

# Voices



children & families of iowa

Stories and voices of hope.

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## Finding a reason to smile

*CFI helps one woman in her search for a happy, fulfilling life after a traumatic past.*

Thirty-year old Elizabeth\* has spent most of her life desperately longing to experience simple moments many of us take for granted. Growing up, it was a longing for moments where she could feel the real, unconditional love of a parent or loved one. Today, she longs for a moment that simply makes her smile.

Born to an alcoholic mother, moments where Elizabeth was supposed to feel loved as a child were replaced by moments that left her feeling hurt and brokenhearted. Her mother, having grown up in an abusive and broken home, used alcohol as a form of self-medication and abused her own daughter emotionally, psychologically and physically. "She would yell and scream at me, throw lamps, pots-anything she could find," Elizabeth says.

When Elizabeth was 16, her mother sought help and became sober. Though the abuse ended and their relationship improved, the past never stopped haunting Elizabeth, and had already done significant long-term damage to her health. She developed problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Reactive Attachment Disorder and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which cause severe anxiety and an unhealthy attachment to others. "I have yet to be independent," she says. "If I

go anywhere, Wal-Mart, the grocery store, I have to be with someone or I get extremely anxious." She struggles to hold a steady job due to trouble getting along with others, and has difficulty overcoming situations most people would not find overly stressful.

Though Elizabeth began seeing a psychiatrist ten years ago, medication did little to help. Her doctor suggested she begin seeing a therapist at Children & Families of Iowa (CFI). She started therapy, but admits she wasn't willing to make a change in her life. During that time, she was involved in a relationship that was often physical and violent. Eventually, she stopped coming to sessions.

Shortly after, Elizabeth gave birth to her daughter, a life changing moment she will never forget, "That was the moment I experienced real, unconditional love for the first time," she says. For a while things seemed to be better, but the pain of the past returned. "I knew I needed to learn coping skills so I could talk about my issues and feel something, not just block it all out." Six months ago, Elizabeth decided to return to therapy. "I wanted to learn how to smile and feel it," she says.

Elizabeth's therapist works with her on meditation exercises where Elizabeth pictures a place she feels safe. "It has been really helpful because it brings me out of the bad place I am in, calms me and makes me feel safe," she says. "Thanks to CFI, for the first time in my life I feel like I am on the right track to overcoming my past. I'm finally starting to feel like a happy, self-sufficient life is possible and achievable for me, not only so I can have a better life, but more importantly so my daughter can."

Though Elizabeth's new journey toward healing has just begun, CFI has already given her hope for a brighter future.

*\*Name has been changed to protect client confidentiality.*



*More hope inside!*

Why We Give ■ Events ■ Isabel Bloom Butterfly ■ Planned Giving



# Why We Give: Stories of Hope from People Who Give Back

## Venue provides incredible fun for an incredible cause

The Incredible Buffet & Fun Center in Urbandale has done some pretty incredible things for children across Iowa. The venue hosts Children & Families of Iowa's (CFI) Super Incredible Party, where children dress up as superheroes and enjoy Incredible's fun-filled activities, including a breakfast buffet, arcade games and go karts. The fun-filled atmosphere isn't the only reason why this place is incredible. Proceeds from the Super Incredible Party benefit CFI programs, which provide services to at-risk children and families across Iowa.



*Karron Milam, aka "Eco Man" shows off his costume at CFI's Super Incredible Party.*

"After learning what Children & Families of Iowa is about and all the things that they do for people in this state, we were honored to host this event," says Andrew McCurdy, the store's managing partner. The event, formerly known as Boys will be Boys, has raised \$17,552 since it began in 2011. "It has been very rewarding to know that this event and the money it raises helps so many people," says Andrew.

## Similar mission drives longstanding partnership

For over 25 years, Children & Families of Iowa (CFI) and the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation have partnered to help thousands of individuals in need. "Our mission, to serve as a catalyst and partner to improve the health of the most vulnerable people in our community, and the work of CFI naturally align," says Denise Swartz, Mid-Iowa Health Foundation's Senior Program Officer. "As a result, we've given CFI programs over \$403,000 in grants since 1985."



For the past five years, the Foundation has given substantial support to CFI's Cornerstone Recovery, a program dedicated to helping youth overcome substance abuse. "We believe this program's critical combination of substance abuse and mental health treatment represents an opportunity to intervene early in an adolescent's life," says Denise. "The range of services and the care taken to find the best fit for each youth and their family support systems increases the potential for successful treatment and a satisfying and productive life." Thanks to the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation for their continued support!

## Special Thanks to the many wonderful individuals who volunteered at Children & Families of Iowa during the months of January-March 2014.

Gracy Young  
Shelly Nagel  
Vickie Eft  
Pat Helwig  
Lori Brantley  
Barb Thompson  
Kathy Zarghami  
Kara Jane Curl  
Liz Kirk

Stacey Olson  
Lucy Tuttle  
Rhonda Hopewell  
Dawn Sinnott  
Andrew Mickunas  
Elaine Thompson  
Sally Blumer  
John Eckert  
Shera Babcock

Kathy Zhargami  
Delores Griglione  
Lilah Ness  
Ann LaFontaine  
JoyAnn Benoit  
Paulette Lame  
Walnut Creek Church group  
Over 800 volunteers who helped  
make Kidsfest 2014 a success!



children & families of iowa  
*Restoring hope. Building futures. Changing lives.*

[www.cfiowa.org](http://www.cfiowa.org)

# Mark Your Calendar

for these upcoming events



children & families of iowa's



**Friday, June 27, 2014**

*Terrace Hills Golf Course, Altoona*

Join us for an inter-generational golf tournament! Teams will be put into flights based on the age of the youngest player. Visit [www.cfiowa.org](http://www.cfiowa.org) to learn more or to register.



children & families of iowa's

**LADIES' INVITATIONAL**  
*Golf Tournament*

**Friday, July 11, 2014**

**Shotgun Start at 8 a.m.**

*Copper Creek Golf Course  
Pleasant Hill, Iowa*

# Tango

**NEW DATE! NEW LOCATION!**

**Friday, August 1, 2014**

**6:30 - 11 p.m.**

*Temple for Performing Arts  
Honorary Chairs Roxanne & James Conlin*

Visit [www.cfiowa.org](http://www.cfiowa.org)  
or "like us" on Facebook  
for up-to-date information  
and registration for  
CFI events.

## THANK YOU

Children & Families of Iowa's

# Kidsfest!

presented by **Veridian**  
credit union



*Joalyn and Emilia Hamel  
enjoying Kidsfest weekend.*



children & families of iowa's

# SUPER INCREDIBLE PARTY



presented by **EMC**  
credit union



*Hendrik Hill having fun at  
CFI's Super Incredible Party.*

Over 12,725 children and parents enjoyed a fun-filled weekend at Children & Families of Iowa's Kidsfest, presented by Veridian Credit Union. The event raised over \$163,000 for the programs of CFI. Mark your calendars for next year's Kidsfest, which will be held March 6 - 8, 2015.

Thank you to the 232 attendees who joined Children & Families of Iowa staff for a fun-filled morning at Incredible Buffet & Fun Center which included a breakfast buffet, an arcade and many superheroes. The event raised \$4,775 for CFI programs.

# Butterfly Sculpture Sale!

One-of-a-kind, handmade Isabel Bloom butterfly sculptures are available for purchase online at [www.cf Iowa.org](http://www.cf Iowa.org). These beautiful figurines are on sale for \$31, with 50 percent of proceeds benefiting Children & Families of Iowa's (CFI) Domestic Violence Services. Orders are available for pick up at CFI's main office at 1111 University Avenue in Des Moines. Office hours are Monday- Friday (excluding holidays) from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



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REMEMBERED.

**Limited quantity available-purchase yours today!**

## *Make a* Planned Gift

Children & Families of Iowa has been helping Iowa's at-risk children and families live safe, healthy, productive lives for 126 years! Our donors make it possible for us to help the thousands of individuals we serve each year. To that, we say **THANK YOU**. Experience tells us there will continue to be those who need our services in the future.

Please consider making a planned gift, there are a large variety of ways to do so. To learn more, visit our website at [www.cf Iowa.org](http://www.cf Iowa.org) and click on "**Make a Planned Gift**" under the "**Give to CFI**" tab. You will find an array of resources to help you determine if a planned gift is right for you. If you have additional questions, please call Amy Stapp-Arpy, Chief Development Officer/Vice President of Development & Communications at (515) 697-7921.

*Find ways to give at*  
**www.cf Iowa.org**

children & families of Iowa  
1111 University Ave., Des Moines, IA 50314



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