

FALL 2018

HOPE

REIMAGINED



At Virginia Home for Boys and Girls (VHBG), we're putting out a rallying cry to make Mental Health First Aid as common as traditional first aid and CPR.

What would you say to a youth you suspect was having a mental health issue?

When a young person is struggling, it's up to all of us to notice. Anyone anywhere can be the one to make a difference in the life of someone with a mental health challenge ... if they know what to do and what to say.

Becky, a local camp counselor, noticed Gracy was acting withdrawn and guided her to seek treatment before her symptoms got worse. Becky's intervention helped Gracy turn her life around. Becky knew what to do and what to say because she'd taken the time to get educated about Youth Mental Health First Aid – a free, 8-hour course provided by VHBG and open to anyone.

More than 400 people (like little league coaches, church and youth group leaders, childcare workers, parents, grandparents...and more) have signed up to take this workshop that has been offered each month at VHBG for the past year. It's led by our highly-trained staff and remains free-of-charge in part due to generous sponsors.

VHBG's community-based prevention efforts give all of us hope that we can reduce the stigma of mental illness so that more youth can get on their path to healing. The sooner mental health issues are addressed, the better chance a youth has of success.

Thank you for partnering with or supporting VHBG's Therapeutic Resources.



GIVE FOR DARIAN

Darian's being adopted. That sounds simple but the process to get to this point was no small feat. In Darian's early childhood he was severely abused and neglected to the point that he thought he was supposed to be 'bad'. He didn't know 'good' – good people, good relationships, good behavior, good feelings, a good home. After twelve unsuccessful placements in foster care and residential facilities, he came to a VHBG group home and that's when the 'bad' began to stop. A partnership with a local adoption agency resulted in the identification of a family who was willing to spend eight months in counseling learning how to help Darian with his special emotional and behavioral needs. They patiently worked with his VHBG therapist, supported his treatment plan, and attended parent coaching sessions. Now that Darian has a new, permanent, healthy home, he and his family continue with outpatient counseling at VHBG. Darian says it feels like he's shed a 'coat' of 'bad' and has emerged as the 'good' person he always was.



GIVE FOR MICHAEL

It's unbelievable how much one person can witness in their young life. For Michael, his brother was murdered, he'd been homeless and lived in a car, he'd witnessed his drug-addicted mother being beaten by several boyfriends, he'd been hungry, and experienced the deaths of older relatives. Home life was chaos. Michael's arrest was no surprise. He'd sprayed graffiti on a wall then violated his probation by missing a curfew. The Department of Juvenile Justice recognized that Michael wouldn't be successful if released from jail to a home with a historic lack of structure. VHBG's Intensive In-home Counseling provided crisis support for Michael, his mother, and extended family and helped coordinate other services for Michael that were required by the court system. Michael is back in school and, at fifteen, working at a part-time job. Michael's mom now receives outpatient counseling and Michael is getting the mentoring he needs as he heals from a life of trauma. Learning that there is hope for a bright future motivates him to end the cycle of violence that surrounds his family.

These stories are real but names have been changed to protect the youth's privacy.

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VHBG's licensed and credentialed professionals meet the specific and individual treatment needs of youth who live on our campus as well as those living in the surrounding community who have experienced substantive trauma in their lives.

VHBG's Therapeutic Resource Center offers:

- Outpatient Counseling
- Psychiatry

"I wish there were more places like VHBG!"

—ESSEX COUNTY
CSA COORDINATOR



Virginia Home for Boys and Girls (VHBG) is a nonprofit organization that has been serving children in crisis since 1846. Nearly 50% of VHBG's budget is supported by philanthropic dollars and community volunteers play a critical role in supporting the organization's needs. The trauma-informed care youth receive in our group homes, independent living apartments, specialized K-12 school (John G. Wood), and therapeutic resource center restores hope to them and their families who then find the courage to thrive.

Virginia Home for Boys and Girls
8716 West Broad Street / Henrico, VA 23294
804-270-6566 / VHBG.org