

Discovering Abilities


Caring Solutions
caringsolutions.org

Caring Solutions designs and provides services to meet the unique needs of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families, giving them the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives.

Fall 2019

What is it that Caring Solutions does?

Since its founding in 2001, Caring Solutions has provided oversight and care for kids and adults who have developmental disabilities such as autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and other unique needs including medical and behavioral challenges.

Backgrounds vary from the best of situations with loving families to much less desirable living environments—even from abuse or from being homeless. Most individuals need 24-hour care and Caring Solutions provides this as well as other levels of support in a variety of community living and staffing options.

Caring Solutions has earned the reputation of stepping up to serve those with the greatest need.

Caring Solutions was the first nonprofit in Missouri to provide the shared living host settings and recently was the first nonprofit to offer therapeutic respite services for those with a developmental disability and significant behavior issues.

Established in 2017, Caring Solutions “Valentine Place” in Ferguson, Missouri is part of a program that also includes care and crisis intervention and support in the family home.

Save These Dates:

GALA - April 25th, 2020
GOLF - October 5th, 2020

Philip: Embracing Abilities & Assuring His Future

Philip is a happy, young man whose developmental disability causes him to be excitable, nervous and physically overactive around other people.

This can hinder his ability to focus and be safe. Caring Solutions’ staff have learned to reassure and re-direct Philip by reminding him to have “calm hands” and by giving him a comforting embrace when needed.

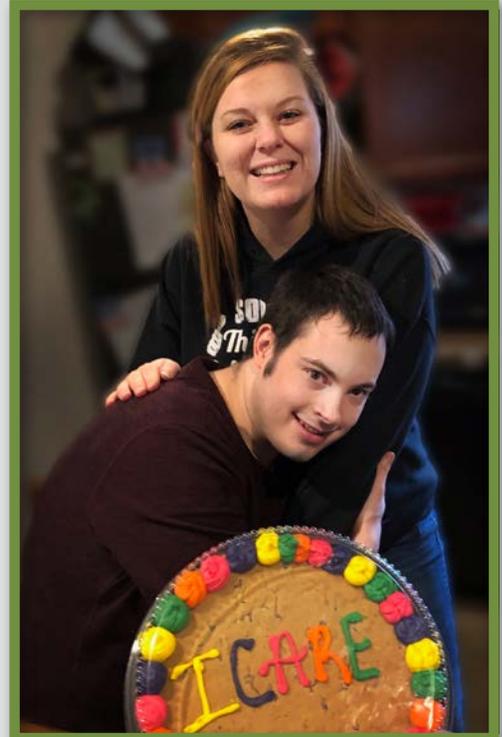
In 2013, Philip began receiving 24-hour support from Caring Solutions in the Franklin County home he shares with another young man who has some similar disabilities. With this assistance, Philip is now able to safely go with his staff to do grocery shopping, go to a movie and even volunteer with Meals on Wheels and help at the local senior center. Though Philip doesn’t talk, he is beginning to learn to use a communication device in which he pushes the appropriate buttons to ask for food, to go to the bathroom and for other needs. Long-term goals for Philip include becoming more independent by using his “voice” with this device.

Nicole Deleski, Caring Solutions Program Coordinator, said Philip’s family is involved in his life and appreciative.

“They told us that if it wasn’t for Caring Solutions, they may have had to consider putting Philip in a nursing home at some point.”

Kayla Vieland is one of Philip’s direct care staff who does a great job encouraging and reassuring him. This picture was taken when leadership staff went to various homes to thank employees and present each site with an ICARE cookie. ICARE is an acronym for the values that staff determined should drive all that we do.

Integrity, Commitment, Achievement, Respect and Empowerment.





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Madi Hawn - Founder & CEO

HOW TO REACH CARING SOLUTIONS

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 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization



Work or Volunteer at Caring Solutions! We are always looking for caring staff and members for our Board of Directors and Advisory Council.

Share our story, please!

Tell your friends, family, colleagues, service groups, churches, businesses and others about us. Need a speaker or printed information for a group or meeting? We can provide that!

Contact your state legislators on behalf of Caring Solutions and other direct care providers. The need to ensure adequate funding from the Missouri state legislature is becoming more challenging and critical for both current and future needs for Caring Solutions and other nonprofit providers of services to individuals with developmental disabilities. If you are willing to contact your representatives, we can provide you with the information that you can forward to them.

Giving Tuesday is December 3, 2019 and is one of the biggest national online giving days to charity. Caring Solutions will appreciate an online gift of any size! **Go to caringsolutions.org to donate.** (Of course, we appreciate both your online and regular mail giving any day of the year, too!)

Give STL Day will be May 7, 2020 and is sponsored by the St. Louis Community Foundation. You can be from another state or country and still give to Caring Solutions through their website at GiveSTLDay.org There are opportunities for match money and also prizes for contributors on this special day of giving for charities of your choice in the Greater St. Louis Area.

Other ways you can give . . . Consider gifting **highly appreciated stock** and/or setting up a **charitable remainder trust** to Caring Solutions. This can result in substantial savings to you by eliminating capital gains tax. Other giving options include naming Caring Solutions as **beneficiary of an insurance policy** or giving **funds from your IRA**. Have you remembered Caring Solutions in your **will and living trust?** We will appreciate hearing that you did this for the benefit of the children and adults with developmental disabilities who receive our services.

Caring Solutions Special Needs Fund is for both essential and emergency needs. Some examples of how financial gifts to this fund help include: behavior therapies, housing and utility assistance, medical equipment, specialized dental care, appliance and furniture needs and emergency shelter.

“Assuring the Future” Campaign

Caring Solutions “Assuring the Future” Campaign has a goal of securing \$1 million in reserve funds in three years. We are over halfway to our goal with commitments from Caring Solutions Board and Advisory Council members, staff and other donors. We plan to be here for many years for current and future individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. We would very much appreciate your consideration of a gift toward this effort, too. (See Madi’s Q&A on page 3 for more info.)

WISH LIST items that we can always use are many and we are happy to share our current extensive list upon request. Some **basic, everyday items always needed include: paper towels, laundry detergent, dish detergent and hand soap.** Also always helpful to have on hand are dish towels, non-breakable dishes and cups, bath towels, hand towels and washcloths, twin sheets and pillowcases and more.

BE A GEM



Be a **GEM!** Join the growing group of donors who are **Givers Every Month** to Caring Solutions. Some of these caring individuals have their banks send a check from their account to us directly each month. Others send in a monthly check themselves or make a gift by credit card via our website at **caringsolutions.org** or by setting it up with us. You choose what works best for you.

Q & A with Founder & CEO Madi Hawn

So what's new at Caring Solutions? I think we are probably at the best place in the 18-year history of this organization than we have ever been! We now support over 100 people on an annual basis so we make a big impact in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

What are some current challenges? Our biggest challenge now is staffing--to find good staff and teach them the skills they need so we can provide quality care. The job itself is becoming more challenging especially dealing with those who not only have a developmental disability like autism, Down syndrome or cerebral palsy but who also have behavior challenges and may also have a secondary diagnosis of mental illness such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. Some also have high medical and health needs.

While finding staff is a challenge, our retention of employees is very good. If someone stays a year then usually they stay for a long time. We have quite a few employees celebrating 10 and even 15 year anniversaries here. We have a stable work force and a very stable leadership team and this stability gives confidence and ensures consistency in our services.

Is low unemployment a factor on finding staff? Yes! All kinds of businesses are having trouble finding employees. With low unemployment and other businesses increasing pay rates, it's hard to be competitive—and that's not just with Caring Solutions but our whole service industry. As it is, we are increasing our starting pay for direct-care employees to \$11 an hour. That's still below the national minimum wage and simply not a living wage.

We need supporters to contact their Missouri legislators to request more money be appropriated in the Department of Mental Health (DMH) budget so we can increase our pay for direct care staff. Provider agencies requested funding in the last budget period so we could offer \$12 an hour, but we received less than a third of what was requested so we weren't able to do that. Budgeting starts again in January for fiscal year 2020-21, so we need to try again. We're coordinating a clear message with the Missouri Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (MARF) and will be able to provide that info for those who are willing to make these connections. **Anyone who can help us by contacting their legislators, call Caring Solutions at 314-942-7350.**

How about other benefits for staff? Caring Solutions values everybody here. Even though we've grown a lot, we're still like a big family. I'm happy to say that we do provide good benefits including excellent health insurance. We also offer 401K, life insurance and even an employee assistance program free of charge to employees. We provide a very supportive and open environment.

How does funding work? Caring Solutions is certified by the DMH through their Medicaid Waiver program. Each individual with a diagnosed developmental disability has a



Employee Nancy Walsh is with Blake who receives services from Caring Solutions as Founder/CEO Madi Hawn introduces them to John Hutchens, Board Treasurer and Joe Ilges, Board President.

detailed budget based on agreed upon needs. DMH must approve the budget and their funding of it for us to serve an individual.

Even then, there are many areas and even mandates that are not funded by anything except charitable donations to Caring Solutions. Just a few examples include all that is required to train/hire staff, meetings with families, and securing housing and furnishings to serve someone new. We're not reimbursed for that or for initial and ongoing training including orientation, CPR, First Aid, medication administration and behavior supports.

What does our future look like? Again, the focus will be on the growing demand every day to have supports for people who have developmental disabilities plus significant behavioral or medical needs. It's a challenge but we are making a successful and positive impact at our home sites, at Valentine Place therapeutic respite home and with our Crisis Intervention Team to help families in their homes. There is a need for more of this kind of service throughout the state both in metropolitan and rural areas.

One of the biggest needs we are addressing now is for families wanting to know that Caring Solutions will be here for them and their loved ones for a long time.

A year ago, we started the "Assuring the Future" Campaign with a goal of raising \$1 million over three years to build our reserve funds. Currently, we rely heavily on a line of credit because of how we get reimbursed which involves a lag time of around eight weeks after services have been provided. Assuring the Future gifts will help us raise funds to offset that dependence on the bank's line of credit. We also need to start an endowment fund for Caring Solutions. We will be looking to current donors for their continued financial support and for their help in spreading the word so we can find new sources of support. With their help, we have found we really can make a difference and we're grateful!

Emerson Recognized with Valentine Award at 2019 Gala

“We were so pleased that Dave Rabe could be with us at the 2019 Gala so we could recognize Emerson’s involvement and generous support of our Valentine Place therapeutic respite home in Ferguson,” Madi Hawn, Caring Solutions Founder & Chief Executive Officer, said.



David Rabe is the Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility for Emerson. He was present at the ribbon cutting at Valentine Place in February 2017 as was Trudy Busch Valentine, Caring Solutions Advisory Council member, donor and friend to Caring Solutions. The respite home bears her name as it was through her donor-advised fund with the St. Louis Community Foundation that the property was purchased.

“Our sincere thanks to Emerson for helping to open the door for Caring Solutions in their community and for their continued interest and investment in our success,” Hawn said.

Valentine Place is the first therapeutic respite home for individuals with developmental disabilities and significant behavior challenges in the state of Missouri.

2019 Gala Honors Carl and Jeanne Deutsch

Carl and Jeanne Deutsch were recognized at the 2019 Gala for their faithful support since Caring Solutions first began. For those attending the earlier galas, Carl and Jeanne were often seated at the registration table helping guests at check-in.

Caring Solutions was happy to honor them this year with a commemorative plaque and the Discovering Abilities Award. Thank you, Carl and Jeanne! We look forward to seeing you at the 2020 “Discovering Abilities” Gala on April 25, 2020 at St. Nicholas Family Life Center.

We hope all donors and friends will also plan to join us for festivities, silent and live auctions and a great dinner provided by Callier’s Catering with entertainment by The Ralph Butler Band.

