

Volunteer Case Aide Program

Bill Wilson Center's Volunteer Case Aide (VCA) program is designed to provide trained paraprofessionals to support children in foster care. By connecting youth to adults who will provide assistance, support, and serve as positive role models, we help youth understand that there are adults who are not abusive, and we give the children a chance to learn how to build positive relationships in their lives.

These security-cleared volunteers fulfill job responsibilities requested by the children's social workers. VCA volunteers perform a variety of tasks on behalf of children and parents including supervising visits with parents, mentoring and tutoring children, providing child care for foster parents so they can attend trainings, and providing some respite care for foster parents and biological parents. The Volunteer Case Aide Program recruits, trains, security clears, matches, and supervises volunteers.

Children served include those placed with foster families and children who remain with their parents while their parents take corrective steps to maintain custody. Ideally, children will remain with or reunite with their parents. In cases where abuse and neglect continue or are severe, this is not an option and permanent foster care or adoption placements are sought.

The VCA program helps parents who need support to maintain or regain custody of their children, as well as children in permanent placements. These children have been abused and neglected by their parents – people they should have been able to count on. Providing these kids with stability, caring people, and support can make the difference between a child who will succeed in life and one who will not.

Services provided by VCA volunteers include:

Supervised visits are staffed by VCA volunteers to help the child maintain contact with family members. This ongoing contact, as appropriate, helps reduce feelings of abandonment and supports family reunification. BWC typically provides over 400 supervised visits a year.

Supervised visits are crucial in supporting the child. When parents are working to regain custody, it's important to maintain the bond between parent and child. Even when reuniting the family is not possible, the bond between parent and child is so important. In spite of



neglect and abuse, children need to feel that their parents care about them. VCA volunteers are present in the room when parents and children meet.

Mentoring is provided for children to help them gain self esteem, learn to develop trusting relationships, experience a positive adult role model, have someone to confide in who can provide guidance, practice interpersonal skills, and diminish feelings of isolation. BWC typically provides 400 mentoring contacts a year.



Placed with a single foster mom, a teen boy needed a male role model. Assigned a Volunteer Case Aide, the boy met with this mentor regularly. Children in foster care benefit from interacting with supportive adults – most have had few adults they could trust in their lives.

Homework help (tutoring) is provided to children in order to help each child improve school achievement and experience a supportive adult assisting in education. BWC volunteers typically provide over 600 tutoring sessions a year.

When a child in foster care was struggling with math, he was matched with a Volunteer Case Aide who met with him weekly to review his lessons and help with homework. This one-on-one attention helped the child understand the concepts that he had eluded him. The added bonus was that the child and the volunteer formed a close connection which gave the child an additional adult in his life.



Child watch is provided to children while their parents attend therapy or classes; foster parents need to attend mandated training. BWC volunteers typically provide 300 child watch sessions a year.



In order to ensure that foster families have the skills they need to deal with foster children who may act out as a result of the neglect and abuse, they participate in on-going training. Parents who are working to maintain custody participate in therapy and parenting classes. Volunteer Case Aides supervise the children while the parents or foster parents are in sessions.

Adopt-a-Family ensures that children receive holiday gifts. Many children in the foster care system have not had happy memories of the holidays. Knowing someone cares enough to give them gifts, encourages self-esteem, creates positive relationships within families and decreases isolation. BWC provides holiday gifts for over 800 children each year.

The thank you note read, "Thank you for the new sweater. Red is my favorite color!" Another thanked the donor for the new game and Transformer. The holidays for children in foster care haven't been big festive occasions. VCA donors are matched with children who have submitted their wish lists. A young child may want a new teddy bear; and older teen may ask for a bicycle so he can ride to his new job.



Bill Wilson Center

The vision of Bill Wilson Center is to prevent poverty in the next generation.

We pursue this vision by building connections between the youth we serve and education, employment, housing, and emotional well-being. By providing the tools that young people need to prepare them for a better life, we can provide youth with a path to a self-sufficient, healthy and successful life.

Bill Wilson Center's mission is to support and strengthen the community by serving youth and families through counseling, housing, education, and advocacy.

The agency is focused on youth, and in particular youth who are homeless, in foster care (or have aged out), have exited the juvenile justice system, or live in dysfunctional families.

While the agency is focused on youth, creating a healthy, safe community requires that people in all ages receive the support they need. For this reason, Bill Wilson Center also offers services for adults and families.

Bill Wilson Center was incorporated in 1973 and is named after Bill Wilson who had served as the mayor of Santa Clara, and saw the need for affordable, professional counseling in the city. Since then, the agency has grown to include 18 programs providing a wide-range of services throughout Santa Clara County.



"We are privileged to see some wonderful, positive changes as a result of our services. Many of the youth who turn to us for help learn that they have the inner resources to find solutions to their problems."

- Sparky Harlan, Executive Director

Bill Wilson Center

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Our Guiding Principles provide the foundation for the way we deliver services:

Least Restrictive Environment: We help people solve problems at the family and the community level; public institutions are a last resort.

Diversity: We value our unique cultures and differences as individuals. Our staff, volunteers, and clients reflect our community

Strength-Based: We look for the positive in each person and build on those assets.

Youth Development: We help build leadership skills by involving youth in programs and planning for their future.

Advocacy: We work on improving systems that do not meet youth or families' needs.

Collaboration: We work with others to provide a continuum of services.

No Fail: We don't give up on people because they've made a mistake. We keep trying.

Bill Wilson Center

Financial Overview

Bill Wilson Center's FY2012 budget is \$11,354,794. Our funds are primarily government grants and fees, but the individual donor is crucial. Government grants allow us to have a base of funding, but generally matching funds from our donors are required – and often the grants will not cover a specific expense that is important to the success of the program, but can't be funded from the grant.

The Volunteer Case Aide program is an example. The County has contracted with Bill Wilson Center to provide the service, but only funds 37% of the cost. We are seeking support from our donors to fund the balance.

Bill Wilson Center posts its financial reports on our website so our donors can be assured that we're appropriately reporting and managing our funds.

Our audits and IRS 990 forms can be accessed at www.billwilsoncenter.org/about/reports.html.

The reports reflect our focus on funding services for our clients. In FY11, our administrative costs were 9.9% and our fundraising costs were 2.8%. With an industry standard of 25% maximum for these expenses, Bill Wilson Center is managing its money well and ensuring that we prioritize funding for direct services.

What's Happening With Volunteer Case Aide (VCA) Program

Bill Wilson Center's Volunteer Case Aide program was County-funded until February 2011 when the County needed to make budget cuts. The County eliminated funding for the program on short notice and the program was closed by Bill Wilson Center.

As of July 2011, the County will fund 37% (federal funds passed through the County) of the VCA program; Bill Wilson Center needs to generate the remaining 63%. The budget for VCA is \$128,000 which means that BWC needs to raise \$80,640 to continue these services.

