

cribnotes

MEASURING UP



Carrie DePasquale is what we'd call a smart cookie. It could be her degree in Neuroscience, or the fact that she's working on her PhD in child development. Luckily for us, Carrie's putting her smarts to work for the Nursery, by helping develop critical program measures. And even better, she's bringing her big heart along.

A HEART AWAKENS

As an undergrad at the University of Delaware, Carrie took a job entering research data—and entertaining children whose siblings or cousins were involved in a research study.

Carrie had no idea that a simple hour of playtime would help ignite a passion that has helped shape her research and community commitment to date. While babysitting a cousin for a fairly high-risk Philadelphia sample, Carrie was struck by how quickly the little girl opened up after such a short period of positive interaction. "It made me realize: she probably doesn't get experiences like that very often," Carrie says.

"I became so motivated by that little girl," Carrie relates. "Kids go through such stressful experiences at such a young age. That has really made me passionate about identifying ways we can prevent exposure to or reduce the impact of those stressors."

MEASURING SUCCESS

Fast forward a few years, and Carrie's now planted at the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development, where she's working on her PhD under Dr. Megan Gunnar. Here at the Nursery, she's working to develop a behavioral measure that will help Nursery staff better evaluate our program offerings, by collecting data across six different behavioral categories.

"My goal is to help identify opportunities for improvement," Carrie says. "Whether that means adding programs, or potentially just finding different ways to help the kids deal with transitions.

They're not used to getting up and going about a normal day." Carrie works with Mary Pat and the Nursery staff on a regular basis to ensure the behavioral tool she's developing will be usable and reliable for ongoing work.

AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

Carrie recognizes that the cycle of poverty and violence can be hard to break. "It's important to realize that these parents want what's best for their children. There's only so much that they have control over," she says. "The Nursery is an amazing place and resource for parents to use. The Nursery can foster hope, and set families on a better track."

For Carrie's part, her early experience with at-risk kids has really shaped how she thinks about community outreach—and today, she's committed. "I want to help make sure that all of these kids grow up and lead happier and healthier lives."

KID-FRIENDLY METRICS

Carrie and her team are looking at several different behavioral measures. Here are a few:

Behaviors to discourage and reduce

- » Self-stimulating behaviors, such as rocking back and forth
- » Aggression – physical or verbal

Behaviors to teach and encourage

- » Coping skills – such as taking a breath, counting to 10, recognizing I need help
- » Prosocial behavior, such as sharing and comforting



LETTER FROM MARY PAT

I truly believe that we are never done improving. And here at the Crisis Nursery, we take that idea of continuous improvement to heart. For us that means doing good work today—and even better work tomorrow.

The belief that we can always do better has driven us to develop our Nursery Way Care protocols, a trauma-informed approach to working with children and parents. It has led us to expand our 4th Day Home Visiting program to provide more families in crisis with deeper support. And this same belief has motivated us to create an in-home mental health services program, to ensure that parents who aren't able to successfully access traditional mental health services get the help they need.

In striving to improve, we're developing resources that we can use to help the community understand the real impact of our work. And we try to keep learning. By reaching out to the University of Minnesota, the University of Chicago, and the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard, we are able to incorporate the most current research and best practices into our work. This gives our staff the tools and resources they need to do their good work each day.

A constant desire to innovate and do better means we spend time on evaluation standards, logic models, and measurement criteria. Yes, it may be a whole lot of data collection—but this data is at the core of how we know whether the families we serve are getting what they need. Our families face so many challenges. We owe it to them to provide the very best care possible.

To our volunteers, donors and friends—thank you. We are so grateful for the support you provide that helps us get better each and every day. We know that our work is making a difference in improving children's physical and emotional health, and in supporting parents' ability to care for their children.

Every day, we work to keep children safe from abuse and neglect and to create strong healthy families. And every day, we work to keep getting better.

Mary Pat Lee
Executive Director





JEREMY THIGPEN PITCHES IN FOR COOK FOR KIDS

If you are interested in volunteering for our Cook for Kids program, contact Keith Johnson at (612) 767-8483 or kjohnson@crisisnursery.org. Learn more at crisisnursery.org/volunteer.

FY16 VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

MEASURES OF SUPPORT AND SUCCESS

Each year, we keep track of the support we receive as well as the impact we have on our community's families. Here are some highlights of the results we've seen in the past fiscal year.



⤴ Volunteers from The Breck School do weekly enrichment projects with children at the Nursery.

+2,000

VOLUNTEERS PROVIDED

20,468 HOURS

of service – Equal to nearly 10 full time employees!

VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Volunteers are an integral component of the love and support we deliver to our community's most vulnerable children and families – and we couldn't do this important work without them! Check out how much volunteer support we had in the past year:

4,318 **VOLUNTEER
SHIFTS FILLED**

\$65,000 Amount that volunteer donations saved the Nursery in food costs

365 **TEAMS
PROVIDED** } **545 MEALS
211 SNACKS**
for children at the Nursery



GMCN ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

Your support makes a difference for the children and families we serve. With your donations in the past year, we are happy to report some significant successes for our community's families. Take a look at some of the highlights below.

3,764

Number of calls for help that family advocates answered

528 CHILDREN



from **313** FAMILIES

accessed overnight residential services
(unduplicated)

736

home visits were provided through the 4th Day Home Visiting Program

142 PARENTS

participated in parent education and parent support groups

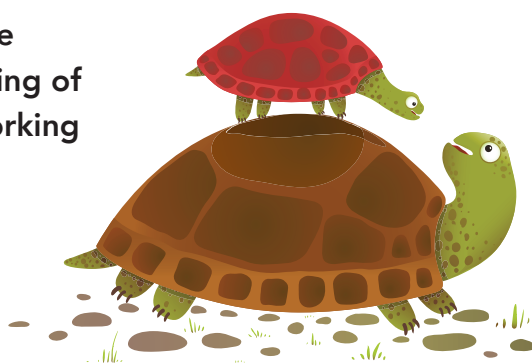
99% of families reported the Crisis Nursery helped them alleviate their current crisis

97% of families reported they now have strategies in place to keep themselves and their families safe



93% of parents have gained a better understanding of child development while working with the Crisis Nursery

92% of families have identified someone to talk to when they need support



EVENT NEWS

THREE CHEERS FOR HARVESTING HOPE

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 12th Annual Harvesting Hope wine tasting event to benefit the Nursery. More than 350 of our supporters were there, and together we raised nearly \$265,000 to provide crisis care to children and families who need it most.



BE A HOLIDAY HELPER!

Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery's Holiday Helper Program supports families who access our services during the winter season of giving. Gifts received from the Holiday Helper Program are distributed to families based on their specific needs and what has been donated. Download the Holiday Helper Wish List at www.crisisnursery.org



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