

# COMING HOME

Every child deserves a home.



CHS NEWSLETTER VOLUME 3 | JUNE 2019

This newsletter is sponsored by SUNTRUST

## EXPANDING OUR POSSIBILITIES

### CHS IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

Beginning in July, The Possibilities Project will begin offering Independent Living Services to youth ages 18-21 who are participating in Fostering Futures. These youth are still receiving assistance from the Department of Social Services and are focusing on learning to live on their own. We will provide the same model of services and case management but on a more intensive level.

These youth will be housed at the same location as the other participants and have access to therapeutic counseling and mentoring, while working on their educational and vocational goals.

The Possibilities Project Independent Living Services will serve four youth initially. The TPP staff is excited to work with these youth and begin preparing them for independence earlier. CHS is working to find sponsors to furnish the new apartments and volunteers to help with move in and set up. If you are interested in helping please contact Lauren Weidner at [lauren@chsva.org](mailto:lauren@chsva.org).



## “THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP” WAS PROUDLY ON DISPLAY AT CHS’ TENTH ANNUAL LEGACY EVENT



*Our panel discussion focused on how institutions and individuals play a critical role in the success of private non-profit service organizations.*

Power...Community...Impact...Philanthropy...Influence...Responsibility. Themes that were explored at the 10th Annual Legacy Event round table discussion. What do we mean by the Power of Partnership?

If not for the far reaching impact of the collaborations with our community partners that have evolved through the work of Children’s Home Society, we would not be able to deliver our trailblazing and innovative programs. With the common goal of finding solutions to issues related to adoption and foster care, we rely on the partnerships of our Donors, Board of Directors, Jr. Board, Volunteers, Adoptive Families, Businesses, Churches, Civic and Foundation Supporters. Each generously give their time, passion, money, heart & soul—while creating the village that supports our children and youth.

This year’s Legacy Event celebration of community partners included some of our service providers. Our three guest speakers described and encouraged support for the missions of non-profits. Two young adults who aged out of foster care and now participate in The Possibilities Project bravely shared their experiences and the vital services the program provides. Our guests opened up their hearts and checkbooks in support of our programs—and a dozen corporate sponsors generously matched their efforts. Children’s Home Society is proud of the excellent service we provide to Virginia’s often under-served populations... proud too that so many of our generous partners value and participate in our efforts.

**If you missed the Legacy Event, please consider making a donation to support our life-changing programs and families. ([www.chsva.org](http://www.chsva.org))**

### THANKS TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS:



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To register or learn more about our events, please contact CHS at (804) 353-0191 or visit [chsva.org/events](http://chsva.org/events)

## Third Annual CHS End of School Year Party

June 15, 2019, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

- Forest Hill Park
- Join us for food, fun, & games!
- Please RSVP to Sara Buckheit at [sara@chsva.org](mailto:sara@chsva.org) by 6/7/19

## Adoptive Family Listening Session

June 25, 2019, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

- Children's Home Society of Virginia
- Input from adoptive families is crucial as we develop an advocacy agenda
- Please RSVP or direct your questions to Cassie Cunningham at [cassie@chsva.org](mailto:cassie@chsva.org)

## Mini Golf Guys Tournament and Fundraiser

August 7-11, 2019

- Dozens of mini-golf courses in Virginia
- Visiting Richmond area August 8 and 9
- Please make a donation to CHS on behalf of this fundraiser at [chsva.org/minigolfguysdonateform](http://chsva.org/minigolfguysdonateform)

## KID'S CLUBS \*

### Richmond Kid's Club

June 27, 2019, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

- Busch Gardens
- Adoptive youth ages 6 to 18 are invited
- RSVP to Sara Buckheit at [sara@chsva.org](mailto:sara@chsva.org) by 6/20/19

### Fredericksburg Kid's Club

July 11, 2019, 8:30 pm – 5:00 pm

- Kings Dominion
- Adoptive kids and teens are welcome.
- Please RSVP to Anna Yates at [anna@chsva.org](mailto:anna@chsva.org) by 7/4/19

### Richmond Kid's Club

July 23, 2019, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

- Pool & Play
- Please RSVP to Sara Buckheit at [sara@chsva.org](mailto:sara@chsva.org) by 7/16/19

### Fredericksburg Kid's Club

August 6, 2019, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

- Splashdown Water Park
- Please RSVP to Anna Yates at [anna@chsva.org](mailto:anna@chsva.org) by 7/30/19

### Richmond Kid's Club

August 15, 2019, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

- Kings Dominion
- RSVP to Sara Buckheit at [sara@chsva.org](mailto:sara@chsva.org) by 8/8/19

\* Registration is required and space is limited. Please email Sara Buckheit at [sara@chsva.org](mailto:sara@chsva.org) for more information.

# FOSTER CARE ADOPTION

SOCIAL WORKER-TURNED-MOM FOR YOUNG MAN OF GREAT CHARACTER



My time with Keith started in late 2015. He had entered foster care in the summer of 2010 and moved to and from four different foster homes. We were able to build a relationship quickly because he was excited to look for an adoptive family and was very involved. We talked about people who he has lived with in the past, and people who have loved him in his life. I reached out to a few people; none were in a place to adopt but they all agreed to be a lifelong connection for him.

Keith moved to a potential adoptive home in the summer of 2016, which unfortunately disrupted in the spring of 2017. He joined a residential treatment center, then a group home, then back to the residential treatment center. Much of my work was focused on encouraging Keith to consider looking for an adoptive home again, and for him to not give up on the idea of having a family!

In the spring of 2018, I had a serious talk with a worker, Mary Anna, who had kept tabs on Keith over the years. She helped transport him a few times in 2013 and 2014 to and from respite, and said she often thought about him. When I let her know that he was losing hope in finding a forever family, Mary Anna stepped forward and asked to be considered! Keith remembered her and was open to the idea of visiting. Visits began, and in June 2018 I had the pleasure of packing him up from the residential treatment center and taking Keith home.

As to be expected, they have had some rough patches. Mary Anna has shown her commitment to him by "walking life" with him and always being there.

Keith's adoption finalized on April 11, 2019! They found out the good news while on a cruise in the Bahamas! Keith is thrilled to be out of foster care and to finally be adopted; incidentally he is the 88th finalization of our Wendy's Wonderful Kids program!

—Krista Watson, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter for CHS



# SUPER MOMS SUPPORT CHS EVERY MONTH!

MONTHLY DONORS PROVIDE CRUCIAL SUPPORT FOR OUR FOSTER CHILDREN AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES PROGRAMS



Cathy RollerTyrrell is a mom and owner of Blackbird Salon. In December she contacted us because she and her staff wanted to do something for the community. After a chat, Cathy decided she wanted to sponsor the catering for the Holiday Party for the youth in The Possibilities Project. Her customers also made donations for the Holiday Gift Wish List posted on our website. The TPP Party was great fun and one of the participants in the program said “her heart was smiling and she was touched beyond words for everything she had received.” Cathy also made sure all the youth had salon products so they could look their best in the new year.

But Cathy didn't stop there; her generosity now continues every month. She wants the youth in The Possibilities Project to know there are people that care about them and, like parents, are always making sure they have what they need. Cathy contacts our Possibilities Project Life Coach to see what is needed each month, and then shops for it. Like a good mom she also prepared Valentine's Day presents and Easter Baskets for The Possibilities Project youth.

Another one of our super moms, Emma Nesbit, has been making a monthly donation since July of last year! Emma retired from the Army and is demonstrating to her daughter the “power of giving back.” Emma and Winter shopped for plush blankets after hearing from our Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter that some children in foster care had been complaining about itchy blankets. These

children now know they matter because someone cared enough to buy them soft blankets.

Won't YOU please follow these super moms' examples, and join our Family Plan by making a gift EVERY MONTH...the donation that keeps giving all year!



## THE MINI GOLF GUYS' VIRGINIA TOURNAMENT WILL BENEFIT THE CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

AUGUST 7-11, 2019 | MULTIPLE MINI-GOLF COURSES IN VIRGINIA

The Mini Golf Guys are taking on Virginia in 2019, and they're raising money and awareness for Children's Home Society of Virginia along the way with their Mini Golf Tournament & Fundraiser. Make your donation at [chsva.org/minigolfguysdonateform](http://chsva.org/minigolfguysdonateform), and make a difference in the life of a child in Virginia.

Mini golf has been an American classic for the entire family for generations, and this year the world's longest mini golf tournament is coming to Virginia with The Mini Golf Guys. Best friends Tony, Alex and Mike will be exploring the many miniature golf courses throughout the state while raising money and awareness for Children's Home Society of Virginia. The Mini Golf Tournament & Fundraiser will be in Richmond on August 8 and 9 at ten different mini golf courses, before moving on to Williamsburg and Virginia Beach.

Those interested in following along on their adventure can do so by visiting [www.theminigolfguys.com/virginia](http://www.theminigolfguys.com/virginia). There's also more info on their support of CHSVA. Please donate to help make this amazing and generous mission a success!





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## CHS INFANT ADOPTION EXPERT TO RETIRE

**Debra Wilson** began at CHS on November 6, 2006, but her career as an adoption social worker started long before that cold Monday. Debra didn't plan on becoming a social worker; in fact she wanted to be a second grade teacher. After high school she went to Hunter College in New York to pursue a teaching career.

Soon Debra realized she wanted to work with children, but not as a teacher. Her sister was working at New York University School of Social Work, and suggested she try social work. Debra took a chance and transferred to NYU, where she found her calling and began her esteemed career as an adoption social worker.

After graduating, Debra first worked at New York Foundling Hospital (NYFH). Debra worked in adoption finding loving homes for children in foster care.

Debra's career spanned 14 ½ years at NYFH and she became the Director of the Child Welfare Program!

Eventually Debra needed to relocate to Virginia to be closer to family. She soon resumed her social work career at Catholic Charities of Hampton Roads. She continued working in adoption—now with birth mothers considering a plan of adoption for their infant. This was a time when birth mothers began to be allowed to have input into selecting adoptive parents and get updates on their child; these changes were positive and acknowledged the life-long journey for all involved. Debra spent over 12 years at Commonwealth Catholic Charities of Hampton Roads before joining CHS.

During Debra's time at CHS, her work has impacted hundreds of lives in many ways! She has provided compassionate counseling to birth mothers to enable them to make the best plan for their child. She has worked with individuals, couples and families longing to grow their family through adoption. She often delivered the long awaited news to a couple that they will finally become a parent, and has held a birth mother as she wept while saying goodbye to her child. Debra has seen adoption change from a decision shielded in secrecy to an opportunity for birth and adoptive parents alike to become part of the same family in order to support the child they all love! She has been a part of this process, this change and this gift of adoption.

Debra has served as an adoption social worker for nearly 40 years and will retire from CHS on June 28th. Her impact on adoption will be forever on the hearts of the birthmothers, families and staff. We wish Debra well and will miss her. Thank you, Debra, for making a difference and giving us the opportunity to learn so much from you!