

# Kind HEARTED

your gift changed lives

Human Kind  
October 2021

*"I have so much more hope  
than I came in with."*



## Unexpected Blessings

BECAUSE OF YOU,  
SHAUNA DID NOT GIVE UP

LIFE WITH TWO  
YOUNG CHILDREN  
AND A SURPRISE  
PREGNANCY WAS  
OVERWHELMING ALL  
BY ITSELF.

When learning that Shauna was going to be a mom for a third time, the news hit her with tears instead of excitement. Her doctor saw the anxiety in her reaction and knew she would need wrap around support going forward. But with an already stretched family budget, how would she afford the help she needed. But you stepped in and filled that gap for Shauna. Because of you, support was ready and waiting at Blackwater Counseling, and what perfect timing because all of this happened before the pandemic even began. Now this mom

# YOU ARE THE REASON LIVES ARE TRANSFORMED.

►Continued from page 1

of three is thriving – she got the support she needed, so she could take care of her family with three young children even during the most challenging of times.

Having no family support system in place, Shauna and her husband stretched themselves as thin as possible. They were exhausted. Caring for two small children under six, working full time, and keeping food on the table left very little time for self-care. And at the start of 2020 Shauna learned they would be adding another mouth to feed to their family. Her doctor insisted she needed to seek counseling for anxiety and depression, but there was not much wiggle room in her budget to invest in herself that way.

Because of you scholarship slots for counseling and support at Blackwater Counseling were an option for Shauna. This was a blessing she never expected would exist. Within weeks, Shauna started working with a counselor and quickly realized it was opening a door to see through her anxiety and feel the support of someone walking the journey with her. Her Blackwater Counselor was also able to

Because of you, she found support when she needed it most.



Now a mom of three children, Shauna still has her moments of feeling overwhelmed as the effects of the pandemic linger on. But because of you, today she's stronger and has the tools and resources to guide her -- to take care of herself and her family.

refer Shauna to the Healthy Families program giving her more parenting support and access to family resources.

She was just starting to manage her symptoms when the global pandemic arrived and suddenly all in-person support was taken away. Now isolated at home, struggling to care for her family, trying to continue working, and focus on prenatal care – it was all again too much.

**“My therapist kept saying ‘You can create space for yourself, you can create boundaries for yourself, you can take care of yourself – I am right here to walk the journey with you.’ If she had not been so encouraging, I’m not sure I would have made it through those long days. I just kept her voice and her message playing over and over in my head.”**

Your gift made it possible to find a way to connect even in the midst of a pandemic – telehealth counseling was up and running getting Shauna connected with her counselor within days. Your support was a lifeline during some of the darkest days.

Regular appointments continued virtually with her therapist and her Healthy Families caseworker. When possible she was even able to meet them outdoors – time for her young children to play while she connected to help. By the end of the summer, her symptoms for anxiety and depression were visibly decreasing.

A few months later, her baby boy Nicholas arrived – and officially completed her family. “When I met him I knew that I was so grateful he was mine, he’s part of my story pushing me to get the help I needed, and he’s the next right piece in our family”, shared Shauna. “Blessings come in the most unpredictable ways and at the most unpredictable times.”



## Connection is Everything

YOUR GIFT PROVIDED A PLACE FOR REFUGE AND HEALING

Andrew and Thomas have been in the foster care system longer than most children at their young age – for more than three years. It has been a long, drawn out process. An unfortunate consequence of the pandemic. This slower pace also may have been a blessing as they had time to find new ways to manage their emotions and a greater ability to connect with others. And now with the adoption process underway, their time in foster care is finally nearing the end. Because of you they had the support and help they needed along the way.

Having suffered a traumatic start in life, they often struggled with impulse control and regulating their emotions that resulted in outbursts and frantic behavior. HumanKind’s Foster Care team connected the boys to a therapist at Blackwater Counseling. In the beginning the thought of not meeting in person felt pointless for the foster family. But then the

Because of you, Andrew and Thomas have a trauma therapist to connect with them in thoughtful and unique ways and helping them build a toolkit of therapeutic skills. Your support is the reason lives are transformed, and children get the care they desperately need.

therapist asked if they could meet outdoors on the historic campus and make use of the grounds for their sessions together.

Andrew and Thomas were a little more interested at the idea of meeting outside rather than sit in another office. In one of the first sessions, the therapist and the boys started exploring the grounds – first heading down to the community gardens. “What is growing here? Who eats this food? Can I pick something?” they asked eagerly. A gentlemen working in the garden stopped to greet them and answer as many of their questions as possible. And then he shared something they had not even imagined – he had been a foster child too, and grown up right there on that land. His words of encouragement about how good his life had become moved mountains for the boys that day.

Your generosity has made outdoor sessions possible each week – heading to the pond with a fishing pole, finding the perfect tree to climb, bouncing balls on the basketball court, and building a fort in the forest – all creating meaningful connections. With a more natural setting out for a walk, looking in a garden and exploring something outside gave them a unique opportunity to connect. “We know that being in nature boost growth and healing – and for kids especially it helps them think more clearly, be more comfortable in their bodies and connect more easily,” their therapist shared.

You provided the wrap around support for Andrew and Thomas helping them build resiliency. What a gift that will not only help them now, but stay with them the rest of their lives.

Because of you Andrew and Thomas had care workers and a therapist ready to meet their unique needs and prepare them for life.

# MENTAL HEALTH CHECK IN + GENTLE REMINDERS FOR ALL OF US

We asked our Blackwater Counseling therapists, to share some encouragement and reminders to care for yourself. You do so much for others, we want you to know we care about you and are here to help along the way.



There are always going to be challenging times in life. Add in several months of a global pandemic, and we have added reasons to be overwhelmed facing new challenges, hardships, obstacles, anxiety and stress. Fatigue is normal, human response right now. Please know you are not alone. Here's our hopeful message and a few reminders to help you feel supported:

**1. REGULATE** – find ways to calm the stress response by checking in with yourself each day and doing little things that help. Get enough sleep. Be gentle with yourself. Try bringing awareness to the present moment with deep breathing, mindfulness, and exercise.

**3. RELATE** – focus on relationships and connection with others. Try to connect with a friend or family member by video or phone. Play with a furry friend, listen intentionally to others, or watch a funny show for laughter. Post-traumatic growth happens when we feel safe and secure in relationships.

► Regulate, relate, reason strategy –based on the work of Dr. Bruce D. Perry.

**2. REASON** – storytelling and putting words to experiences helps us grieve and process our experiences. Try giving yourself grace, add boundaries for what you can reasonably handle emotionally, practice regulate and relate strategies daily.

Blackwater Counseling is located on HumanKind's Main Campus, at 1903 HumanKind Way, Lynchburg VA. Telehealth options are available to Virginia residents.

If you have a specific question regarding counseling needs, please don't hesitate to contact us at [blackwater@humankind.org](mailto:blackwater@humankind.org).



## Letter from the President



Robert S. Dendy Jr., MPH  
President and CEO

THANK YOU FOR  
MAKING SURE  
THERE IS A PLACE  
OF HOPE FOR  
THOSE WHO  
ARE IN NEED  
OF NURTURING,  
HEALING AND  
STRENGTH.

You do a lot to serve the children, individuals and families in our community – and I am incredibly grateful. Each new day brings new challenges and another weary soul to our doorstep who desperately needs help. They live in isolation feeling like there is no way out and no way up. But you ensure they have help – a chance to

restore hope, find rest, refuge, healing and support they had only dreamed was possible. You change their story.

Thanks to your support, those in need have access to resources, counseling, and the opportunity to find programs that help them succeed in life.

A day doesn't go by that I don't thank God for the important, life-transforming work that happens here at HumanKind—and for your support that makes it all possible. Your generosity means a lot. Thank you for helping us show that empowering our neighbors creates real and lasting change.

# THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE



What a gift you have provided Kimberly and Aja – high quality child care, job training, access to resources and wrap around family support.

## Taking the Next Step

YOU'RE THE REASON KIMBERLY AND AJA HAVE A BRIGHT FUTURE

Kimberly lost her full-time job six months into the pandemic and had to make ends meet with part-time jobs. She felt stuck only able to focus on the obstacles in front of her instead of her family's future. Kimberly knew she would need to find reliable childcare for her daughter if she was ever going to get ahead, have a full time job, a home of their own and better opportunities in life. And then she heard about Early Head Start opening child care in the Lynchburg area.

She took a deep breath and submitted an application for her 1-year old daughter Aja – not sure if she would be eligible. Like an answer to her prayers, Aja was accepted. The Family Engagement Specialist, Crystal, reached out quickly and started a family assessment to help identify what support Kimberly and her daughter would need in addition to childcare. After making sure they had access to

Because of you, Kimberly had someone to walk the journey with her and ensure a better life for her family.

food, supplies and care, Crystal asked “If you could do anything with your life Kimberly, what would it be?” She was stunned. If her daughter had what she needed, what then could she do to create a better life for both of them?

After some thought – she responded that she had always wanted to pursue a career in agriculture. Crystal then worked with Kimberly to start looking for ways to gain training and educational opportunities in agriculture. As her guide, Crystal helped her make a list of what she would need in order to apply for programs including school transcripts, GED records, and prerequisite courses.

And now because of you, Kimberly is well on her way to making this dream a reality. Aja has full time care in Early Head Start and Kimberly is pursuing an education in agriculture. Having the encouragement to find stability where she is right now and then be able to think ahead for the future is only possible because of you. Kimberly had a Family Engagement Specialist right there to not only ensure her daughter's needs were met, but also to walk with her to take the next step.

Kimberly is able to share what she is learning in her agriculture courses at the EHS center's garden having her very own hands-on learning experience. She hopes to teach other families and engage other parents in the garden along the way. Your gift makes dreams like this possible and plants seeds in the community for a better tomorrow.

“I am with a family from the beginning and get to watch as their circle of support grows. It's beautiful to see when a family starts thriving – they are better able to care of their children.”  
– Family Engagement Specialist.

# You Can Ease her Worry

YOUR GIFT WILL HELP A CHILD WHO IS LIVING IN DISTRESS.

Amelia's world feels upside down and everyone around her seems just as overwhelmed as she is. As the oldest child, her mom needs help with the two younger siblings, so she can keep working to support the family on a single income.

Every day begins with tears, ends with tummy aches at bedtime and wakes with nightmares. She tries hard to avoid school altogether – too afraid to go, and when she does get there, headaches follow. In the first month of school her teacher has noticed Amelia withdrawing from classmates.

After time the guidance office, working with the teacher, and talking with her mom – it is clear Amelia needs some additional support for anxiety. At only 11 years old, she is aware of what is happening in the world, but lacks the coping skills to process the fear, loneliness, and emotions surrounding her. She can't begin to focus on school work – she's more worried about her mom's job and her family's survival. Amelia's mom knows she needs help – but not sure how.



The guidance counselor suggested a referral to see a trauma therapist at Blackwater Counseling. Time with a trained, caring professional counselor can help Amelia with

what she's going through and equip her with tools to navigate anxiety and fear. Here Amelia will be empowered to create space for her emotions, feel valued and build a therapeutic toolkit of coping skills. But her mom's insurance won't cover the cost, and the additional expense just won't fit in the family budget.

But the good news is that you can help! For just \$26 you can provide counseling with a therapist who can walk the journey with Amelia. Your gift will stretch so far by providing scholarship slots combined with other resources to wrap around this family.

And it's not just Amelia who is distressed right now -- we have a waiting list of children who are struggling with anxiety and stress. Referrals are coming in from schools, doctor's offices, and community centers. There is so much change, so much unknown and the adults in their life are overwhelmed too.

Help Amelia feel safe, secure, connected and empowered with tools to navigate these challenging times. These tools will serve her for the rest of her life – what a gift.

**Your gift of \$26 will provide counseling for a child in distress today.**

**Yes, I'll help ease the stress and anxiety of a child.**

Here's my special gift to provide care with a trained, caring professional counselor and support the good work of HumanKind.

- \$26 provides counseling for 1 child
- \$52 provides counseling for 2 children
- \$104 provides counseling for 4 children
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_, to provide counseling help to as many children as possible.

To give faster, please give online today: [humankind.org/counselinghelp](http://humankind.org/counselinghelp)

Help  
a child  
today!