

A Place to Heal

What We Do

Provide comprehensive mental health services to children and adolescents with behavioral or family problems, regardless of their ability to pay



“If it wasn't for the staff at Crittenton, I don't know where I'd be.”

Cari Salyer,
former inpatient at
Crittenton Children's Center

Cari Salyer was out of control, wrecking cars and swiping shoes, until doctors and staff at Crittenton helped her to stop

At 16, Cari Salyer was a hand-ful—rash, temperamental, embarrassing.

“My brother hated me because I did weird, impulsive things on purpose,” said the Overland Park resident. “In high school, I took his best friend's sister's shoes. Then I walked up to my brother's friend in the hallway and shoved the shoes at him, in front of everyone. Not cool.”

However, her behavior wasn't a hormone-fueled, teenage phase. It quickly went from prankish to dangerous.

One day she took her dad's company car, ran a red light, and crashed into a family in a van. (Luckily, no one was seriously hurt.)

“I was so impulsive, I didn't even realize the light was red,” Salyer said. “And it wouldn't have mattered if I did. I was constantly out of control, swinging from high to low.”

That's when her parents agreed something was wrong and checked her into Crittenton Children's Center, where doctors diagnosed and treated her for bipolar disorder.

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Shelter from the Storm

Salyer wasn't alone. Every year social agencies refer dozens of children ages 5 to 18 to Crittenton, a residential and outpatient behavioral treatment facility in Saint Luke's Health System. The center, which evolved from a program that began in 1896, serves children with a variety of psychiatric, behavioral, emotional, or addiction disorders.

Although her inpatient stay lasted just days, Salyer credits continuing outpatient therapy at Crittenton, plus medication, with saving her life. Now 23, she's a doctor's assistant, a wife, a mother-to-be, and in control.

“The staff at Crittenton changed me forever,” she said. “If it wasn't for them, I don't know where I'd be.”

How You Can Help

Contributions help sustain life-changing and, in some cases, life-saving services for children:

- \$20** Foster care case management, per day
- \$85** Outpatient treatment and family counseling session
- \$100** Assistance for community education programs and materials
- \$200** Day of residential treatment
- \$660** Day of inpatient hospitalization