



DePelchin
CHILDREN'S CENTER

Spring 2023
Newsletter



Brighter Tomorrow

Stories of hope YOU bring to children & families!



Jenifer Jarriel
President & CEO

Dear Friend,

It's that amazing time of year — new life, growth and, of course, a bit more warmth across our Texas communities.

Thanks to friends like you, I'm looking forward to our own growth here at DePelchin Children's Center as we continue to evolve to meet the needs of the children and families we serve.

In late 2022, DePelchin assumed the campus assets of the former

Today's Harbor for Children residential facilities. Because of this, DePelchin now has the opportunity to offer two new residential programs for youth in foster care in LaPorte.

One program focuses on pregnant and parenting foster teens while the other will benefit teenagers in foster care who plan to be independent by the age of 18. In an ever-changing world, both initiatives will offer evidence-based programs to equip youth for success.

I hope you'll enjoy reading a few stories I've chosen for you in this spring edition of *Brighter Tomorrow* that illustrate the difference you make for more children and families.

For families like Allison's (page 7), your generosity is making way for a happier, healthier family bond — she's so grateful for your support.

Thank you for choosing to join with DePelchin to create a brighter tomorrow for children and families across Texas. I look forward to our continued partnership throughout this year!

With gratitude,

Jenifer Jarriel
President & CEO

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You Bring Families Together



Lacey and Ethan are quick to describe the day they adopted Vincent as “seriously, the greatest day,” and thanks to friends like you, they also had the critical support they needed leading up to that special day.

The couple’s first exposure to the child welfare system began when they served as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) soon after they were married and they served on the same case for five years. During that time, their daughter Delaina was born.

“Once our CASA case closed, we got interested in foster care,” Lacey says.

The family began the training and the licensing process in September and were officially licensed by the end of October. Nineteen days later, the couple received a call about a 13-day-old baby.

“*Thank you because my home is bigger by one child.*”

The couple says the emotional support provided through DePelchin was especially critical for their journey from foster care to adoption, a process that was at times uncertain and challenging.

“That’s why I feel like the agency that you choose is so integral,” Lacey says. “I think it makes or breaks your experience in foster care because it is lonely and trying.”

Ethan and Lacey say they hope their children will grow up to be accepting and loving toward people of all different backgrounds and that “they’re happy and that they’re healthy and that they’re good people.”

Lacey also has a special message for donors like you who make the support they’ve received possible.

“Thank you, because my home is bigger by one child,” Lacey says. “I can’t imagine not having him in our home and he’s the happiest and most fun kid.”



Thank You for *Sharing Hope* This Spring!

DePelchin Sun Society **Monthly Giving Group**

DePelchin Sun Society is a great way to change lives for the better every day. Members provide monthly, critical funding to support and sustain children and the families who care for them. To find out how you can easily join *DePelchin Sun Society*, please call our Office of Advancement at 713-802-7795 or visit www.depelchin.org/monthly-giving today!

We Appreciate the Gordy Family!

This past holiday season, generous friends of DePelchin, Russell and Glenda Gordy, offered an incredible \$200,000 matching gift challenge. Thanks to the support of our community of donors, we met and exceeded the matched goal to help even more children and families in 2023! Thank you to all our donors and to Russell and Glenda Gordy for investing in the lives of vulnerable children this past holiday season!



Linda Ledbetter, Vanessa Gilmore, and Sue Nan Cutsinger at 2022 Families for Kids Luncheon.



Families for Kids Luncheon

Wednesday, April 26 at River Oaks Country Club

DePelchin's annual luncheon honoring Baker Botts will take place Wednesday, April 26. Our keynote speaker for the event is Dr. John Gaines, a former foster child turned mentorship advocate. Growing up surrounded by drugs and violence, and being bullied for his differences, he had every reason to give up. At the luncheon, Dr. Gaines will share how just one, "I believe in you" changed his life. For more information or to make your reservation, please visit www.depelchin.org/luncheon.

Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month — an opportunity to recognize the importance of families and communities working together to strengthen families. In 2022, there were 56,944 victims of child abuse and neglect in Texas. Visit our website to learn how you can take action to support children this April. There's no better time to bring awareness to this issue and join DePelchin in our work to keep children safe and healthy.

Thank you TaxAct Texas Bowl!

Thank you to the TaxACT Texas Bowl and all of the supporters of this year's event. Since 2006, more than \$2 million in funding has been donated to DePelchin through the annual bowl proceeds. In addition, they've hosted scores of DePelchin children and families at special events — like this year's Field Day with collegiate athletes — providing memories to last a lifetime.

A Century of Dedication: Junior League of Houston

DePelchin is proud to acknowledge a century of time, care and effort by one of the oldest and most respected volunteer organizations in our community: the Junior League of Houston, Inc.

Founded in 1925, the League has walked alongside DePelchin in our work on behalf of vulnerable children for almost a century. Archival materials reveal that, from its beginning, Junior Leaguers provided care and support to children living on the DePelchin campuses and in our foster and adoptive homes – taking children to appointments, teaching life skills, supervising kids on the playground, mentoring and much more.

The Junior League of Houston is proud of its long-standing relationship with DePelchin Children’s Center.

DePelchin has also benefitted from the leadership training that the League provides to its members — to our knowledge, every DePelchin board of directors from 1925 onward has included one or more Junior League of Houston representatives.

As the League approaches its 100th anniversary, it has elected to bestow upon DePelchin an extraordinary honor: its Centennial Gift to the community, in the form of a \$2,000,000 investment toward the construction of a new volunteer facility. With a projected grand opening date of June 2025, the new facility will begin serving the community in conjunction with the League’s celebration of its Centennial Anniversary and will feature a ‘History Wall’ of archival material documenting the 100 years of our organizations’ joint service to the community.

“The Junior League of Houston is proud of its long-standing relationship with DePelchin Children’s Center and looks forward to continuing to serve DePelchin and the greater Houston community with critical volunteer support and direct financial contributions,” says Anne Sears, 2022 – 2023 Junior League of Houston President.

The decades have seen significant changes to both our organizations, but two key factors have remained constant: Houston’s children and families have benefitted from our unswerving partnership on their behalf, and DePelchin is stronger because of the Junior League.



Junior League leaders and DePelchin staff.

Allison, Christopher, Madi and Autumn cuddle up for some outdoors family time.



Allison and her husband, Christopher, are the proud parents of three daughters, Ashley, 26, Madi, 14 and Autumn, 4. After giving birth to Madi, Allison was unable to have more children. However, a decade later, Allison and Christopher were given an opportunity to expand their family when a pregnant acquaintance chose the couple to adopt her baby, Autumn.

A few years after the joy of adopting Autumn and completing their family, Allison and Christopher felt they needed some new parenting tools to better care for their children.

On a visit to Autumn's pediatrician, Allison first learned about DePelchin's ParentingHelp Program, a free, 9-session course that covers topics ranging from stress management to problem solving and child development.

"The doctor could tell I was having a rough day," Allison says. "I was exhausted, frustrated, felt like I was failing at this whole mom thing."

Once in the program, Allison says she began to have major shifts in perspective and began focusing on Autumn's positive behaviors rather than constantly correcting undesirable behaviors.

You Equip Caregivers

"This parenting thing is tough, and each day and age and stage seems to bring new challenges... but this program has given me tools to feel equipped to take those challenges on in a more positive and constructive way." Allison says.

"The shift in perspective and guidance on how to put things into action made all the difference."

Allison stays home with Autumn and says she now tries to make sure she spends not just lots of time with her daughter, but *quality* time "that helps her to feel seen, heard and important."

The shift in perspective and guidance on how to put things into action made all the difference.

Thank you for empowering caregivers to be the best they can be through your support of DePelchin. Your generosity helps build happier, healthier families.

You Make Family's Dreams Come True



Tyler, Christie and Allyson pose with Julia on the day of her adoption.

Like many parents, Christie and Tyler dream of a future for their children that is full of joy, happiness and possibility. Thanks to friends like you, both of their girls have a bright future ahead of them.

The couple are the proud parents of one biological daughter, 11-year-old Allyson, and one adopted daughter, 5-year-old Julia. They first got interested in foster care and adoption after being around several foster families in their church's small group.

"Julia was placed with one of the foster families from our small group as an emergency placement and I just kind of fell in love with her," Christie says.

The couple began training right away through DePelchin to become foster-to-adopt parents

and welcomed Julia into their home through foster care once certification was complete.

Christie says DePelchin was a lifeline through the entire process. "We were told they didn't know if she would ever walk," says Christie.

“ Thank you so much for helping DePelchin help families and kids. ”

Julia is nonverbal and has a rare genetic condition. According to the couple, DePelchin went to bat for them to ensure she receives the help she needs. And now, "Julia is walking, running, and playing."

"If DePelchin hadn't accepted and found her a good placement where she could receive the therapy

services that she needed, her life would look much different right now," Christie says. "She's going to have any opportunity she wants because she's receiving all the services she needs."

Christie teared up when asked what she would say to donors like you who make DePelchin's programs possible.

"DePelchin steps in and they fill in that gap for you and they remind you that you can do this and they're going to help you do it," Christie says. "Thank you so much for helping DePelchin help families and kids."

For more information about DePelchin Children's Center or how to get involved, visit us at www.depelchin.org