

Note From the CEO



From all of us at TN Voices, we hope the start of summer has brought some sunshine and joy to you and your loved ones.

This month marks six months since TN Voices and Nurture the Next came together to serve families across Tennessee. And while it may seem like just a name change, it is so much more. It is a meaningful partnership between two teams with deep experience in mental health and early childhood development. Together, we are building a future where children, families, and adults are supported every step of the way, with care that is rooted in prevention, healing, and hope.

We are already seeing the difference this can make.

Not long ago, a mom went into preterm labor at just 30 weeks and gave birth seven weeks early. Because she had not yet worked a full year at her job, she was let go and was left without paid leave at the exact moment her baby entered the NICU.

When her baby was six weeks old, she connected with Healthy Families, a program that started with Nurture the Next. She opened up about how scared she was, especially about paying rent and keeping her housing. Her home visitor helped connect her with Reach and Rise, a program from TN Voices that provided rent assistance and gave her the breathing room she needed.

Her baby spent seven weeks in the NICU and still needs medical care, but today he is nine months old, healthy, and meeting his milestones. She has had time to plan her next steps and has found a new support system to walk alongside her.

Stories like these are why this work matters. With our combined strengths, we are already reaching more families and expanding access to the care they need. And this is just the beginning.

With gratitude,
Rikki Harris
CEO, TN Voices

5 Ideas to Strengthen Family Bonds

By: David Thomas

Families spending quality time together is vital to strengthening family bonds. It

helps create a sense of belonging and security. Children develop greater self-esteem and even improve their academic performance. But how do you go about bringing your family closer together? Here are some ideas.

- **Schedule Family Time:** Find a block of time that fits into everyone's calendar. Make sure everybody sets that time aside as family time. If possible, try to choose a regular evening once a week when you can all know you'll have time all together.
- **Create New Traditions:** You might already have some family traditions you inherited from your own family, but that doesn't mean you can't start your own!
 - Friday night could be movie night
 - Apple picking in the summer
 - Going to a local festival
- **Sit Down for Meals Together:** Having meals as a family strengthens bonds and encourages communication. But did you know it can positively impact your children's mental and physical well-being? Active schedules may make it difficult to get everybody together. But even a few nights each week is better than none. If dinner is too challenging, try scheduling family breakfasts!
- **Make Chores a Family Activity:** Tackling chores makes them go much faster, but it also helps create a solid sense of teamwork. This is specifically true if one person finishes first and helps another with their chores. Start by making a list of chores and allowing everyone to sign up for the ones they'll do. Then, schedule a time when everyone can work on their chores at the same time. If you want to add an encouraging reward, get together to watch a movie, play a game, or even get ice cream together once you're all done.
- **Volunteer Together:** Giving, whether time, energy, or money, makes us happier and more grateful. It's also a learning experience that can be shared as a family.

Finding ways to get your family together can be challenging with your busy schedules. But it's essential to do so. By choosing a few fun activities to do together, you can make it much easier for your family to bond with each other. (Chole, 2023).

Child Abuse Prevention Month

Throughout April, dozens of cities and counties across Tennessee issued proclamations in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. We're proud to share snapshots of TN Voices staff alongside local mayors and leaders as these proclamations were signed. These moments highlight the reach of our work—and the dedication of our team—in raising awareness, strengthening communities, and championing prevention efforts statewide.





The TN Voices Team

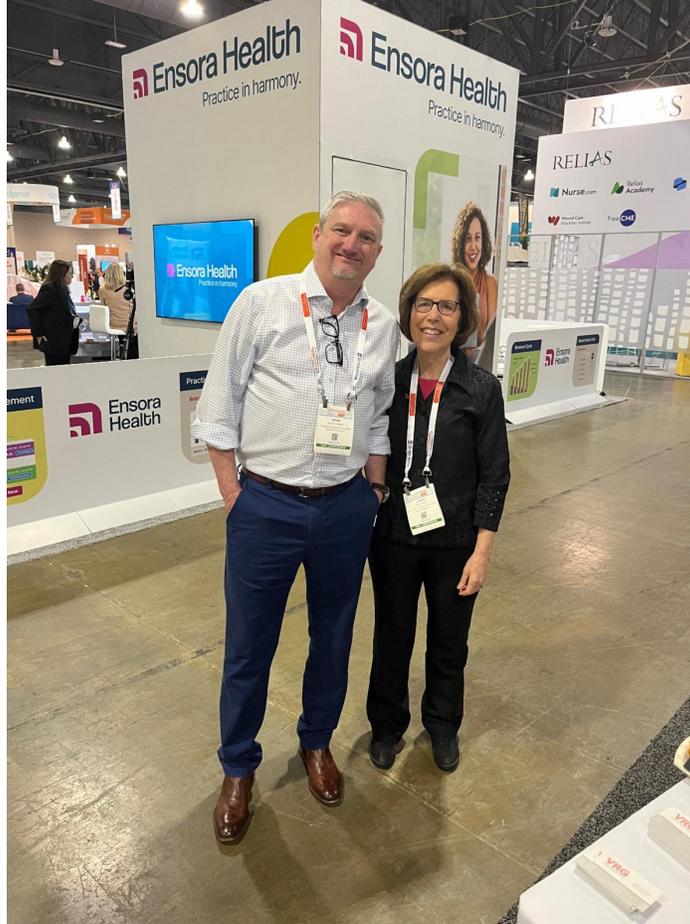


The SBBHL team attended the Project Raise Conference on Friday, May 2.



 National Training Institute on Effective Practices
Addressing Challenging Behavior

Eight of the Ready. Set. Go! staff attended the National Training Institute on Addressing Challenging Behaviors in Tampa, FL April 22-25th. This conference was on promoting young children's social-emotional development. NTI is designed to provide an in-depth, intensive learning experience on the Pyramid Model Framework. Our team divided up and attended several 3-hour sessions throughout the day on evidence-based practices.



David Thomas with Dr. Judith Beck at NatCon25, the largest conference on mental health and substance abuse in the country, hosted by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

**Have you thought of a career in Mental Health?
Check out our open positions at [TN Voices](#).**

Foundation Support



The strategic union of TN Voices and Nurture the Next has garnered substantial support from several highly esteemed foundations. These gifts

show the need for our collaborative effort to improve and expand mental health and family services in our state.

Thank you to the Frist Foundation, Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, The Healing Trust, Joe C. Davis Foundation, HCA Foundation, and the Memorial Foundation. Together, these foundations are not only supporting us joining together as one organization but are also laying the groundwork for a stronger, more resilient support system for the community.

Their combined efforts are a testament to the power of collaboration in driving positive change.

Program Highlight Resources and support for pregnant moms in Tennessee

Pregnancy is a time of myriad emotions. While it can be an exciting and beautiful experience, it can also bring a mix of stress, anxiety, and challenges. Whether you're expecting your first baby or your fourth, it's completely normal to feel overwhelmed at times

You might be struggling with:

- Anxiety or worries about your health, your baby's health, or what the future will hold.
- Mood swings and feeling emotionally drained or down due to pregnancy hormones.
- Stress about birth or parenting and how you'll manage once the baby arrives.
- Relationship struggles, whether with your partner, family, or friends.
- Sleepless nights caused by discomfort or anxiety, affecting your mood and energy.
- Feeling isolated or disconnected from others, especially if you don't have a strong support system.
- Past traumas or anxiety triggers that may resurface during pregnancy.

If any of this resonates with you, you don't have to go through it alone. TN Voices provides *free* therapy for pregnant moms in all 95 counties across Tennessee, with virtual options available.

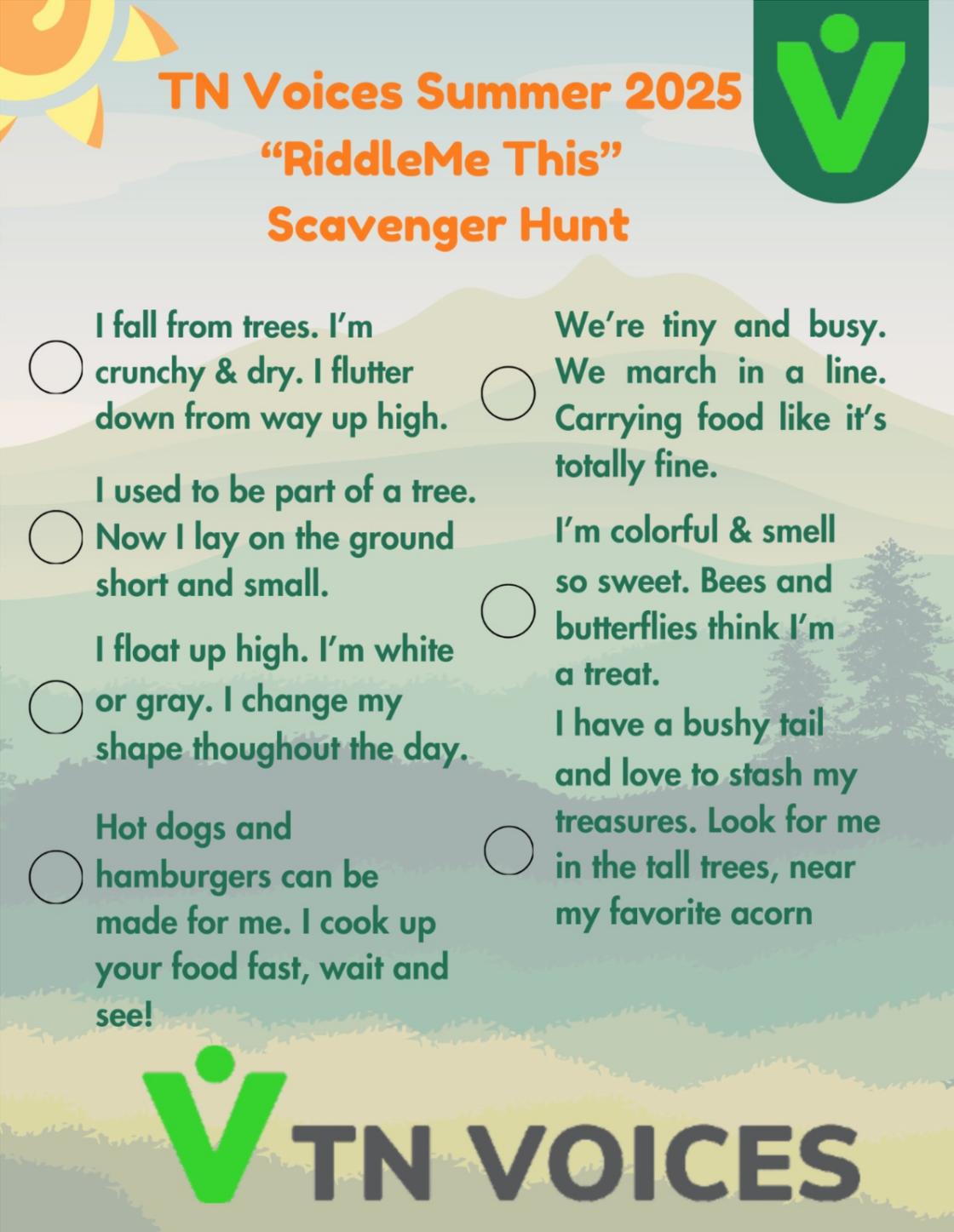
Our team is here to offer a safe, confidential space to talk through your feelings and provide support for the emotional challenges of pregnancy. Whether you're dealing with anxiety, mood swings, relationship stress, or simply need someone to

talk to, we're here to help you feel more at ease and confident as you navigate this journey

If you're ready to start feeling better, reach out today. We're just a call or email away. Let's talk about how we can support you during this time.

You can enroll today by using this link: <https://tnvoices.org/make-a-referral/>

Make a Referral



The graphic features a sun in the top left, a stylized green 'V' logo in the top right, and a background of rolling green hills. The text is arranged in two columns of riddles, each preceded by a radio button. At the bottom, the TN VOICES logo is displayed in a large, bold font.

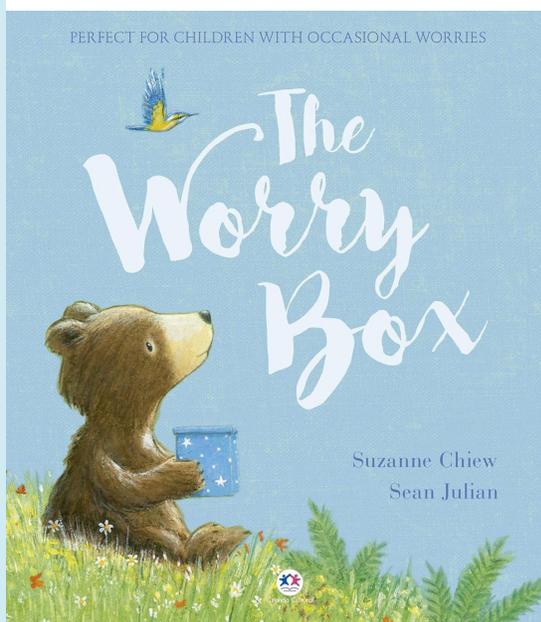
TN Voices Summer 2025 "Riddle Me This" Scavenger Hunt

- I fall from trees. I'm crunchy & dry. I flutter down from way up high.
- We're tiny and busy. We march in a line. Carrying food like it's totally fine.
- I used to be part of a tree. Now I lay on the ground short and small.
- I'm colorful & smell so sweet. Bees and butterflies think I'm a treat.
- I float up high. I'm white or gray. I change my shape throughout the day.
- I have a bushy tail and love to stash my treasures. Look for me in the tall trees, near my favorite acorn
- Hot dogs and hamburgers can be made for me. I cook up your food fast, wait and see!

 **TN VOICES**

Online Library Resources

The Worry Box by Suzanne Chiew



Murray Bear has lots of worries. What if the waterfall he's visiting is too loud? What if he's not very good at climbing? And what if all his friends laugh at him? With the help of his sister, Milly, Murray makes a special box in which to keep all his worries. But can the worry box really help?

[Listen and Read Along Here!](#)

Search "The Worry Box" on this page to find the book.

[View more resources in our online library here!](#)

Upcoming Trainings

Effective Advocacy Training

Would you like to build confidence in your ability to advocate for yourself and your child? Our advocates are here to help! We will provide information and tips, as well as discuss some barriers we encounter. This training is FREE and virtual.

Contact Carolyn Lawson at carolyn.lawson@tnvoices.org with questions.

All Things Behavior: FBA, BIP, Manifestation Meetings & More

This FREE virtual class is specifically designed for parents, caregivers, and professionals who want to understand key elements of behavior management in school settings. In this course you'll learn about Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs), Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), and Manifestation Meetings. This knowledge will equip you with the essential tools and insights to be an active part of a child's learning journey and advocacy for their behavioral needs.

July 16th 11 – 12:30 CT, 12 – 1:30 ET), Register [here](#) or contact Jordan Buchanan at Jordan.Buchanan@tnvoices.org with questions.

Empowering Families through the Special Education Process

This class is designed to equip parents and professionals with the knowledge and tools to navigate the complexities of the education system successfully. It will

guide you step by step through the IEP and 504 Plan processes in special education. By the end of this class, you will be empowered to advocate effectively for children's educational needs, ensuring they receive the personalized support and accommodations necessary for a successful learning journey. This class is FREE and virtual.

Contact Sabrina Moore at sabrina.moore@tnvoices.org with questions.

Nurturing Parenting

This evidence-based program builds protective factors in families that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children/teens and families. Classes also include the Darkness to Light presentation of child sexual abuse. Classes are offered monthly. They are virtual and are FREE. Contact Randall Sidwell at randall.sidwell@tnvoices.org with any questions.



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