



FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

EDUCATION CHANGES EVERYTHING FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

by Verni Howard, MPA, CNP



Education changes everything including the conversations about homelessness! When families are able to gain job skills and earn a living wage, their entire outlook shifts from hopelessness to hope. It happened again at 814 Cotton Street! Families, friends, and community leaders celebrated and honored ten relentless families (10 adults, 36 children) during the 2024 Fall Graduation ceremony held at First Baptist Church. The event marked 673 families completing the program since the agency's inception — an indicator of our commitment to breaking the homeless cycle one family at a time through robust educational opportunities, job skills training and housing. It's not rocket science, but certainly hard work.

Britney Green, Chief of Domestic Violence in the Special Victims Unit of the Caddo District

Attorney's Office, inspired our families and reminded them all of one central message: "You have the power to create the life that you want to live!" While this was a major milestone in the lives of our families as well as Providence House, graduation reminds us that there is still so much work to be done and we are certainly equipped for the assignment; however, we need your continued support to ensure that every single family can live their highest level of self-sufficiency.

As we enter the holiday season, please remember those men, women, and children who still our help. Your support allows us to catapult one more family across the finish line! Thank you for allowing us to serve this community for 36 years. We are honored!



Executive Director Verni Howard brought her corporate and non-profit banking experience to Providence House in 2015. She leads the charge in changing the landscape for homeless families with children in northwest Louisiana and beyond. Verni is actively involved with worthy causes throughout our community and state. In all things, she gives her time, talent, and treasure to better the community she so passionately serves.

FULL AHEAD!

CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE FOR CHILDREN IN NORTHWEST LOUISIANA



Three years of designing and planning came to fruition in August. Providence House welcomed Mayor Tom Arceneaux, Board Director Trey Fauber, and Prevot Interior Designer Laken Drake, along with community leaders, friends, and supporters to celebrate the grand opening of the William C. Woolf Child Development Center. The STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) Center is the first of its kind in northwest Louisiana.



The Child Development Center has been ranked 4-STAR by the Louisiana Department of Education for five consecutive years. As one of the strongest centers in our state, staff continues to strive for excellence and spent part of the summer learning the Frog Street STEAM curriculum which has been implemented with all students.



There is an alarming decrease in Kindergarten Readiness scores in Shreveport-Bossier. Currently, 60% of students who enter Caddo schools score below the benchmark for Kindergarten Readiness. When coupled with homelessness and poverty, the educational trajectory further declines. Providence House is positioned to change the landscape for our local community.

We believe there are two ways out of a lifetime of poverty – education and workforce development/job skills training. The earlier we begin to shape and mold the minds of our children, the sooner we can see real impact. So, we have removed the kitchenettes from our PreK classroom and replaced them with a house frame so that girls and boys can begin building and creating. Even our infant classroom is equipped with all STEAM learning tools. We want every child that enters our doors to be prepared for a world filled with possibilities; we truly believe that we are nurturing the minds of future engineers, doctors, teachers, and artists.



For more information about the William C. Woolf Child Development Center, contact the organization at (318) 221-7887 or visit www.theprovidencehouse.com/cdc.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

by Mikayla McCoy

I am so honored to be the Director at the Child Development Center (CDC). My degree in Children Services, numerous certificates, and years of experience in Early Childhood all prepared me for this role that I love.

Fun events and hands-on learning activities help our children learn and grow. Students and teachers alike are thoroughly enjoying our newly remodeled classrooms. Teachers are consistently increasing their skills in the topics of Frogstreet Curriculum and STEAM. *The skill set of this team is unmatched and deserves to be recognized!*

Enrollment has increased tremendously this year. The Center continues to grow and provide excellent care for children in our shelter, as well as community members. We are actively enrolling for all ages eight weeks to five years old. **Swing by for a tour!**



Mikayla McCoy serves as the Child Development Center Director. With more than ten years in the industry, Mikayla is certified as a trainer, director, and site supervisor by the Louisiana Department of Education. She also holds CLASS, CPR/First Aide, ECAC and ODJFS certifications. Her love for education and children is evidenced by her life-long journey in early childhood education.





IMPACT REPORT



Providence House understands the challenges families face in preparing for the school year. The ultimate goal of the Back to School Bash was to ensure the community and families we serve had access to resources they may need for the back-to-school season and beyond. The HERO theme symbolizes empowerment and support for families, giving them the tools they need to thrive.

SERVED

82 FAMILIES



193 STUDENTS

OFFERED



3

INFLATABLE
WATER SLIDES



4

FOOD/SNACK
STATIONS



18

COMMUNITY
RESOURCES



75

VENDORS &
VOLUNTEERS

PROVIDED



100

WINTER COATS



300

BACKPACKS
FILLED WITH
SCHOOL
SUPPLIES



400+

SETS OF
SCHOOL
UNIFORMS

Shining the Spotlight on Staff

40 UNDER 40 HONOREE: DR. WHITTNEY POLLEY



Please join us in congratulating Dr. Whittney Polley, 40 Under Forty honoree. Dr. Polley, a Louisiana native, is dedicated to inspiring positive change through education, advocacy, and collective impact. With a strong commitment to fostering community partnerships, she works tirelessly to enhance economic and educational opportunities for all. She holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, serves on several school boards, and is an Army veteran and proud Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. member. Dr. Polley's leadership and dedication to education are further exemplified in her role as the Director of Education at Providence House. Dr. Polley mentors and coaches residents and students on college, career, and life skills while guiding them to achieve their educational and professional goals.



Dr. Whittney Polley

PRESIDENTIAL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT: DR. CHRIS HANDY

Dr. Chris Handy, Intake Specialist and Head of Security at Providence House, is a behind-the-scenes kind of guy who leads with integrity, serves with his whole heart, and humbly keeps things in order on the job. Even so, it never occurred to him that someone in the community noticed his hard work and dedication enough to nominate him for the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award. But that's just what happened!

When Chris received an odd message earlier this year, he thought it was yet another SPAM call. The caller stated she was on the selection committee for the Presidential Lifetime Achievement

Award. It sounded like a hoax and Chris did not return the call, nor did he give it another thought ... until he received his official certificate, gold medal, and service pin in the mail!



The President's Lifetime Achievement Award is the most prestigious, highest civil volunteerism award to honor those who have continually poured out thousands of hours of volunteer service in this country.

"I was blown away that someone would honor me in this way! I couldn't wait to share the news with my family, friends, and co-workers. The certificate is hanging in my office as a reminder of why I love my job, serving the community, and making a difference in the world."

Dr. Chris Handy

A GREAT BIG *Thank You* TO OUR COMMUNITY

Providence House is the beneficiary of so much good. Below is a small sampling of how our community continually supports our families. We never tire of saying "thank you!"



Did you know you can volunteer to read to our CDC students? It's true! Just 30 minutes of your time creates a huge impact for our little ones.



The staff at **KENDRA SCOTT SHREVEPORT** are long-time supporters. Providence House benefitted from Mothers Day shoppers at the Kendra Gives Back event on May 9th.



Internal Medicine Residents at **LSU Health Shreveport** recently toured to learn more about Providence House and its mission. At the core of every question was, "How can we better help?" Thank you for your commitment to our community!



We are incredibly grateful for our new partnership with volunteers from **The Arc Caddo-Bossier**. This happy, hard-working group will be helping out weekly in the donation center and around the campus.



What is better than ice cream on a hot day? Ice cream and a visit from the **Sphynx Ryderz Motorcycle Club**. Thank you, **Joe Reynolds** (PH Board Member) for sponsoring a cool afternoon for our families.

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



SCAN THE CODE TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED.

Planned Giving

A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING



Have you considered supporting the work of Providence House long-term AND receiving a tax benefit at the same time?

PLANNED GIVING is the process of making a significant charitable gift during a donor's life or at death that is part of his or her financial or estate plan, but does not affect their day to day financials. Smart planned giving is usually best accomplished as part of a donor's overall financial situation.

To find out more about Planned Giving options, please contact Verni Howard, Executive Director, Providence House at (318) 221-7887.

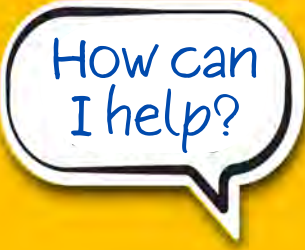
Give a gift that lasts a lifetime.

HOW TO DONATE

Online: www.theprovidencehouse.com/donate
Mail check to: 814 Cotton Street, Shreveport, LA 71101



View our platinum non-profit profile at www.guidestar.org.



THANKS FOR ASKING!

"How can I help?" could be the most popular question from our friends and community supporters. And it's one of our favorites!

Just as your house needs certain supplies and items to keep it running smoothly, so does Providence House. We appreciate your in-kind donations of these items not included in our budget.

BATH & BED

- Bath Rugs
- Bath Towel Sets
- Blankets (full, twin)
- Comforters (full, twin)
- Pillows (standard)
- Mattress Pads (full, twin)
- Sheet Sets (full, twin)
- Shower Curtains w/Rings

CLEANING

- Bleach
- Dish Liquid
- Disinfectant Spray
- Glade Refill Fragrances
- Laundry Detergent
- Multi-Purpose Cleaner
- Paper Towels
- Trash Bags (13g, 55g)

GENERAL

- Batteries
- Disposable Gloves (L, XL)

HYGIENE

- Baby Wipes
- Bath Soap / Body Wash
- Toilet Paper
- Women's Deodorant

CALL 318-221-7887 FOR MORE WAYS TO HELP!



Together, we are
Breaking the Homeless Cycle
One Family at a Time

814 COTTON STREET • SHREVEPORT, LA 71101

PROVIDENCE HOUSE
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