



Helping Greater Richmond's Children Since 1924

## Partnerships Help Heal Our Community's Children

Dr. Robin Foster is no stranger to what poverty and violence can do to a family; she sees it every day. She works to help our community's most vulnerable neighborhoods recover one person at a time. But to hear her tell it, it isn't a one woman show and it takes the whole community to help children and families heal.

If you ask Dr. Foster, who is the Director of Pediatric Emergency and the Child Protection Team at Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU (CHoR), this healing takes "grassroots" organizations, like ChildSavers. When she speaks about grassroots, she does not mean campaigning or activism, but community based. These organizations are in the neighborhoods that need help. They build personal relationships and are trusted, reliable, and passionate.

She said, "If someone shows up in the ER they are in crisis and the majority are not just in medical crisis, but social crisis as well. So, I try to figure out what is happening at home. Has the heat been shut off? Is the mother out of formula? What resources do I know of and have at my disposal that I can give to these families in crisis?" Dr. Foster uses her network of grassroots partners to help, "I love that I can call and get support for these families. It could be as simple as making a phone call to get a car seat. These simple measures can help a parent de-stress." But sometimes the resources they need are beyond the material and the hurt is more than skin deep.

ChildSavers is among the resources that Dr. Foster uses to help families. When asked what prompts her to make a referral to ChildSavers she said that it involved two different scenarios.

The first scenario occurs after an acute trauma incident. Medical personnel and family see that a child needs mental health services. Often these families do not have the resources to get the help they need. The second scenario involves more than one visit to the ER and attention to detail on the part of the staff. Dr. Foster said, "Sometimes kids have something that happened to them and it wasn't recognized as a traumatic event the first time around. It isn't until they return to the ER with anxiety issues or other physical symptoms that it becomes apparent." When either scenario occurs, Dr. Foster makes a referral to ChildSavers.

When the calls come in, often it is the Mental Health Program Manager, John Richardson-Lauve, who answers. According to Richardson-Lauve, "When a child experiences trauma, it is a violation of safety, security, trust, and his or her sense of self. Trauma-focused therapy works to help the child re-establish these essential elements of childhood. The referrals from Dr. Foster and her team are essential for getting children the services they need to help heal."

Success for a child and family experiencing violence and poverty requires partnerships between "grassroots" organizations, like ChildSavers, and CHoR's pediatric emergency room and Child Projection Team. It also requires dedicated individuals, like Dr. Foster, who tend not just to the immediate needs of a patient, but help in a deeper, more profound way. This drive to do more is ultimately, what leads to healing beyond the physical, and gets to the root of a problem.

Dr. Foster has been the Director of Pediatric Emergency and the Child Projection team since 1997. To learn more about this service you can visit [chrichmond.org/Services/Child-Protection-Team](http://chrichmond.org/Services/Child-Protection-Team).



Dr. Robin Foster

*"I love that I can  
call and get support  
for these families."*



To read more of our interview  
with Dr. Foster, go to  
[childsavers.org/news](http://childsavers.org/news).

# Story of Hope

It is dark, and the small closet she is kept in is cramped. Her nose itches and eyes burn from a strong smell nearby. Her breathing has become labored and she is so hungry. Sometimes the door opens and she gets food. Sometimes the door opens and she only has a moment to crouch and cover her face before she feels the belt. This is Betsy's\* life; she is only four years old. This is all she knew until she was admitted to the VCU Medical Center's Pediatric ER for breathing problems.

When the doctors examine her, they find evidence of long-term abuse; they can see the belt marks on her skin. Betsy is so thin; it is obvious that she is malnourished. Her respiratory problems are related to the chemicals kept in the closet where she was held, it was the awful smell that burned her eyes.

Together, the police and doctors collect evidence that leads to the arrest of Betsy's parents. Betsy is placed in a foster home and her life changes forever.

Betsy's new family helps her to heal. Her skin mends, she begins to eat well, and her breathing improves. Though on the outside her body has recovered, there are still wounds on the inside. Betsy and her new family come to ChildSavers for therapy. Betsy's new family and her therapist are helping her know that love doesn't have to hurt and that home can be a safe place.

Betsy learns to draw when she is angry or scared, and how to ask for help. In therapy, Betsy's foster parents are learning how to support Betsy during her rage and sadness. Together they are forming a foundation built on love, support, and resiliency.



In a recent therapy session, Betsy drew a picture of herself as a superhero, breaking chains and flying into the arms of her foster parents and away from a punishing dragon. For the first time in her life, Betsy knows what it is to be safe and loved.

*\*Details have been changed to protect privacy.*

**Give children like Betsy the gifts of hope and healing.**



**Your gifts support children and families every day!**

★ Yes, I want to make a difference in my community by giving children the confidence and skills they need.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

My gift is in honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please acknowledge at: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable to ChildSavers

Please charge \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my credit card:

Mastercard  Visa  American Express  Discover

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Sec. Code/CVN: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I have included ChildSavers in my estate plans.



# USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program Week

Devon\* is hungry. He just arrived at child care and can't wait for Ms. Pam, his child care teacher, to serve breakfast. Today it is milk, peaches, and multi-grain cereal.

Devon is one of the more than 390,000 children in Virginia that spend up to 80% of their day in care outside the home and it is important for them to get healthy meals while in care.

March 13-19 is USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program week. The program was established to combat hunger and bring healthy foods to the table for adults in day care and children in child care, and in afterschool and summer feeding programs. ChildSavers is part of a nationwide network of sponsor agencies that administers the federal USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.

It is important that child care providers participate in the USDA Food Program because for many children, like Devon, it is the only healthy food they receive. Studies showed children who participated in the program were 62% less likely to be in fair or poor health and 64% less likely to have been hospitalized verses children who rely on food from home. Studies also show that food provided by participating child care providers is healthier and provided more nutrients than non-participating providers.

Participating in the USDA Food Program can also positively impact children for life. Studies have shown that the earlier healthy eating starts the more likely the child will continue to eat well into their adult life.

The USDA Food Program also plays an important role in improving the quality of child care programs and in making them more affordable. Studies reported that 87% of the providers providing quality care participated in the USDA Food Program. In addition, since the program supplements child care provider's



income, it also helps to make child care affordable while improving quality.

The USDA Food Program improves children's nutrition and health, increases the likelihood that children will continue to eat healthy as they become adults, and improves the quality and affordability of care.

Join ChildSavers in celebrating USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program week by eating healthy in March by using more fresh fruits and vegetables, making healthy eating fun, and increasing the use of whole grain products.

To learn more about this program visit [cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org) or go to our website [childsavers.org](http://childsavers.org).

*\*Details have been changed to protect privacy.*

## Mark Your Calendars

**May 19 • Supper at Sunset** Mark your calendars for this exclusive event on ChildSavers' back lawn. Savor food prepared by chefs from Dutch & Co. and Metzger's as you enjoy live music and sweeping views of Richmond's skyline. Proceeds support ChildSavers. Tickets limited and more information will be posted at [childsavers.org/events](http://childsavers.org/events).

**October 20 & 21 • 8th Annual Artists Support ChildSavers**

Artists Support ChildSavers Show is a special reception, silent auction, and sale of artwork benefitting ChildSavers.

Mingle with the artists on Oct. 20th during the Opening Reception. This is a ticketed event and includes hors d'oeuvres and free libations. Individual Tickets are \$40 in advance and \$50 at the door; Junior Patron Tickets are \$100. To buy tickets go to [childsavers.org/events](http://childsavers.org/events). The Show continues Oct. 21st.



### Child Care Trainings

**March 17 • What's Cookin' in the Kitchen**

Participants will create a cookbook utilizing the USDA "My Plate" program. Each participant will be asked to bring one child friendly and healthy recipe to share with the group.

**March 22**

**Investigating the World thru Sensory Art**

Learn to encompass as many of the senses as possible to foster moments of understanding that promote neural growth in children's brains. Whether children are a visual, auditory, or tactile learner, the art center allows them to directly connect with learning.

**To view the full list of trainings and to register for classes, please visit [childsavers.org](http://childsavers.org).**

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**Learn more at**  
**[www.childsavers.org](http://www.childsavers.org)**

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# Why is Quality Early Child Care Important?

In the first three years of life, a child will soak up more information than she ever will again. This is a crucial age and the care that a child receives can have lasting effects well into adulthood. According to an article by the American Academy of Pediatrics on the effects of quality early child care, children's brains are powerfully influenced and affected by their experiences and surroundings. The Academy states that these experiences affect the functional and structural brain development of a child and influence a child's development and learning. Both positive and negative experiences of the child have lasting impact on the child, family, and even society.

The Academy also states that high quality early care for lower-income children results in greater school success, higher rates of graduation from high school, lower rates of juvenile crime, a decrease in special education services, and even lower adolescent pregnancy rates. Compared to lower-quality care, The Academy found that children who attended higher-quality child care

programs showed better language, math, cognition, social, interpersonal relationships, and behavioral self-regulation skills. Further, the study finds that poor quality child care can harm school performance, and social and language development.

The results are clear, when a child receives quality pre-k education their development is enriched and furthered than if they do not. According to Child Care Aware, the Nation's leading expert on child care, "Children who receive care in quality, responsive, and nurturing early learning environments have opportunities to establish healthy habits and get a jump start on school readiness." Recent national reports on school readiness stated that more than 85% of children who began school without the skills needed to succeed are still behind in fourth grade. Investing in quality early child care is essential for not just ensuring the success and health of a child, but of the adult they will become.

To learn more about how ChildSavers' increases quality care, visit [childsavers.org](http://childsavers.org).

ChildSavers guides our community's children through life's critical moments with trauma-informed mental health and child development services.

ChildSavers – Memorial Child Guidance Clinic is a 501(C)3 non profit organization and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or gender.