Your gifts help youth heal

Patricia Martinez grew up in Hermitage, Arkansas, with her parents. Patricia endured physical abuse at the hands of her parents. After a particularly bad beating, she went to her older brother for help. He took her to the local hospital. When her nurses realized Patricia was bruised because her mother hit her, they called the Arkansas Department of Human Services. Patricia was placed in foster care.

Patricia entered emergency shelter at a children’s home in Warren. When her short-term stay was finished, her parents did not want her to return home. She was placed at Vera Lloyd, where she stayed for five months at age 16.

“Vera Lloyd taught me to respect myself, to be myself and to be happy. My house parents were so sweet,” she said. “I had never met so many people who were kind to me. They helped me with school and made sure I did better in school.”

She was particularly grateful that Vera Lloyd staff taught her to do laundry, keep a clean home and prepare healthy meals, important skills that she did not learn from her parents.

“Saturdays were the best. The girls at my home listened to music, deep-cleaned and made it fun to spend the day together,” Patricia said. “They taught me what a real family was—I didn’t know how that felt,” she said. “They taught me to have a voice and to overcome my shyness and anxiety.”

After five months, her caseworker recommended to the juvenile judge that Patricia return to her parents. She went home, but nothing was better.

She moved out of her parent’s house and, with a roommate, moved into an apartment. She graduated from Warren High School in 2013—earning a high school diploma, an achievement only about 50% of youth in foster care realize.

Shortly after graduation, she and her boyfriend, Luis, had their first son, Rodrigo, who is two years old. They are also proud parents of a one-year-old boy named Henry. Luis works as a farmhand in Warren and Patricia stays home with her boys during the week. On weekends, she helps her sister with her chicken houses. She plans to enter college and hopes to be a teacher one day.

Patricia stays in touch with the other girls she lived with at the Barton Home. They talk frequently and bring their kids together for play dates.

Patricia has a close relationship with her father, who delights in being a grandfather to Rodrigo and Henry.

“I appreciate everything Vera Lloyd did for me,” Patricia said.

Nominate a young professional today!

Are you or someone you know interested in joining Vera Lloyd’s young professionals group? Contact us today!

Vera Lloyd’s young professionals group will kick off in late summer with a social happy hour and service project.

You will be part of a group of professionals living in Central Arkansas ages 22-40(ish) who have a heart for helping youth in Arkansas.

You and others will make a difference in the lives of youth. This group will learn more about the mission of Vera Lloyd, participate in a small service project and host a fundraising event each year.

Contact Natalie at natalieclark@veralloyd.org to nominate yourself or someone you know.
**Youth benefit from nutrition program**

With help from Blue and Youth for a Healthier Arkansas, youth are learning about the importance of nutrition this summer. Connelly Weeks, registered dietitian, is updating meal plans and leading hands-on cooking education.

“We are showing youth how to maintain healthy eating practices,” said Connelly.

The cooking classes are being held in University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College’s Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Institute’s state-of-the-art kitchens.

In their first class, youth prepared summer fruit salsa, guacamole, chicken quesadillas and their own version of peanut butter cups.

One youth said this was the first time she had ever eaten guacamole—let alone an avocado.

“I think the best part about being at Vera Lloyd is that I am finally in a stable place,” she said. “I love of science and helping others. At Vera Lloyd, I like having a schedule,” Claire said. “My house parents are more like real parents; they’re there to help me work through my problems and figure out a solution.”

Claire loves to write and paint in her new bedroom at Vera Lloyd. She has enjoyed getting to know all of the staff better.

After high school, Claire plans to enroll in college and then nursing school. She hopes to become a nurse to combine her love of science and helping others.

Youth are learning skills in this Culinary Nutrition program that will help them combat future health risks, such as obesity, heart disease and stroke.

**Make a difference at our children’s home!**

- Financial gifts to close the gap between state funding and costs of caring for youth
- Books, movies, board games, recreation supplies
- Living room furniture
- Funds for textbooks for youth going to college
- Funds for a guitar and piano instructor
- A 15-passenger van, used truck for maintenance program
- Art supplies
- Sponsor a boy or girl for Ferncliff/summer activities (average $450 per child for summer activities)

To help, contact Melissa Hendricks at 501-666-8195 or info@veralloyd.org.

o Yes, I will give to improve the lives of children in need!

I will give:  
- $500  
- $250  
- $100  
- $50  
- $25  
- Other ______

Donor Name: _______________________________________________________________________________

Address: ___________________________ State: ___________________________ Zip: ___________________________

City: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

Please mail to: Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services, Inc. 1501 N. University, Suite 345, Little Rock, AR 72207

Or make a gift online at www.veralloyd.org.

Follow and like us on Facebook! Visit our page at www.facebook.com/VLPHFS
You gave children a new place to play

The Elsie Nolan Playground, a new addition to the Vera Lloyd children’s home in Monticello, opened in May with a special dedication ceremony. The event included remarks by Donna Mahurin, Vera Lloyd CEO andikkia Davidson, program manager.

A portion of an estate gift from Elsie Nolan, grant funds from Blue and You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas and support from generous individuals provided for the addition of the playground.

Mahurin described Elsie Nolan, a long-time member of Second Presbyterian Church in Little Rock who passed away in 2016, as a committed supporter of Vera Lloyd and, as a former teacher, someone who was passionate about helping children.

Davidson described how the playground elements were selected, with a goal of helping youth improve strength, balance and social skills. And, as she pointed out, to have FUN!!!

Nathaniel Burton, site director, said, “Our staff and youth enjoy the playground every day, gathering and visiting together around the playground. It is a much-appreciated addition to our home.”