



# Hopeful Futures

*Cover art by a teen in Wedgwood's Residential Program*

**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.



*From the Desk of*  
**DR. DAN GOWDY**  
WEDGWOOD'S PRESIDENT/CEO



The past year and half haven't been easy. The challenges presented by COVID-19 were unlike anything we've ever encountered. The reality is that we still have a long way to go, and it's important to remain vigilant.

The ongoing pandemic has intensified a mental health tsunami, accelerating the arrival of the greatest mental health crisis of our generation. We're already seeing the effects of this tsunami, indiscriminately wreaking havoc across community demographics.

The 2020 Kent County Community Health Needs Assessment — a report that identifies and prioritizes health related needs in our community — recognized mental health among youth as one of the county's key issues. 1 in 3 young adults have some form of depression, and 30% reported having 14 or more 'poor mental health days' in the previous month. That means that **a third of young adults experienced 'poor mental health days' at least HALF of the previous month.** That's devastating.

The children in our communities are struggling. They're crying out for help and we need to be ready and able to step in to help. How do we do that? For Wedgwood the answer is to do more of what we're already doing.

**We have the strength, expertise, and leadership to help those who are affected by trauma, and provide a loving, compassionate, and grace-filled environment for them to flourish.**

Our excellent and distinctively Christian services can provide a brighter and more promising future for children and teens in need of mental health and substance use services. We can give them the tools they need to cope, and change the trajectory of their life.

We can do all of that, but we can not do it without *you*.

For the last 61 years, we've been incredibly fortunate to have generous donors in our midst who, without hesitation, helped Wedgwood fill the gaps in our community. We are at a critical time in our history, and how we respond today will directly impact those around us.

I hope you'll join us as we begin to tackle what I believe will be the biggest mental health crisis of our time. 🇺🇸




**DR. DAN GOWDY, Ed.D., CFRE | President/CEO**  
**DGOWDY@WEDGWOOD.ORG**

# Events & Happenings!



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NEXTGEN BOARD MEETING



"Wedgwood's Coffee Break Conversations" is a new series sharing the stories of people who work at, learn from, and grow through our grace-filled care.

Check out the **videos** at [www.youtube.com/WedgwoodCS](http://www.youtube.com/WedgwoodCS), the **podcast** episodes - available at [coffeebreakconversations.buzzsprout.com](http://coffeebreakconversations.buzzsprout.com) or wherever you get your podcasts, and the **blog posts** on our website!



## WEDGWOOD WELCOMES NEW CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

Brooke Jevicks started as Wedgwood's new Chief Advancement Officer in September. She joins the Advancement Team after a 5-year tenure as the Development Director at Dégagé Ministries.

"It is a privilege to join the team at Wedgwood Christian Services," Jevicks said. "I am passionate about advocating for children, teens, adults, and families in our community who are hurting. I care deeply about restoring hope and transforming lives so that each person can reach his/her full potential."

As Chief Advancement Officer, Jevicks will oversee Wedgwood's Advancement Department which is responsible for raising funds for Wedgwood's Children's Hope Annual Fund, donor relations and community engagement, and agency marketing efforts. She will also have an active role in strategic vision and planning for the organization.

"I am looking forward to sharing the impact that Wedgwood is making on so many lives, inspiring new partnerships, developing new pathways for engagement, and stepping out in faith to help move this organization forward," she added.



## Training for the Future: *Employment*

For teens in Wedgwood's Residential Program, having a job is so much more than a way to bring in income. Being hired through Wedgwood's Employment Training program means learning valuable life-skills, developing important job experience, and building confidence that opens them up to a future full of possibilities.

Wedgwood's Employment Training Program, also known as Wedgwood's ETP, is an optional program for teens receiving treatment and care in Wedgwood's Residential Program. Kids who call Wedgwood home have often experienced immense trauma – like abuse and neglect – and are navigating mental, emotional, and behavioral health challenges. Part of Wedgwood's holistic treatment approach is preparing kids for life after Wedgwood, giving them the tools to gain a sense of independence.

To participate in Wedgwood's ETP teens must apply, obtain references from therapists and other staff members, and go through an interview process. They are coached along the way, building their confidence in navigating the hiring process. Wedgwood's ETP staff guide the teens as they learn important things like time management and punctuality, working as a team, receiving constructive criticism, and leadership. Once hired, teens work on a variety of projects including: lawncare, car detailing, wood shop, and upholstery resulting in items that are available for community members to purchase.

Handcrafted products like charcuterie boards, birdhouses, pillows, masks, and candles are some of Wedgwood's ETP most popular products, and to meet increased demand for these items Wedgwood's ETP has launched an Etsy Shop.

"Wedgwood's Employment Training Program works to transform the lives of at-risk youth by teaching job skills that will prepare them for their future," said Jackie Brewster, Program Manager for Wedgwood's ETP. "Through this program, we foster an environment where young people gain not only hands-on experience, but confidence and independence so they can feel prepared as they enter the working world."

All proceeds from Wedgwood's ETP Etsy Shop go back into the program, which is 100% donor-funded. The Etsy Shop is an initiative that not only allows Wedgwood's ETP to reach more community members, but also contribute to the program's financial sustainability.

"Wedgwood's Employment Training Program is a vital part of our person-centered approach," said Dan Gowdy, Wedgwood's President/CEO. "Giving kids the skills and confidence they need to succeed, especially in the workforce, opens them up to a future brimming with hope and possibilities! We are excited about Wedgwood's ETP expansion to include an Etsy Shop because it is important to us that kids feel equipped to fulfill their potential, and we can teach them these skills through the various handcrafted products and services, Wedgwood's ETP provides."

"Wedgwood and ETP helped shape my work ethic and changed my life for the better," said one teen who received care in Wedgwood's Residential Program and was a part of Wedgwood's Employment Training Program.

To purchase items from Wedgwood's ETP Etsy Shop and support the teens in Wedgwood's care, visit [www.etsy.com/shop/WedgwoodETP](http://www.etsy.com/shop/WedgwoodETP).

For more information & custom project requests, visit [www.wedgwood.org/employment-training](http://www.wedgwood.org/employment-training)



# Reclaiming Hope

## THE ROAD TO RECOVERY



*James Sherrill is a Clinician on Wedgwood's Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Services team. He works primarily with teens within the Ottawa County Court system. As a part of our SUD Team, James provides support for kids, and their families, who are struggling with co-occurring substance use and mental health challenges. We sat down with James recently to talk about the important work he does and how Wedgwood is offering hope through recovery support.*

### So what can you tell us about the adolescents, adults, and families involved in Wedgwood's SUD services?

The kids I typically see primarily come to us through court referrals, so we've built a relationship with the juvenile court and work closely with probation officers. They connect with us when they recognize a substance use issue. There's not really a 'typical' kid - we see kids across many demographics. I've seen kids as young as 10, all the way up to 18; kids who have made good choices and gotten out of the system, and those who transition from juvenile court to adult court and still need on-going support for their substance use and mental health challenges. We help them find healthy, productive ways to cope with their challenges, mental health, and trauma so they can get out of the system, get off probation, get clean, improve school performance, decrease conflict, and rebuild or improve their relationship with their family.

### How do you see trauma playing a role in your clients' substance use?

Trauma is always there. It is always there. Almost every single client has that kernel of trauma underneath all of it. When we think trauma we think war and violence and sexual assault, but you know what - not having a dad at home, that's part of it. There's also the sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and physical abuse. The type of trauma varies, but there's always that kernel of trauma in there.

Learn more about Wedgwood's Substance Use Treatment Services: [www.wedgwood.org/substance-use](http://www.wedgwood.org/substance-use)

### So what happens during their time with Wedgwood's Recovery Services?

There's a lot of rapport building at first, building that relationship. We have an assessment process and then work on setting goals for what they want to accomplish and sometimes even just figuring out what they want to accomplish. We work through the objectives they need to meet those goals. It starts with building that relationship, that trust, and then working through all the little pieces: the trauma, the anger, the little undercurrents of junk that build up and make substance use so much more appealing as a way to cope.

### How do you see your role in helping people heal and find hope again?

I help people recognize that these changes are doable, I think that is the big thing. Many come to us with this feeling of, 'this is my life and this is the way it's going to be'. But we help them recognize that there is a way to manage the trauma, the hurt, the anger that doesn't involve creating more problems than it solves. We are shifting their perspectives on what success looks like. I work on helping them make a healthy choice and reclaim their power, amidst the chaos in their lives, to make those good choices and take control of what they can.

### How does Wedgwood help set people up for success with continued sobriety and brighter futures?

We are helping people to reclaim that power, feel that success, and to recognize the wins. When they can recognize the 'small victories' it empowers them to look toward the next one, and think: 'What else can I win?', 'How else can I get a victory?', 'How else can I overcome?'. The seemingly tiny successes build upon one another until there is this monster wall of overall life success. It's an ongoing journey and doesn't happen overnight. We have to remind them that there are times they are going to take a few steps back. But I tell them, "You know what, you did it once. You've shown yourself that you can do it. You've done it once, you can do it again."

### What's one thing you think would surprise people about working in Recovery Services?

That people who are dealing with substance use disorder aren't bad people. These are kids and adults, who more often than not, are dealing with a lot of hurt. For them, it's about finding a way to inject a little bit of happiness to fill a little bit of a hole in their soul more than anything. It's more than getting high, sure that's a part of it, but it's about soothing that hurt. So what we need is more compassion, and less punishment, less stigma, less of the idea anybody who uses substances is a bad person. 🌈



*"I'm sober, I have a car and I have a job. I am so thankful for the people at Wedgwood who helped me get to where I am today."*

— "Destiny", age 17, Wedgwood Recovery Services Client





# LIVING FULLER LIVES

**“THERE NEEDS TO BE A LOT MORE EMPHASIS ON WHAT A CHILD CAN DO VERSUS WHAT A CHILD CANNOT DO.”**  
 // DR. TEMPLE GRANDIN

Here at Wedgwood, we believe this wholeheartedly. Through all of our mental, emotional, and behavioral health services, we celebrate each person’s unique abilities, their God-given talents, and small to big successes. As children of God, we can all do great things.

Wedgwood’s Autism Center for Child Development (ACCD) is life-changing for the whole family. Our highly-trained staff work with young children with autism spectrum disorders one-on-one on individual goals. The children may use the toilet for the very first time, go to school, and develop a way to communicate their wants and needs. Parents often hear their child’s first word.

Through new skill development and support, every day families are living fuller lives and are able to participate in

Dr. Candice Lake, PHD, BCBA-D, LBA, LLP | CLAKE@WEDGWOOD.ORG  
 Director of Wedgwood’s Autism Center for Child Development



their communities in ways they have not been able to before.

We strive to help the greater community understand that autism doesn’t stop individuals from learning, growing, interacting, and thriving. Like Dr. Temple Grandin says, “there needs to be a lot more emphasis on what a child can do”.

The children receiving therapy at ACCD are still children. They want to have friends. They want to play. They want to learn. They want to live their best life.

Together, we can give the gift of acceptance, education, and opportunity. Join us in celebrating acceptance and providing comprehensive early intensive behavioral intervention to young children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

For more information about Wedgwood’s Autism Center for Child Development, visit [www.wedgwood.org/autismcenter](http://www.wedgwood.org/autismcenter)

Wedgwood’s ACCD uses the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), an empirically supported treatment for ASD, to provide comprehensive therapy that encompasses all areas affected by the child’s ASD. To get connected to resources or set up a tour of our center, call 616-965-3492 or email [autismcenter@wedgwood.org](mailto:autismcenter@wedgwood.org).



“The team at ACCD changed our son’s life. They’ve changed our lives, and we are so thankful! They set the groundwork for him to succeed in school, and in life.”  
 – “Melanie”, Parent of a Wedgwood ACCD Client



# Re-defining Futures AFTER TRAUMA



AMANDA SYVERSON, MA, LPC  
 Clinician and Clinical Supervisor  
 COUNSELING@WEDGWOOD.ORG

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TFCBT) is an evidence-based model for children and adolescents and their families who have experienced and been impacted by trauma. Our team of TFCBT clinicians at Wedgwood are passionate about the work they do and recognize the importance of a trauma-informed approach to help promote healing and hope.

Trauma is defined as “an emotional response to something deeply distressing or disturbing” according to The American Psychological Association. Often, the word trauma comes with a large suitcase full of worries, fears, and beliefs for those affected. Questions and fears surrounding one’s ability to heal and recover can become overwhelming. While it is important to acknowledge that the brain changes in response to traumatic experiences, it is also imperative to understand that re-learning and

patterns of re-thinking can occur. This can help promote healing and encourage a sense of safety and security.

A powerful aspect of trauma work, and specifically of TFCBT, is a learned understanding that trauma does not have to define us. **While it has made an impact, it does not define our future.** By making the “unmentionable, mentionable” in regards to trauma, we can begin to create and redefine aspects of healing. Many children who have experienced trauma, specifically complex trauma, struggle to see their lives past 18, let alone a long-term future for themselves. When children and adolescents are able to work through their trauma experiences with a trained-trauma informed clinician, they are able to begin tapping into their own resiliency to find hope and make meaning for their future. 🌈

For more information visit [wedgwood.org/trauma-focused-cognitive-behavioral-therapy](http://wedgwood.org/trauma-focused-cognitive-behavioral-therapy)

# GROWING IN POSITIVE WAYS

“It’s amazing you can take something awkward or difficult and make it fun and easy to talk about!”

Student responses like this are music to the ears of Positive Youth Development (PYD) staff who work to encourage teens to grow in positive ways and avoid the obstacles that can keep them from achieving their goals. Programs focused on healthy relationships, setting goals, substance use prevention and sexual risk avoidance are available in schools and community sites to not only provide education, but to increase awareness, conversation, and confidence.

PYD Group Specialists go above and beyond to provide more than just education. After a ZOOM session, a birthday cake was delivered to a 6th grade student who would not have had a celebration otherwise. Our staff are often present to chat during lunch or may check on a student who is struggling with a home situation or experimenting with substance use during school hours. Some PYD programs include videos and lessons which are incorporated into daily advisory periods. The Dean of Students at one school stated that **Wedgwood’s PYD program had created a positive culture change.**

Summer activities this year included a community movie in the park. Families enjoyed a movie together on a perfect summer night. Between the free popcorn and the children waving glow sticks in the air, it was clear that everyone had a good time. Community partners also helped with events. After allowing the children in a PYD Summer program to play in the spray of the Fire Department water hoses, the firefighter joked that she didn’t know who had more fun...the kids or her! (It’s possible it might have been the PYD Group Specialists who joined in on the fun as well.)

All of these fun activities have an important, meaningful impact. When kids feel supported and safe to have tough conversations, they are empowered to think about their goals and make healthy decisions. Our PYD team helps them develop the resiliency and skills they need to build a foundation for a brighter future. 🌟



CATHY RACALLA, MA, CHES  
 Prevention Services Team Lead  
 CRACALLA@WEDGWOOD.ORG

# Faithful Futures»



Gary Raterink, CPA | GRATERINK@WEDGWOOD.ORG  
Planned Giving Officer

We often write about giving from the heart. Such style of giving certainly provides hopeful futures. We hear much about legacies in discussions about Planned Giving today.

John Marshall writes that every person leaves some kind of legacy. For some it's positive. For others, it may be negative. We do have a choice about what kind of legacy we will leave. We must work and be intentional to leave the legacy we want, and know the legacy we want to leave. Someday people will summarize your life in a single sentence. Now is the time to pick it. **Choose now who will carry on your legacy. A legacy lives on in people, not things.** Remember you are handling God's money (we are His money managers)!

We will all leave a legacy when we depart this life. Giving from the heart unlocks the secrets of charitable giving and makes it easier to make giving your way of life, integrate it fully into your lifestyle. Wesley Wittmer writes that as long as we are on this earth, the things of this world will attempt to claim us for their own. The kingdom of God beckons us to be transformed to the image of Christ. Wittmer also writes that our lives should reflect an ever deepening understanding of the love and generosity of God. As thoughtful parents we are instructed about gifts to our children. In **1 Peter 4** we are instructed how to live for God. Nevertheless, our decision of how

much, in what form, and when to make gifts to our children and/or ministries deserves prayerful consideration. Decisions about the form of our gifting can take many different avenues. Should they be outright - such as gifts of securities, life-insurance, real estate, or perhaps through a trust.

**Malachi 3:10-11** cautions us on bringing the whole gift into the storehouse and testing God for His blessings. Hopefully these thoughts will enable us to provide a legacy to Wedgwood in a manner that provides a hopeful future to this ministry - and the children, teens, families, and adults that rely on Wedgwood - until the Lord returns again. God loves a cheerful giver. Accept His purposes for faithful giving and a hopeful future for Wedgwood.

**"AND GOD IS ABLE TO BLESS YOU ABUNDANTLY, SO THAT IN ALL THINGS, AT ALL TIMES, HAVING ALL THAT YOU NEED, YOU WILL ABOUND IN EVERY GOOD WORK."  
// 2 CORINTHIANS 9:8**

If you have any questions about readying your legacy, giving options that transform lives through Wedgwood's grace-filled care for years to come, or would like to notify us of plans you have made - we are here to help! 🌈

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

## 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.

**Rebecca Croff**  
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Russell & Luann Axdorff

For more about Gifts in Memory contact us at [advancement@wedgwood.org](mailto:advancement@wedgwood.org)



Monday, June 7 was a lovely day for Wedgwood's 36th Annual Charity Golf Classic! 348 golfers played a round (or two!) and raised over \$190,000 for our 100% donor-funded Transforming Services, which help children, teens, families, and adults heal from the trauma in their pasts and move toward hopeful futures! We are grateful to each golfer, and sponsor who joined us to #GolfForTheGood of those who rely on Wedgwood's grace-filled care. 🏌️‍♂️

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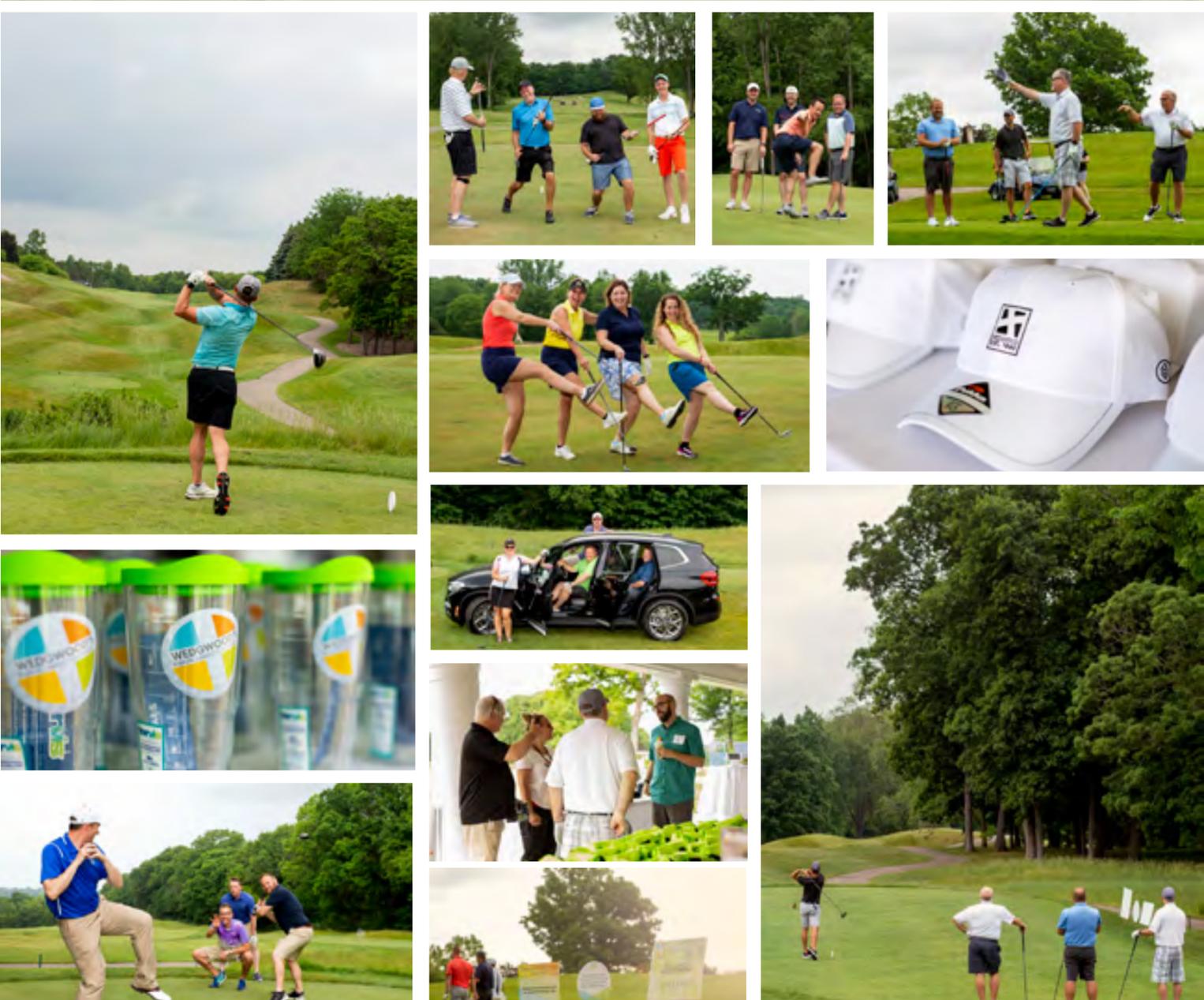
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WEDGWOOD'S  
Anniversary Celebration

**October 21, 2021** | AMWAY HANGAR @ GERALD R. FORD AIRPORT

"Where My Wings Will Take Me" art installation featuring original artwork from Wedgwood clients



The Molly Guillaume Volunteer of the Year Award recipient Deb VanderBand



The Doug & Lois Nagel Leadership Award recipients Jim & Jane Zwiers



Update from President/CEO Dr. Dan Gowdy



What a spectacular evening, celebrating **61 years** of lives transformed through Wedgwood's programs and services! The generosity of our sponsors and 300 guests **raised over \$275,000** for Wedgwood's Children's Hope Annual Fund! These funds support our 100% donor-funded Transforming Services which help kids, adults, and families discover their wings and soar into futures full of hope and possibility!



Live interview, hosted by Maranda from WOOD TV8, with former Wedgwood resident, Dr. Wendi Miller



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