
New Women's & Girl's underwear & bras  
White t-shirts & sleeveless undershirts  
Socks & shoes (Boy's & Girl's)  
Sweatpants & Sweatshirts, all sizes  
Graphic t-shirts  
Gift Cards to Wal-Mart, Old Navy, TJ Maxx, Journeys, Hibbett Sports, Shoe Stores, etc.

School Supplies (pens, pencils, notebooks & paper)  
Backpacks  
Current Books & Magazines with Youth Appeal  
Art Supplies (brushes, canvases, paint, etc.)  
Sofa set or sectional set  
Area Rugs  
Cat Food 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

***\*\*Due to space constraints at our facility, we now refer all used clothing donations to Jackson House/Safe Haven, where we "shop" as needed\*\****

### 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 & outdoor bedding plants

Corelle or Melamine plates & bowls  
Magnetic wall boards with magnets for resident rooms  
New matching comforter sets  
Paint  
Area and throw rugs  
Trendy wall-Motivational quotes  
Board games  
Perfume & Body sprays

### 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)  
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