

The Cumberland Connection

THE CUMBERLAND YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES NEWSLETTER



It's hard to believe we are already a couple of months into 2024. I hope everyone had a happy New Year and that you were able to set some goals for the new year. We have been busy goal setting too.

Our mission is to create safe places to call home where healing can begin. Here is what we have in store for 2024...to provide:

- **5,840** days of daily care for **16 foster youth** in our residential treatment and emergency shelter service programs.
- Recruitment, training, licensure, and support for **32 family-based foster or adoptive homes.**
- **5,840** days of daily care for **16 young adults** aging out of foster care.
- To provide **10,950** days of daily care for **8** resilient **single parents and their 20+ children.**
- To provide **2,080** counseling sessions for our clients, families, and the uninsured community.

We cannot do this work without you. It is through your generous support that we are able to serve kids, families, and young adults in foster care and resilient single-parent families. If we can look back next year having accomplished our 2024 goals, it will be because we did it together.

Gratefully,
Courtney Banatoski
President & CEO



Cumberland Community Updates

OUR COMMUNITY JOINS US IN CELEBRATING OUR NEWEST PROGRAM

On January 17th, Cumberland hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for our Foster Care & Adoption Program. Denton Chamber of Commerce representatives, community leaders, board members, local supporters, and staff joined in as we celebrated this milestone achievement.

Our President and CEO, Courtney Banatoski shared with those gathered that there are “more children in foster care that need a safe place to call home than we have actual homes for kids. In fact, in Denton County, there are about 150-170 kids in care each month who need placement, and only about 25 licensed family-based foster home placements and about 25 licensed group residential placements in our county.”

Led by Jennifer Maddox, our Foster Care and Adoption Program Director, our dedicated team has made it their mission to provide family-based foster homes for 32 youth in foster care in 2024. This goal would double the number of available family-based foster homes in Denton County. Currently, we are hosting two information sessions each month, virtually and in-person that are designed to educate and answer questions about community-based foster care.

If you're interested in being one of the 32 homes or learning more about this program, and scan the QR code to the right.



Program Updates

Follow us on social media, scan the QR code and get connected today!



FIRST PLACEMENT IN OUR FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION PROGRAM

On January 5th, our Foster Care and Adoption Program exceeded our timeline by placing our first youth in foster care in a family-based foster home. One down, 31 more to go! If you are interested in learning more about fostering, adopting, or kinship support, join us for an upcoming information session.



SUPPORTING SUCCESS IN OUR FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

In our Family Residential Program, we support single-parent families with transitional housing, extensive case management, career, and education support. Our single parents utilize our on-site counseling services, attend weekly classes that cover topics such as financial management and parenting, and provide peer support. These services are why this program was created - to offer support and knowledge that provide single-parent families with opportunities to succeed.



A NEW SEMESTER IS UNDERWAY

This semester, one resident in our Supervised Independent Living Program chose to resume their college journey, which means 73% of residents are now actively pursuing higher education. This program was designed to provide young adults transitioning out of foster care with the support and tools needed to navigate adulthood. Our team is dedicated to supporting residents as they pursue higher education, a trade, or full-time employment. Active case management and other supportive services prepare these young adults to be self-sufficient so they can live independent, successful lives after leaving our care.



KEEPING SIBLINGS TOGETHER

In our Children's Residential Program, we prioritize keeping sibling groups together. Studies have shown that when siblings in foster care are kept together, they have improved mental health outcomes and do not face the additional trauma that comes with being separated from both their family and siblings. This past summer we were able to keep two sibling groups together in our Emergency Shelter. This created stability and a greater sense of belonging for these siblings - something that Cumberland strives for with every youth in foster care.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT Destinie Myers

What attracted you to work at Cumberland? As cliché as it sounds, I didn't find social work – social work found me! Once I got here, I fell in love with social work and then applied to my graduate program shortly after.

Describe a specific accomplishment or project that you are most proud of from the past year. My biggest accomplishment, personally, in the last year was obtaining another professional license and becoming our agency's Licensed Child Care Administrator (LCCA).

What do you think sets Cumberland apart from other organizations that care for kids in foster care? The passion – All of the employees who are currently employed truly want to be here and want to make a difference in the lives of those that they are serving.

What is the biggest misconception the community has about Cumberland's residents? I would say that probably the biggest misconception is that they are broken or that there is no hope. Nobody is ever past the point of no return!



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT The Satterfields

As longtime Denton residents, we both graduated from the UNT and chose to stay in Denton to raise our family. Now that our children are grown and have families of their own, we remain active members of the GREAT Denton community.

What motivated you to support Cumberland? Our neighbor invited us to the Hats & Horses Derby Party 3 years ago, where we became more familiar with the organization and realized we had a deep passion and connection to Cumberland's mission. Amongst many good causes, Cumberland stood out to us because of the many ways they give back to their community. Investing in a child's future that needs help is the most important calling. From the Foster Care and Adoption Program to Community Counseling, we recognize that our support goes a long way.

What do you believe people should know about Cumberland? We wish more people knew all that Cumberland has to offer, so please spread the word! This organization offers so much more than a place for residents to call home, they provide support in many ways for the Denton community.



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: JAIRIA DIGGS

Hello, I'm Jaira Diggs, and I consider it a blessing to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees for Cumberland Youth and Family Services. Professionally, I hold the role of Director of Federal Programs for Denton Independent School District, where my focus lies in writing grants for federal funding, particularly aimed at supporting at-risk students. Outside of work, my husband and I, both avid sports enthusiasts, find joy in cheering for our children during after-school sports and engaging in

friendly banter while rooting for opposing teams in professional sports. Joining Cumberland's Board of Trustees was an easy decision for me as I wholeheartedly believe in the organization's mission. My family has personal experience with the foster care and adoption process, having fostered and later adopted a child of our own. This journey has given us profound insights into the challenges and joys of these experiences. I am so proud of Cumberland's accomplishments and the launch of its new Foster Care and Adoption program is truly remarkable. I am eagerly looking forward to witnessing the positive impact it will have on families and children in need.



**Cumberland Counseling Insights from Clinical Director
Lauren Titsworth, PhD, LMFT-S, LCDC**

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is a great tool to use and it doesn't just occur in the therapy room. Mindfulness is not one specific thing or action but is a state of mind that needs practice.

Mindfulness is an awareness and acceptance of your thoughts, feelings, and senses in the moment. When practicing mindfulness you may notice more of those thoughts, feelings, and senses, but awareness doesn't mean you get lost in the feelings. A mindfulness approach helps a person work towards non-judgmental acceptance of what they are experiencing and then use skills to work through those thoughts, feelings, and sensations. When we practice mindfulness we may experience a reduction in symptoms, better ability to self-regulate, decreased rumination, more confidence in adapting to stressful situations, and improved relationships.

A person can practice mindfulness in multiple ways and it can include meditation, body scans, and their five senses. Meditation is little like what we see in the movies. It includes being in a comfortable place and paying close attention to your breathing. As you are paying attention to your breathing you can take time to notice where your mind wanders and then turn your attention back to your breathing. Many phone apps can be used for guided meditations such as Headspace and Calm. Body scans help you pay attention to the physical experiences in your body. You can start at your head or your toes and then slowly move your attention to each body part on

your way up or down. You can tense and release each body part as you recognize the feelings within the tension. The five senses are an important part of mindfulness and taking time to notice what is occurring in the present moment can guide your practice. Take time to notice five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

Exploring mindfulness doesn't have to stop here. How are you going to practice awareness and acceptance this month?

COMMUNITY COUNSELING NO WAITLIST FOR DAYTIME APPOINTMENTS

Scan the QR Code to
fill out our interest
form.



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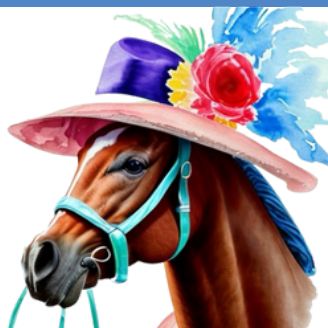
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MAY 04



JOIN US FOR THE 4TH ANNUAL HATS & HORSES DERBY PARTY