



Gill steps in at crucial time...

When Patrice was asked about her grandson, Jae'ceyon, she beamed. "Let me tell you about our sweet Jae," she said. "Our 10-year-old handsome son is very funny, smart, caring, and forward thinking." Jae adores constructing imaginative worlds with his Legos and reveling in outdoor adventures at the park. He also delights in dressing up and experiencing the joy of ordering food at restaurants.

Patrice and her husband were about to be empty nesters, eagerly planning for retirement. "We are actually Jae's biological grandparents," she explained. "We adopted Jae about 4 years ago." Despite having to defer their retirement plans to care for Jae, they embraced their new roles wholeheartedly. She said, "Once the decision was made, we also realized that continuing to work along with

At six years old, Jae was diagnosed with Autism, presenting developmental and speech delays along with challenges in communication and social interaction. Patrice said, "He has daily intense meltdowns and shutdowns." He would bump his head on the floor or table when angry, and his aggression was hard to manage at times.

Despite their best efforts, Jae's experience in the classroom was untenable. "It became a nightmare," Patrice said. Without the appropriate interventions offered, Jae was faced with attending alternative school. Patrice decided to withdraw him from school and care for him at home. Jae now uses a self-paced life skills program at home and has Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy 40 hours per week. These changes have shown positive results, though Jae's



“Gill was expeditious and amazing at assisting our family without causing additional stress.”

taking care of Jae's many needs would not be possible for us. We made the sacrifice to adopt Jae and become a one-income household." Patrice left a career in office management and chauffeuring to be with Jae every day. "We do not regret one moment," she said. "We do the best we can, taking one day at a time."

aggression still required attention.

Jae's Behavior Analyst suggested a few items to help protect him during outbursts. "Our finances had become thin at this point," she said. Even with insurance coverage, the cost of Jae's ABA therapy is overwhelming. "The very fact that our child needed additional items to try to reduce his

behavior and our finances had become tight, was very stressful," she said.

Patrice remembered her Medicaid representative providing information about Gill Children's Services, and she reached out. "Gill was expeditious and amazing at assisting our family without causing additional stress."

continued inside...



Because of your support, Jae received a helmet and kickboxing bag to help manage his intense emotions. "The helmet makes me feel better when he is angry," she said. Jae also uses his kickboxing bag every day. Patrice said, "It really helps him to redirect his behavior when he is angry and not throw things in his room that he should not be throwing."

"Without Gill's assistance, we would not have been able to provide Jae with this need," Patrice said. "We do not know whom we would have turned to for assistance if you had not stepped in. Thank you to Gill's Children's Services and its donors for your wonderful work in assisting families like mine. You are amazing." ●

Make a donation to help children like Jae'ceyon.



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State of Gill

By Peyton S. Lehrer, Executive Director

This marks the 45th anniversary of providing a safety net for Tarrant County children. At these special milestones, I find myself immersed in the captivating world of old news articles, where every headline becomes a window to the past. In this digital archaeological expedition, I discover the very essence of our organizational identity, etched in the ink of bygone newspapers. The Star-Telegram archived many children impacted by Gill over the years, serving as a poignant reminder of our journey. It's a voyage of understanding, where the past informs the present and propels us towards the future with renewed vigor and appreciation for the path we've treaded.

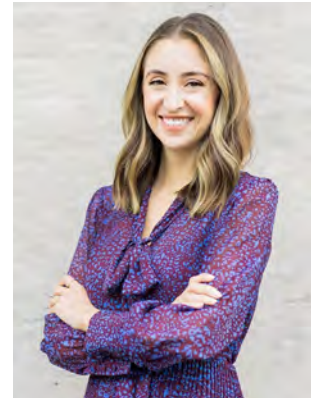
In 1981, Gill Children's Services helped fund an outdoor program for children in Tarrant County Juvenile Services. In 1984, Gill funded specialty hearing aids for a child with Cornelia DeLange Syndrome, a condition little known at the time. Gill also funded counseling in the same year to help a child adjust to life with an ileostomy and colostomy. In 1988, surgery funded by Gill restored hearing for a near-deaf child. In 1992, Gill funded a computer voice synthesizer for a child suffering from dystonia, a disease that hindered his speech.

Today's generation of children still face challenges, with some falling through the cracks due to discontinued Medicaid coverage. As Medicaid's unwinding unfolds, the present-day needs of children become increasingly pressing and complex. Basic healthcare services become precarious, jeopardizing the well-being of countless young lives. In fact, a local dental office warned us of increased applications to come from their patients who need dental treatment. They are experiencing profound decay, but cannot schedule surgery without Medicaid. The urgent call emerges for a solution to safeguard the health and future

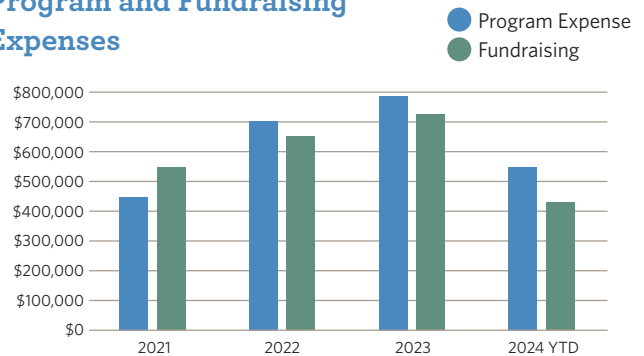
of our children, recognizing that their well-being is not only a moral imperative but also a cornerstone for building resilient, thriving communities.

In this current season, the influx of applications for assistance is surpassing our fundraising efforts, posing a significant challenge. Despite the generosity of our supporters, we find ourselves grappling to meet the escalating demand for help. Your generosity can make a profound difference. We invite you to join the new generation of champions who provide a safety net for children. Together, we can make a lasting impact. Thank you for your unwavering support.

Across Texas 2.7 million people are at risk of losing coverage, and the local impact will be great. Last year, nearly two-thirds of the children we assisted relied on CHIP or Medicaid for their health needs. We will likely see the number of uninsured children grow as a result of Medicaid protections expiring. ●



Program and Fundraising Expenses



Design Inspirations

The 31st annual Design Inspirations event was a tremendous success. Local designers and artists created elaborate tablescapes, and guests heard from award-winning architect Gil Schafer III. Proceeds will benefit Gill Children's Services and Breakthrough Fort Worth. The event is planned by the alumnae groups of Pi Beta Phi and Kappa Kappa Gamma. We are grateful for the event chairs and committee for their hard work on behalf of local children!

Pictured left to right: Design Inspirations 2024 Chairs Lauren Bailey, Keely Nezworski, Kaci Strawn, and Mackenzie Zwick





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Mental Health of Tarrant County Children

From the Perspective of Pediatrician and Gill Children's Services Board Member Dr. Adele Reeder

When speaking to pediatricians about the greatest challenge that they have faced over the last ten years, they will undoubtedly say it has been the rise of mental health crises in children and teens. The problem became so severe that in 2021 the American Academy of Pediatrics declared a national state of emergency for child and adolescent mental health. Though the rise in anxiety, depression, and ADHD is multifactorial and started prior to the pandemic, the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 certainly exacerbated the crisis.



Children who are stressed or depressed often turn to unhealthy coping skills like self-harm, eating disorders, drug use, alcohol, school avoidance, excess screen use, and social isolation. Such behaviors seem to be increasing exponentially in my clinical practice, and pediatricians like myself often struggle to find good treatment options. Children from underserved communities are disproportionately affected. Psychiatrists and therapists often have long wait list or may not accept insurance, making it difficult for patients to access them. I am seeing more school absences than ever before because of mental health issues, and I worry for the future of our children if they are missing out on vital education and time with peers.

There is hope, though. Therapy and medications (both alone and together) can relieve symptoms dramatically. Children can heal when they have access to pediatricians, psychiatrists, and therapists who can treat them and teach them healthy coping skills. It is critical that we support these families so that we can build a healthy future for our children and future generations. ●

Our Wish List

Are you interested in donating an item for our children or staff?

A list of items is available on our Amazon Wish List. When you donate, the item will be shipped directly to our office!



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Taco Week benefits Gill Children's Services!

*Head over to The Original Mexican Eats Cafe during
Taco Week on May 1-5 and your tacos will be more than
just delicious - they will be supporting our children!*



Our Mission

Gill Children's Services provides last resort funding for Tarrant County children whose medical, dental, physical, social, psychological, or educational needs have not been met by other community resources.