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# ChildSavers

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## Press Release

### ChildSavers Expands Mental Health Care for Children

**RICHMOND, VA, September 10, 2018:**

The Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF) funded mental health program expansion for ChildSavers in 2017 and 2018. As a result of this and other investments, ChildSavers provided 485 children with more than 7,800 hours of mental health therapy, an increase from 6,700 hours in its last fiscal year.

VHCF's gift of \$178,944 over a two year period provided support for two children's mental health therapists and increased hours of service for child psychiatry. Their support allowed ChildSavers to hire and retain experts in trauma like clinician, Mavis Mintaah.

Mintaah is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and a Certified Trauma Specialist. She says she was inspired to become a social worker because she knew she always wanted to work with people and children. "I see my role more as somebody that helps children that have experienced a lot of traumatic events in their life or stress or been through challenges. I see my role as a helper in their healing process," she said.

VHCF also helps eligible, uninsured clients get coverage through FAMIS and FAMIS Plus. FAMIS is the Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan. It is Virginia's health insurance program for children under the age of 19, living in families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid. FAMIS covers all the medical care children might need to avoid getting sick, plus the medical care that will help them if they do get sick or get hurt.

ChildSavers' Chief Executive Officer, L. Robert Bolling said, "Virginia Health Care Foundation's gift has not just helped grow our outpatient clinic and connect our families with resources they need, but also challenged us to solve a problem many of our clients faced: transportation. This funding motivated us to address a barrier to getting service and problem solve to remove this barrier. As a result, we now have a system in place to connect our families who need it with free transportation. We are grateful that these partners are playing a key role in the growth of ChildSavers and in our initiatives to address childhood trauma."

Nationally, childhood trauma impacts one in four children. The Adverse Childhood Experiences study (ACEs) measured a set of ten traumatic experiences in childhood. These include abuse, domestic violence, and emotional neglect, among others. Each measure counts for one point, with the lowest ACE score as zero and the highest as ten. The higher the score, the more likely a child will grow up and suffer from chronic diseases or mental illness.

However, Bolling stressed that childhood adversity does not determine fate. “The universal prescription for trauma is resilience and our work helps children heal, cope, grow, and thrive.”

One of the key elements for reducing the impact of trauma, is a quick response in the aftermath of a traumatic event. That means getting children into therapy sooner rather than later, said Bolling.

“VHCF helps ensure that families don’t have to wait on the waiting list. This grant gives families the opportunities and the mental health services they need. They don’t have to be told to wait a long time. They have access right away and, hopefully we help them achieve some stability in their life.” Reducing the amount of time a child has to wait in the wake of trauma reduces the likelihood of developing PTSD. Therapy and healthy relationships with an adult helps children be resilient.

Despite challenges some of our families experience, Mintaah said, “People in this community are very resilient. Families are very resourceful. They are able to work with the little that they have.” Mintaah said the work VHCF supports is very important and needed. “It does make a difference in the lives of the people that we serve. . . This work is so important and is very needed in this community and in other areas because of the increase violence and stress that families and children experience.”

## **ABOUT CHILDSAVERS**

ChildSavers is a Central Virginia nonprofit organization whose mission is to, “...guide our community’s children through life’s critical moments with trauma-informed mental health and child development services.” The core of their mission is a fundamental commitment to the mental well-being of children and the positive bond between adult and child. They support this with clinical treatment, education, and training services that offer reassurance, healing, and the skills necessary to achieve normal life and development.

ChildSavers was founded in 1924 by Martha Patteson Branch in memory of one of Richmond’s first pediatricians, Dr. McGuire Newton, to serve Virginia’s children during a worldwide flu epidemic. Early in their history ChildSavers mission turned to addressing the mental health and development needs of children throughout the region; especially those who have experienced trauma.

ChildSavers is a community-supported nonprofit governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. They are licensed by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services and accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Child and Family Services.

Their offices are located at 200 North 22nd Street in the Church Hill community of Richmond. To learn more about their programs and services visit [www.childsavers.org](http://www.childsavers.org) or call (804) 644.9590.