MORE THAN A SMILE

Grace* endured sex trafficking, exploitation, and addiction from the time she was eight years old. As an adult, her teeth served as a constant reminder of a past she wanted to forget.

“It felt like people were seeing my past on my face every day – and I would look in the mirror and judge myself for it,” Grace said. Two years ago, she came to FamilyForward seeking advocacy from our Redevelopment Opportunities for Women (ROW) programs. Program Manager Janée Johnson spent time with Grace and quickly learned how important a new set of teeth would be to her healing process.

“She didn’t have to make that choice, but she did make that choice – for herself,” Janée said.

Grace poured her heart into the letter she sent to local dentist Dr. Jerell Wilson, who

CONTINUE ON P.3
Dear friends,

I hope you’ve shared joyful moments with loved ones this holiday season. Our three unique holiday projects (Shop for an Angel, Shop for a Teen Angel, and Shop for a Children’s Home Angel) have spread cheer to over 800 client children, thanks to the many friends who organized donation drives and shopped to fulfill wishes for individual kids. Thank you for making the holidays brighter for those we serve.

I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished together in 2019. We’ve helped thousands of vulnerable children and teens, parents and caregivers, women who have survived domestic violence, and children with developmental disabilities. I’m grateful for our dedicated staff, supportive board members, generous donors, helpful volunteers, and strong partners. There’s still work to be done and the need in our community remains.

As a friend of FamilyForward, you know better than anyone that Bradley (see p. 7) deserves hope and healing. Your support has positioned FamilyForward staff to transform the way we understand the effects of childhood trauma. We need your help now more than ever so we can reach vulnerable children like Bradley and support struggling families while there is still time.

Thank you for helping FamilyForward bring hope and healing to our community. Best wishes for a peaceful new year!

Sincerely,

Karen Nolte
Chief Executive Officer, FamilyForward

Karen Nolte

EMPOWERING WOMEN

FamilyForward’s Redevelopment Opportunities for Women (ROW) programs empower women and their families to build safety, skills, economic security, and hope for the future. Known nationwide, ROW’s Economic Action Program (REAP) helps women who have experienced domestic violence and financial hardship achieve economic stability and sustainability.

REAP is funded in part by generous grants from The Allstate Foundation, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Foundation, State Farm Companies Foundation, and Trio Foundation of St. Louis. Thank you for your meaningful support of FamilyForward’s innovative economic intervention services.

ROW also offers advocacy, safety planning, crisis intervention, trauma therapy, and wraparound support to survivors.

Grace now works in the mental health profession, meeting with clients who are facing the same battles she fought. The Missouri Attorney General’s office has asked Grace to sit on a task force to help state legislators write new laws regarding exploitation.

"Now I smile all the time."

"Grace is who people turn to for advice about exploitation and addiction." Janée said. "Everyone is relying on her and her expertise." Continuing to cope with triggering situations and the trauma that resulted from her experiences, Grace now has people she can talk to – people she can lean on.

Just this year, Grace had to attend court to file an order of protection. “Janée went to court with me. That’s the stuff I needed. Would I really be doing this if I didn’t have her support?” Grace said.

One thing remains constant throughout this new chapter of her life: Grace is now smiling all the time.

To read more about Grace’s transformation, visit conta.cc/2Ni1V4N.

*Names have been changed to protect client confidentiality.

WARMTH OF GIVING

Your Brady Bunch, Emily Brady’s State Farm insurance team, is passionate about supporting their community. This holiday season, they promised their customers they would spend $10 on gifts for FamilyForward client kids for every quote request or online review. They also offered pies as a sweet symbol of gratitude to friends who contributed toy donations.

When Your Brady Bunch delivered their many contributions, it was clear that their efforts made an impact. Thank you, Emily, for embodying State Farm’s caring spirit and helping FamilyForward provide something special for every child we serve.
INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

FamilyForward offers comprehensive coaching and therapy to address family stressors such as safety, shelter, unemployment, and parenting. Generous funding from The Boeing Company and Scott and Christine Homan | C & S Foundation enables FamilyForward to focus resources in North County, developing social supports within the community to help families cope with crisis.

Through purposeful investments, employee engagement, and thoughtful advocacy efforts, Boeing and its employees support innovative partnerships and programs that help build better communities. Boeing has supported FamilyForward since 2010, allowing us to meet struggling families where they are and ensure stable environments for children.

Longtime FamilyForward supporters Scott and Christine Homan are committed to building safe, independent families and removing barriers for parents of vulnerable children. Their dedication has helped us expand services and achieve better outcomes for clients.

Thank you, Boeing and Homan family, for your partnership!

THE ROCKET BALL

Annual Dinner Auction
Saturday, February 22, 2020
6:00 – 11:30 pm
The Ritz-Carlton, St. Louis

The countdown has begun! Blast off with us at The Rocket Ball for experiences that are out-of-this-world. The evening will feature a cocktail reception with silent auction, dinner and program, live auction, and an exciting after party with music and dancing sponsored by Garcia Properties. Join us!

Buy tickets or become a sponsor: familyforwardmo.org/rocket-ball

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Employees from Mastercard hosted a toy drive to benefit Shop for an Angel, a FamilyForward holiday project aimed at filling the void felt by many of our client children during the holiday season. After dropping off an impressive haul of donations, the energetic group went on their merry way to our Children’s Homes in Brentwood and St. Charles. Volunteers spent the afternoon decorating both locations for the children in our residential care to enjoy.

Mastercard aims to have an enduring impact on the communities where their employees live and do business. We thank them – from the bottom of our holiday hearts – for making the season brighter for the kids and families we serve.

“We have been at such a loss with our situation and our therapist was so kind and very thorough. My family is in a much better place because of her.”

— FamilyForward client

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

FamilyForward Transform is published to further our mission and to acknowledge our partners in achieving this mission. Client confidentiality is essential: names of clients have been changed and photos are stock photos, unless we have received client authorization to do otherwise. For corrections or questions, please email meghan.robinson@familyforwardmo.org.

Jessica Dederer
Chief Development Officer

Emily Lunt
Graphic Designer

Meghan Robinson
Marketing and Communications Manager
The direction? **Hope.**

By the time Bradley was three, his short childhood was marked by chaos and fear. He had been neglected, physically abused, and exposed to extreme violence. He was staying in a homeless shelter. Bradley’s experiences — those no child should ever endure — were traumatizing and resulted in foster care placement.

When we first met Bradley, he felt threatened and would lose control during the simplest transitions like moving from the lunch table to story circle. Yet, our Therapeutic Preschool staff welcomed Bradley and helped him feel safe with predictability and routine. We completed a trauma assessment to better understand Bradley’s developmental strengths and vulnerabilities.

With an understanding of how early trauma impacted his ability to function in everyday situations, we gave Bradley a safe place to grow and created a plan just for him. The plan included regular therapeutic activities with our staff and his peers, sensory input like spinning and yoga that calmed Bradley, and interactions with nurturing grown-ups who helped him feel secure.

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The two-staff team worked with Bradley for months to help him transition from a state of chaos to one of calm.

OMISSOURI RIVER

Brentwood Children’s Home 9445 Lindenwood Rd
Brentwood, MO 63144-1143 314.918.2432

St. Charles Children’s Home 2144 Monegan Rd
St. Charles, MO 63303-3130 314.561.2110

**OUR DONORS**

Thank you for joining us on the journey and investing in FamilyForward’s comprehensive treatment and prevention services. We could not do it without you.

**Ways to give**

Securely online at familyforwardmo.org/bradley

Check or credit card using the enclosed envelope

Visit familyforwardmo.org to learn more about locations and services.
OUR VISION
FamilyForward leads the community in providing innovative solutions for advancing safer, healthier relationships for children and families.

OUR MISSION
FamilyForward moves vulnerable children in the direction of hope by delivering comprehensive therapeutic and educational services to support biological, foster, and adoptive families.