

# THE Porch Light

CHILDREN'S INN  
NEWSLETTER FALL 2017  
Volume 18 ■ Issue 2

## FEATURED INSIDE:

■ Happy 40th!	1-3
■ From The Director	4
■ Award Recognitions	4
■ Guardians of the Children	5
■ Vern Eide Golf Classic	6
■ Children's Inn Needs List	6
■ Thune Staff Visits Bright Start	7
■ Funski: Save the Date!	7
■ Wrap It Up!	8

## Children's Inn

A program of  
CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

409 N. Western Avenue  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104-5607  
Phone: 605.338.0116  
[chssd.org/childrensinn](http://chssd.org/childrensinn)



## Happy 40th Anniversary, Children's Inn!

### The year was 1977.

We wore bell bottom pants. A gallon of gas cost 79 cents. The first *Star Wars* film premiered, and Atari was first released in North America. *Saturday Night Fever* ushered in the disco dance era. President Jimmy Carter was in the White House. Elvis Presley died at age 42.

And Children's Inn opened its doors in Sioux Falls to victims of child abuse. Children such as Danni and Dayton...

*Three-year-old Danni was small for her age. Her face was framed with blonde wisps of fly-away hair. When she came to Children's Inn, little was known about where Danni came from. But her parents were using and dealing drugs, which resulted in their arrest.*

*Law enforcement found Danni and her baby brother, Dayton, in their filthy home with no food, no heat, and no one*

*caring for them. There was no family to take Danni and Dayton, so they were brought to Children's Inn.*

This is just one story out of thousands that could be told by any staff member at Children's Inn over the past 40 years.

The number of  
**people sheltered**  
by  
Children's Inn  
over its  
40-year history  
**would fill the**  
**Denny Sanford**  
**Premier Center**  
in Sioux Falls  
**almost 3 times!**

Originally conceived as a shelter for children, it was less than a month before the mission expanded to include women. More often than not, women were bringing their children to our doors for safety—but they themselves had no safe place to go.

In hindsight, it seems so obvious that a place like Children's Inn would be created. But the reality

is Children's Inn began at a time when the general public didn't speak about what happened behind closed doors. For the most part, people minded their own business. Consequently, options available to victims of domestic violence were virtually non-existent at that time.

*continued on page 2 ►*



## Happy 40th... *continued from page 1*

The very idea of opening such a place was given life thanks to the foresight, united vision, and thoughtful planning by the Siouxland Child Protection Council, the Medical Auxiliary, and other community leaders in Sioux Falls. As one of the first 10 domestic violence shelters in the entire United States, Children's Inn opened in the fall of 1977.



**1977: Two-bedroom bungalow**

No one could have believed at that time what Children's Inn would grow to be—a haven of safety and unconditional support for victims of domestic violence, and a refuge for children caught in the cross-hairs of those situations.

There would be more than 32,000 intakes into our safe shelter over the next 40 years.

The first Children's Inn location was a two-bedroom unfurnished bungalow donated by McKennan Hospital. It had a stove, refrigerator, and a wringer washer. There were five staff and 20 volunteers.

The Director's desk was in the basement by the furnace, and the phone in the kitchen had a long cord that would stretch into the basement to allow privacy for crisis calls. Counseling sessions were held in the bathroom.



**1979: Four-bedroom on Grange Avenue**

Caring community friends gradually furnished and supplied the house. After one year, the number of clients needing help quickly outgrew capacity.

Children's Inn moved to a house on Grange Avenue in 1979. It had four bedrooms, with extra space for groups to meet. Support groups for women and children were added, and services also expanded to include a crisis phone line, drop-in counseling, parenting sessions, community referrals, and public education. Three more staff members were hired, and faithful volunteers continued their service.



Once again, consistent over-crowding precipitated a move and a capital campaign was launched in 1989 to build a new facility. Land for the new location was donated by Louis and Dorothy Hurwitz. In January of 1991, Children's Inn moved to its current location on Western Avenue. This third home had 14 bedrooms, and more office, therapy, and play space.

An addition to Children's Inn was completed in 2005. This expansion increased the number of bedrooms to 24. It also provided extra bathrooms, a client laundry room, and additional office, therapy, living room and storage space.



**Children's Inn Campus Today**



## Children's Inn Operations Directors: 1977-2017



**Connie Kolbreck**  
**1977-1984**



**Marlene Weires**  
**1985-1997**



**Krista Heeren-Graber**  
**1997-1999**



**Mary Weber**  
**1999-2003**



**Erin Baker-Daggett**  
**2003-2008**



**Amy Carter**  
**2008-Present**

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Children's Inn. Gone are the days of a simple lock on the front door of the Inn. There are now state-of-the-art security systems.

Gone are the days that the daily count of individuals in shelter could be counted on one hand. Today that number averages between 40-50 on any given day, but has had as many as 79.

Gone are the days that well-intentioned volunteers could provide the lion's share of client care. Social workers, therapists, counselors, and other trained professionals are available to deal with childhood trauma, handle emotional distress, provide counseling, lead support groups, promote public education, and coordinate community networking and rural outreach.

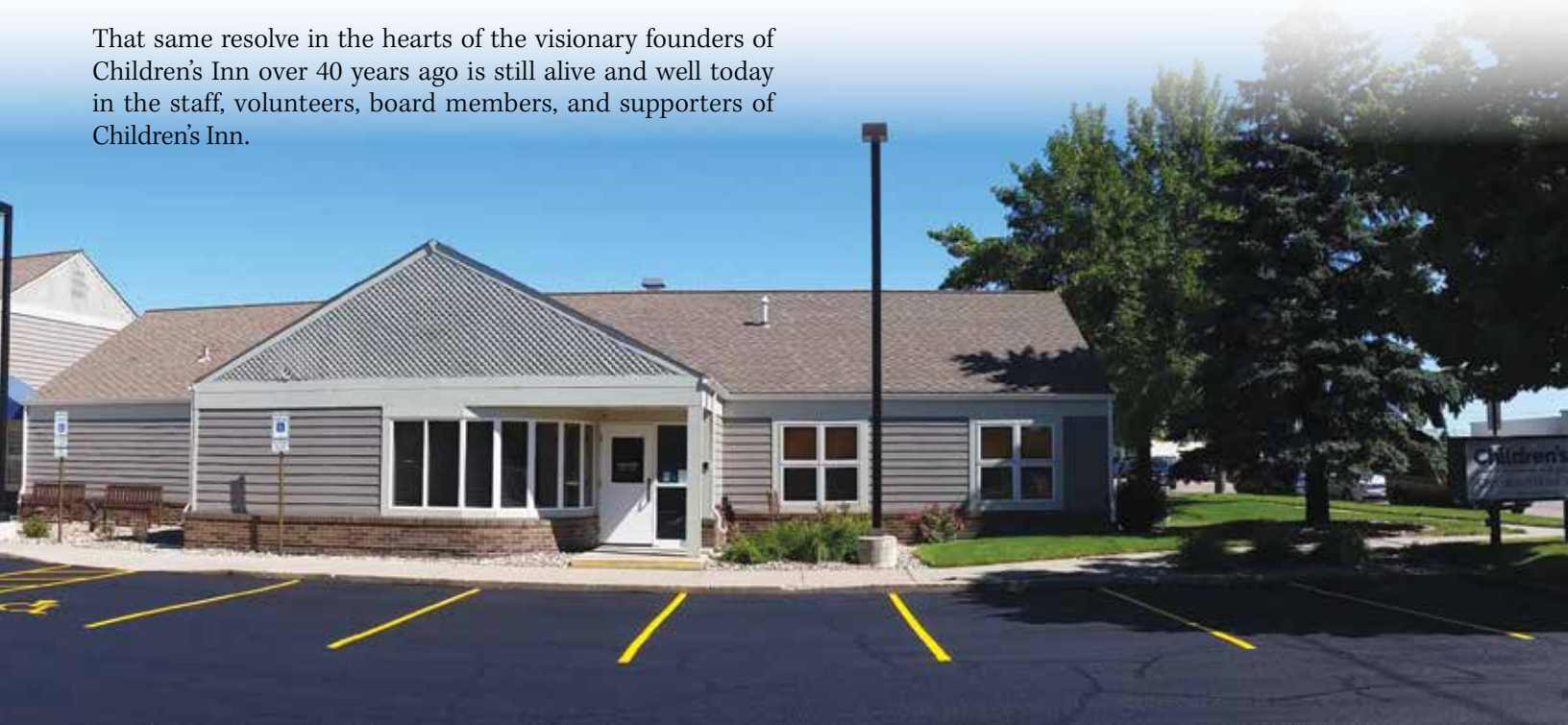
Gone is the notion that domestic violence and child abuse shouldn't be talked about, or that it happens in other places, but not here. "Look the other way" attitudes have changed as society has come to view abuse as unacceptable under any circumstances.

Many things have changed, but thankfully, some things are very much the same. ***Like knowing that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence and have a safe place to call home.***

That same resolve in the hearts of the visionary founders of Children's Inn over 40 years ago is still alive and well today in the staff, volunteers, board members, and supporters of Children's Inn.



***Four employees have been bringing love, hope, and safety to the women and children of Children's Inn for over 20 years (back row): Staci Kropuenske, 22 years of service, Janice Lee, 32 years of service, (front row): Candy Koehn-Lauck, 36 years of service, and Donna Traut, 25 years of service.***





## From the Director

**Amy Carter**  
Operations Director

Nine years ago I was given the opportunity to become the Operations Director for Children's Inn. To know that I am part of the Children's Inn legacy is incredibly humbling and something I will always treasure.

I'm blessed to work alongside amazingly gifted women and men who have dedicated their professional careers to this work. Of the 59 employees who currently call Children's Inn their "work home," 12 have been here 10 years or more, and two have been here over 30 years! To me, that speaks volumes about how meaningful and rewarding this work truly is.

But this work isn't easy. It's often exhausting—both emotionally and physically. It's fast-paced, and it's unknown what each day will bring. At a time when people are at their most vulnerable, experiencing the most difficult and often the most dangerous situations of their lives, they trust Children's Inn.

People walk through our doors as victims. But with our support, the help of community resources, and time to heal, they can walk out as survivors.

No one could have guessed that there would be more than 32,000 intakes into our safe shelter over 40 years. In addition, tens of thousands more individuals have been impacted through crisis intervention, counseling, parenting classes, and support groups.

As a friend of Children's Inn, we thank you for all you've done to make this possible. We value the partnerships, donations, encouragement, and compassion you show us and those we serve. Work like this cannot continue without a team of players, and we are so grateful you are on our team!

I'm incredibly proud as I look back at all Children's Inn has accomplished these past four decades, and I'm very excited for what the future holds. There's a lot yet we can do in the areas of abuse prevention, service response, and managing our growth.

Since our inception in 1977, we have kept our focus on client-centered care and empathy for those who are victims of domestic violence and child abuse. If we stay true to that course, I predict Children's Inn will be celebrating many more landmark anniversaries!

## Dedicated to excellence: Two receive awards



**Children's Home Society CEO Bill Colson (left) and CHS board member Carolynn Stavenger (right) presented the Employee of the Year award to Heather Weeg.**

### EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

**Heather Weeg** received the "Employee of the Year" award for Children's Inn and Bright Start employees at Children's Home Society's annual Employee Appreciation Event.

Heather has been with Children's Inn for the past 10 years, and currently serves as the Rural Outreach Coordinator. She spends time on the road serving victims of abuse in the rural areas.

Heather works hard to connect these individuals to the resources in their home communities, advocate on their behalf, and support them in their journey.

Congratulations, Heather!

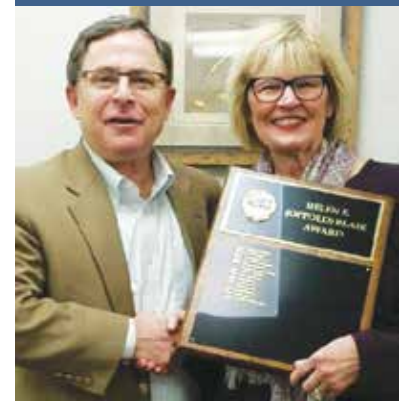
**Carolynn Stavenger** was the recipient of The Helen E. Oppold Blair Memorial Award, presented by the Sioux Empire United Way earlier this year at their annual recognition event. This award honors an individual whose work in child abuse prevention has been exemplary. Nominees come from the areas of human services, law enforcement, education, or faith-based services.

In addition to her service as a board member for Children's Home Society (which includes Children's Inn), Carolynn has been a receptionist one day each week at Children's Inn for the past 14 years. She is the first to welcome those who reach out for help in their time of crisis.

Carolynn is also a volunteer for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate). Carolynn assists with complex child abuse cases and works with parents, child protection workers, the courts, and attorneys.

Carolynn has devoted her life to working on behalf of those impacted by child abuse and domestic violence. Congratulations, Carolynn!

### HELEN E. OPPOLD BLAIR MEMORIAL AWARD



**Jay Powell of United Way presented Carolynn Stavenger with the Helen E. Oppold Blair Memorial Award.**





## Guardians of the Children

A legacy program established to recognize and honor those people whose vision, philanthropy, and love of children has been demonstrated by a planned gift to Children's Home Foundation. Funds from the Foundation support the programs and services at CHS, including Children's Inn.

"The missions of both Children's Inn and Children's Home Society have always made a whole lot of sense to both of us. Their services are needed, and we've always felt we wanted to support them to make sure they continue," says Mike Pekas.

In addition to financial support, Karen rolled up her sleeves back in the mid-1970s. She recalls a time when the Medical Auxiliary talked about opening a safe place where abused and neglected children could go. Auxiliary member Bertie Van Demark sought input from Karen and asked her to enlist a few more people who might also embrace this mission.

Karen called Jean Orr and Kathy Kemp. They all met with the Auxiliary and listened to their plans. Thanks to a donation from McKennan Hospital of a two-bedroom bungalow on a nearby property, Children's Inn was born and opened its doors in 1977. Within a few weeks, they realized they needed to provide shelter for abused women as well.

The Auxiliary also took on a project to offer classes to help moms and dads learn parenting skills. Every Friday, for 11 years, Karen and Jean cared for and played with children while their parents met with counselors to attend those classes.

Karen says, "We served a lot of milk and cookies over those 11 years!"

When Bertie Van Demark retired as a board member, Karen was asked to join the board. Karen was still serving as a board member during the transition years when Children's Inn was merged as a program of Children's Home Society (CHS) in 1998.



**Mike and Karen Pekas**

"The merger truly was a move that solidified the continuance of the Children's Inn mission," says Karen.

Mike adds, "One of the great strengths of South Dakotans is the ability to see the obvious and then do what needs to be done. A good example of this was the merger of Children's Inn and Children's Home."

Mike and Karen have provided a legacy gift to Children's Home Foundation (CHF) through a beneficiary designation from their 401K.

"This type of gift is a very simple process; as simple as completing a few forms. Typically there is no cost, and does not need to involve an attorney," says CHF Development Director Rick Weber.

Mike and Karen understand that the Foundation supports all CHS programs, so they know their gift will also support Children's Inn—a mission that has been near and dear to their hearts for 40 years.

*Thank you, Karen & Mike!*

### CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

Gina Hopkins, President  
Meg Warder, Vice President  
DeMaris Nesheim, Secretary  
Tim Rustand, Treasurer  
Bill Colson, Executive Director  
Sally Anderson (Honorary Member)  
Helen Boer  
Holly Brunick  
Darla Crown  
Kris Evans-McKittrick  
Mick Gibbs  
Bob Hoover  
Tim Hamel  
Ron Jeffries  
Laura Johnson  
Kathy LaPlante  
Liz Lloyd  
John McGrath  
Dave Nelson  
Chad Ratigan  
John Rozell  
Maggie Russo  
Karen Schreier  
Greg Schweiss  
Carolynn Stavenger  
Bobby Sundby  
Marilyn Van Demark  
Steve Watkins

### CHILDREN'S HOME FOUNDATION

Scott Barbour, President  
Jeff Skinner, Vice President  
Julie Anderson Friesen, Secretary  
John Brewer, Treasurer  
Bob Baker  
Greg Blomberg  
Gary Brown  
Mike Buckingham  
Kim Burma  
Jeff Denison  
Jennifer Kirby  
Lori Lewison  
Bill Lindquist  
Dave Schmidt  
Joe Sztapka

### DIRECTOR EMERITUS

To achieve this status, a board member must meet all three of the following criteria:

- Served six or more years as a CHS Board Member
- Served six or more years as a CHF Board Member
- Served as President of either board.

Those achieving Emeritus status include:

Lynne Byrne	Rob Mudge
Jeb Clarkson	T.J. Reardon
Steve Egger	George Roberts
Phil Helland	John Rozell*
Blake Hoffman	Dave Schmidt*
Bob Hoover*	Peg Seljeskog
Gary Jensen	Carolynn Stavenger*
Deanna Lien	Dennis Stene
Helen Madsen	Pam Taylor Jansa
Jack Marshman	Gene Uher
Royal (Mac) McCracken	Marilyn Van Demark*
Tim Meyer	Doug Wells
Linda Mickelson	
Graham	

\*Current board member

## Needs List

### Can you help?

A complete list of needs and gift ideas can be found at  
[www.chssd.org/childrensinn](http://www.chssd.org/childrensinn)  
 or by calling Staci Kropuenske.  
**605.338.0116**

### GROCERY

Canned fruit  
 Canned vegetables  
 Cereal (not sugared)  
 Crackers (saltine, graham, snack)  
 Pudding cups  
 Syrup  
 Sugar  
 Coffee  
 Non-dairy creamer  
 Bottled water  
 Iced tea mix  
 Frozen meats

### FOR LITTLE ONES

Pedialyte powder packs  
 Children's ibuprofen  
 Good Nights or Pull-ups  
 Baby lotion  
 Infant sleep sacks  
 Infant swaddle sacks  
 Children's toothpaste

### PERSONAL CARE

Unscented lotion  
 Body wash  
 Pump hand soap  
 Deodorant (no roll-on)  
 Shampoo & conditioner (regular size)  
 Hair spray  
 African American hair products

### CLOTHING & BEDDING

Underwear (all sizes)  
 Pajamas (all sizes, no fleece or flannel, please)  
 Twin size bed blankets  
 Twin size sheet sets

### THAT OTHER STUFF!

Batteries (all sizes)  
 Laundry detergent (HE only)  
 Fabric softener  
 Dryer sheets  
 Cell phone charging cords  
 (universal/iphone/android)

### GIFTS

Grocery store gift cards  
 Retail store gift cards  
 Gas gift cards  
 Gift wrap for kids  
 Toys and gifts for kids ages 0-17  
 (used for Christmas and birthdays all year!)

## Children's Inn

A program of  
 CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

Donations accepted between  
 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Monday,  
 Wednesday, or Friday.

## Vern Eide Acura Golf Classic Raises \$68,870 to Benefit Children's Inn

The 4th Annual VERN EIDE ACURA GOLF CLASSIC took place July 10 at Willow Run Golf Course on a picture-perfect summer day. There were 29 foursomes on the course playing for hole prizes, and event champion bragging rights!

There was a lot of excitement at Hole #16 as each golfer tried to sink a hole-in-one for a new Acura. No one drove the Acura home this year, but it's always fun to try!

*A big thanks to all our sponsors, golfers, and friends of Children's Inn.*

### THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!



#### EAGLE SPONSORS



#### MEDIA SPONSORS



#### BIRDIE SPONSORS

Harold & Helen  
 Boer



#### EVENT HOSTS:



#### HOLE SPONSORS:

Accountable to You, Inc  
 Brown & Saenger  
 Dakota Electric  
 Interstate Office Products  
 Jerry Jencks  
 Koch Hazard Architects  
 Modern Woodman of America  
 NAPA Auto Parts  
 Tom & Jean Nicholson  
 Nordstrom's Automotive, Inc  
 Catherine Piersol  
 ShopKo Foundation  
 Sioux Falls Federal Credit Union  
 Sioux Falls Networks  
 Wayne & Mary's Nutrition Center  
 Winsupply, Inc.

## IRA Gift Provision has been made permanent

The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015 makes permanent the IRA Charitable Rollover provision that has come and gone several times over the past 10 years.

A direct distribution from an IRA can be a great way to provide a charitable gift.

### BENEFITS TO THE DONOR

- Allows the donor to avoid receiving an IRA distribution as taxable income.
- May lower the donor's income tax rate.
- The gift counts toward the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

### RULES

- The donor must be age 70½ or older.
- Gifts are allowed up to \$100,000.
- The gift must be a direct distribution from the IRA to the charitable organization.
- The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction.
- The gift may not be used to fund a gift annuity, charitable remainder trust, donor advised fund or private foundation.
- You may not receive any goods or services in return for the gift.

For more information, check with your tax consultant, or contact  
 Children's Home Foundation Development Director Rick Weber at:

**605.965.3127**  
[rick.weber@chssd.org](mailto:rick.weber@chssd.org)

## A CONGRESSIONAL VISIT:

# Thune staff tours Bright Start program

The Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) is a national program that is getting a lot of attention right now from Congress. The Bright Start program in Sioux Falls was selected recently as the site in South Dakota to host representatives from Senator John Thune's office to learn how efficient and effective the program has been.

The Bright Start home nursing program impacts families every day. Bright Start visiting nurses spend time with young, at-risk, first-time mothers to provide the kind of information, support, and guidance that any new mom should have.

In August, two of Senator Thune's staff spent time touring and talking with Children's Home Society (CHS) leadership, Bright Start nurses and therapy staff, and a family that is served by the Bright Start program.

Bright Start is part of the NFP model, and the funding that supports NFP programs is currently up for reauthorization.

This was a welcomed opportunity to educate Senator Thune's staff about what the program does, the research behind it, and how it works. They also heard first-hand accounts from Bright Start staff that are "in the trenches" doing life-changing work with families.

Kristine, a Bright Start client, shared how critical the program has been to her and her son. She expressed her



**Bright Start and CHS staff, along with a Bright Start client, met with representatives from Senator John Thune's office on August 16.**

gratitude for her nurse and therapist and all they have done to help her be the best parent she can be, despite the many challenges she faces.

Bright Start and CHS staff felt confident that Senator Thune's staff left with a greater sense of the difference the NFP program has made, and continues to make in the lives of first-time moms—moms willing to learn how to give their child the best possible start in life.

**Save the Date!**

**MediaOne<sup>®</sup> FUN 20 SKI 18**

29th Annual

**Media One Funski**

**January 19–20, 2018**

**Great Bear Ski Valley, Sioux Falls**

*Wax your skis and snowboards, inflate your fat bike tires and snow tubes, sharpen your snow sculpting tools, lace up your sloshers, and get ready to play in the snow!*

**www.funski.org**

## ABOUT US

Founded in 1977 as a domestic violence shelter, Children's Inn merged in 1998 and became a program of Children's Home Society of South Dakota.

Children's Inn provides 24-hour, free services for women, children, and men who are victims of domestic violence, stalking, elder abuse, sexual assault, and child abuse, or neglect.

Service area includes the South Dakota counties of Minnehaha, Lincoln, McCook, Turner, and Union. Children's Inn services are provided regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and include:

- Crisis Shelter for Women & Children
- Crisis Hotline
- Counseling Services
- Parenting Education
- Women's Support Groups
- Children's Groups
- Safety Planning
- Rural Advocacy
- Community Referrals
- Community Education
- Bright Start—Nurse Home Visitation

**THE PORCH LIGHT** is a twice-yearly publication of Children's Inn and Children's Home Foundation.

### MARKETING:

Janet Andersen, art director  
Staci Kropuenske, editor  
Debra Moritz, senior writer  
Sarah Javers, website coordinator

### AMY CARTER

Children's Inn Operations Director  
Bright Start Program Coordinator

### STACI KROPUENSKE

Development Coordinator

### MELISSA EDMAN

Development Assistant

### JANICE LEE

Financial Administrator

### KOBI RINGLING

Shelter Program Supervisor

### MELISSA JENKINS

HR Representative  
Volunteer Coordinator

### MARK SIGETTE

Facilities Coordinator

### BECCA ANDERSON

Mental Health Therapist

### JODY BOCKORNY

Mental Health Crisis Therapist

### HEATHER WEEG

Outreach Coordinator

### SANDY JONES

Parenting Coordinator

### DONNA SPRINGMAN

Shelter Receptionist

### GWEN PETERSON

Administrative Receptionist

### KATHY SCHNEIDER

Bright Start Nurse Supervisor

### CHILDREN'S INN

409 N. Western Ave.  
Sioux Falls, SD, 57104  
Phone: 605.338.0116

**NOTE:** To protect the privacy of the children and families we serve, it is our practice (unless otherwise noted) to use names and photos that represent our stories, and ensure confidentiality.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

THE PORCH LIGHT

8

## It's a WRAP...

Before you get **wrapped up** in holiday tasks, **wrap** your head around this—Children's Inn volunteers would be happy to do your Christmas **wrapping** for a donation to Children's Inn! And don't keep that fact under **wraps**. Tell all your friends, especially those you have **wrapped** around your little finger!



### CHILDREN'S INN GIFT WRAP BOOTH:

Macy's Court in the  
Empire Mall, Sioux Falls  
Friday, December 1, through  
Sunday, December 24  
(Booth open during mall hours)

Volunteers will wrap your gifts  
for a donation to Children's Inn.

**100% of all proceeds  
benefit Children's Inn!**



CHILDREN'S INN GIFT WRAP BOOTH IS SUPPORTED BY THESE PARTNERS:



**Great Western Bank®**  
Making Life Great®  
Member FDIC

**THE EMPIRE MALL**  
A SIMON MALL

