

ChildSavers

Every day, children in our area are witnesses to or victims of acts of violence – including murder, armed assaults, and domestic violence – and need professional assistance to help them cope with the resulting trauma. Every day, children in our area need professional therapy to help them resolve the psychological and emotional problems that adversely affect their academic performance, social development, and overall happiness. Every day, parents and child care providers in our area need high-quality training and support programs to help them give the young children in their care the best possible start in life.

ChildSavers-Memorial Child Guidance Clinic exists to help meet these needs. Founded in 1924 as the Children's Memorial Clinic, ChildSavers' mission is to provide comprehensive mental health and childhood development services that holistically embrace the needs of children and those who care for and educate them. We offer a broad range of services to clients throughout Central Virginia, and we never turn anyone away for inability to pay.

Our three primary program areas are:

- ◆ Trauma Response – Responding to children's needs in the immediate aftermath of violent events can help prevent, or decrease the severity of, future emotional and behavioral problems. Trauma Response is the program through which we provide immediate therapeutic response to children at the scenes of violent crimes and other traumatic events. Our trained therapists are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and usually arrive to work with the child or children in need within 15 to 30 minutes after receiving the call.

Since the Trauma Response program's inception in November 2004, we have worked with more than 2,200 children.

- ◆ Guidance Clinic – Unresolved childhood mental health issues have been linked to poor academic performance, high dropout rates, and an increased use of public services later in life (i.e., more tax dollars spent on incarceration and criminal justice, welfare, etc.). However, due to the daily challenges of living in poverty – such as lack of transportation and work/school scheduling complications – Richmond's disadvantaged urban children have only limited access to vital mental health services. Our Guidance Clinic staff provides outpatient therapy and psychiatric services.

During our 2010/11 program year, our Guidance Clinic staff worked with 459 children through 5,474 hours of therapy and psychiatric sessions.

- ◆ Child Development Services – The first few years of a child's life are critical to his or her development and future success. Our highly qualified early childhood specialists provide a broad range of support services – including professional development training and credentialing, nutrition education, and a child care referral service – to the adults who care for and educate preschool children.

During our 2010/11 program year, our CDS staff held 83 training sessions for child care providers/early childhood educators (total attendance: 1,164); helped 158 providers per month offer nutritious meals and snacks to the 1,360 young children in their care; and completed 1,115 visits to providers' places of employment to offer professional assessment and mentoring, and to distribute important resources such as safety equipment and educational toys and games.