Kevin’s eyes opened wide as a 200-pound grouper slowly swam past him. “Look at the size of that one!” he exclaimed. The children, mesmerized by the exotic sea life at Denver’s Downtown Aquarium, gazed in silent wonder.

Later, after visiting other exhibits and heading for home, teacher Erin Ohm told the students she had one final surprise: ice-cream cones for everyone. Cheers of excitement erupted as the bus pulled into the McDonald’s drive-through. “This is the best day of my life!” Kevin shouted jubilantly.

**A Brand New Experience**

Most students eagerly anticipate classroom field trips, but for the children in treatment at Mount Saint Vincent, off-campus excursions often hold much more meaning. It’s difficult to fathom, but many of the children in our residential program have never experienced what many consider
A Letter from the Executive Director

Mount Saint Vincent’s foster care program is one of our newest services. Recently, I had the privilege of having dinner with several foster families during our foster care appreciation night. Some of the people I met were longtime foster parents and others were just recently certified.

What a great night it was! I heard wonderful stories of foster parents stepping up and taking care of children who desperately needed them. There were no complaints; in fact, many of the parents talked about the children with a gleam in their eye often reserved for one’s own children. Some talked about supporting past foster children as they transition to their forever homes. Several families had adopted their foster children and became forever families.

It was truly amazing to listen to them talk about the children in their care. They took joy in sharing their children’s accomplishments, they spoke with care and concern about the challenges their children face, and they laughed lovingly at the funny things their children did.

By the time I left, I was in total awe. Our foster parents are unbelievably brave people who give selflessly of themselves. They have sacrificed to give a child a chance at a full life. While I was driving home, I realized that I had had dinner with some real heroes. Foster parents change lives on a daily basis, and I am proud to be associated with each and every one of them.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent—or to make a donation, volunteer, or provide clothing or supplies—I urge you to call us at 303-458-7220. You, like our foster parents, can provide help to a child in need just by offering a helping hand.

Gratefully yours,

Kirk Ward, LCSW

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Internationally renowned child trauma expert Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., is nothing if not passionate about his work. During two half-day symposiums, held April 12, 2017, in Denver, Colo., capacity crowds totaling 300-plus child advocates listened intently to his remarks. Mount Saint Vincent organized and hosted the event.

Perry noted that as scientists have learned more about how the brain works, it has become increasingly clear that many traditional trauma treatment approaches that are highly verbal are not particularly effective when a person is disregulated, anxious, or overwhelmed.

“Trauma alters the systems in the lower parts of the brain that mediate the stress response,” Perry said. “These systems are much more likely to be responsive to things we refer to as somatosensory.”

Perry noted that Mount Saint Vincent is stepping ahead of the traditional treatment model by focusing on activities that target the part of the brain impacted by trauma. Actions such as grooming a dog, going for a walk, dancing, or molding modeling clay can be beneficial. “Things that seem nontherapeutic in the conventional sense actually have tremendous therapeutic power when it comes to treating trauma,” he said.

Perry believes that the more “relational wealth” a child has in his or her life — recurring, positive interactions with family members, teachers, coaches, after-school care providers, and others — the more likely the child is to recover. “Relational interactions make all the difference,” he said. “It’s the nature and the number of positive relational interactions you have that both protect you from present stressors and help you heal from past trauma.”

Perry is hopeful that the database of statistics his organization is compiling will be instrumental in affecting policy change. The ChildTrauma Academy’s massive database includes data from literally hundreds of clinical child trauma cases from organizations like Mount Saint Vincent worldwide. He believes the strength of being part of an international learning network is to accumulate data much more quickly and conduct research that will be crucial for changing public systems. “By being part of this network,” Perry said, “Mount Saint Vincent is part of a learning organization that’s transforming policy in countries all over the world.”

Raffle Tickets for $10,000 Cash Prize on Sale Now

Winner need not be present to win!

Raffle tickets for a $10,000 cash prize are on sale now. The winning ticket will be chosen at the Silver Bell Ball on November 11, 2017, but the winner does not need to be present to win. Tickets are $50 each, and the odds of winning are one in 2,000.

Tickets may be purchased at MSVhome.org or by calling 303-458-7220. All proceeds benefit the children in treatment at Mount Saint Vincent. Purchase one today!
common childhood experiences. Kevin had never before eaten at a Burger King. Anna had never heard of Old Navy. And JR has never once been allowed to pick out his own toy from a toy store.

**To Be a Child**
The children at Mount Saint Vincent have been so severely abused or neglected, they suffer from acute emotional and behavioral challenges. It can take weeks or even months of therapeutic care to help them recover from their past trauma. But even in the midst of providing specialized treatment, the staff never lose sight of the fact that the children they care for are just that: children.

“Our goal is to give our kids every opportunity to experience a normal childhood,” said Clinical Director Megan Cook. “After all they’ve been through, they need—and deserve—time to just be carefree.”

**The Meaning of Gratitude**
With that in mind, the therapists, school staff, and cottage workers incorporate fun, discovery, and outings whenever they can. Kind donors offer tickets to movies, museums, amusement parks, and sporting events. But here, common experiences are never commonplace. “You don’t know the meaning of gratitude until you’ve worked with these kids,” said Mental Health Worker Andrianna Moore. She knows because she sees it every day. She saw it last night when she checked in on Kevin, asleep in his bed. The Downtown Aquarium ticket was peeking out from under his pillow.

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Mount Saint Vincent’s current administration building, built in 1904, once housed nearly 300 orphans.
Celebrate the Season at the Silver Bell Ball

If you pick just one gala event to attend this year, choose Mount Saint Vincent’s Silver Bell Ball. Slated for Saturday, November 11, 2017, at the Grand Hyatt Denver, the much-anticipated event is the unofficial kickoff to the holiday season. You’ll join more than 500 other guests stepping out to raise funds for the children receiving treatment at Mount Saint Vincent.

There will be numerous activities from which to choose. Peruse the fun and unique items up for sale in the silent auction, which include ski passes, vacation getaways, family fun packs, spa treatments, behind-the-scenes tours, sporting and concert tickets, and much more.

Guests will also enjoy a delicious dinner, a wine wall, a live auction of one-of-a-kind items and experiences, and—for those with a sweet tooth—a decadent dessert reception. Raffle tickets for a $10,000 cash prize will be on sale as well.

Tickets to the gala are $300 per person and can be purchased at MSVhome.org or by calling 303-458-7220 ext. 228. Corporate sponsorships are also available.

Make plans now to attend the Silver Bell Ball! ❤️

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Wine: Infinite Monkey Theorem

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Golf Tournament Raises $50,000

Amid bright sunshine and a cool breeze, the 11th annual Play a Round for Kids charity golf tournament players teed off at the Omni Interlocken Golf Club in Broomfield, Colorado, on June 19, 2017. The highly successful event featured a delicious luncheon, silent auction, and player awards. More than $50,000 was raised for the care of the children.

The 2018 tournament will be held at the Omni Interlocken Golf Club on June 18, 2018. We hope to see you there! ❤️
Thank You to Our 2016 Donors!

We Appreciate Your Support.

Our mission at Mount Saint Vincent is to provide clinical treatment and loving care for children suffering from the effects of trauma, mental illness, abuse, or neglect. But this important work would not be possible without the incredible generosity of our faithful donors. Through their selfless giving, they help heal young children who are in desperate need of love and support. The 900-plus individuals and organizations listed here donated $100 or more in 2016 to help our children.

Our hearts are full of gratitude and we are grateful beyond words. Thank you. We are truly blessed.

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The Helping Hands of Volunteers

In addition to the care and treatment of the children at Mount Saint Vincent, there are six buildings and 16 acres of grounds that need to be cared for as well. It takes a small army to maintain our campus, but fortunately, we are lucky enough to have one.

Every year, individuals from more than 40 different organizations from across the Denver metro area volunteer at Mount Saint Vincent. From painting to weeding and cooking to reading, they give thousands of hours of their time—all to help make Mount Saint Vincent a better place for our children.

Saunders Construction, Inc. is one such organization. Their relationship with Mount Saint Vincent began nearly 10 years ago. In addition to providing financial support and in-kind services, they recently extended their involvement to include a back-to-school supply drive, summer cookouts for the kids, and even an outdoor carnival.

“Our commitment to Mount Saint Vincent is ongoing,” said Saunders’ CSR Specialist Margy Moseley. “We plan to continue to honor and support our relationship with them for years to come.”

The Helping Hands of Volunteers

A Saunders Construction staffer applies face paint during a summer carnival.

A child “signs” for her package of school clothes, hand-delivered by UPS.

From driver-delivered school clothes to one-on-one activities with the kids, UPS is one donor that delivers. They strike a great balance between service- and child-based projects, says Mount Saint Vincent Volunteer Coordinator Meaghan Peters. “It’s great to have the support of people who are just as invested in the welfare of our children as we are,” she said.

When it comes to getting their hands dirty, Murphy Company employees jump right in. It’s not unusual to see the Denver general manager with a big soapy sponge in his hand at the company’s annual fundraising car wash, an event that typically raises more than $3,000. “We have a lot of fun hosting the event,” said Office Manager Debbie Sawatzky, “but the bottom line is, it’s an honor for us to be the conduit to give money to the kids at Mount Saint Vincent.”

According to Mount Saint Vincent’s Executive Director Kirk Ward, the agency’s volunteer program plays a crucial role. “Volunteers connect the community to us and us to the community,” he said. “It serves to remind us that anyone—in ways large and small—can do something to help a child in need.”

For information on volunteering or sponsoring an upcoming event, call 303-458-7220.

Agency Awarded Accreditation Status

The National Council of Accreditation (COA) awarded Mount Saint Vincent its prestigious four-year accreditation in June of 2017. The reaccreditation—initially issued in 1997—signifies that Mount Saint Vincent continues to meet or exceed the stringent best-practice standards of quality set forth by the council. The agency’s new foster care program, which opened in March of 2016, was awarded accreditation as well.

“We are proud to have maintained COA accreditation for 20 consecutive years,” said Mount Saint Vincent Executive Director Kirk Ward. “We are also happy to welcome foster care as a newly accredited program under the Mount Saint Vincent umbrella.”

Although accreditation is not required by the organization for licensure, Mount Saint Vincent chooses to obtain the status to demonstrate its commitment to provide the best possible services to the children and families it serves.
The Goodbye Tunnel
By Executive Director Kirk Ward, LCSW

What is it about time-honored rituals that we find so captivating? More than achievements or accolades, they signify rites of passage, once-in-a-lifetime moments, the crossing of a threshold in life. For me, the Goodbye Tunnel at Mount Saint Vincent has become one of these cherished events.

The children who participate in our residential or day treatment programs attend our on-grounds K–8 school. Upon arrival, they may be one or more grade levels behind their peers, lack the ability to focus, or exhibit distrust of others. They gradually begin to feel safe and trusting of the adults around them. Once that level of safety and trust is achieved, the children often start making huge academic gains. From that moment on, there’s no stopping them. It won’t be long before they are ready to begin a new chapter in their young lives.

The Goodbye Tunnel originated years ago; no one knows exactly when. Its purpose, though, is clear. In keeping with our core value of fostering a caring spirit, it celebrates every child’s unique accomplishments. That caring spirit is evident as the staff proudly send a child out into the world, knowing that he or she has the knowledge and tools to succeed.

The days leading up to Jacob’s recent discharge date were charged with emotion. He felt the pride of accomplishment, the joy of becoming part of a family, and the nervous uncertainty of life beyond the caring confines of Mount Saint Vincent.

Finally the moment arrived. The school doors flung open, and Jacob raced toward the school gate, backpack and coat flapping behind. The 30-foot sidewalk was lined with two dozen cheering staff. Amid smiles, clapping, laughter and tears, he received hugs, shouts of encouragement, and high-fives as he made his way through the human tunnel, his face beaming.

Once past the gate, he waved goodbye one last time. I watched, a little misty-eyed, as he looked up and took the hand of his new foster parent. For me, there is no greater feeling in the world than to give a child a chance—just a chance—to succeed in life.

A child runs through the Goodbye Tunnel on the day of his discharge to smiles, cheers, and high fives.

Be Social With Us!

Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram and join in the conversation.

Facebook: MSVhome
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Colorado now has one toll-free hotline to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

1-844-CO-4-KIDS
Help keep children safe and secure. Your call is confidential.
Paw Prints, a Dog and a Check

Like many therapy animals, Daisie has a sixth sense when it comes to people’s emotions. During a recent therapy session, an agitated nine-year-old boy squirmed in his chair. The young black Lab waited for a moment, sat down next to the boy, and then nuzzled the boy’s hand. The boy stopped fidgeting and slowly began to stroke Daisie’s head. “What a good doggie,” he whispered. Daisie looked into the boy’s eyes and gave a contented sigh. Such is the power of the human-animal bond.

A Child’s Best Friend
What is it about Daisie that children find so comforting? Maybe it’s the unconditional love reflected in her eyes. Maybe it’s her soft, silky fur. Or maybe it’s the sense of calmness they feel when Daisie gently lays her head in their laps. Whatever the reason, the children in treatment at Mount Saint Vincent love Daisie, one of the many certified animals in the therapeutic program.

Learning to Trust Again
Animal-assisted therapy is often used as an intervention when a child who has been abused or neglected exhibits an attachment disorder or is distrustful of other people. Mount Saint Vincent’s program includes dogs, horses, guinea pigs, and even fish in the school classrooms. “A dog shows unconditional positive regard for the child, and once a relationship has been established, the child feels safe,” said Mount Saint Vincent Child and Family Therapist Teresa Coen, LCSW, AAT. “And when children feel safe and comfortable, they not only talk more, they also process more.” It’s that processing that can lead to healing from past traumatic events.

When Chuck & Don’s Pet Food & Supplies was looking for a beneficiary for its annual fundraising campaign in late 2016, they heard about Mount Saint Vincent. What better fit for a pet supply retailer looking to support a nonprofit than an organization that uses animal-assisted interventions to help children overcome the effects of abuse and neglect? Chuck & Don’s team couldn’t have agreed more.

Spreading the Word
With their beneficiary chosen, Chuck & Don’s began educating store associates about the work being done for children at Mount Saint Vincent. They in turn then educated their customers. As it turned out, store patrons were eager to make donations during the six-week “Paw Prints” campaign. Once the corporate donation was added in, the final campaign tally was more than $28,000. Chuck & Don’s marketing and community relations manager, Heather Ratynski, delivered the check.

“More Than We Ever Imagined”
“I’ve delivered Paw Prints donations to nonprofits before, but the reaction of Mount Saint Vincent’s staff when they saw the amount was off the charts,” Ratynski said. Laughter and tears ensued as one of the therapists raced to notify the nonprofit’s Executive Director, Kirk Ward, and Director of Development, Kay Kelleher Mc Dowell. “To say we were surprised by the amount of the check is putting it lightly,” said Ward. “We are so grateful to Chuck & Don’s and their customers.”

Just Another Day
As for Daisie, she takes all the commotion in stride. Following another successful therapy session, she happily accepts a big bear hug from her young friend. For this therapy dog, providing comfort and support for children who have been abused or neglected is all the reward she needs.

Children and staff alike are drawn to Daisie’s gentle demeanor and soulful eyes.
Upcoming Events

Join us for any or all of the events below that help raise funds for children in need. Call 303-458-7220 or visit msvhome.org for complete details.

Dining Out for Kids Restaurant Week is a fun and easy way to help the children receiving treatment at Mount Saint Vincent. Eat out at any participating restaurant, and they will donate up to 50 percent of their sales to Mount Saint Vincent!

September 10–17, 2017
Various locations throughout the Denver metro area

Don’t miss the most fun and festive gala of the year: our 11th biannual Silver Bell Ball! Join us for a delicious dinner, live and silent auctions, a choose-your-own wine wall, and a decadent dessert bar. Tickets are on sale now.

Saturday, November 11, 2017
Grand Hyatt Denver
1750 Welton Street
Denver, CO 80202

Hit the links to help out kids at the 12th annual Play a Round for Kids charity golf tournament. You’ll enjoy a challenging 18 holes, a delicious luncheon, and have a chance to win fabulous prizes at this beautiful semiprivate course.

Monday, June 18, 2018
Omni Interlocken Golf Course
Broomfield, CO 80021

How You Can Help Our Special Children

You can make a difference in a child’s life. Here’s how:

❤️ Make a donation.
While we accept donations of many types, our most urgent need is for cash donations. These funds help pay for therapy, food, clothing, and more. You can donate securely online at MSVhome.org.

❤️ Volunteer your time.
There are many opportunities available, from reading to the kids to helping in a classroom. For information on volunteering, call Meaghan Peters at 303-964-1122.

❤️ Give clothing or supplies.
Donations of clothing for children aged 5 to 12 are always appreciated (new only, please). View our wish list at MSVhome.org.

Donate securely online at MSVhome.org