



Judson Center Family Matters

Fall/Winter 2017 Newsletter

www.judsoncenter.org



From Foster Child to Successful Adult



Judson Center Program Supervisor, Brandy and her two sons.

Photo credit: RyanGuzinskiPhotography

Brandy is successful today because *somebody* reached out as a foster parent when her life was in crisis.

You, too, can be *somebody* who makes a real difference in the life of a child.

At Our Center



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President & CEO

It is that time of year, where we come together to celebrate the holidays, give thanks for what we have, and to help others.

At Judson Center, we value and appreciate you - our supporters, families we serve and the communities we live in - now and each moment of the year. We know that together, we can make a positive impact in the lives of others, which also makes a difference on their trajectory and those they surround themselves with. This is extraordinary, that is Judson Center and with you, *we are somebody*.

As you read this issue of *Family Matters*, you will notice a common theme - our programs not only effect those we serve, it embraces many individuals, families and generations. We are a 93 year old organization, and just as relevant to the needs of people today as we were in 1924.

We Are Somebody.

Judson Center has and continues to be a resource for healing and a leader in human services. We deliver brighter futures for those we are privileged to serve, nearly 7,000 this past year. Imagine what we can continue to do as we end the year and begin a new one. How many more lives we can invest in, we can change, we can impact. As we begin the holidays and the season of giving, I ask that you continue to help us recognize that everyone we serve is *somebody*, and that you are also somebody. You are not waiting for others to make a difference, you *are* the difference.

Wishing you and yours all the best this holiday season. *We Are Somebody.*

Lenora Hardy-Foster
President & CEO



I am so honored to be a part of an amazing organization. The passion I see from other board members, staff, and the community for the amazing families served is so energizing. We have launched the Young Leaders Board (YLB) over a year ago, and I am so happy to see the great success we have had introducing our networks to Judson Center. I can't wait to see what the future holds for the growth and success of Judson Center. *I am Somebody!*

~Janelle Morck, Board of Trustee Member
and a founding member of the YLB.



"When Xavier was diagnosed with autism at age 2, I was at a loss, what do I do now?"



Today, one in 68 children are diagnosed with autism, and it is hard to know what to do next or where to go after the diagnosis. The Ballard family experienced just that, and this is their story.

"Xavier was a happy baby, meeting all his milestones his first year. Then, everything started to change. I noticed that he was not playing with his toys as other children his age were. The small vocabulary he once had seemed to disappear overnight. He was no longer communicating. I just knew in my gut that something was not right, and that is when I decided to contact Early On to assess his development skills. I am so glad I did. My gut was right. They recommended that we have a diagnostic done for autism.

At age two, Xavier was officially diagnosed with mild autism and was nonverbal. We were told that he may never speak again. Our hearts broke into pieces right at that moment.

We were not familiar with autism, we heard about it, but did not know about

it and what that really meant. So, I did what many people do. I Googled it and looked for answers - anything that could help Xavier.

We first enrolled Xavier in a public school program dedicated to children with autism in a different school district, from ages 2 ½ to 6 years old. Not too long after that, we then enrolled him in Judson Center's Autism Connections for afternoon ABA (applied behavior analysis). He was doing well.

Then, our lives changed again.

Xavier became very aggressive. Being older and nonverbal, it was hard for him to communicate his needs/wants and aggression set in more so than before. We needed to find another resource to help and that is when we made the very difficult decision to admit him to the University of Michigan hospital. I could not believe it. My sweet little boy had become so aggressive, that this was the only option we thought was best at that moment. However, in less than a week, I again listened to my gut and took him out of the hospital, changed doctors, switched schools, and continued the amazing services at Judson Center's Autism Connections.

Life began to return to the normal we once knew. Xavier was doing well. He attended his new school in the morning, and received Judson Center's ABA services.

Then life changed again. In January 2017, we decided what Xavier needed was Judson Center. At school, his learning had stalled and he began to have more meltdowns, which was

not happening in the afternoons at Judson Center. Xavier went from four years part-time to full time Monday through Friday at Judson Center's Autism Connections. To this day, he loves going and being there.

Today, our world and most importantly, Xavier's world has opened up. He can communicate more independently with use of technology (i-pad) and speak more words and sounds. I still remember his first word he learned and spoke - "bye". I was so ecstatic to hear him say that simple word. This was a major milestone for us, a major victory. And each day, there are more victories. The small stuff parents usually take for granted are huge milestones for us.

The journey from diagnoses to finding support services is not easy, but if I can share anything to others experiencing and living with an autism diagnosis is this, there will be doubt, you will be scared, but always listen to your gut, do your research and be your child's advocate. My son Xavier may have autism, but that does not define him. He is one happy, lovable little boy who loves Buddy's pizza, Woody from Toy Story and the Backyardigans. Simply put, he is just that, our little boy."

~ Carla, Xavier's mom.



We Are Somebody.

If you would like more information on Judson Center's Autism Connections Program, please contact: Royal Oak: 248.837.2047 or Ann Arbor: 734.528.2003



Even Corporations can *Be The Somebody.*

This past summer, Judson Center’s Vocational Services program began a new and exciting initiative to help high school students with a traditional rite of passage – work a summer job.

Early in the summer and throughout Metro Detroit, over 150 Oakland County teens with disabilities had the opportunity to participate in soft skill workshops, a pre-requisite to the Summer Work Experience. Judson Center’s Vocational Services program hosted sixteen of those teens from different high schools throughout the area, for the first of its kind program geared toward teen employment. These young adults worked on 10 specific soft skills to help them with their summer employment:

1. Communication
2. Teamwork
3. Problem Solving
4. Time Management
5. Attitude/Work Ethic
6. Adaptability/Flexibility
7. Self-Confidence
8. Accepting Feedback
9. Networking
10. Resume Building

Once the workshop was completed, students had the option to begin summer employment. In all, 20 young adults, seven from Judson Center’s workshop plus 13 other high school students who participated in workshops

elsewhere, were placed into summer jobs for a total of six weeks.

Each teen was placed in a small group made up of three or four students with a job coach. The job coach provided mentoring and support for the group. Employers included TJ Maxx, Meijer, Nino Salvaggio and Proud Lake Recreation Area.

“We are able to provide real world experience to kids who as adults, are at a disadvantage as they are often overlooked for employment. The majority of the teens are on the autism spectrum and learning and working early on as a teen will help them in the future to be gainfully employed”, Jenipher Guerin, Judson Center’s Employment Specialist Manager.

The Summer Work Experience is a win for everyone involved. There is no cost to the companies to participate, as wages are paid through a state funded partnership with MRS (Michigan Rehabilitation Services), and over \$20,000 of income in all for the 20 students. “Companies just need to be willing to give high school students with disabilities the



“The Summer Work Experience was a great opportunity to learn how to cope with others. I am very grateful for the experience.”

*Mike Abbott,
High School Student.*

opportunity to have real world experiences. They have the ability to work and employers are expected to raise the bar high, because from experience, they will reach it”, shared Jenipher.

Next year, the Summer Work Experience has a goal to increase employment opportunities for 250 teens to obtain gainful employment.

If your company is interested in participating in our Vocational Services program, please contact Irene Salem at irene_salem@judsoncenter.org or 248.837.1227



In 1996, Judson Center realized there was a need in the community for mental health services. Today, 21 years later, we are still working hard in helping nearly 1,000 children and families each year! Here's what our clients have to say about our mental health services:

Judson Center saved my life.

We really love Judson Center. They treated us with lots of courtesy and also respect. The staff is very understanding. They do their job very good. They make sure my family is very happy and satisfied. Thank you Judson Center.

I have recommended several people to Judson Center and will continue to in the future. You all have helped my family come such a far distance, thank you!

This place has helped me from my lowest point I could possibly be in and stood by and listened and actually cared what I was going through. It's like talking to a close friend that doesn't judge and will help you any way they can. My therapist is the best therapist I have known. I thank her for getting me through this time of my life and helping me like no one else. Thank You!

stig • ma

a mark of disgrace or infamy; a stain or reproach, as on one's reputation

Stigma erodes confidence that mental illnesses are real, treatable health conditions.

We have allowed stigma to erect barriers around effective treatments and recovery. It is time to take those barriers down.

**End the stigma.
Change lives.
Be The Somebody.**

My therapist is amazing, she has helped me to reach so many goals. I feel confident that I can share anything with her. The doctor is amazing with making sure I am taking the right medication. The staff is awesome! I am happy to be a client at Judson Center.

My sessions with my therapist are a great help. I feel relaxed enough to be able to open up and not be afraid or embarrassed about my feelings.

I have improved since I have been here and really feel comfortable with my therapist. She has been very understanding to my needs and feelings. I am blessed to have her helping me.

We appreciate the kindness shown by all staff members. Judson Center is a caring environment! They give me a lot of support as a parent. We are grateful. ☺ Thank You!

For more information about our Mental Health Services, please contact Judson Center at 586.573.1810 or kathryn_lowe@judsoncenter.org.



From needing *Somebody* to being *The Somebody*.



“Over fifteen years ago, I found myself in a downward spiral. Once it started, I just could not keep up, and that is when my world officially crumbled. I lost my kids to the foster care system.”
Keya, Parent Partner at Judson Center

I promised myself that I would do what I needed to do to get them back. My children were and are my world. I could not breathe without them. I was determined.

there to support them, build their self-worth, and let them know they can do this. I am not part of the ‘system’, I am part of their support system,” shared Keya.

Fast forward to today, Keya is living a successful life and is a parent to her four adult children and a grandma. If you ask her, she will tell you that her past does not define who she is today. Her story is not uncommon for thousands of parents in Michigan, where every day struggles can become too much to handle. Where certain choices, a lack of where to go for help or who can help, will lead children into someone else’s care – placement in foster care.

I followed all the programs the court required me to do; I never missed a visitation or a court-ordered appointment. What usually takes an average of 12 months to complete, I did in 7 ½ months and my children came home.

Just this past summer, Keya was invited to speak in Lansing for the State’s Annual Family Reunification Day. She shared her experiences with other families celebrating reunification with their children. “The advice I always share with family, friends and those I help as a peer, like I did in Lansing, is to know that it is okay to ask for help. Don’t be afraid.”

“Today, I realize I should have listened to my family, and got the help I needed, rather than take the back seat to life like I did. I was raising four children in a hostile family environment and I should have made some changes. When my children were placed into foster care with my grandmother,

I did it. The struggle is real, but not impossible. It is very hard as a mom to lose your children. I was younger and did not realize what I know now, how things could just unravel from the choices I made or did not make. That is why today, I am a Parent Partner.

.....
A parent partner is a parent who successfully reunited with their child(ren) from foster care. The parent partner provides guidance and mentorship to other parents whose children are currently in foster care.
.....

I want to let other parents know that they too can be reunified with their child(ren). I provide support and mentoring for the parents. We work on personal goals outside of the court system. I am

For more information on Judson Center’s Parent Partner program, contact Child and Family Services Director Heidi Raubenolt at 313.794.5653 or heidi_raubenolt@judsoncenter.org.

For more information on becoming a foster parent, contact 313.255.8272 or foster_care@judsoncenter.org.

Judson Brighter Futures Fund THE GIFT OF GIVING



Join Judson Center today with a gift to the *Judson Brighter Futures Fund*. You will be the somebody who is making a positive difference in the lives of others and in your community.

My son Xavier has autism but that does not define him. *We Are Somebody.*
~Carla Ballard, Xavier's mom (page 3)

Getting experience in the work place for high school kids is an entry to the adult world. It is the first ring on the ladder. *I am Somebody.*
~Jenipher Guerin, Judson Center's Employment Specialist Manager (page 4)

I see how unconditional love can change a child. *I Am Somebody.*
~Anonymous, foster parent.

I have more hope for my own future now. *I Am Somebody.*
~Anonymous, Mental Health Consumer

Making a gift today is simple to do!



Mail the enclosed envelope



Call Kelly Kinnear at 248.837.2030



Email kelly_kinnear@judsoncenter.org

She brought color to our lives.

Wendy and Dwayne are your typical family, happily married with two children, Caden, age 13 and Cody, age 11. However, what makes them unique is that later in their lives, they decided together as a family, that adoption from foster care was going to be the next chapter in their happily ever after.

“Dwayne and I always wanted a little girl and we talked about fostering an older child for some time and after speaking with our boys, we knew we were ready to begin the journey. We had so much love to give and we knew that there were older children out there waiting for their *forever family*.

As we looked into fostering with the hope of adoption, we decided to look at the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) photo listings, and that is where we found Felicity.

Felicity’s smile, name *and* personality really resonated with us. So much so that when I found her, I sent the link to my husband and he did the same! We just had to meet this young girl.

On August 25, 2016, my husband and I met Felicity at the annual Back to School Extravaganza at Judson Center. We were volunteering, but truthfully, we were meeting Felicity and she was not aware of who we were or our true intent. After she received her new school haircut, we approached her and started a conversation, which flowed so easily.

Felicity, like her name, was just so bubbly, and she even put a hair bow in Dwayne’s hair. We were smitten!

Our second meet-up was at the Detroit Zoo. We had a date without our boys and met up with Felicity and her Adoption Specialist, Monique. We had a great time. Our hearts just knew this child was meant to be part of our family. And I guess Felicity thought so too. After we left, Felicity told Monique that she wished we were foster parents and that we could adopt her. Monique then told her that we did want to adopt her. I will never forget her sharing that moment with us”, stated Wendy.

After being in foster care for nearly four years, Felicity, who was only 8 months younger than Cody, began visits with Wendy, Dwayne and her boys. Day visits turned to overnights and on January 1, 2017, she moved in. The transition went pretty smoothly, but with any children experiencing changes, there were a few hiccups along the way.

Today, they are a complete family. Felicity’s adoption took place on August 25, 2017, exactly a year later from their first meeting. Caden and Cody are overprotective brothers and Felicity is thriving at home. She does visit with her foster mom too, who is forever a family member as well.



“It is important to share that the children waiting for their *forever family* are good kids. They have been through trauma and good experiences will change them, and will change you. Felicity was meant to be. We, as a family, can’t remember what life was without her and can’t even imagine what life would be without her now. From a very traumatized life, our little girl is full of life and she brought color and additional happiness to an already happy family. We are truly living happily ever after.

We are Somebody.

For more information on adopting a child, please visit mare.org or contact Child Safe Michigan at www.childsafemichigan.org or 248.353.0921.

PULL! for Kids



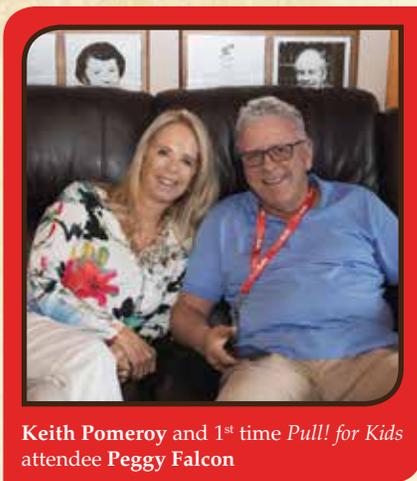
2017 Winning Team from left to right: Paul Campanile, Nick Palmieri, Michael Newman, Amber Brown, Mike Dunn, Tom Paine & Paula Paine

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!

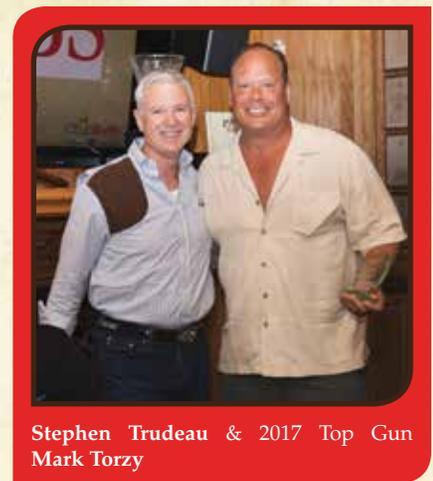
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On Thursday, September 21 Child Safe Michigan, an affiliate of Judson Center, hosted its 8th annual *Pull! for Kids Sporting Clays Tournament*. This year's event was held in memory of founding co-chair and Child Safe Michigan Board Member Ed Greenup, who passed away in October 2016.

The Pull! Event Committee, made up of Child Safe Michigan Board Members, Richard Najarian, John Parent and Joseph Saker, helped our Founding Chair and Child Safe Board Member Stephen Trudeau host an action packed day of clay target shooting. This sold out event featured a reception full of good food and conversation, along with a live auction and awards ceremony – all in memory of Ed, which raised \$125,000 to benefit Child Safe Michigan's foster care, adoption and mentoring programs.



Keith Pomeroy and 1st time Pull! for Kids attendee Peggy Falcon



Stephen Trudeau & 2017 Top Gun Mark Torzy

"This is our 8th year of the Pull! For Kids Sporting Clays fundraiser! Over the years we have netted more than \$500,000 to directly support the children and families of Southeast Michigan with mentoring and related services. I want to thank Child Safe and Judson Center for their continuing support and to especially remember Ed Greenup, my co-chair for the first 7 years, who is now overseeing things from heaven."
 ~Child Safe Board Member and Founding Chair, Stephen Trudeau

Volunteer

Making a Difference Every Day

Over 200 new backpacks and hundreds of school supplies were collected by area businesses, organizations and individuals to send foster kids well prepared and ready to learn for the new school year.



Kathryn Cassidy from Marian High School and her cousin John VanDagens from Brother Rice, worked with congregations from St. Regis Church and St. Hugo's Church to collect back to school items throughout the summer.



Team members Leea Moon and Linda Kurkechian were among the team members from LSG Insurance Partners who collected dozens of supplies for our kids in foster care.



Theresa Joswick of Dawda, Mann, Mulcahy and Sadler, PLC hosted a back to school drive at her office.



Tyresse Adams from Proctor Financial Inc. delivered a truck full of school supplies on behalf of his team members.

Volunteers from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, DTE Energy, and Ryder Transportation provided over 45 volunteer hours to help sort, organize, stuff and prepare all of the back to school supplies for the Back to School Extravaganza event.



Ryder Transportation volunteers



Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan volunteers



DTE Energy volunteers

For more information about
Peggy Kerr at 248.837.2019 or

er Voices

y Day. We are Somebody.

Our *Back to School Shopping Extravaganza* on August 30 supported 100 kids in foster care with a fun evening of back to school haircuts, manicures, games, dinner, and of course new backpacks filled to their brims with tons of school supplies from our generous community!



A child in foster care checks out the great variety of backpacks to choose from before making her final decision.



A child in foster care gets her hair cut and styled by **Jacki** from **The Studio for Hair** in Farmington Hills, who donated all services.



The kids in foster care were excited to visit with **Belle** from **Beauty and the Beast**, who made a surprise visit at the Back to School Extravaganza event.



Nobie Dawsey, Mentor Coordinator for our affiliate Child Safe Michigan, worked with volunteer **Evan McCullough** from **Groves High School** to help organize the food and toiletry pantry for those we serve.

Autism Connections Summer Program was a wonderful success thanks in part to our dedicated volunteers who supported the Autism Connections team by preparing classrooms, socializing with the kids, and doing anything needed to provide a memorable summer experience for the kids participating in the program.



Volunteer **Sarah Kreitman** and consumer **Blake G.** at Autism Connections Summer Program.



Bedrock volunteers, **Dave Early** and **Lee Dodds**, cleaned and sanitized the Autism House to help prepare for the Autism Connections Summer Program.

For more information on volunteering, please contact peggy_kerr@judsoncenter.org.

Many thanks to **Jones Lang LaSalle** for hosting their annual golf outing on September 25 at Shepard's Hollow Golf Course to benefit Child Safe Michigan. All proceeds from this event support Child Safe Michigan's parent's visitation room renovation project. The parent visitation room is used for families, whose children are in foster care. It allows parents a comfortable and kid friendly space to spend quality time with their child(ren).



Lauren Brosch Event Coordinator for Judson Center, and **Jones Lang LaSalle** Golf outing event organizers **Matt Babel** and **Lindsey Burger** stand with the rendering for the new Foster Care Family Visitation Room for Child Safe Michigan.



Matt Babel, **Dan D'Mato**, **Chris Balek** and **Matt Stewart** from **Jones Lang LaSalle** play a round of golf for the children we serve at Child Safe Michigan.

On Saturday August 5, over 200 riders came out to ride over 60 miles for the annual *Ride for Autism*, supporting our Autism Connections Program!



Strategic Staffing Solutions wore *Jeans for Judson* to raise money for Judson Center.



Co-Chair of *Ride for Autism* **Larry Stock** stands with *Ride for Autism* Ambassador **Amy Lange** from Fox 2 to welcome and cheer the riders at the starting point.



Founder of the *Ride for Autism* event **Sal Ferra**, (center) prepares to *Ride for Autism*, a fundraiser he founded 14 years ago to bring awareness to autism.

ity of Caring

omebody.

On August 13, the *Back to School Shopping Extravaganza* hosted by **Todd Stamper** of **Stamper Facility Management** was held at Kohl's in Troy. Over 60 foster children from Judson Center and Child Safe Michigan participated in this annual event. Thanks to Mr. Stamper's generosity, each child received a \$100 gift card to shop for clothing and accessories, all to start the school year off in style and most importantly, help boost their self-esteem.



Barton Malow served Judson Center during their annual Community Week by beautifying our grounds at our Lahser Respite Home, as well as weeding and power washing our buildings at headquarters.



Eagle Scout Nathaniel Abbott from Troup 1029 in Beverly Hills raised over \$750 in the community by coordinating a can drive to purchase an art cart for Autism Connections' Summer Program. Nathaniel assembled the entire cart by hand, and stocked it full of art and craft supplies from donors. Receiving the gift are **LynShannon Williams** and **Lauren Schuld** from the Autism Connections Program.



Aria Energy packed over 40 comfort and care overnight bags at their office in New York and drove them back to Judson Center to distribute to our kids in foster care.



ROCK GALA



Saturday, October 14 2017
MGM Grand Detroit

On Saturday, October 14, 2017 Judson Center supporters and friends rocked around the clock at the MGM Grand Detroit, as Chevrolet presented the *Judson Center Rock Gala*. Chaired by Steve Hill, General Motors North American President, Heather and David Mingle, and welcoming Vice Chair Bill Kolb, Global President, Diversified Agencies, McCann Worldgroup. Guests enjoyed the life of a Rockstar for the evening as they jammed to live bands, sipped on custom cocktails, enjoyed silent and live auctions, and most importantly raised funds to support Judson Center's mission of *helping those in need succeed*.

Guests were greeted by "paparazzi" as they stepped onto the red carpet as their favorite icon and in their stylin' jeans then headed up the Stairway to Heaven for a VIP and cocktail reception. Rockstar impersonators and more mixed and mingled with the crowd while guests created their own rock music video in the Star Show Experience booth. Emcee Ann Marie LaFlamme of Channel 7 WXYZ kept the night rockin' into the Afterglow party where guests were invited "Backstage" to dance and sing along to their favorite rock songs throughout the ages with tribute band Fifty AmpFuse.

We thank all the incredibly generous individuals and sponsors who donated their time, talents and resources to make this year's Rock Gala the most successful Gala yet!



Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan ♦ Willie Brooks and Michael Garrett
Joanne and John Carter ♦ Chemical Bank ♦ CIA Insurance + Risk Management
Daniel Brian Advertising ♦ Sue and Rick DiBartolomeo ♦ Dickinson Wright ♦ Dykema
GM Customer Care & AfterSales ♦ GM Fleet and Commercial Operations
Great Lakes Wine and Spirits ♦ Hammond & Associates ♦ Honigman ♦ LoVasco Group
MAI Capital Management ♦ Maritz ♦ Mort Crim Communications
Catherine and Christian Nieman ♦ Sonia and Keith Pomeroy
Plante Moran Wealth Management ♦ Plastipak Holdings, Inc. ♦ PricewaterhouseCoopers
Ronnisch Construction Group ♦ Salesforce.com ♦ Mickey and William Shield
The JRT Agency ♦ The Rehmann Group ♦ The New Foster Care and OCG Companies

Barbara and James Bayson ♦ Bowman Chevrolet ♦ Cambridge Consulting Group
Daly Merritt Insurance ♦ Dawda, Mann, Mulcahy & Sadler, PLC ♦ Fitness for Life Pilates
Law Office of Leila Frejij ♦ Pega Systems ♦ PNC Bank ♦ Plunkett Cooney ♦ Wells Fargo Private Bank



Judson Center leadership rockin' the night away.

EventFULL

SAVE THE DATE

Leon & Lulu
live well, laugh much, shop often.



November 9, 2017
6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Join us on Thursday, November 9, 2017 from 6-9 p.m. as Yelp and Leon & Lulu team up for *Yelp Helps for the Holidays*.

This annual event brings the holidays to 250 children in our foster care program by providing special gift bags of cheer (fun and fundamentals). You will have the opportunity to make these special gift bags and shop for those on your holiday list. Leon & Lulu will also donate a percentage of the evening's sales to Judson Center.

Bring your family & friends, shop for a cause and you may even spot the man himself taking a break from the North Pole.

SAVE THE DATE



A proud NAIAS Charity Preview Recipient
"Working as one for the youth of Michigan"

The 2018 Charity Preview
Friday, January 19

For tickets visit
www.CharityPreview.com

JEANS FOR
JUDSON
★ GO CASUAL FOR A GREAT CAUSE ★

Here's how it works:

- ★ Wear your jeans on designated casual days ★
- ★ Make a donation in whatever amount you choose ★
 - ★ Send donations to Judson Center ★
- ★ Build camaraderie while raising funds to help Judson Center build brighter futures for children and families ★

For more information on Jeans for Judson or corporate partnerships, please contact Nick Papadas at 248.554.6361 or nick_papadas@judsoncenter.org.



Wishes will come true, thanks to you! Each wish you fulfill is more than a gift, it is comfort and it is happiness to children who are in foster care, away from the neglect and abuse they endured. It allows for families to have a memorable holiday season full of good times and laughter.

For more information on how you can get involved in Holiday Wish, please contact Peggy Kerr, at 248-837-2019 or peggy_kerr@judsoncenter.org



Judson Center

Helping those in need succeed

4410 West 13 Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48073

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Debbie and Brandy, 1994

My life changed 20 years ago when I became a Judson Center foster care worker.

As a young child, Brandy suffered insurmountable abuse that resulted in trust issues, but I knew that did not define her or her future. She was a natural leader, strong, smart and with the right people in her corner, she would thrive.

Children in foster care, like Brandy just need love, someone to be in their corner and help them. It is amazing how much children benefit from support and nurture.

Even though I am no longer working in the foster system, I am often asked, would I have chosen a different path earlier on in my career. No. I would do it all over again in a heartbeat. These kids need us.
~Debbie

I Am Somebody.