

ALEXANDER CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

August 2026 eNews



LETTERS FROM LYNN: AUGUST 2026

How can it be time to head back to school already? I feel like summer just started. It's still 100 degrees outside and the sun doesn't set until late; it can't really be time to gear up for another school year. I know it's hard for me to believe because my last child just returned to school for their senior year of college (how can I really be that old, but that's a whole other issue). I see the yellow school buses on my way to work, and all the school supplies displayed at Target and Walmart. I remember how excited my kids were to go shopping for school to pick out their notebooks, pens, lunch boxes, and all the other things to get the new school year started off on the right foot. I am sad those days are over for me, but I am so excited to be able to experience back to school at Alexander Youth Network.

Over the past 8 weeks our kids put the school books away and enjoyed different summer camp themes and fun activities as they continued learning to manage their mental and behavioral health challenges and work on the coping skills they need for success. At Alexander Youth Network, we have an amazing team that supports kids year round in our programs across North Carolina. As August comes to a close and kids around the country return to school, our programs will as well. The new school year will bring a fresh start for our kids and it's time to focus again on new books, new lessons, and new coping skills.

What are your goals this fall? Are you looking for ways to make a difference? Start a new routine? Learn something new? We offer many volunteer opportunities that support our kids throughout the school year and beyond to help achieve their personal goals. If you're interested in getting involved at Alexander Youth Network, [please visit our website](#) to learn more about volunteering. As our kids head back to school, please consider shopping our [Amazon wish list](#) to help ensure they have the tools they need to succeed.

Thank you to our donors, board members, volunteers, and Alexander Youth Network team members who show up every day in little ways to make a difference in the lives of North Carolina's vulnerable children and youth. I wish all those out there that are starting a new school year, job or phase of life all the best for success. May you all find the right tools and supplies to help you achieve your goals.

Gratefully,
Lynn

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Thank you to our amazing friends at Congregations for Kids, who hosted an end-of-summer blast on our main campus for our Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility and Transition House kiddos! It was a Saturday filled with water slides, slushies, bubbles, and lots of laughs, a perfect way to beat the summer heat and enjoy some fun before gearing up for a new school year.

Not only has Congregations for Kids created meaningful experiences for our kids, but they've also made it a priority to show our incredible staff how much they are appreciated. Part of their mission is to serve and support those on the front lines, and they've done just that by showering our direct-care staff with tokens of appreciation and reminding them how much their time and energy mean to our community.

A HUGE thank-you to Kristin Zaraquett, our Bark & Heal foster parent who works with the kids in Transition House to train the dog she fosters through Billie's Buddies - and who also happens to be a program manager at CFK, helping strengthen the partnership between our two agencies.

Kristin shared about the day, "What a gift it was to bring an afternoon of summer fun to Alexander Youth Network! I loved seeing the kids' faces light up when they saw the Sunset Slush cart, hearing their squeals of delight as they raced down the water slide, and watching them be carefree for a couple hours. It was sweet to see many of them encouraging and cheering each other on. It was a joy to be a part of this summer fun day!"

We're excited to continue growing this collaboration and are truly grateful for the special summer memories they've created with our kids.



If your community group or company is interested in joining the fun of volunteering, please reach out to Ashley Nieves, Volunteer Engagement Officer, at anieves@aynkids.org.

To see our other available volunteer opportunities, [visit our website to read more](#).

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Community partnerships are essential to the work of Alexander Youth Network and the children we serve. We are so grateful to the companies who share in our passion for children's mental health and believe in our mission. In this edition, we are honored to highlight another new community partner who was a first time sponsor for Celebrating Our Kids this year. Paul Hastings is a premier law firm providing superior intellectual capital and execution globally to the world's leading investment banks, asset managers and corporations.

Partner at Paul Hastings and current Alexander Children's Foundation board member, Aleks Kopec, introduced Alexander to the firm earlier this year. When asked why Alexander Youth Network, the firm said "Paul Hastings is proud to support Alexander Youth Network and its life-changing work for children and families across North Carolina. Together, we share a belief that every child deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential. Through its compassionate care and comprehensive support services, Alexander Youth Network empowers children and strengthens families, helping communities thrive."

In addition to being a sponsor at Celebrating Our Kids this year, employees from Paul Hastings recently visited campus to volunteer with the kids in our Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility. Our kids had so much fun decorating bird feeders and spending time with the volunteers! They all left proud of their work and excited to hang their bird feeders outside their cottages. We are grateful for the time and care the volunteers put into their afternoon with us! Thank you for supporting the children we serve.



PAUL

HASTINGS

If your company is interested in sponsoring Celebrating Our Kids in 2027, please reach out to our Director of Development, Brooks Shelley, at bshelley@aynkids.org.

THE IMPACT YOU MAKE: MAYA'S STORY

Maya is a teenager who was really struggling with anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. She was living with her father and attending school, but she didn't have any friends and would stay mostly to herself. Her anxiety made it hard for her to interact with anyone outside of her family.

After moving back to her mother's, she began doing online school. Her parents hoped that this would help lessen her anxiety, but she began to further isolate herself and wouldn't leave her room except for meals and to use the bathroom. At a loss for what else to do for her daughter, her mom found Alexander Youth Network and Maya began working with one of our Intensive In Home teams.

At first, Maya would wear hoodies during their sessions to hide herself in them. Her team realized that she was really struggling with her self-confidence and self-esteem. Part of the reason she didn't want to leave the house was because she thought people were watching and judging her. The IIH team knew that they needed to slowly build their relationship with Maya, showing her over time that she could trust them and would be safe outside her home. It took baby steps to get Maya out of the house. First they started doing sessions outside on the porch or in the car. As Maya got more comfortable, they were able to get her to go to the library and the park. Soon, Maya was making requests on where she wanted to go.

After 9 months, Maya felt ready to join a teen group in her community. Her IIH team worked with Maya to find the right group for her and went with her to make sure she felt comfortable. As they stood back and observed Maya interacting with her peers, they marveled at how different Maya was since they first met her. She was no longer hiding in her hoodies or having a panic attack at the thought of leaving her room. She was laughing and enjoying herself, making new friends for the first time in years. On the car ride home, Maya told them she was already excited to go back the next week.

Maya has since discharged from our IIH program, but her mom recently reached back out to our staff to let them know how Maya was doing. She's made friends with a new girl that moved into her apartment, attended a teen tea party social, and is going back to a public high school this year. While she's nervous for school, she wants to try and give it a chance. What struck our staff the most was the smile on Maya's face from a picture of her dressed up for the tea party. This young lady had blossomed under their care and was now taking what they taught her and using it to navigate the world around her. The staff at Alexander Youth Network are doing this with the kids in our programs every day. Their work is building the bridge for our kids to one day grow and thrive with the tools they need to manage their mental and behavioral health challenges.

COMMUNITY CORNER

In June, Ace The Stigma held their 3rd Annual Ace The Stigma Tennis Memorial Event, honoring Chuck Reiney. This two day event brought together members of the community to engage in meaningful conversations around mental health and suicide prevention. We are honored that Alexander Youth Network was selected again as one of their beneficiaries. This year they raised a record breaking \$325,000 to support seven local mental health organizations!

Ace The Stigma's mission is to defeat the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide prevention. Their goal is to raise funding for programs to increase awareness and provide education and outreach/treatment program for individuals struggling with their mental health.

With Ace The Stigma's contribution, we are able to serve more children and adolescents who are experiencing mental health challenges. Thank you for continuing to support Alexander Youth Network and the children that we serve!



CAMPUS TOURS

Join us for a tour of Alexander Youth Network! Tours are scheduled for the first and third Thursday of the month. This is a great opportunity for a personalized, guided tour where you can ask questions and learn about all the amazing programs and services provided by Alexander Youth Network.

All tours of Alexander will take place on the Charlotte campus, located at 6220 Thermal Road, Charlotte, NC. Campus tours are 1 hour long. You can [sign up for a tour by visiting our website](#). If you would like to come for a tour, but are not able to make one of the scheduled dates, please contact Kaitlyn Dixon at kcoppadge@aynkids.org or 704-227-9159.

The September tour will be on the 17th at 4:30 pm. Tours in October will take place on the 1st at 12:30 pm and the 15th at 4:30 pm.