September 2019



Be A Voice

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Please contact info@tnvoices.org with questions regarding Be A Voice

mission

Tennessee Voices for Children provides leadership, advocacy, and hope to advance the emotional and behavioral well-being of children, young adults, and families.

core values

Family-Driven Services

Access to Services

Family Member/Caregiver Education

Lived Experience/Peer Support

Statewide Presence

Leadership through Collaboration



a letter from the CEO



Certainly there have been a lot of great happenings at TVC over the last quarter that you will see in this edition of the newsletter. One highlight includes an expansion of our suicide prevention work across the state. The expansion was made possible because Governor Lee committed funding to target the growth in suicide rates among young people in TN. I am grateful to see his commitment to this issue and also grateful to Commissioner Marie Williams and her team for the work they do each day to ensure the Governor knows what is happening in our state regarding mental health.

I am also very excited to welcome TVC's first Chief Clinical Officer, Sean McPherson. This role was designed to assist TVC with the growth that we have experienced in our programs over the last two years. I have known Sean for a few years and I know that TVC will benefit tremendously from his knowledge and experience. (For more information about Sean and other new staff see pages 11-12).

Lastly, I had the incredible opportunity to participate in a sabbatical this summer thanks to The Healing Trust and TVC's Board of Directors. This experience was truly one that I will never forget. For me, it highlighted how important self-care is and how much it can be the real difference between overall satisfaction and burnout. On my journey of self-discovery, I had the opportunity to work with some amazing people who offered me knowledge, enthusiasm, fresh ideas, and direction toward a stronger me both mentally, physically, and spiritually and in my role as a leader. As I put into practice what I learned, it will certainly influence how TVC moves forward in the future. It gave me a chance to clear some space in my heart and mind to dream about TVC's future... stayed tuned.

Sincerely,

Rilli Han

Rikki Harris Chief Executive Officer

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Leadership

TVC Board Member Spotlight



Laura Fair TVC Board Member

Laura Fair holds a Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and has been serving on the board since 2017. As a parent of a child with a mental health diagnosis Laura feels passionate in representing families like hers on the board, ensuring that their shared voices and experiences are heard, recognized, and considered. Laura has over 15 years of experience working in the mental health field and currently works as a child therapist in the Middle Tennessee area. Previously, Laura worked for over ten years at Tennessee Voices for Children managing programs and overseeing grant writing activities. Laura is committed to erasing the stigma that many children with mental health needs face, supporting parents so they can engaged and active participants in their child's

coordination, and increasing the availability of mental health services to all children regardless of socioeconomic status. In her personal time, Laura and her husband can be found watching their three girls play soccer or volleyball at any number of the many fields and courts in the Middle Tennessee area.



Devika Kumar TVC Board Member

Devika is a healthcare management veteran who left Corporate America to pursue her dream of owning her business. After an extensive search of various business models she chose to open a CycleBar. CycleBar Hendersonville provides a rhythm-based, multi-sensory indoor cycling experience led by an experienced instructor. The studio is dark, the music is loud and 45 minutes flies by because you are having fun! It's a high intensity workout but safe for your joints. CycleBar is especially popular with members who are no longer able to tolerate other workouts that are hard on their joints.

Devika's draw to the CycleBar brand was the franchisor's support and

encouragement of giving back to the community. CycleBar Hendersonville opens its doors to non-profits for fundraisers and charity rides. All proceeds from these events go directly to the non-profit or charitable organization.

Devika has served on TVC's Board for 4 years because she is passionate about giving children and their families the support they need for young people to thrive. "Life seems so much more complicated these days compared to when I was growing up. There are so many more external influences and pressures on our youth. It should not be a mystery why we are seeing such an increase in mental and behavioral health in children! TVC provides tools for kids to cope with mental health challenges; and equally importantly, TVC provides resources for the parents to help their children. I am blown away at the impact this organization is making across the state!"

Mental health challenges are real and treatable. And we're here to help.

Speaking out

TVC Staff Participates in "Advocating for U(s)" Summit



In July the first-ever multi-system collaborative youth summit in the State of Tennessee was held at the Drury Hotel in Franklin, Tennessee. This Youth Summit was planned by representatives from The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, The Department of Health, The Department of Human Services, The Department of Children's Services, The Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Family Voices of Tennessee, and Tennessee Voices for Children. The summit titled, "Advocating for U(s)," was aimed at youth and young adults with systems involvement.

The summit consisted of keynote speakers and break outs aimed at giving youth and young adults the skills to navigate systems successfully and independently. Two of our staff members Garrett Spurlin and Crystal Hutchins, assisted in conference planning and presented a breakout session titled, "A Peek Into Mental Health." The session was centered on mental health advocacy and went over mental health issues that affect young people. We look forward to being involved in this event for many years to come!

Family Peer Leadership Academy 2019

Tennessee Voices for Children is proud to have such a strong workforce of Certified Family Support Specialists who work with families across the state. These individuals have gone through professional trainings and a competency course and have the unique experience of being a parent of a child(ren) who has a mental health diagnosis. Family Support Specialists teach caregivers how to advocate for their own children as they navigate child serving systems and can empathize with some of the challenges that come with parenting children who have mental health needs.

On July 27th and 28th, over 50 Family Support Specialists from across the state came together at The Westin Nashville for the 2nd annual Family Peer Leadership Academy. The Academy was hosted by Tennessee Voices for Children (TVC) and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) as part of the System of Care Across Tennessee initiative, and featured workshops focused on supporting the Family Support Specialists workforce. Topics included professional ethics and boundaries, the impact of the juvenile justice system on families, peer coaching, mindfulness, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

In reaction to some of the material presented, TVC CFSS Amy Blackwell explained, "As a team, a strategy on the Plan of Care was for the parents to attend the Peer Leadership Academy to gain knowledge and understanding of advocacy in general, but specifically in the school system."

"A CFSS is in a unique position when working with families, because we share our life experience. The Ethics Training at the Peer Leadership Academy allowed me a better understanding as to when and how much of my life experience to share with the families I serve." -Monique Jenkins, CFSS, Tennessee Voices for Children

"It was my second year going and it did not disappoint. I really liked the session on mindfulness. I know how to utilize it in my own daily life, but they gave us simple techniques to use with our families." -Jen Aitken, CFSS, Tennessee Voices for Children

Speaking out

7th Annual System of Care Across TN Conference



On September 17th and 18th, Tennessee Voices for Children (TVC) staff and interns (pictured to the left) attended the 7th annual System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) Conference in Franklin, TN. The theme of this year's conference was "Inviting Everyone to the Table" and focused on everyone being present and collaborating together to help children, youth, young adults and their families. Attendees consisted of a variety of professionals from child-serving systems, caregivers, youth and young adults from all regions of the state. The goal of the conference was to provide participants with knowledge on how to provide supports that are family-driven, youth-guided, community-based, and culturally and linguistically responsive. Each session

challenged attendees to step out of comfort zones and see how we all fit together to support each other and work together as we sit at the same table moving forward.

TVC staff not only attended the conference, but also offered expertise as session facilitators, and played integral roles in the planning and implementation of the conference. TVC's SOCAT Social Marketing Coordinator, Garret Spurlin, an integral part of the SOCAT Core Team, led the promotion and marketing efforts of the conference. In addition, TVC's Director of Contracts, Will Voss, participated as an expert panelist in a breakout session titled "Juvenile Justice Reform in Tennessee." During this workshop, Will provided information from a provider's perspective about the implementation of reform programming, which expands community based services and training.





Pictured L to R: Jasmine Taylor-McHaney, Crystal Hutchins, Garrett Spurlin, and Alisa Jordan.



Pictured above: TDMHSAS Deputy Commissioner Matt Yancey.



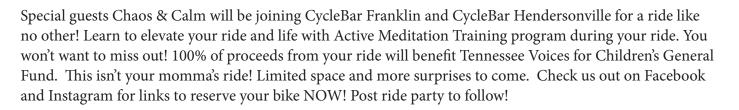
Pictured L to R: Tamara Hall and Jennifer Aitken.

Upcoming events

CycleBar Community Fundraising Ride

Elevate your life, your health, and your wellness all while making a difference for children in need! Join us for afternoons of fun, community, health, wellness, and supporting the incredible work of Tennessee Voices for Children!

Sunday, October 20th at 3:00 PM at CycleBar Franklin Sunday, October 27th at 3:00 PM at CycleBar Hendersonville



Cameron K. Gallagher SpeakUp 5K Nashville



It's back! The Cameron K. Gallagher Foundation is partnering with Dominion Payroll to host the 2nd annual SpeakUp5k, and Tennessee Voices for Children is the benefactor again of this year's race! We couldn't be more honored or excited!

궁 CYCLEBAR'

Chaos & CALM

Join us on November 16th at 10:00 AM on Lipscomb University's campus as we come together for those that are battling depression and anxiety and challenge people to visibly and vocally support one another! This event is a perfect way to get out with family of all ages, and there are so many ways to get involved – start a team, run, walk, volunteer, sponsor, or cheer and party at the finish line! Find out more HERE!

The SpeakUp5k was designed by 16-year-old Cameron Gallagher as a way to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. She planned this event to be fun, family-friendly, and a way to shed light on an important topic that needs to be openly discussed without judgment. The SpeakUp5k has allowed many across the country to have the freedom to SpeakUp and get the help they need.

*No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Community outreach

TVC Hosts 2nd Annual Field Day Event

Thanks to generous support from the Nashville Predators Foundation, TVC hosted its 2nd annual Field Day at YMCA Camp Widjiwagan in Nashville, TN on August 17, 2019. Throughout the day, participants worked through fun activities including archery, extreme corn hole, puzzle solving, and many other skill building challenges. This event was a wonderful opportunity for youth to positively engage with adult mentors and their peers. It also allowed them to enjoy a full day to relax and enjoy being a kid! Our participants were treated to Chick-Fil-A lunch, dinner and a DJ dance party to end the fun-filled day. We are so grateful to members of TVC's Board of Directors and other community partners who volunteered their time and resources to support TVC Field Day.



Northeast TN Corner



Tennessee Voices for Children was awarded a federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration grant for a Statewide Family Network that will respond to children, youth, and young adults with SED and their families in NE TN Appalachian area. As a result of that program, NE Tennessee Voices for Children has been busy with outreach, stigma reduction, and trainings to ensure

that the families of children and youth with mental health needs and their families have access to an effective family-driven mental health services with respect to their culture, traditions, and beliefs.

During Children's Mental Month in May, TVC initiated a first responder recognition program. Staff and youth volunteers visited fire stations, EMS offices, and police stations throughout NE TN and left a poster and green ribbon memory tree in honor of their efforts to diminish the stigma often associated with mental illness. Each of the stations and the first responders appreciated the acknowledgment and recognition they received as the first to ask, "Do you have a mental illness?" as a part of their response in an emergency. TVC encouraged them to continue this very initial and critical screening process to direct individuals to the best care possible. Back to School Bashes consumed the later part of the summer. TVC participated in Back to School events in 4 counties and served over 3,000 families and their children. TVC was able to answer questions, offer resources, and direct families to services and supports to assist their children and youth as they enter the new school year.

Collaboration is the key word for this fall. TVC continues to be a part of multiple collaborative programs and events throughout the NE region, including a National Leaders Retreat. And, for the first time, the Remote Area Medical (RAM) will have a strong mental health and SAMHSA grantee presence. The RAM mission is to prevent pain and alleviate suffering by providing free, quality healthcare and resources to those in need by delivering free dental, vision, and medical services to underserved and uninsured individuals. RAM's Corps of more than 135,000 volunteers–licensed dental, vision, medical, and veterinary professionals–have treated more than 785,000 individuals and 68,000 animals, delivering \$135 million worth of free care. TVC serves on the NE TN-Gray RAM planning committee and will act as a host, volunteer, and local resource vendor. As such, staff will work the three days from sunup to sundown with the 1,000 families that seek medical services for themselves and their children, linking them with needed mental health services at and after the event.

Staying informed

ISMICC Update



In December 2016, the 21st Century Cures Act was signed into law. Through this Act (Public Law 114-255), the Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee (ISMICC) was established to address the needs of adults with SMI and children and youth with SED and their families. The ISMICC is entering its third year after their presentation of a full report and recommendations to Congress for transformation of the mental health system. This Executive Summary to the 2017 report to Congress

shines the spotlight on the critical issues and services for Americans with serious mental illnesses (SMI) and serious emotional disturbances (SED). The 2017 report to congress represented a starting point in a five-year process of improving the lives of people with SMI and SED. Since the presentation of the report to Congress three years ago, several efforts have risen to ensure that the recommendations are responsive and progressive within the constraints of political and governmental processes.

Are you familiar with the report and its recommendations? If not, this <u>link</u> will take you to the report and the recommendations therein.

TVC staff member Conni Wells is a member of ISMICC. Members represent non-federal interests and have carefully monitored the federal progress over the past two years. They have found that those on the front lines of mental illness in America (families, youth, consumers of mental health services, those with serious mental illness, providers, administrators, businesses, and communities) have a huge stake in the outcomes of the government's ability to move toward implementation of these recommendations. They recommend stakeholders to invest time into learning about the recommendations and be an active member in their implementation. Below are some suggestions to ensure that the voice of America is the driver of mental health transformation.

- Review the report, especially Chapter 4, Recommendations from Non-federal Members.
- Look at the recommendations in terms of your experiences and the needs you see. The recommendations may seem general and without detail.
- Consider how each recommendation can or cannot answer some of the gaps and issues in the system today.
- Serve as your stakeholder watch dog; monitor progress and how it is impacting the lives of those you serve.

If you have ideas, comments, or concerns please share them with ISMICC or one of its membership. Ensure that the investment of time and dollars resulting from the Cures Act is wise and prudent. For more information or to share your ideas to Conni Wells, ISMICC non-federal member, at cwells@tnvoices.org.



Recognition

TVC Recognized for Zero Suicide Initiative

This year, the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network's (TSPN) annual Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event was held the morning of Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at Trevecca Community Church in Nashville. In attendance was Mayor David Briley and the Assistant Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Rob Cotterman. Over 300 mental health advocates and those with lived experience came together to remember the lives lost to Suicide and work towards saving lives in Tennessee. This year's event featured the presentation of a signed proclamation from the office of Governor Lee officially recognizing September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in Tennessee. Tennessee Voices for Children (TVC) was presented with an award for successful implementation and completion of all 7 domains of the Zero Suicide Initiative. On behalf of TVC, Natalie



Pictured L to R: Misty Leitsch, Natalie Webb, Melissa Sparks and Scott Ridgway.

Webb, LMSW, accepted the final piece to the Zero Suicide plaque to mark the fulfillment of the Initiative. TVC was the only agency this year to receive the award of completing the Zero Suicide Initiative. For the past few years, the TVC Zero Suicide Task Force has successfully worked together to bring attention to the needs of clients related to suicide prevention and care. The current members of the task force are Tammy Wilson, Ali Edmonds, Amy Blackwell, Mallory Morris, Daniel Haile, Marissa Pollard, Michele Jarrett, and Natalie Webb. De Louthen also served as a past member. The foundational belief of Zero Suicide is that suicide deaths for individuals under the care of health and behavioral health systems are preventable. For systems dedicated to improving patient safety, Zero Suicide presents an aspirational challenge and practical framework for system-wide transformation toward safer suicide care.

In Tennessee, an estimated 1,000 men, women and children die by suicide each year. More people die by suicide each year than from homicide, AIDS, or motor vehicle accidents. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among youth and young adults ages 15-24 in Tennessee, and for the United States at large. In almost all cases, suicide can be traced to unrecognized, untreated, or poorly treated mental illness. TVC is very proud to be a part of the Zero Suicide Initiative and accepts the call to relentlessly pursue a reduction in suicide and improve the care for those who seek help.

Rikki Harris Receives Amerigroup TN Healthy Hero Award



Pictured L to R: Dr. Victor Wu, Mary Shelton, Commissioner Gabe Roberts, Robert Garnett, Rikki Harris, Will Voss, Brian Taylor, Sean McPherson, and Amy Eller.

In August, Tennessee Voices for Children's Chief Executive Officer, Rikki Harris, was recognized as the recipient of the AmerigroupTennessee Healthy Hero Award! This quarterly award recognizes those who work to improve the lives of those living in their communities.

"Rikki is known as the "uniter" among her peers and works hard to build the emotional and behavioral health of children, young adults, and families in the TennCare community!" -Amerigroup

New team members



Leah Aknay Nurturing Parenting Facilitator At the beginning of this year, Leah decided to completely change careers to do something more meaningful. Leah has a 6-year-old stepson, Alex, who has been a

major inspiration for why she wants advocate for children. Previously, she did hair for 15 years and was an educator for a hair color company. With that she brings an abundance of life experience and her passion for helping others, as well as her hobby for public speaking. In June, Leah completed the CPRS (Certified Peer Recovery Specialist) training and is working on getting her hours to become certified. She's excited to join the TVC team!



Lupe Armengol Care Coordinator, Survivor Connection

Lupe completed her Bachelor's in Social Work at East Tennessee State University in 2013 and is currently enrolled at Capella University to pursue her Master's in

Social Work. She has previously worked for Head Start, DCS and Infectious Disease in a social worker capacity. Her passion is working with children and families. Lupe's childhood experiences help her in her current role.

She has two very creative daughters that keep life interesting. She is the middle child of 7 and very close to her siblings. They enjoy pranking each other, playing cards, and recording video documentaries of made up characters.



Amy Conard Care Coordinator,

System of Care Across TN Amy grew up in East Tennessee and received her Bachelor's from Johnson University in Knoxville, TN. She is completing her Master's from Grand

Canyon University at the end of this month!

She is married to her best friend, Shaun, and she has one beautiful daughter, three stepsons, and 3 ridiculously behaved cats. She loves to spend her free time outside enjoying God's beautiful creation. Camping is her favorite way to destress and rejuvenate.

She is excited about joining the team at TVC. She has already had the opportunity to meet some great people and looks forward to joining everyone on this journey to help families.



Victoria Finch Early Childhood Program Coordinator

Tori is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, and before TVC, spent time teaching abroad in Madrid, Spain and in Nashville charter schools.

Volunteering for various nonprofits, accompanied with her passion for youth mental health and social/emotional well-being, led her to her current role as Early Childhood Program Coordinator at TVC!

In her downtime, she enjoys book clubs, going to shows featuring local Nashville artists, and watching Spanish Netflix dramas. She is excited to get to know her fellow TVC staff and to be a part of such an incredible organization.

New team members



R. Sean McPherson, SPE-HSP Chief Clinical Officer

Sean joined the TVC family as our new Chief Clinical Officer. He has 18 years of experience in the behavioral health field serving as a Case

Manager, Therapist,

Diagnostician and Administrator having worked in residential youth care, community mental health and prison mental health. Sean specializes in work with the severe and persistent mentally ill, program development, crisis management and innovative treatment approaches. He earned his Bachelor's of Science in Psychology from David Lipscomb University, a Master's in Counseling Psychology from Trevecca University and is currently licensed as Senior Psychological Examiner.



David Thomas, Ed.D, LPC-MHSP, Clinical Director

Dr. Thomas as joined TVC as our new Clinical Director. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor, National Certified Counselor, and Approved Clinical Supervisor. His

previous experiences include serving as a clinician with Cumberland Heights and Clinical Director for LifeCare Family Services. Dr. Thomas' specialties include cognitive behavioral treatment of anxiety (social anxiety, OCD, panic disorder, generalized anxiety), depression, anger issues, substance abuse, bipolar, self-injury, and maintaining effective personal boundaries. Dr. Thomas' research interests include attachment, fatherlessness, aggressive and violent behavior, suicidal behaviors, and clinical supervision.



Daisy

TVC's Therapy Dog

Meet Daisy! Daisy was born June 8th in Portland, TN. Prior to her birth, Rikki Harris, TVC's CEO, began preparing for her to become part of the TVC family. She wanted Daisy to be a part of her passion for mental health and the work we do each day at TVC. Daisy came home on July 27th and began her journey of training to be a therapy dog. Daisy will have a second home at TVC and when she has completed all her training, she will be able to work with children in our therapy program. Daisy thinks people are the best thing she has ever seen!

Her name means innocence and purity. Daisies were often given to new mothers as a symbol of new beginnings. Daisy was also the name of Rikki's late grandmother, a person who always encouraged her to do big things in life, but stay grounded in her faith, be humble, and never stop believing that no matter who you are, you could accomplish whatever you put hard work into. Much like Rikki's Grandmother, Daisy is a little stubborn yet a very sweet lady!



Our Mission Tennessee Voices for Children provides leadership, advocacy, and hope to advance the emotional and behavioral well-being of children, young adults, and families.

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OF NOVEMBER AND NINETEEN IN THE EVENING
Featuring
DINNER & PROGRAMMING INCLUDING LIVE & SILENT AUCTION
LEGACY AWARD PRESENTATION TO LINDA O'NEAL
Emcee
HAYLEY WIELGUS AND LAUREN LOWREY
Gala Chair
BRIAN SHULMAN
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