



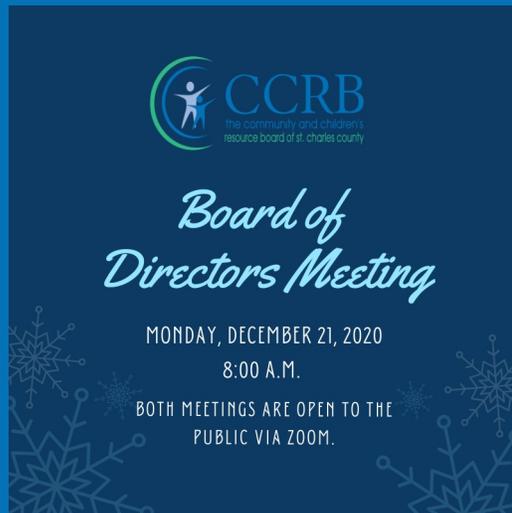
CARING FOR KIDS - December 2020

Greetings!

December is traditionally a month of holidays, family gatherings, travel, and gift giving. With COVID-19 still active in our communities, anxiety, stress, and depression may make it more difficult to feel joy for the season. We are fortunate the St. Louis metro has wonderful community supports, including Compass Health Network's 24/7 COVID Stress Line available for youth and adults at 888-237-4567. For youth related concerns, the BHR Youth Connection Helpline is available 24/7 at 1-844-985-8282 or text BHEARD to 31658. We appreciate your continued support for the CCRB and hope you will find information of value each month.

Happy Holidays!

Bruce Sowtasky, Michelle McElfresh, Jeanne Spencer, and the Board of Directors
The Community & Children's Resource Board of St. Charles County



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Learn more about our monthly Board meetings [here](#).

2020: The Best Year Ever!

by Bruce Sowatsky, CCRB Executive Director

To be honest, 2020 has sucked! Since March, we have been immersed in a global pandemic, the likes of which we haven't seen for a 100 years. In addition, we have

been beset with partisan politics that have unfortunately turned some friends into enemies; hurricanes, forest fires, unemployment, financial hardship, and the murder of many African-Americans at the hands of police and vigilantes. The pandemic has taken the lives of colleagues, friends, and dear family members; leaving us grieving. Activities that were a sense of joy or respite have become super-spreader events and taboo. Behind all of the depression and anger is deeply held wish that things would return to normal.

Yet despite this horrific set of circumstances, I see the sacrifice and dedication of the front line workers of our partner agencies, staff members demonstrating patience, politeness and grace with one another, and the ability of our non-profit leaders to adjust to constant changes. I don't remember taking a course in college in how to handle a pandemic, and I doubt my colleagues attended one either. However, I have been truly impressed with our partners' ability to manage this ever changing landscape of COVID.

It's easy to fall prey to the difficulties of our current everyday lives and focus on what we can't do anymore. It's harder to count your blessings and locate the joys; yet, we must, for the mental health of our clients, our families and ourselves. It offers us strength and hope on a daily basis, and day by day, we can approach the day when normalcy returns. It's around the corner.



75,000 youth are served annually through CCRB funding.

St. Charles County is #BetterBecauseOfYou

Tips for Caring for Children with Trauma during the Holiday Season

The Holiday Season can be a magical time of the year filled with fun and memories. However, it can also bring extra stress and dysregulation for children, especially those that have experienced trauma. When your child is struggling, there are some key questions you can ask yourself.

- Does my child feel safe?
- Could my child be hungry?
- Is my child triggered?

Here are some tips for helping you and your child avoid some of the Holiday Madness and increase the Holiday Joy and Memories.

Safety:

- Sometimes at holiday gatherings the adults congregate in one area while the children play in another area. This can lead to kids being in charge of other kids. Young children especially can benefit from being in an environment where both children and adults are around. This offers the fun of playing with other kids but also the safety of having adults available if needed.
- Another safety concern for some children relates to personal boundary setting. It



can be common at family gatherings for people to want hugs or kisses from children. It is extremely important for the child to feel comfortable giving any form of physical affection. It is important for children to know they are in charge of their own bodies and they can say "No" to a hug request and their answer will be respected.

Hunger:

- A fear that stems from some types of trauma is the fear of not having enough food when a child is hungry. Many parents traditionally think of the holiday season as having more food or treats than normal so they may not be aware of moments where a child's trauma can be triggered. To a child, a change in meal timing and meal size can be confusing and triggering especially if the child has a fear of not having food. One way to help children manage meal changes is to allow snacks either before or after a meal if they are hungry.
- Also, some children do not respond well to new foods or smells. One way to help ensure their appetites are satisfied is to include a dish that you know they like to eat.
- Additionally, a child may hoard food from a large Christmas meal if they have had past experiences where food has been scarce. For these children, it can sometimes be helpful if they have a special type of food set aside that they know will be available to them if they are ever hungry. If your child does have a history of food hoarding, mention it to your counselor and they can help you develop additional strategies.

Triggers:

- It is nearly impossible to accurately predict and prevent all potential triggers for children. However, it can be helpful to know what has triggered your child in the past and if possible try to reduce the likelihood of it being a problem again. Additionally, if your child has a favorite comfort item like a blanket or stuffed animal, if possible encourage them to bring it with you to holiday events. Having a familiar comfort item and taking deep breaths can often help soothe children when they feel triggered.

Overall, remember that your child is working hard to try to manage any stress they might have during the holiday season. Trauma can be overwhelming for children and their parents. Showing love and grace to our children during the stressful and tense moments is often one of the greatest gifts parents can give.

Article by Tasha Lehner MA, Heart to Heart Child and Family Counseling
<https://www.hearttoheartfamilycounseling.com/blog>

Spotlight: Pastor Raymond Horry, Board Member



Pastor Horry joined the CCRB in May 2017. He is the founder and Pastor of Ark of Safety Christian Church in St. Charles, where he focuses on teaching and living life as an exemplary Christian. His wife, Kathy is the First Lady and Minister of Music for the church and proudly serves alongside her husband. Pastor is a published author, dedicated husband and father of three, with a passion for family, sports, and the community he serves.

Since joining the CCRB, Pastor Horry has become more sensitive to the mental health challenges in our community and through education, he has changed his perception of mental health. He hopes the CCRB will remain consistent as they move forward, maintaining the honesty, integrity, and transparency for which they are known.

The Child Center Makes Room for Healing

The Child Center, Inc. is pleased to announce they are moving into their new therapy office space. Because of community support, they were able to expand into another office at their current location to house their critical therapy services. The Child Center is a Child Advocacy Center for children who have been the victim of sexual abuse or who have witnessed a violent act. Their services include forensic interviews, child advocacy, sexual abuse prevention programs, Mandated Reporter training, and specialized therapy for caregivers and children.



The new space will allow therapists to accommodate the growing need for services to help child victims of abuse mend from their traumatic experiences. It is also important to the Child Center staff to provide healing in a separate location other than the space where the children disclose their trauma. To learn more about their services call 636.332.0545.

When You're Not Sure What to Say to Your (Teen) Child, But Know that You Want to Stay in Connection C H E A T S H E E T



I'm here to support you. No matter what. Let's figure out a solution.

This is really hard right now. But we can do hard things.

Can you help me understand this better? I am listening.

This boundary is not negotiable, but I still want to hear why you disagree.

I know you are upset. When you're ready to talk, I'm here.

Everyone makes mistakes. Let's take a breather, then brainstorm what to do.

Signs of Anxiety & Depression in Youth

ST. LOUIS – The founder of CHADS Coalition for Mental Health says many kids and teens are struggling during this pandemic. Marian McCord says children see the job losses, the isolation, and the illnesses that worry parents. But, she says some parents may not notice their kid or teen having a serious mental health challenge. McCord explains to Fox 2 reporter, Kim Hudson, the signs of depression and anxiety in young people and how CHADS Coalition can help. [Click here to view the full interview.](#)

Courtesy of FOX2 News and Kim Hudson



News from the Field



Parenting is a 24/7 job and as the challenges created by the pandemic wear on, parents are under more stress this holiday season than ever before. **The Crisis**

Nurseries of St. Charles County are here to help! Their doors are still open and the Helpline remains staffed 24/7 for parents looking to find free, confidential support. A dedicated team of caring professionals are ready to assist with everything from virtual or phone based parenting and counseling support, to 24-hour emergency care for children, assistance with food or diapers, and virtual art/play therapy for children. **Connect with the Crisis Nursery team anytime day or night at: 636-887-3070.**

The O'Fallon Lights Christmas Show is collecting monetary donations for **Our Lady's Inn Maternity Homes** in St. Charles, MO - a shelter for women, children, and expectant mothers.

O'Fallon Lights has been providing joy and entertainment through synchronized lights since 2006. The show is open 5:30-10p.m. nightly, and 5:30-11p.m. on Friday/Saturdays through New Years Day. **The address is 1355 President's Landing Drive O'Fallon, MO 63366.**

Community Living, Inc. is pleased to announce the recipients of their Direct Support Professional Awards.

- Maria Gericke is Community Living's 2020 Direct Support Professional Award recipient.

Recipients of this award are people who provide direct support to individuals with disabilities and recognizes those individuals who demonstrate consistent dedication and who are frequently going above and beyond their typical day-to-day responsibilities. Community Living Center Manager, Jess, said she nominated Maria because of the attitude and passion she brings to her job.

- Christy Jacquemin is the recipient of the new 2020 Direct Support Professional Covid Hero Award.

This award is designed to recognize those who are frequently going above and beyond their typical day-to-day responsibilities specifically during the time of COVID. She was nominated because she sought out ways to continue to connect with her participants even during a time when they weren't able to see each other face-to-face.



The Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Charles County (BGCSTC)

Board of Directors is proud to announce

they are a 2020 awardee for the **Boys & Girls Clubs of America League of Eagles Silver Award**. The award centers on board engagement, leadership, and service. The



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF ST. CHARLES COUNTY



United Services for Children's Family Support staff provides opportunities for

family education and training. Small and large group classes for parents, grandparents and caregivers are offered throughout the year. Support groups for siblings of children with disabilities run throughout the school year, meeting monthly in the early evening. A licensed social worker is available to meet the needs of our families on an ongoing basis.

Family Support includes:

- **SIBSHOP** – a sibling support group for children (ages 6 years and older) who have a sibling with a disability. Groups meet monthly throughout the year, offering siblings a better understanding of their families.
- **Early Childhood Parenting Made Fun** – This is a three-week parent training program, designed by the Love and Logic Institute, for parenting children ages birth to 6 years. Parents learn to feel more confident, have more fun, and gain valuable tools to help them handle day-to-day frustrations of raising a young family.
- **Referrals** – Connecting families to community resources or other supports.

For more information, please call 636-926-2700.

A Huge "Thanks!" to **Starbucks in St. Charles County** for partnering with the **Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition** to spread the word about **Holiday Little Wishes!**

The kids requested 4,420 Little Wishes this year. The most ever! Together, one Little Wish at time, we can do it!

Next time you're picking up your favorite drink at Starbucks in St. Charles County,

Silver Award is granted to organizations achieving 90% or more involvement from its board of directors in these areas. Just 15% of the 1,100 Boys & Girls club member organizations across the country are recognized each year. This year, BGCSTC's Board was one of the only Midwest organizations to receive this recognition.

To learn more about the Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Charles County's Board of Directors, please visit <https://bgcstc.org/board-members/>.

Over the Top for Tots

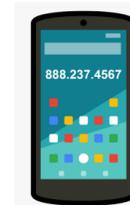


Congratulations!
Crisis Nursery
Front Line Staff



Guardian Angels

**COVID
STRESS LINE**



Compass Health Network has a COVID Stress Line, in addition to our 24 hour crisis hotline.

please call 888-237-4567

Visit our website at <http://compasshealthnetwork.org>
For more information



make sure to scan the QR code by the drive through window to make the holidays brighter for a child impacted by foster care! More info at <https://www.foster-adopt.org/>



Find out about current online programming by visiting our website at www.namistl.org

buying a month...
I'm feeling depressed...
How can I get help finding legal aid?
Where can I find a support group?
I'm having trouble finding employment...
I can't afford to pay my medical bills...
Is there an after-school program in my area?
I need to find affordable housing...
How can I help you?

United Way 2-1-1 Connects You to Information about Community Services

Dial 2-1-1

Free, confidential information & referrals, Available 24/7



 **CCRB**
the community and children's resource board of st. charles county

For 24/7 linkage to children's mental health resources, call the BHR Youth Connection Helpline at 314-819-8802 or text BHEARD to 31658

[Services](#)

[Funding](#)

[Meetings](#)

[Publications](#)

The CCRB is funded by a dedicated fund for children's mental health services in St. Charles County. Through a local sales tax, over 70,000 children and youth receive prevention education and mental health supports annually. The CCRB is proud to administer these funds, ensuring our youth and their families have the resources they need to realize a brighter tomorrow. All funds stay in St. Charles County for County residents.

St. Charles County

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Contact
Us

