



WEDGWOOD CHRISTIAN SERVICES  
**60 YEARS**  
OF TRANSFORMING LIVES



# The **IMPACT**

RESIDENTIAL, OUTPATIENT, COMMUNITY SERVICES  FALL 2020 | VOL 35 | NO. 2

**OUR MISSION**

Wedgwood Christian Services extends God's love to youth, adults, and families through professional counseling and educational services.

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INTEGRITY • COMPASSION • EXCELLENCE • DIVERSITY

**OUR VISION**

We envision our community transformed and equipped to reach its full potential by the distinctively Christian, professionally excellent, financially sustainable behavioral health services we provide.



# Building Hope

## THROUGH ADVERSITY



Dr. Dan Gowdy, EdD, CFRE | *President/CEO*  
DGOWDY@WEDGWOOD.ORG

A teenage girl, named “Sammi,” came to Wedgwood after attempting suicide while struggling with depression and a history of abuse. She spent a year in our residential program, where she was able to heal. Her journey involved honoring her feelings and emotions instead of stuffing them away, learning how to manage those intense feelings and how to advocate for herself. During that year, when she was able to experience some peace finally, she started drawing again, something she hadn't done in years. One of her caregivers noticed her talent, provided additional supplies and encouragement. She applied to art school. Shortly after graduation, she received her acceptance letter to art school along with a full scholarship. Her life was transformed. Mental health challenges derailed “Sammi” early in life, but active treatment and care at Wedgwood helped her find a path of Hope for a bright future and the tools to navigate that future.



Finding Hope these days is not easy. The ongoing worldwide pandemic along with the unprecedented social injustice and unrest continue to wreak havoc on our hearts and minds. As a result, we are on the verge of the most significant mental health crisis of our generation.

Wedgwood’s mental health experts, who provide grace-filled care, offer Hope in these difficult times. They continue to help restore our community one life at a time and are preparing for even greater demand.

We are strengthening services and building capacity for greater levels of care, to meet these growing mental health needs. This includes **improving processes, telehealth, electronic health records, document management, and business intelligence.**

Balancing care for others and personal wellness, under prolonged stress, can be difficult for caregivers. In response, Wedgwood’s *Care for the Caregiver* offers support for direct care staff and supervisors by checking in, sharing devotionals, offering self-care training, and, most importantly, an attentive ear.

It is exciting to know that God is faithful. He has sustained Wedgwood for 60 years and he will remain faithful in our commitment to extend His love to children and families during these uncertain times.

We are **building Hope through adversity.** Thank you for your continued prayers as we help “Sammi” and others discover their potential. 🌈

**“...BUT WE ALSO GLORY IN OUR SUFFERINGS, BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT SUFFERING PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE, PERSEVERANCE, CHARACTER; AND CHARACTER, HOPE.” // ROMANS 5:3-4**

# THE *Vision* OF OUR FOUNDERS



FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS  
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS, Sunday, June 24, 1962

The founders of Wedgwood Christian Services were guided by a clear vision: they desired to share God’s love with children and families in a manner that was both distinctively Christian and professionally excellent.

Wedgwood has remained faithful to that vision over the last 60 years, mindful that if we extend love and mercy in the name of the One whose name is Excellent (*Psalm 8:1*), we must do it well — in a way that brings glory to His name.

Consistent with the founding vision, Wedgwood’s services have been fully licensed and accredited for many years, certifying that they meet the highest standards of professional excellence in the field.

Children and families served by Wedgwood have received the best care and professional treatment, provided lovingly and tenaciously by our dedicated staff. Feeling unlovable at times and wondering why the staff hadn’t given up on them, they were reassured, “We’ll never give up on you because He never gave up on us!”



Since 1960, thousands of children, youth and families have experienced healing and unrelenting Christian love in Wedgwood’s array of therapeutic programs. And they’ve heard amazing Good News about Jesus, the Savior who loved them.

Please join in gratefully celebrating the vision of our founders and 60 years of rich blessings at Wedgwood. 🌈



Dick Gritter | Former Wedgwood Executive Director, 1978 - 2001

In 1960, in an old house in Grand Rapids, Wedgwood's first home for vulnerable teens was founded. The residents arrived, having experienced abuse and neglect, to find house parents who provided grace-filled care and thoughtful structure. For most of the teens, it was the first place they called home, where they felt safe.

Sixty years later, Wedgwood is still a safe place for kids to heal and now also provides care and counseling to adults and families. Today, staff in the homes, outpatient offices, and community programs are committed to providing that same grace-filled care. We are grateful for the amazing transformations taking place through Wedgwood's life changing services and know that God is at the center of it all.

## 1960s

- ▶ **July 29, 1960** — *Christian Youth Home* Incorporates
- ▶ **September 8, 1960** — *Wedgwood Acres Christian Home for Boys* incorporates
- ▶ **January 10, 1968** — *CYH* opens second home
- ▶ **November 1, 1967** — Second boys home opens

## 1970s

- ▶ **1970** — Wedgwood Acres and Christian Youth Homes merge
- ▶ **1974** — Ground breaking for Kentwood Campus
- ▶ **1975** — Kentwood Campus opens: two homes, counseling center, and office
- ▶ **1979** — Dedication of Huzinga Counseling Center and educational wing

## 1980s

- ▶ **1980** — Recreational facilities added to Kentwood Campus thanks to Kiwanis Club of GR East
- ▶ **1981** — First Chaplain hired
- ▶ **1984** — Hope for Hurting Children campaign kick-off
- ▶ **1989** — Wedgwood Christian Counseling Center, Employment Training Program, and Wedgwood Foundation established

## 1990s

- ▶ **1990** — Wedgwood achieves accreditation by Council on Accreditation
- ▶ **1993** — Honey Creek Christian Services transfers programs to Wedgwood, and name changes to Wedgwood Christian Youth and Family Services
- ▶ **1996** — Alliance with Grand Rapids Area Young Life established
- ▶ **1997** — Nagel Chapel & Conference Center Dedication
- ▶ **1998** — Wedgwood's Institute for Healing Racism & Diversity Training established

## 2000s

- ▶ **2000** — Community-based Prevention programs begin
- ▶ **2003** — Name changes to Wedgwood Christian Services
- ▶ **2005** — Wedgwood launches Lighthouse Academy
- ▶ **2006** — Substance Use Disorder Outreach services begin
- ▶ **2008** — Building Hope for Children Campaign and Kentwood Campus Consolidation
- ▶ **2009** — Bouma Counseling Center Groundbreaking

## 2010s

- ▶ **2011** — Residential services for youth with developmental disabilities begins  
— Wedgwood launches Hope Academy of West Michigan
- ▶ **2012** — Wedgwood's Manasseh Project Trauma Recovery Center opens to treat girls who have been trafficked  
— Lighthouse Academy expands campuses  
— Growing Hope for Children Capital Campaign
- ▶ **2015** — Wedgwood's Autism Center for Child Development opens
- ▶ **2017** — Substance Use Disorder treatment services expand
- ▶ **2019** — Faith in our Future Campaign launches and exceeds goal





# Thank you, Randy!

Earlier this year, Randy Zylstra announced his retirement from his role as Wedgwood's President/CEO. We are grateful for Randy's servant leadership and his 25 year tenure at Wedgwood spent working tirelessly to transform lives! Randy began his time at Wedgwood as a clinician, then shifting to program administration, which led to his time serving as Chief Operations Officer. After an interim period, Randy was named President/CEO of Wedgwood Christian Services in 2015. During his time as CEO, Randy led the agency with compassion, vision, and wisdom. 🌟



# Care for the Caregiver

Wedgwood's Caregiver Response Team, comprised of clinicians and chaplains specifically trained in debriefing and trauma response, offers support and assistance to any employee who has experienced a traumatic event, either within their role at Wedgwood or in their personal lives.

Care for the Caregiver, a part of this response team, has expanded into regularly providing strategies, resources, and devotionals pertaining to managing anxiety, self-care, restoration, and resiliency.

## Building Skills

Teens in **Wedgwood's Employment Training Program (ETP)** were hired to build 24 tables for outdoor picnic areas at *Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park!*

This project helped teens build more than just tables! In ETP, teens build vital life and job skills, like teamwork, time management, and problem-solving. Plus, the pride associated with having their hard-work displayed at such a prominent community location provides a crucial boost to the teens' self-confidence! 🌟

Learn more about Wedgwood's Employment Training Program:  
[www.wedgwood.org/employment-training](http://www.wedgwood.org/employment-training)

# A New Format

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted us all. There has been a well-documented increase in mental health symptoms related to the stressors of the recent circumstances. One in three Americans surveyed reported experiencing significant symptoms of anxiety or depression in March and April, according to the Pew Research Center. Twenty five percent of young adults (ages 18-24) reported suicidal thoughts in the month of June in research done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Wedgwood remains committed to responding to the mental health needs in our community throughout this challenging time. We have been offering outpatient counseling services using telehealth (utilizing a HIPAA-compliant version of Zoom). With telehealth sessions, clients have been able to access effective therapy from the convenience and comfort of their own homes. Given the public health concerns associated with COVID-19, telehealth also gives an option to receive therapy without the risks of meeting in-person.

Feedback from our clients regarding the transition to telehealth has been very positive. A client survey completed in July 2020 indicated good satisfaction with receiving services through telehealth. The majority of clients reported a preference to continue to receive services with telehealth going forward.

Our therapists bring their skills and expertise to this new format and find new possibilities to support connection, learning, and positive life changes. Many have discovered very creative ways to use telehealth to incorporate games and interactive interventions with children and teens. Jillian McCarthy, an outpatient therapist, describes some of the benefits of the telehealth format, "It has been an incredible way to safely reach individuals that need support during this really uncertain time. It has removed the barrier of travel and given an equal opportunity for access to needed mental health treatment. I have been extremely grateful to use telehealth services to continue to provide services during this time."

As Wedgwood celebrates our 60-year anniversary, we continue to grow and change to meet the needs of the time. In this unique moment in history, Wedgwood has adapted the way outpatient therapy is offered to make it most accessible for those we serve. 🌈



Dr. Elizabeth Raese, Psy.D. LP | ERAESE@WEDGWOOD.ORG  
Associate Director of Community Services

For more information about Wedgwood's Counseling Services: [www.wedgwood.org/counseling](http://www.wedgwood.org/counseling)



# The *Gold* Standard

It's hard to believe that more than 10 years have passed since I first stepped foot on Wedgwood's campus as a youth treatment specialist into the Parramore Home for adolescent boys. Throughout the years I've been fortunate enough to serve the Grand Rapids community in a variety of therapeutic roles, and for the last three years as an outpatient psychotherapist at Speak;Easy Mental Wellness, a private practice located in the heart of Eastown that I co-founded in 2017. Though I've relished my role as a clinician, I've long been interested in exploring and expanding into leadership roles that require diplomacy, influence, creativity, and collaboration while promoting personal and professional development.

In addition to my personal and professional goals, I chose to return to Wedgwood because I wanted to be part of a dynamic team culture that encouraged originality. I joined the Wedgwood family at a unique time. Within the last year the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) program has endured a tumultuous transition, and in spite of that the SUD team has remained passionate and steadfast toward the future and continued efforts of becoming the gold standard of substance use treatment in the communities that we serve. I wanted to be a part of that. I knew I had to be involved in this transformation. I felt that this role would allow me to be a part of something bigger than myself, and Wedgwood granted me that privilege. The warmth I've experienced in my first few months back serves as proof that I am where I need to be. The level of support and patience I've received from everyone has made this an idyllic experience.

On a broader scale, as a treatment team within the recovery community we strive to provide excellence in services and quality care through adopting best practices and leading trends. We believe that through awareness, education, and strategic planning we can illuminate a path towards stripping away the myths and misconceptions of addiction while cultivating change along with healthy connections for those in need of grace and acceptance. 🌱



Chris Rivera, LMSW, CAADC | [CRIVERA@WEDGWOOD.ORG](mailto:CRIVERA@WEDGWOOD.ORG)  
Director of Substance Use Disorder Services



For more information about Wedgwood's SUD Services: [www.wedgwood.org/substance-use](http://www.wedgwood.org/substance-use)

## Why We Work at Wedgwood



"I love working for and with committed teams where everyone's primary focus is how we can better serve clients, one another, and Wedgwood as a whole - through continued trust, dialogue and process improvement. I love my job because I am so supported by my team. I am humbled by their caring nature, enduring faith, and commitment to their families."

— Donna Hayataka, Administrative Coordinator - Ionia County SUD

# IMAGINE THE Party

I work at the Boelkins home here at Wedgwood. Our program is for boys ages 8-12 who have been abused and neglected. When I work on Sundays we have mini church with the boys, which is like church — but shorter. A few weeks ago, I told the stories of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son that Jesus told in **Luke 15**. I didn't just read it, I told it with props and the boys played the characters.

For the **first of Jesus' stories**, I didn't have any sheep, but I did have a stuffed, rainbow alpaca. I told the boys that Jesus is a good shepherd and a good shepherd takes care of His sheep. And then I began by holding up the rainbow alpaca. This shepherd had 100 sheep, that's a lot of sheep. One of the sheep gets lost. I threw the "sheep" to another staff member and she chucked it into the other room. Wouldn't a good shepherd go and find that sheep? The other 99 sheep are safe, but one is lost. So, the shepherd goes here and there and gets dirty and climbs and finds the sheep. Then Jesus says to the crowd, "the shepherd was so excited to show his friends and family he found the sheep, can you imagine how heaven must party when one person, a person who is lost is found?"

For the **second story** I held up a quarter. There was a guy who had 100 of these (the boys were doing math on their fingers) and he lost one. So, he still has 99, but wouldn't he try to find the one by checking the couch cushions, and all his pockets to find the one that was lost? He did, he found it and he was pumped, and told his friends. That's just a coin, can you imagine how hard heaven must party when a human being who was lost is found?

The **third story** needed some characters, the boys fought over the parts. The younger son character wore a mullet wig and a Hawaiian shirt. The father in the story wore a long raincoat, that kind of looked like a robe. The boy playing the part of the older son wore a chef coat because he worked a lot. I narrated and they acted out the story. They were totally into it — it was awesome.

The Boelkins Home is a place where:

- ▶ Boys who have experienced trauma will feel safe.
- ▶ Kids can be kids and are encouraged to have fun.
- ▶ They will experience the love of God.
- ▶ They will find a hope for their future.

Being a kid can be hard. There are a lot of kids out there that are doing alright. They have their basic needs met, their family structure is okay, there is stability, and their family has not been impacted by addiction. 99 kids are doing okay. But there is one kid who is not doing okay. He's lost, they are lost. And not of their own doing. Their family structure was not okay, it was far from stable, often addiction has their family structure reeling or completely broken.

Wedgwood exists for the one. Imagine the party 🎉



Steve Carigon | Assistant Home Supervisor | [SCARIGON@WEDGWOOD.ORG](mailto:SCARIGON@WEDGWOOD.ORG)



# FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

A WEDGWOOD CAMPAIGN 

In early 2019, Wedgwood launched the **Faith In Our Future Capital Campaign**, designed to promote and inspire emotional and physical well-being. The three primary objectives of the campaign were to improve our services to effectively meet the challenges of our kids, rehab aging facilities to ensure a safe environment for our kids, and secure our future so we can provide love and care to future generations. Our campaign efforts were led by co-chairs: **Rich and Dawn Antonini** | **Jim and Ellen Bruinsma** | **Jim and Jane Zwiers**

This leadership team was instrumental in creating a dynamic campaign cabinet that worked well together for many months towards our **\$6.5 million goal**. The response to our campaign was tremendous. On October 17th, at our public announcement of the campaign, we were able to share that our goal had been surpassed, months ahead of schedule. God’s grace made it all possible. We were blessed by so many dedicated long-time donors as well as a great number of new supporters who came to know Wedgwood through campus visits and tours. It was a great joy for us to share our enthusiasm for the work being done at Wedgwood for vulnerable children and their families, with our growing donor community. Now that the fundraising portion of our campaign has been completed, we move to putting those funds to much needed use on behalf of those we serve.

## PHASE I


PHASE I of our process has been completed and entailed eliminating the remaining balance of a pension obligation resulting in additional funding that was designated to staff retention and recruitment which is critical as the children in our care depend on Wedgwood staff for grace-filled care.

## PHASE II

PHASE II which began earlier this year, continues. This phase involves an upgrade of agency electronic infrastructure which will increase staff efficiency. COVID-19 has magnified and accelerated the importance of this element as we have built a new digital infrastructure to ensure that we can continue to serve clients through the pandemic and beyond.

## PHASE III

PHASE III involves much needed renovations and upgrades to our aging facilities. Because the on-going pandemic has permanently changed how childcare institutions gather and serve our community, a centralized cafeteria is no longer a safe and efficient way to serve the residents. This has forced us to adjust the original plan to better align with new safety protocols, while keeping the original intent of this solution. Each home’s kitchen and dining area will be updated to promote a family home environment essential to creating a safe place for healing.

We plan to continue sharing our progress with you. Thank you for helping make these improvements a reality. 



Vivian TerMaat | Chief Advancement Officer | [VTERMAAT@WEDGWOOD.ORG](mailto:VTERMAAT@WEDGWOOD.ORG)

# Opportunities TO TRANSFORM

**"CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO INVOLVE GOD'S PEOPLE IN GOD'S WORK." // JOHN FRANK**

**W**edgwood has sought for sixty years to transform lives. God has blessed this challenge and many stories can be told of lives changed. Many of our faithful donors have seen the opportunities and importance of this work.

We continually seek to point out that wealth giving is vital to carry on this mission. Giving from one's wealth requires careful planning as well as acknowledging that wealth comes from God as our provider. Most of the wealth in the world is held in noncash assets. It is written that close to 90% of wealth is noncash assets and only 10% is in cash assets.

Someone has written that those of us who make plans of our assets must always hold God above them, not them above God. God calls us to aim high and to know how to get there. I Chronicles 29:12 says it so well, "wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things."

Many of these noncash assets hold appreciated value over their original cost basis. In spite of the ups and downs of the stock market many people still hold appreciated assets today. There is great wisdom in gifting such assets to charities, such as Wedgwood. Tax incentives can still matter. For example, if you have an asset that cost you \$100 and it is now valued at \$1,000, the \$900 gain upon a sale would be taxed; however, by a gift to charity the \$900 appreciation (profit) will never be taxed to you. The elimination of tax on appreciated amounts is a great incentive for such charitable gifts.

If we can be of assistance to you or answer any questions you may have, please let us know. In addition, the services of the Barnabas Foundation are available to you at no cost through our membership with them. 🇺🇸



Gary Raterink, CPA  
Planned Giving Officer  
[GRATERINK@WEDGWOOD.ORG](mailto:GRATERINK@WEDGWOOD.ORG)

For more information Contact **Gary Raterink** at (616) 831-5623 or [graterink@wedgwood.org](mailto:graterink@wedgwood.org)

## Why We Work at Wedgwood



"I love working at Wedgwood because I know that what I do on a day-to-day is making a long lasting impact. Children are the future, and being able to help them learn and grow at a pivotal age is very moving. The job I have is incredibly rewarding. It encourages me to wake up in the morning and helps me look forward to work!"

— *Hannah Lemke, Registered Behavior Technician*

## MEMBERS

Anonymous Friends (9)  
John Bielema  
Jack Bloem  
Jim & Barb Boelkins  
John & Janice Borst  
Carolyn Bouma  
Lois Bouma  
Ross & Heidi Cate  
Tom & Joan De Fouw  
Vern & Linda De Weerd  
Phyllis Ditmar  
Frank & Kerrie Doezema  
Carol Rempe Dearing  
Jeanet Ebels  
Jim & Nancy Engen  
Ginny Geldhof  
Richard & Nancy Gritter  
Norm & Molly Guillaume  
Bob & Harriet Hasper

Bill & Marybeth Haverkamp  
John & Joyce Heetderks  
Karen Helder  
John & Carole Hoffman  
Willard Kingma  
Raymond & Barbara Klaassen  
Peg Knoll  
Robert & Ruth Knoll  
David & Jane Krombeen  
Hildegard Krusch  
Anne Kunnen  
Marilyn Lobbes  
Peter & Jan Malek  
Peggy Myslenski  
Doug & Lois Nagel  
Jim & Debra Nagel  
Julie Nagel  
Tom & Marcia Nobel  
Henry & Sharon Ottens

Betsy Prose  
Carla Capotosto  
Gary Raterink  
Robert & Barbara Roskamp  
Raymon Schutt  
Jessie Seven  
Tom & Mary Stuit  
Ed & Joan Stuursma  
Dale Snyder  
Ron & Carol Van Antwerp  
Wes Van Houten  
Henry VanSledright  
Gord & Skip Van Tuinen  
Fred & Carol Vanden Bosch  
Jerry & Jessica Vander Wall  
Ray Vander Weele  
Philip & Audrey Wiltjer  
Dave & Bea Zylstra  
Randy & Beth Zylstra

## MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

Don Beukema  
Judy Bielema  
Dora Bloem  
R. Charles Boelkins  
Henry Bouma  
Carol Boven Fitzgerald  
Bill Ditmar  
Lucille Doorn  
Gordon Geldhof  
Louis & Harriet Guikema

Earl & Berneda Hart  
Don & Mae Hendricks  
Donald & Frances Johns  
Mary Kingma  
Arnold Knoll  
Ronald Kunnen  
Alvin Lobbes  
Ted Myslenski  
Cal & Elaine Nagel  
Lester & Marilyn Oosterbaan

Peter Overbeek  
Neda Raterink  
Paul & Thelma Schutt  
Charles Seven  
Herbert & Florence Soodsma  
Louise Snyder  
Agnes Timmerman  
Kornelius & Madeline VanGoor  
Don Ver Hage  
Casey & Vivian Wondergem

## Gifts in Memory

Gifts in Memory are placed in the *Wedgwood Living Memorial Fund* which is a part of the *Wedgwood Foundation*. This Living Memorial Fund is quite special in that it is a permanent fund, and the earnings are used for the care of the children and teens at Wedgwood. These gifts help make it possible for Wedgwood to provide for young people for many years to come.

Questions about **Gifts in Memory?**  
Email [advancement@wedgwood.org](mailto:advancement@wedgwood.org)  
or call (616) 942-2392

**Karen Bouman**

Bill Bouman

**Maxine Bruinsma**

Bill & Karen Bruinsma

**Donna Bytwork**

Albert Bytwork

**Terry Chamberlain**

Tait Chamberlain

**Bud & Ella Decker**

Willard & Gert Nieboer

**David Grant**

Marilyn Grant

**Suzanne Grant**

Marilyn Grant

**Hazel Jackson**

Beverly Jaarsma

**Leah Kos**

Lois Williams

**Marnie Kotwick**

John Kotwick

**Peter B. Northouse**

Roger and Connie Brummel

**Bradley Pylman**

Yvonne Pylman

**Norma Pylman**

Yvonne Pylman

**Alice Raterink**

Lorraine Becksfort

**Wilma Ritsema**

Albert Ritsema

**Clarence & Edna Tamminga**

Gerald & Lucinda Schreur

**George & Gert Vander Laan**

Gene & Gennie McClelland



Wendi sharing a bit of her story for Wedgwood's Family Dinner

# GOD WORKS MIRACLES HERE

An Interview with Dr. Wendi Miller

## What is your connection to Wedgwood?

**Wendi Miller:** I was a resident in two different homes, spending about a year and half between the two programs.

## What were your first impressions when you arrived at Wedgwood?

**WM:** I first came to stay at the "open" program, and though the house was nice, I'd already been in a number of shelters, psychiatric hospitals, and juvenile homes, and I figured this was just another placement. The name at the time was Wedgwood Acres Christian Youth Homes so I assumed it was run by a bunch of phony Jesus freaks. I was very rebellious, and I can remember making a point of telling anyone who would listen that because I was a ward of the court they were violating the laws requiring separation of church and state. I had a rough start and actually got kicked out of that program after only a couple of months. Despite my initial misgivings, I found I desperately wanted to return, so some part of me must have already realized that Wedgwood was different. I begged my case worker to give me another chance and he told me later that he practically had to beg on my behalf, but luckily, they allowed me to return, the second time starting in a more intensive program where I eventually worked my way back to the open program.

## What did you learn at Wedgwood that still impacts your life today?

**WM:** I learned that, my actions have consequences, and I may suffer consequences for bad decisions, but that does not mean I am a bad person. I learned to forgive others and forgive myself. I learned you can dislike what someone is doing but still love them. That, in fact, truly loving someone means holding them accountable, and that discipline is a form of showing love – a lesson that would later help me in raising my five children. But most importantly, I learned that God is always with me, that He is not just in church on Sunday morning. I learned the Bible verses that carried me through the rough times that still lied ahead, and I learned to pray and talk to God anytime, anywhere. From the Wedgwood staff I learned that Christians are not perfect, but they are forgiven, and through them I



Wendi as a teen at a Wedgwood event

## Why We Work at Wedgwood



"I look forward to working with the clients every day! I want them to feel safe, valued and know that they have someone pulling for them, no strings attached. I feel every interaction is a seed, so I try to plant wisely. I enjoy the diversity of the team and the collaboration to accomplish the agencies mission. It makes it a fun place to work. Everyone can have input and it makes for a very solid team. The leadership is visible, open and gives timely feedback. I believe God directed me to this team."

– Sara Blackburn, Shift Supervisor - Cook Claus

saw the kind of life I wanted someday. It was because of their example that I made a commitment to raise my children in a Christian home. I went on to baptize them, take them to Sunday School and church, pray with them, educate them in Christian schools, and see them through confirmation of their faith. Today, I am blessed with being able to watch as my grandchildren are raised the same way.

## How did you change during your time at Wedgwood?

**WM:** I became much more trusting. I had come there believing that there was no one I could count on except myself, and I was suspicious of the motive behind anyone who wanted to help. I had tried to convince myself that I was strong and did not need or even want anyone to care about me. But the truth was I had terribly low self-esteem and felt unworthy of being loved. At Wedgwood I was able to develop relationships with the staff that allowed me to open up and be vulnerable because, for the first time, no one took advantage of me in any way. There really had been abuse of all kinds in many of my previous placements. I found that being able to trust the adults around me opened the door to being able to trust that the world itself might not be such a horrible place. I saw that there was value in being in a relationship with another, and that there was nothing wrong with asking for, and receiving, help. I also grew in faith. Wedgwood and its staff changed my view of what it meant to be a Christian, and I came to appreciate what church and scripture had to offer. I began to really believe in God and trust in His plan for me.



Wendi celebrating Christmas with her family

## What do you remember most about your time at Wedgwood?

**WM:** Of course, I have lots of memories of individual events, both good and bad. I met my best friend there, and we still talk about how our days at Wedgwood were some of the best times of our lives: going to the beach with Nan and Virginia, hiding in a bathroom stall during a skate-a-thon because our feet were too blistered to go back out on the rink, working in the garden and cooking with Ellen, hanging out shooting pool with Slump. There were some not-so-good times too, because I did some horrible things while I was there, and I was still dealing with a lot of my own issues. But the thing that I remember most when I think of Wedgwood is how it was there that I truly felt safe, for the first time in a very long time.

## What would you say to a teenager arriving at Wedgwood today?

**WM:** You have been blessed today. I know you cannot believe that now, but it is true. The things that happened, the things that got you here, as horrible as they may have been, have been worked into a blessing by bringing you here. It probably does not feel like anything good can come of what you have been through, but God wanted better for you and has brought you to this place where you are safe. Here you will learn that you are worthy, and you are loved. You might be scared or angry, or probably you are feeling a combination of both, but take it from me because I have been where you are, there are plenty of institutions that could house you or punish you, and some that might even try to counsel and teach you, but this is a place that will genuinely care for you. God works miracles here, and He has plans to give you hope and a future. 🌈

## Why We Work at Wedgwood



"I love my job because of the wonderful, welcoming staff at Wedgwood. I have never worked somewhere else where I've felt so at home. I also wholeheartedly support Wedgwood's mission and admire the staff that work directly with our clients to transform their lives every day."

— Katie Nagelkirk, Talent Acquisition Administrative Assistant



MONDAY, JUNE 22 | EGYPT VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB

Though **Wedgwood's 35th Annual Charity Golf Classic** looked a little different than previous years, June 22 was a beautiful day at Egypt Valley Country Club to Golf for the Good of children and families in Wedgwood's care! Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and golfers, **over \$123,000** was raised for Wedgwood's 100% donor-funded Transforming Services! 🎉



SAVE THE DATE | **Monday, June 7, 2021**

## Why We Work at Wedgwood



"I love working at Wedgwood because I have the chance to impact these young lives and show them love and encouragement, before they re-enter their communities. I also enjoy being able to work as team with my co-workers and all the direct care staff around the campus."

— *Albert Franklin, Education Specialist & Evening Campus Supervisor*



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# WEDGWOOD'S Family Dinner 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



CEO Dan Gowdy shares an opening message

**Wedgwood's Family Dinner Experience** celebrating 60 years was a fantastic online event that debuted on October 14th, showcasing the transformative power of the programs and services that Wedgwood offers to children, adults and families.



Chef Jenna shows Maranda some tips for making a family dinner



Doug & Lois Nagel Leadership Award Presented to Bill & Sally Swets



Molly Guillaume Volunteer of the Year Award Presented to Stefani Boutelier

It was a privilege to hear from former clients and staff who've seen hearts and lives changed for the better because of the grace-filled care received at Wedgwood over these 60 years.

Maranda and Chef Jenna shared their incredible energy and reminded us all of the importance of a family meal.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and registrants, **over \$200,000 was raised for Wedgwood's 100% donor-funded Transforming Services!**

We are deeply grateful. 🌈

## Why We Work at Wedgwood



"I love being able to help clients sort through difficult times in their lives. It is awesome to see the 'light bulb' come on with a client in session and seeing growth and confidence increase as they learn and use coping skills."

— Duriel Cohen, Outpatient Clinician

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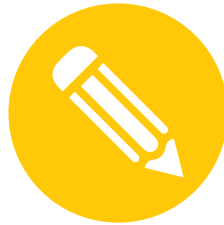


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Email **HELLO@WEDGWOOD.ORG** for details.



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