

Young people ages 11-17 in need of temporary, safe housing due to instability in their life.

“From the minute I walked through the front door at VHBG, I knew I'd be OK!”

▶ THE CHALLENGE

Young people in crisis due to family dysfunction are often unable to move into traditional foster care due to a variety of factors, including:

- the unavailability of foster homes in Virginia
- the intimacy of a family environment that triggers reactive behavior in traumatized youth
- the need for a trauma-informed transitional environment when stepping down from a mental health treatment facility
(while family reunification is facilitated)

Multiple placement disruptions re-traumatize young people and increase the likelihood of youth developing long-term social, emotional, behavioral, and psychological disorders. Young people in states of transition need to be in a trauma-informed, least restrictive environment that keeps them safe, addresses their mental health needs, and allows them to interact with the community and ‘natural supports’ as much as possible.

▶ THE SOLUTION

Many times, DSS licensed Group Care is all that is necessary to best meet a youth and family's current needs. Transitional services offer a structured, stable, therapeutic (trauma-informed) approach to help teach and guide a transitioning youth and family along their way to a more permanent home setting.

At Virginia Home for Boys and Girls (VHBG), our Group Care Services (GCS) program covers the gap between placing a child in foster care before they are ready and placing a child in a medical model program funded by Medicaid that they don't need.

VHBG's group homes are unique and use the evidence-based Teaching-Family Model of care to provide a stable, positive, family-style environment for youth ages 11-17. Trained Youth Counselors use this model with a goal to help children transition back to their biological family, adoption, or traditional foster home.

Our group homes contain all the elements one would expect in any home such as communal meals, activities in the community, and 'family' meetings so youth feel connected to the home and have input in day-to-day decisions. Youth learn to develop skills associated with frustration tolerance, anger and/ or aggression management, healthy decision-making, conflict resolution, social engagement, self-advocacy, and age-appropriate living. Our youth attend local public schools or our on-campus nonprofit specialized school, John G. Wood. Some of our youth may be eligible to hold part-time jobs in the nearby community. Transitional Services at VHBG are ideal for TFC disruptions, TFC stabilization, CHINS type cases, and family reunification after prolonged time out of the home. In each of these situations, it should be the need first and not the funding source driving the decision for the appropriate level of care. Our primary goal is to work with children and their families to ensure that youth in our care transition to safe and healthy "forever families," and return to their public schools as quickly and safely as possible. Our structured support for families ensures that reunification or other permanency options allow a child to return to their community with the greatest chance for success.

▶ STATE LICENSE ACCREDITATION

VHBG's Group Care Services program is licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and the Teaching-Family Association.



▶ FUNDING

VHBG's GCS program is funded by private donations from our community and Children's Services Act (CSA) funds. We use this funding model because Medicaid funds are not appropriate for meeting the needs of the youth we serve.

For referrals or more information, contact our admissions team members at **(804) 806-5745**, email Admissions@vhbg.org, or visit vhbg.org/group-care-services

VHBG is a nonprofit organization that has been serving children in crisis since 1846. VHBG has remained agile and able to respond to the ever-changing needs of our community and we have never strayed from our core belief that all children deserve to grow up surrounded by a loving, nurturing family in a safe, supportive community. While we began as an orphanage, we have evolved into an organization with three core program areas: Transitional Living (Group Care Services (GCS) and Independent Living (IL)); Specialized Education (John G. Wood School); and Therapeutic Resources to support the mental health needs of the young people we serve at VHBG.

