

RCYS- SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1976

GIFTED BICYCLE HELPS TEEN RE-START HIS LIFE

Transportation is essential to success in the workforce. A young man navigating the Rogers County court system aspired to “start his life”, with a personal goal of securing employment. Limited resources left him lacking transportation; another set-back in life.



Three local leaders made all the difference, by meeting the teen’s need. Rogers County District Judge Steve Pazzo, Oklahoma Juvenile Affairs(OJA) case worker, Dave Zelnich, and RCYS Director Herb McSpadden joined forces to purchase the teens’ bike.

2024 IMPACT

Issue 11 Christmas 2024

“RCYS HAS BEEN LIFE-CHANGING FOR OUR FAMILY”

“Sarah’s” daughter, “Violet”, was struggling at home and in school. Outbursts of anger and physical violence were “Violet’s” way of communicating before she began receiving services at RCYS.

Through working with RCYS therapist, LeaAnn Hawkins, “Violet” learned to develop healthy coping skills and language for her emotions. Her mom shared, “When my husband and I started implementing the tools LeaAnn taught us, the angry outbursts stopped.



“VIOLET” LEARNED TO EMOTIONALLY REGULATE AND HOLD HERSELF ACCOUNTABLE.

We are now able to work through big feelings without her getting upset. I am so grateful that we were able to get “Violet” help here (at RCYS)!”

All RCYS services are provided free of charge. **THANK YOU for supporting the work we are doing for youth and families, like “Violet’s”.**

STUDENTS OVERCOME THROUGH ART

A year ago, RCYS implemented a creative arts program through our prevention services. Susie Quiroz leads the courses. These courses provide children and teens the opportunity to develop skills to manage stress and learn how to handle difficult emotions.



Classes include: painting, songwriting, learning ukulele, and journaling.

Your support helps provide art supplies and gift ukuleles to those who complete the course.



NEW RCYS BUILDING IN THE WORKS



On the morning of September 12th, we officially broke ground on the land belonging to the future building of RCYS.

The needs for our services has grown, but our space has not. We have three staff members for every one office. Our clients need a place that feels familiar and safe. We need more room. Soon we will be building a space that can better accommodate the needs we seek to meet.

Generational change occurs because of the work RCYS is doing. Developing strong kids leads to healthier families. Healthy families improve the quality of life for all our community.



RCYS DIRECTOR NAMED PRESIDENT OF OAYS



RCYS IS AMONG 36 OTHER OKLAHOMA AGENCIES SERVING YOUTH AND FAMILIES WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

We are all under the umbrella of the Oklahoma Association of Youth Agencies (OAYS).

RCYS is proud to share that our own Executive Director, Herb McSpadden, was honored by Oklahoma Association of Youth Services and elected as their new board president.

200 INDIVIDUALS PROVIDED WITH SERVICES EACH WEEK

According to a study conducted by The National Council For Mental Wellbeing, 42% of Americans do not receive mental health services due to financial limitations.

Thanks to your donations, RCYS is able to provide free counseling, regardless of socio-economic status to approximately 200 individuals each week. We couldn't do this without you!



IMPACTING LOCAL SCHOOLS

Since the start of the fall semester, over 100 kids per week in Oologah schools have been working through the **“Too Good For Violence”** program. RCYS team member, Roxanne Bilby, has been facilitating the curriculum and covering topics like goal setting, decision making, managing emotions, and effective communication. Students are being taught how stress manifests in the body and how to healthily cope when feeling overwhelmed.



TORNADO CLEANUP

On the 25th of May, a tornado ripped through the towns of Claremore and Pryor, showing little mercy to anything in its path.



RCYS team members were grateful to provide assistance in the storm cleanup, as well as help serve hot meals, alongside the Round Up Club and Cherokee Nation. We also offered free 24-hour crisis counseling to anyone whose mental health was impacted by the storm.



DIVERSION PROGRAM IMPACTING YOUTH AND THE COMMUNITY

RCYS' Diversionary Program is a coordinated effort spearheaded by the Rogers County Sheriff's Office with a goal to minimize the number of youth sent to the juvenile justice system; providing resources that help the individual and their family thrive.

“THIS CURRICULUM IS 90% EFFECTIVE. MOST KIDS DON'T RETURN TO THIS (NEGATIVE) PATH.”

-RCYS Executive Director, Herb McSpadden



The program involves a number of community members and is designed to hold youth accountable for the offenses they commit, while providing appropriate resources and services to the individual and their family. The shared goal is that the youth will go on to have a positive contribution in life and within our community.



PREVENTION SERVICES DIRECTOR NAMED “NON-PROFIT LEADING LADY OF 2024”!

The Claremore Chamber of Commerce honored RCYS’ very own, Ellen Thomas. Naming her this year’s Non-Profit Leading Lady.



“My passion is to guide young people as they discover their potential and build resilience and confidence. I feel incredibly fortunate to work with such dedicated individuals and to serve a truly inspiring community.”

RCYS TEAMS NOW SERVING SEVEN LOCAL SCHOOLS

We serve seven Rogers County Schools with evidenced-based curricula that meets the specific need of each school and group of students.

One such course, **Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Skills**, teaches coping strategies designed to help individuals develop



communication, social, and emotional intelligence tools. The DBT Skills practice focuses on changing unhelpful behaviors and regulating emotions. The feedback from both students and teachers regarding the program has been nothing short of positive. One student recently shared,

“I KNOW HOW TO CONTROL MY EMOTIONS NOW.”

This skill, among many other taught in DBT Skills, can have a positive impact on personal and family relationship, and can influence how they respond in future workplaces.



LOW-COST SUMMER ARTS CAMP FOR KIDS

In July, we partnered with sister organization, Volunteers For Youth, in their 4-day arts camp. RCYS Prevention Coach, Susie Quiroz, taught daily therapeutic art classes. Activities aimed to teach children positive affirmations, self-control, gratitude, and mindfulness.



The young attendees were given the opportunity to display their artwork for their families, and perform an original song for them. Susie shared of her experience, **“CHILDREN ARE SO IMAGINATIVE AND BRILLIANT. IT IS SUCH A JOY TO EMPOWER THEM TO USE THEIR VOICE THROUGH ART.”**



Pictured left to right: Herb McSpadden, Kevin Easley, Jr. and Michael Leipzig.

CHEROKEE NATION SUPPORT

Kevin Easley Jr. is an attorney and represents Claremore on the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council. Easley, representing Cherokee Nation, recently presented RCYS \$50,000 to help fund our new building.

"As an attorney, I've worked in the world of custody and criminal cases for a decade now here in Rogers County. I see the impact that trauma has on kids," Easley Jr. said.

"I see the vicious cycle that starts, when they're young, and by the time they're adults, they're in the Department of Corrections." Easley went on to share that he is supporting RCYS, because the work we do helps stop the cycle.



LUNCH & LEARNS

Did you know: RCYS hosts monthly Lunch and Learn events to share about the work we are doing to impact youth and families? We recently hosted the Tuesday Study Club for a Lunch and Learn.



Interested in attending or scheduling for your team or group? Watch for future dates on our website events tab or social media channels. You may also email kim@rcys.org.

ME & MY GUY DANCE

In February of 2024, we hosted the 16th annual event.



WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Our prevention programs impact about **600 youth each week** and serve in seven local schools.

Services offer children and youth a wide array of support. These range from teaching emotional regulation and how to process anger with art, to substance abuse education and healthy communication skills.

RCYS prevention team members cover all of the bases when it comes to **teaching Rogers County students helpful ways to cope and thrive through difficult times.**



Pictured left to right: Susie Quiroz, Roxanne Bilby, Amanda Johnson, Shari Thurman, Melodie Blevins, Ellen Thomas, & Lynn Partney

Want to learn more or support?

Visit our website at www.rcys.org. Here, you can read more about our staff, services we provide, and giving opportunities. .

 [@rogerscountyyouthservices](https://www.instagram.com/rogerscountyyouthservices)  [rogerscountyyouthservices](https://www.facebook.com/rogerscountyyouthservices)  info@rcys.org



**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT 2024.
YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN ROGERS COUNTY YOUTH!**

Know someone who could benefit from our services?

Scan this QR code to be taken to the referral form on our website.



Our pre-intake coordinator, Jennifer Lowry, will reach out to you about scheduling.

WE ARE GRATEFUL

We want to thank those responsible for our matching gift of \$8,000 in this year's Double the Gift Campaign: Thank you to RCYS Board Members:

- **Debbie Butler**
- **Mary Statton (Parts by MST)**
- **Leslie Runyon**

Thank you to all who gave during the Double the Gift campaign.

Double the Gift Campaign totals will be shared, in future publications and in social media announcements.

Ways You Can Give

Donations can be dropped off or mailed to:

1820 N Sioux Ave,
Claremore, OK 74017



Donations can also be made online at: www.rcys.org or by scanning the QR code here:



RCYS is a private, not-for-profit 501c3. Our FEIN is 73-1024338.

