

cribnotes

HOW THE NURSERY EARNED MY TRUST THROUGH THE EYES OF A PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE

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My role as a nurse was to create relationships with families founded on safety, respect, inclusivity, and collaboration. I served new mothers and babies through the Nurse Family Partnerships (NFP) and Healthy Families America (HFA) programs, both of which are evidence-based. These are the same components of care that Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery upholds.

My families faced significant challenges. Lack of housing, financial instability, unreliable health care, and domestic violence were prevalent problems that I helped women navigate through. Often, they were afraid that they would be seen as unfit parents if they requested assistance. They trusted me. It was therefore essential that I trusted where I referred them too. I needed to know they would be treated as the capable and loving parents they were. Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery was an organization I could count on to provide high-quality care my families desperately needed from my very first interaction.

The first time I contacted the Nursery, the mom I was working with, Hani, was in significant distress.



*Name changed for privacy purposes

At 21 years old, she had immigrated from Somalia. Her language skills, although improving, were limited. After leaving her abusive partner, she was estranged by her family. Balancing classes, work, and single parenting, all in a new country, was overwhelming. The multiple stressors caused her mental health to suffer, and she experienced a major depressive episode.

Hani needed time to organize her mental health care, finish moving into her new home after leaving the domestic abuse shelter and find a new daycare. Parenting takes a village that she did not have. We began creating her support network by calling the Nursery with our interpreter. The woman that answered the phone was kind, warm, and worked well coordinating care with a language barrier. It was determined that using the overnight residential care would be appropriate and she organized transportation to bring Hani and her daughter to the Nursery.

Following her experience, Hani shared that she initially felt vulnerable, but the staff at the Nursery were non-judgmental. It made her feel safe. The check-in process was smooth and comprehensive, and she appreciated the Nursery's array of fun activities for her daughter. By addressing her largest barriers—providing transportation, communicating in her language, and ensuring her daughter felt secure—the Nursery enabled her to overcome her crisis, and embark on the next stages of her journey.

Seeking help requires great strength and deserves to be met with open arms and kindness. Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery does this very well for our community every day.

- Joy Cloutier

BE OUR GUEST



Formula for Hope

Save the date and join us for lunch! Formula for Hope, our annual spring luncheon is an inspiring afternoon to come together, celebrate accomplishments, and invest in children and families in our community.

2024 Honoree Anne Davis Carrier

This year's Formula for Hope event is dedicated to Anne's legacy as Chair of the Board of Directors, a committed board member and volunteer, and a long-time supporter. Anne's belief in creating a place for children and families in crisis has transformed thousands of lives over the four decades of her service.



Register to attend or host a table: cbo.io/ffh2024/tix
Learn more about attending: crisisnursery.org/FFH

Tuesday, May 7, 2024 • Noon - 1:00pm
Hyatt Regency Minneapolis

CRAFT CORNER: MINDFUL ZEN GARDEN

Is it hard to keep your kids encouraged and curious during the winter season? Embrace nature even on chilly winter days by introducing them to the calming art of creating a Zen Garden.

Materials:

- Flat, low-edged container
- Fine sand
- Various sized rocks
- Grasses or fairy garden moss
- Small rake, fork, or twig for creating designs
- Decorative materials
(find materials in nature for an extra step of fun)

Directions:

1. Put sand in the container, so it is flat and level
2. Place your decorative materials where you want
3. Rake slowly and breathe. Think about how you're raking.
 - What shapes are you making in the sand?
 - How does it feel to encounter obstacles?
4. Mantras or affirmations are also great ways to practice mindfulness while raking



Photos from [kumarahyga.com](https://www.kumarahyga.com)

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Child Care Volunteers Emily and Olaitan



From cooking in the kitchen to creating arts and crafts, winding down and watching a movie in the evening, to running around the gym with the kids, there are many volunteer opportunities available at the Nursery. Olaitan has been a child care volunteer for one year and she can often be found in her favorite space at the Nursery, the gym!

Olaitan has always had a passion for volunteering and has done it for as long as she can remember. She came across the Nursery when looking for opportunities to work with women and children. “The fact that the Nursery provides free services for parents in need drew me [in] instantly.” She is amazed by the love, care, and attention that was put into creating a space like this. She knew the Nursery was the right place for her from day one:

“I remember my first day volunteering at the Nursery; I walked into the TV room, and the kiddos were watching a movie. A little girl walked up to me and put her hand up for me to pick her up, and it genuinely warmed my heart.”

Outside of staying active with kids in the gym, Olaitan can be found traveling, doing yoga, or spending time with her little puppy.

Olaitan reminds us, “Be patient, understand each child as their own, and understand that each child also expresses themselves differently,” and we couldn’t agree more!

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What creates a cozy nest at the Nursery? You!

The Nursery is abuzz with volunteers from sunrise to sunset. It’s important for kids to receive emotional support and a warm presence while they’re apart from their parents. Emily, a child care volunteer since 2016, can be found with that loving warmth, helping kids feel safe at bedtime.

Emily says, **“I know bedtime is the hardest time for some of the kids, but I love helping them calm down and feel safe enough to sleep,”** and she gives the best cuddles.

She believes that the best way to contribute to a cozy nest at the Nursery is by staying calm. “It’s important to be flexible and find humor since the kids at a young age don’t know how to communicate their feelings, it results in acting out.”

How does she overcome the challenges that arise at bedtime? “I had a really challenging bedtime the other day, and instead of getting worked up because the kid crawled under the bed and refused to come out, I laughed. I could have cried and created a second person for the staff to calm down, but staying calm myself made it easier for the staff to come in and help calm one person instead of two.”

Throughout her time here, she has learned that most children just want to feel safe and loved. She has respect and compassion for the parents. “I admire their strength and humility to seek it out and use it...it can’t be easy to leave your child with strangers for any period of time, let alone up to 72 hours.”

Parents trust the Nursery because they know it’s full of caring, dedicated staff and volunteers like Emily.



A VISIT FROM TIPTOE

Tiptoe the therapy donkey



Who wouldn't love a support animal, and what about Tiptoe, the therapy donkey? When Tiptoe visited the Nursery, there were plenty of big smiles, excited squeals, and even a bit of joyful singing!

Therapy animals can help reduce anxiety for people who have experienced trauma.

We want to give a generous thank you to Tiptoe and his caregiver Erin for creating this special day for the kids!

THREE WAYS SUPPORT ANIMALS HELP PEOPLE COPE WITH TRAUMA

- Animals have been known to have a calming effect on adults and children. A therapy animal's presence can **help reduce anxiety and stress**. For children who have gone through traumatic experiences, a service animal can put them more at ease.
- Many children who have experienced trauma find it challenging to express their feelings verbally, but a therapy animal can provide a non-verbal outlet for emotions. This allows children a different way to **connect and communicate**.
- A therapy animal can act as a bridge for children who may struggle with **social interactions**. The presence of a service animal can often make interactions easier for children to engage with others, including peers, therapists, or caregivers.



YOU MADE HOLIDAY MAGIC REAL

An extra special thanks to everyone who helped make the holidays magical for Nursery families!

This year the Holiday Helper program made gift giving possible for **65 families** and nearly **200 children**.

The Holiday Helper program provides holiday gift cards to Nursery families during the winter season of giving.



Thank you for making this past holiday season magic for so many children!

