



#sjkids update

Winter 2022

We believe that 2022 is going to be an incredible year. We have plenty of updates for you! Read on to hear what it's like to live at St. Joe's and what Black History Month means to some of our team members. Join us in celebrating our many additions and transformations. Also, catch the most recent news on our 173rd Picnic for the Kids — get ready!



Mission Moment

"The place just felt like home."

Read on to hear about Victor's experience living at St. Joseph Children's Home

St. Joseph's is an amazing place. My name is Victor Hayes, and I went to St Joseph's as a child (9 years old and 11 years old) because my family at the time was young and struggled to raise me. I was also a lost kid trying to learn about life. It happens to a lot of us. The memories I had there are awesome. When I felt like I had no one, St. Joseph's Children's Home made sure I knew they had my back.

To start off, the trips were always the best. A few trips I can think of were to the indoor pool, Atlantis water park, tons of places to eat — even The Spaghetti Factory. We even rode horses, rock climbed, rode paddle boats, and went bowling. So many fun trips. However, some of the greatest times were the activities held right out back on the kickball field with the music blasting and everyone just having a great time. Also, the massive events they held in the summer like the water balloon fights and parties with big blow up houses. We also had a basketball team and our own jerseys. We'd compete against other group homes, and that was very fun.

The blonde lady that used to organize the events always looked like she was ready to go for a run. She was awesome, and hosted the game room. We had some crazy times in that game room. We used to turn the music on and battle playing pool like our lives depended on it. I remember one night, it was dark outside and the staff pulled up and we raced while the staff would guess who would be the fastest. Now that I think about it, they weren't just letting us race, they were trying to make us tired so we could go right back in, take a shower, and go to sleep. During quiet time we all had radios in our rooms so we would turn on the radio and clean our room. It was around the time "Good Life" by Kanye came out and Soulja Boy, so that was always on my radio. The place just felt like home.

What was truly special to me at St. Joe's were the events they would always organize for the kids. My grandmother used to pick me up for visitation, and we'd always help run the events out front when they had them. I remember the late night events were always the best. We'd be done showering, sitting watching a movie, then they would line us up and

we'd go down to the Applebee's school. There would be these wonderful people I'd never seen before helping us craft cool things. It was always great seeing new people, because it made me feel like I wasn't alone. The basketball gym was so much fun too. We had roller blades in the back room and tons of other things. We'd rush to the gym trying to get the best skates or ball to play with before anyone else got them.

What I liked about sports at St. Joe's is they would always have full teams because they would get all the units involved. And when I tell you them games got serious, them games got serious. Units started showing up, the music came on, and you knew it was time to ball. The staff would get more into the games than us, and we'd even have the staff join the games. They would always do trophies for the winners, and we had so many events that everyone ended up winning at some point.

Also, the Christmas events that St. Joe's had for us were out of this world. I've never seen any kid receive a better Christmas than the ones at St. Joseph's. When it snowed we would go sledding down the hill way in the back, and that was beyond fun — the staff laughing joking with us while we were sledding. They always tried to make sure we were living our best lives. Halloween at St. Joseph's was amazing. All the kids would have a chance to pick a costume out of this room full of them, then we would get ready and go out to the neighborhoods around St. Joseph's. We would walk right out of the front building and go trick or treating. Always great times at St. Joe's.

I still remember the building. I remember when I thought about running away from the group home, and I got lost downstairs. It was the scariest thing on earth. That building is very scary at night. I don't know if it's the exact same, but I remember walking in the front door taking a left up these big wooden steps and there were two residential units to the left and three to the right. I heard that the Applebee's school at St. Joe's was still open, and that's where I went to school! Great school. I still remember my username and password on the computer in the computer labs. I'll never forget that school. They really went the extra mile to teach us. They really focus on the kids there, and I can't say that about any other group home or kids' home out there. When I first went to St. Joe's I remember they gifted me stuff and made me feel at home. I sat there and cried, worrying why I have no family and why no one loves me, but that group home made me feel loved — they always made sure to tell me I am loved.

They teach you valuable life lessons there too. I always enjoyed the more outgoing staff that you just knew had a similar background as you. I remember this one staff member that used to bring his game system in and play during quiet time. I used to love watching him play. It would keep everyone calm and quiet. The guy that used to pass out the medication, I wish I could remember his name, but he was always louder and outgoing with us. He'd be the guy to also go on field trips with us. But he also didn't play no games. He was a fun character, but very strict. He made sure we were good. We stayed on his good side and got to enjoy all the cool things he did for us. I remember they held church in the building straight up the stairs, and that always was cool.

Things always get better, always. I'm 24 years old now and have a strong family that I not only built myself, but my family from when I was young is now stronger than ever and supporting me. St Joseph Children's Home made sure I had a family regardless. As a kid sitting there in a placement I always wondered why I didn't have a life like all the other kids, why I was in a group home. But now I'm living a great life and raising my own kids with the lady I've been with for over 10 years.

The place really made sure we had a childhood like every kid should. I can go on for months about the fun things and great memories that St. Joe's gave me. When I listen to

Kanye West's "Good Life" I have about 10 million memories run through my head. I remember waking up in the morning to the staff cooking up breakfast, "Good Life" playing on the radio and everyone just relaxing, watching TV, and working on their remote-controlled cars that we got for Christmas. That place is the best. It may not be home, but it sure feels like home. That place is one of a kind. Thanks for everything y'all do. I stand with you guys.

—
Victor Hayes

St. Joseph Children's Home Alumnus
—



Black History Month

Celebration, Perspective, Education, & Support!



Wanda Chatmond, CDC Classroom Teacher:

"As an African-American woman, Black History Month highlights for me the open doors that I am able to walk through, but remember those of the past that were not so fortunate. I have the opportunity to be whatever I want - a lawyer, a doctor, a Surgeon General, a senator, and yes a president of the United States.

Also, being an African-American means being a teacher! Teaching others to achieve their dreams through black history."

Amy Edelen, Maintenance Supervisor:

"Black History Month is a wonderful way to learn about the fascinating and harrowing accomplishments in our society at large. Accomplishments contributed by the black community, serving the greater good.

Not all of those events are portrayed in our history books, so Black History Month is a wonderful way to learn more about what this community has accomplished."

*Pictured Right: Amy's adorable son and resident CDC cutie, Gus.





Keke Rothwell, CDC Sr. Classroom Teacher:

"What does Black History Month mean to me? Our ancestors throughout history had it rough . We as a community today have to live better for them and never forget where/how it all started . But we also have to forgive and live a better future . For ourselves, kids, grandkids, and so on . Understand and learn from history, but let's not relive it.



Love all, stand together:"

Pictured Left: Keke's daughter and CDC resident darling, Maven.

Damon Clyburn, Residential Youth Worker:

"Black History Month reminds me of those who paved the way for African Americans such as our past activists, but none better than Martin Luther King Jr. and his impeccable speech that changed our nation for the betterment:

"I have a dream that one day every valley shall be engulfed, every hill shall be exalted and every mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope."

"I have a dream that one day right there in Alabama little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice."

Martin's legacy will live on forever through the voices of blacks and whites. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."



In Honor of Black History Month

Check out these Black-led, local nonprofits — all with missions to support and serve children and families!



Play Cousins Collective

Sowing Seeds With Faith



Cultivating the Youth Experience (CTYE)



This nationally recognized month not only exists to remember and honor Americans who made history or experience oppression, but also to uplift Black folks who are doing the work today. Please check out the amazing things that the following Black-led nonprofits are doing to uplift children and families in our community: Play Cousins Collective, Sowing Seeds With Faith, Cultivating The Youth Experience, Inc.

**A St. Joe's Love Story
The Zoellers**

Here's the full romantic story you've all been waiting for!

John and Elaine Zoeller's love story began in 1972

with a catholic choir, Bernice Reinart, and St. Joseph Children's Home Picnic. John, then a 16-year-old student at Bishop David High School, decided to join the youth choir.

"I joined the choir because not very many boys did, and a lot of girls did," John said. "I figured I could get me some dates."



It didn't quite work out that way, but John said he did make a lot of friends. One of those friends was Bernice Reinart. Bernice's father, Elmer Reinart, and his siblings spent a lot of time at St. Joe's growing up, so they were also involved in the Picnic event that summer, manning a booth where people spun the wheel to win prizes. Bernice asked John if he would come help her family with the booth.

"Being a 16-year-old, not really having much to do that summer, I said sure I'll help my friend Bernice," remarked John.

He asked if he could bring his friend Larry along, and when they arrived, John noticed Bernice had also invited someone — her cousin, Elaine. Slyly enough, Bernice assigned John and Elaine to work at one end of the booth, while she and Larry worked the other end. Bernice was very insistent that Elaine and John should go out. She was playing matchmaker. It took a bit of persuasion, but eventually John and Elaine did go out.

"We met at the summer picnic of 1972, and Mr. and Mrs. Reinart's booth was what needed work and Bernice was the matchmaker that made sure we got introduced and met," John remembers. "We got married in 1975, so it wasn't a real long time before we decided, yep, we're going to do this."

While Elaine and John have not been to St. Joe's Picnic every year, they've gone as frequently as they can. When they were in their younger years, the couple attended annually, but after having four children, they said it obviously became a bit more difficult. However, all of their children know the story of how they met at Picnic, because John says they like to tell the story.



"For Elaine and I, St. Joe's has a special place," John says. "We've never used the resources there, but it is the starting point of our relationship. To me when you take a look at the whole reason the Reinarts were there and how that gave an opportunity for us to meet, that was special. We know St. Joe's makes a difference in a lot of lives every year. It sure made a difference in our life."

Exciting Updates and News!

Welcome New Director of Development, Carrie Fanelli

St. Joe's is proud to announce our brand new Director of Development, Carrie Fanelli! We are excited to have her join the team with her years of experience and expertise. To learn more click on the link below.

Download press release [here](#).



Picnic 2022 Dates Announced!

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT! The dates for Picnic 2022 are set, and we are already feeling the excitement!

Mark those calendars for August 12 & 13, and get ready for a completely in-person, back-to-normal Picnic!

Stay tuned for more information on this year's St. Joe's Picnic for the Kids! You can keep up to date easily by following us on social media.



Celebrating 25 Years with Tamara Windham!

I started here at St. Joe's on Monday, February 17th, 1997. I remember the date because I had just left my previous job (another daycare) on Valentine's Day. My mother-in-law worked in the CDC and mentioned that St. Joe's was hiring. I was a little unhappy at my previous job and took a pay cut to come here. My mother-in-law worked here until she was unable to care for the kids in the CDC due to health conditions, but everyone that knew her loved her. There are still several staff here today that knew Mary Patricia Windham very well.

My first day I walked through that big door, and I remember all the pink tiles on the walls. They put me in the 2-year-old room. On my second day they put me in the "Little Angels" room which included babies that were 6 weeks old to 6 months old. For the next three years I was in the baby room – it was a great fit! I became pregnant with my third child in 2000 and was walking to take my break when a little girl that was in the daycare (but a residential child) looked at me and asked "Can I go home with you?". I literally teared up, and it wasn't long after that I changed positions to work in our Foster Care & Adoption program. I had a lot to learn about foster care and about the children. I now coordinate getting donations for our annual

parties which include Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner, Back to School event, Halloween party and the annual Christmas party.

In my current position I have seen lots of changes – I have answered the phones for Picnic for the last 10 years and have had my whole family volunteer for the picnic as well. I've been in several different offices over the years, and have lost a few really special people since I have been here — our former Foster Care Director, Patty Murphy, passed away and our dear friend Gary as well.

St. Joe's holds a dear place in my heart – my mother-in-law got me here, and I have lots of ties to the name "Joe". I was born at St. Joseph Hospital, met my husband whose name is Joseph, started working at St. Joe's, and have a son named Joseph. St Joe's is truly a family place and I can't imagine working anywhere else.

Foster Care & Adoption Info Sessions Available



Foster Care & Adoption Info Sessions



When: First Tuesday of every
month at 5:45 pm

Where: Virtual meeting or at
St. Joseph Children's Home

Individual info sessions
available upon request

This year we plan to hold in-person sessions, depending on current COVID-19 rates. To RSVP or learn more, email info@sjkids.org, call (502) 893-0241, or visit our [Therapeutic Foster Care & Adoption Program](#) page.

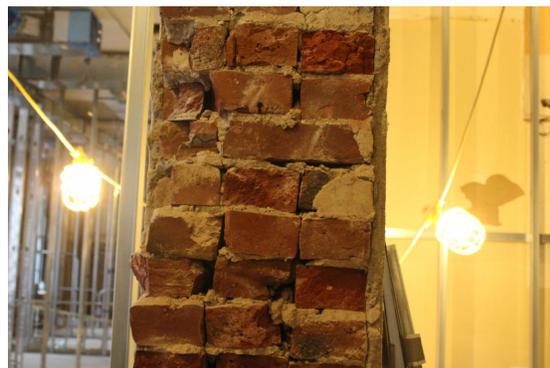
Building Forever Families

Campus Renovations Continue!



The next phase in St. Joe's [Building Forever Families Campaign](#) has begun!

During this time, our renovations' focus is on the East and Center Wings of the Landmark Building including a new residential school classrooms, an art and science room, a renovated cafeteria & chapel, a new mission center, a new front entryway, and additional meeting spaces. Future renovations to the Gymnasium include additional K-12 classrooms for St. Joe's residential children. The East Wing and Central Wing estimated completion date is November 2022!



Top: Chief Operations Officer, Julie Greenwell, stands where her future office is located.

Left: New Board President Bill Schneider, CEO Grace Akers, and 2nd Vice President Cheryl Fischer take a tour of the ongoing renovations.

Above Right: Original brickwork is revealed during construction.

During uncertain times such as these, St. Joe's mission of Giving Children A Home remains more important than ever. For our children who currently live at St. Joe's, we are their only home. We are where they find safety and love. When everything else is unknown, we are the one place that remains unchanged in our children's lives. That's why staying healthy is so critical.



KAHP Vaccine Grant

St. Joseph Children's Home is proud to announce we recently received a grant from the [Kentucky Association of Health Plans](#). This grant is centered around vaccination rates in our community and will allow us to increase communication, outreach, PSA, and directions to vaccination sites. We look forward to working with those in our community to make a healthier Kentucky!



St. Joe's Vaccination Status

We're proud to announce that 100 percent of the St. Joe's team is vaccinated against COVID-19! This news came at a time when cases rose at an alarming rate. Here at St. Joseph Children's Home, we dedicate our energy to doing everything we can to maintain a safe and healthy home for the children and families we serve. While there are many uncertainties, what is certain is that the vaccine drastically decreases the chances of serious illness and hospitalization. Visit sjkids.org/covid19-info for more information, including vaccination and testing sites.

Join Our Monthly Impact Club



A little change makes a huge impact!

What were your New Year resolutions? If they included showing more kindness, supporting your community, or giving back to those around you then we've got a way for you to do that!

Join our Monthly Impact Club to make a BIG difference with a smaller donation. Our MIC members give anywhere from \$5 a month to \$100+, and all are important. Visit sjkids.org/donate and click on "I would like my donation to recur" to join the club! You can also click the "Make A Gift" button in this newsletter located below.

**MAKE A
GIFT**

**FOSTER &
ADOPT**

SEE YOUR IMPACT

**JOIN THE MAILING
LIST**



