

THE o r a t o r

THE MAGAZINE OF FIVE18 FAMILY SERVICES
FORMERLY PATRICK HENRY FAMILY SERVICES

SPRING 2025

EVERYDAY people





FIVE18

FAMILY SERVICES

OUR VISION

*Every child with a thriving family,
supported by a faithful community.*

OUR MISSION

*To build communities of faithful relationships
that ensure children are safe and
families are restored.*

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THE Orator

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A LETTER FROM THE CEO

Robert Day



When I arrived at Patrick Henry Family Services, now FIVE18 Family Services, it would have been tempting to leave things alone, to keep everything as it was functioning when I found it. While it still would have been hard work, with expected challenges and corresponding rewards, we wouldn't have been obligated to push ourselves beyond our own abilities or the organization's capacities. We wouldn't have needed faith to do that. Not really. It wouldn't have required God to show up, since we wouldn't have attempted anything God-sized.

Go to work. Meet a need. Feel good. Collect a paycheck. Give thanks. Retire. That doesn't take a lot of faith, nor much imagination.

We chose, instead, to do the harder thing, the better thing, the we-can't-do-it-without-God-thing. We chose to leave a legacy, a legacy that forced us to change our perspective. And thus, we had to change the work. We changed the direction and the goal. We changed the means. We changed the methods. We changed the pace. We changed everything, including ourselves.

Operating within the group home structure, even with the best of intentions, our children's home had become a place where parents could legally abandon their children. We have sought to become FIVE18 through the lens of this deeply-held conviction: that our efforts must be an integral part of the much larger role and responsibility of the family, the church, and the community.

The name FIVE18 Family Services is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:18, which states: *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."* The key to reconciliation is not costly institutions, bureaucracies, or industrial mega-structures; it's human beings, helping human beings. It's everyday people who need to be in the midst of the need.

At their height, the group homes cared for sixty to seventy residents per year. Today, FIVE18 serves at least 3,000 children—and their families—per year through our main focus areas: family

care, mental health, youth services, and community engagement.

We are not perfect, but we try hard to do what's right in God's sight. We're committed to no ideology, politics, or doctrine, other than this: we are here to meet the needs of every vulnerable child and distressed family that God sets before us. We ache to break the cycles of poverty and child maltreatment, not to solely serve those caught in their destructive grasp. We covet thriving families for every child. We envision a day when the support needed for those families comes from everyday people, the local church and community—not the government or agencies serving on its behalf.



We chose, instead, to do the harder thing, the better thing, the we-can't-do-it-without-God-thing.

As we look to the future, we at FIVE18 Family Services know first-hand that God often leads us down paths we never expected—roads that stretch our faith, challenge our assumptions, and call us to trust him more deeply. The journey hasn't always been easy, and it won't always be comfortable. But we are confident in the one who guides our every step. With every challenge comes the opportunity for God to show up in ways only He can. So, as we continue this mission, we walk forward with faith, ready for the unexpected, knowing that His plans are always greater than our own. And with every change, every pivot, and every leap of faith, we trust that He is leading us exactly where we need to be, mending our futures through every season.

Robert J. Day
MSW, MDiv



THE FIVE18 REBRAND

By Jim Herron, Chief Strategy Officer

FIVE18 Family Services is built upon a deep commitment to restoring families and providing hope in the midst of challenging circumstances. This transformation from Patrick Henry Family Services to FIVE18 Family Services was not just a name change—it was an intentional redefinition of identity and mission, rooted in the biblical calling of 2 Corinthians 5:18.

The journey toward this rebrand began with a vision—one that sought to align the organization's identity with our evolving approach to care. Leadership recognized the need to move beyond historical associations and step forward with a renewed sense of purpose. Guided by prayer and thoughtful discernment, we embarked on a process of seeking God's direction to refine our mission and better communicate our heart to the community.

Through months of discussions, consulting with experts, and engaging in deep reflection, the decision was made to embrace a name that fully encapsulates our commitment to reconciliation and restoration. FIVE18 Family Services represents a commitment to walking alongside families, ensuring they receive the support, love, and community they need to thrive.

The rebrand was not merely an external change—it was a reaffirmation of the organization's purpose.

Every detail, from the logo to the messaging, was carefully crafted to reflect the heart of FIVE18. The transition was unveiled with intentionality and celebration, not just to announce a new name, but to highlight the renewed commitment to serving children and families with grace and compassion.

One of the primary reasons for this transformation was the shift in focus from a traditional residential model to a more community-driven approach. FIVE18 Family Services seeks to strengthen families before crisis occurs, equipping them with the tools and relationships needed for long-term stability. By addressing needs at the root level, we aim to prevent family breakdowns and create environments where children can thrive within their own homes whenever possible.

Collaboration has been a key component in this new approach. FIVE18 Family Services actively partners with churches, community organizations, and other nonprofits to provide holistic care for families. By working together, they create a support system that extends beyond immediate intervention and fosters lasting change. This model ensures that families do not have to navigate their struggles alone, but instead can find strength in a community that walks alongside them in their journey toward healing and restoration.

Freshening the brand over the years:



In preparation for the rebrand, FIVE18 Family Services invested significant time and resources into ensuring the new identity resonated with the community. Through careful planning, we engaged in strategic marketing efforts, redesigning all visual assets, launching a new website, and implementing an extensive outreach campaign. The goal was not just to introduce a new name, but to communicate a renewed vision of hope and reconciliation.

The unveiling of the new name was marked by an intentional celebration that extended beyond the organization itself. Instead of making the announcement at a singular FIVE18 event, we decided on ThriveFest—a community-wide gathering designed to highlight many organizations that support children and families. This collaborative approach underscored our belief that meaningful change happens when communities come together in unity and purpose.

At the heart of this transformation is the unwavering belief that every child deserves to grow up in a loving and stable environment. FIVE18 Family Services

stands as an advocate for families, ensuring they have access to the resources and support they need. This commitment is not just about providing services—it is about building relationships that lead to lasting restoration.

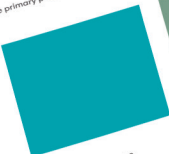
Looking ahead, FIVE18 Family Services remains dedicated to its mission, continuously seeking ways to expand its impact and deepen its connection with the community. The name change is just the beginning of a larger movement toward reconciliation and healing. Every child, every parent, and every family that walks through its doors is a testament to the power of hope and the transformational love of Christ.

The heart behind FIVE18 Family Services is clear: to be a beacon of hope for families in need. By embodying the ministry of reconciliation, we aim to build bridges, heal broken relationships, and create lasting transformation within the community. Every family served is an opportunity to extend love and care, demonstrating the true essence of what it means to walk in faith and service.

Brand Colors

Primary Brand Colors

The primary palette may be used extensively both for large areas of color and as accent colors.



AQUA BLUE
CMYK 100 | 7 | 36 | 0
RGB 0 | 161 | 173
#00A1AD



LIGHT GREEN
CMYK 57 | 25 | 50 | 2
RGB 118 | 156 | 137
#769CB9



TEAL GREEN
CMYK 81 | 29 | 58 | 9
RGB 44 | 132 | 118
#2CB476



CHARCOAL GRAY
CMYK 46 | 50 | 50 | 36
RGB 77 | 77 | 79
#4D4D4F



*All this is from God,
who reconciled us to himself through Christ
and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*

2 Corinthians 5:18



POWER IN PREVENTION:

Collaboration on Early Childhood Mental Health in Central Virginia

By Jennifer Owen, Director of FIVE18 Counseling

The Infant & Toddler Connection of Central Virginia at the Lynchburg Health Department connects children ages zero to three and their families with the resources needed to lay the foundation for future success. A team of qualified professionals meet with the children and their families to assess their developmental needs and link them with the appropriate support services. Examples of these supports include occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy, most of which take place in the families' homes. Until recently, the staff at Infant & Toddler Connection were lacking connections to mental health services to refer these families to. Due to God's timing, FIVE18 Counseling's Clinical Training Team has been able to step in and fill this gap.

While in its early stages, the collaboration between The Infant & Toddler Connection and FIVE18 Counseling's Clinical Training team has the potential to provide lasting impact during the formative years of a child's life. Currently, when it is found that a family is in need of mental health support,

the Health Department's staff provide the referral information to FIVE18 Counseling's Clinical Training team so the family can be paired with their mental health clinicians. The mental health clinicians will then schedule time to visit them in their homes, assess their needs, develop a treatment plan, and begin providing them with tailored mental health support. Together with the parents, the clinicians will focus on the specific mental health needs of that child which could include attachment issues, behavioral concerns, communication skill building, or emotional regulation.

When discussing mental health in early childhood development with Gretchen Jackson, Service Coordinator at Infant & Toddler Connections, she reflected how people don't often think about the mental health of zero to three year olds. Many children in our region experience child abuse or neglect during those early years of life, thus impacting their attachment and brain development. At the same time, many mental health service providers shy away from providing services to children at such

a young age. However, Jackson notes a paradigm shift. The mental health needs of both the child and the caregivers are becoming a primary topic of consideration, which opens the door for preventative work to take place.



Many children in our region experience child abuse or neglect during those early years of life, thus impacting their attachment and brain development.

While there is a significant emphasis on the mental health of the child, the mental health of the caregivers is of equal importance. Jackson noted that sometimes caregivers feel like they are a “bad parent” due to the struggles that their child is facing. Rather than contributing to the shame, guilt, or grief

a caregiver might be experiencing, FIVE18 clinicians are there to hear their story and empower them. The clinicians are able to provide psychoeducation and emotional support to the parents, foster skill-building, and empower caregivers to feel confident in their role in their child’s life. When caregivers are given the tools that they need to succeed in their own mental health and parenting, it creates a thriving space for the child.

The collaborative efforts between the Infant & Toddler Connection of Central Virginia and FIVE18 Counseling are demonstrating the possibilities that prevention can have on the families in our community. When asked about the current families being served in this capacity, Jackson noted one caregiver in particular who is incredibly receptive and desperate for help. She describes them as “extremely excited” and stated, “I believe this will be a huge success for them.” Jackson remarked, “Having an answer and a solution to what seems impossible to a family is amazing.” FIVE18 Counseling is grateful to be a part of this preventative work and excited to see the impact that it makes on children and families in our community.



Kris Crankshaw

By Janice Clemmons, Director of Family Empowerment and Ava Sargent, Family Advocate

Kris Crankshaw's 2023 internship began with community-focused initiatives, rolling up her sleeves to serve single moms and kids. She developed such a strong passion for the moms at Homes of Hope that she was eager to continue volunteering after her internship ended. "I wanted to help," replied Kris, when asked about her motivation to remain involved. As a future counselor, Kris' passion is to serve those around her in a meaningful way, and her volunteer experience has allowed her to do just that.

One of the things that surprised Kris the most was getting a "different look into how people grew up." With a degree in psychology and her own family's struggles, Kris had expected to be prepared by common experiences with the women she served. Instead, she found that she carried some biases, and volunteering allowed her the opportunity to grow in her understanding.

Kris' favorite volunteer project was creating a store for the moms using a storage room full of donated items. She smiled as she described how the moms' faces lit up when they could choose what they needed with 'bucks' earned from program participation. This store will be recreated, with many volunteer hands, starting in February. Kris is eager to work with more volunteers who are interested in making a difference behind the scenes.

When describing the ideal type of volunteer to work alongside, Kris mentioned people who were hardworking, excited, and passionate. She advised potential volunteers to "Ask, don't assume," because there is almost always a space for all kinds of skills, interests, and passions. Any amount of time is enough time!

Janice Clemmons, Director of Family Empowerment was asked to reflect on the impact of Kris' volunteerism. "Kris' generosity of time inspires families and staff. She taught one mom basic cleaning skills. She was incredibly supportive of a mom who was struggling with hydration during pregnancy, helping her to monitor her water intake. She was a consistent presence, stepping into practical tasks that made the environment more peaceful. Now, she's gearing up to develop a store at the office where families can pick up items they may not otherwise be able to afford. I love her heart of service!"

When reflecting on her years of volunteer experience, Kris realized how much she gained from connecting with the staff, other volunteers, and the moms served. Kris maintains relationships with multiple other staff and volunteers, one of whom she describes as her best friend. You can join Kris in supporting the development of meaningful relationships with the goal of strengthening families.

To volunteer, contact us at five18.org/volunteer





By Allison Jordan, Vision 30 Consultant

CarePortal Implementation: CarePortal is an essential tool for the VISION30 initiative, enabling the community to respond to local needs more effectively. This platform connects families, community organizations, and faith groups to provide targeted assistance, making it easier for everyday people from local faith communities to contribute to the well-being of vulnerable children, often reuniting children with their families after foster care or preventing the factors that lead to foster care in the first place.

Understanding the Root Causes: By examining the factors that lead to foster care placements, we gain valuable insights into how to support at-risk and in-risk families. Recognizing the vital roles we all play—from family members to professionals—helps strengthen the foundation of care.

The Power of Prayer: At the core of VISION30 is a commitment to prayer. We believe that prayer provides the strength and guidance needed to meet this challenge, reminding us of the importance of divine support in everything we do.

Building a Stronger, Safer Future for Our Children

VISION30 is more than a goal—it's a movement to create a region where children grow up in safety, supported by families and faith communities. Together, through prayer, collaboration, and a commitment to action, we can build stronger families, safer environments, and a brighter future for every child in our community.

Reach out if you, your organization, your business, or faith community would like to find your place on the VISION30 River.

HOW SMALL STEPS Create Big Change



*By Raven Johnson, Program Evaluator and Impact Analyst
and Nicholette Antoniuk, Director of Family Care Ministries*

A family's story is rarely shaped by one dramatic event. It unfolds through countless small moments—some joyful, some challenging—and the support that helps them navigate life's twists and turns. At FIVE18 Family Care, we walk with families through these moments, believing that even the smallest step toward hope can spark a journey toward healing and growth.

Families come to us with stories full of complexity and courage: a grandparent stepping in to raise their grandchildren, a single mother working hard to create stability, or a foster family learning how to help a child feel safe after experiencing loss. Every family's path is different, but all share a deep desire to build something stronger and more connected.

This is why we center our work on the 5 Protective Factors Framework, an evidence-based approach that helps families grow their resilience, strengthen relationships, and find the tools they need to thrive. Here's how this journey unfolds:

1. PARENTAL RESILIENCE

"Parenting is hard," one kinship caregiver reflected, "but it's even harder when you feel like you're doing it all alone."

A mother who related to this came to FIVE18 feeling overwhelmed, unsure how to help her children through difficult moments. Through Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) classes and one-on-one coaching, she found a new perspective. "It increased my compassion and helped me identify strategies for managing tough moments," she said. Now she feels more capable and connected to her kids, and with each small success, her confidence continues to grow.



2. SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

No one should have to face life's challenges in isolation. Yet for many families, the weight of loneliness compounds every difficulty they

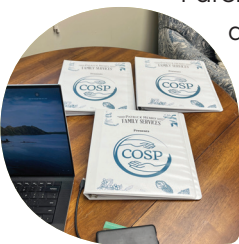
encounter. Social connection is a lifeline—offering relief, trust, and the strength to move forward.



Through our Family Advocacy program, we help families build supportive networks. Whether through peer groups, trusted advisors, or simply having someone who listens without judgment, these connections make all the difference. In just six months, 7 in 10 families experience a remarkable shift, often feeling less alone and more supported, surrounded by a community that believes in them and walks alongside them.

3. KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Sometimes, what parents need most is practical knowledge to help them understand and respond to their child's needs. Our Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) classes give parents the tools to recognize and meet those needs with compassion.



Parents often report feeling lost when their kids act out. However, one parent shared, “now that I’ve learned more about COSP, I can watch more closely and pay attention to new ways my kids learn and do things differently. I’m filled with gratitude as I realize how much my kids are growing and changing.”

By the end of the program, parents experience transformation in their caregiving experience—including a 140% decrease in parenting-related stress and greater confidence in their role. Average scores improve from 1.67 to 4.00 out of 5 by the program's end. This remarkable growth reflects the power of practical tools, combined with knowledge about parenting and child development, to equip parents to meet their child's attachment needs and behaviors. These changes create a foundation where children feel safe, supported, and ready to thrive.

4. CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

Sometimes, change begins with something as simple as reliable transportation, help with housing, or access to childcare. These tangible supports relieve stress and open the door to stability.

For one caregiver, receiving referrals to local food banks, resource closets, and a church ready to build

connection produced something incredible—space to breathe and place to heal. She felt confident in providing for her cousins' needs and started building authentic relationships with her new church family. Small solutions brought immediate relief, but the long-term impact has been life-changing. With that burden lifted, she could focus on building a more secure and hopeful future, inspiring the children in her care to dream in ways that may have seemed impossible before.



5. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

When parents feel supported, children naturally flourish. The stability created by attentive, nurturing caregivers helps children feel safe, connected, and confident to explore the world around them.

Parenting isn't about perfection—it's about showing up, even on hard days. Our Family Care team is there to help parents in those moments of frustration and fatigue, offering new ways to understand their child's behavior and respond with connection instead of conflict.



It's encouraging to reflect that in just six months, 63% of families reported meaningful growth: fewer power struggles, deeper understanding, greater confidence, and a deeper understanding of their children's needs.

FAMILY—WORTH THE INVESTMENT, WORTH FIGHTING FOR

In the end, family is not just defined by who we're related to—it's the people who show up, love us unconditionally, and help us grow. As Maya Angelou so beautifully put it: “Family isn't always blood. It's the people in your life who want you in theirs. The ones who accept you for who you are, the ones who would do anything to see you smile, and who love you no matter what.”

At FIVE18 Family Care, we believe in standing with families—walking with them through struggles, celebrating their successes, and offering hope for their futures. The journey isn't always easy, but it's always worth it.

Because when families are given the right tools and support, they don't just survive—they thrive. And every small step brings them closer to the future they've dreamed of.

Three Brothers Thrive with *Hat Creek Camp*

By Hayley Rosario, Programming Services Coordinator

**Names have been changed to protect identities.*

Children's laughter echoed through the woods as Will, Austin, and Alex navigated an obstacle course, their camp counselors cheering them on. For these three brothers, life had been a series of challenges. Removed from their biological family, they found themselves in the loving care of Julie and Andrew, their foster parents.

Raising three boys, especially those with the complex needs often associated with foster care, can be overwhelming. Julie and Andrew, despite their love and dedication, felt the weight of constant demands. They knew that to truly support their boys, they needed to prioritize finding them the right support. This led them to seek help through Hat Creek Camp's Adventure-Based Mentoring program.

This program paired each brother with a dedicated mentor, providing them with much-needed one-on-one attention and a safe space to explore their emotions. Throughout the year, Will, the eldest, enjoyed weekly outings with his mentor playing

basketball, sharing stories, and learning valuable life skills like patience and resilience. Austin, the middle child, thrived in the creative environment fostered by his mentor, discovering a passion for art and building confidence in his ability to express himself. Alex, the youngest, found comfort in the steady presence of his mentor, learning to trust and open up about his feelings.

These weekly mentoring sessions provided more than just fun; they offered the boys a much-needed break from the stresses of their daily lives. They learned to navigate social situations, develop healthy coping mechanisms, and build crucial life skills like communication and problem-solving.

For Julie and Andrew, the mentoring program provided invaluable respite. The weekly break allowed them to recharge, address their own emotional needs, and strengthen their relationship as a couple. It also gave them the opportunity to focus on individual needs within their family, providing much-needed one-on-one time with each child.

The culmination of this year-long mentoring journey came in the form of a week-long summer camp experience at Hat Creek Camp. For the first time, the brothers would experience camp together, but also have the opportunity to grow individually.

Camp life was a whirlwind of activity. The boys reveled in the freedom of the outdoors, exploring the forest, swimming in the lake, and testing their limits on the climbing wall. They learned to work together as a team, supporting each other during challenging activities and celebrating each other's successes.

But camp also provided opportunities for individual growth. Will, eager to prove his independence, chose to join the older boys' cabin, where he learned to navigate social dynamics and forge new friendships. Alex was able to connect individually with counselors and share his interests without being overshadowed by his brother. Austin, initially hesitant to leave his brothers' side, gradually ventured out, joining other campers in games and activities, discovering a newfound confidence in his social skills.

While mentoring and camp are distinct programs, they collaborated to create a powerful impact in the lives of these three brothers. The skills they'd learned with mentors throughout the year – communication, resilience, and emotional regulation – were put to the test in the dynamic camp environment. The boys learned to navigate social situations, resolve conflicts, and build meaningful connections with their peers.

For Will, Austin, and Alex, camp was more than just a fun summer vacation; it was a transformative experience. They returned home with newfound confidence, stronger bonds with their brothers, and a deeper understanding of their own resilience. The Hat Creek Camp program, with its emphasis on both individual growth and collective support, provided these three boys with the tools and the experiences they needed to thrive.



“ They learned to work together as a team, supporting each other during challenging activities and celebrating each other's successes.





C.O.O.
Jeff Nitz

By Jeff Nitz, Chief Operations Officer and Taylor Melvin, Marketing Communications Specialist

Meet Chief Operating Officer Jeff Nitz!

Jeff and his team keep things running behind the scenes at FIVE18 Family Services. With a personal and professional background in child welfare, Jeff shares more about what he brings to our community with his heart and experience.

What was your introduction to the family welfare field and how has it impacted you?

I was admittedly a reluctant convert to what ultimately has been my career in child and family welfare for nearly four decades. Coming out of college, I envisioned myself serving as a psychologist and dispensing wisdom in counseling sessions to those in need, and had begun to prepare myself for that educational and career path. I ended up taking a role as a foster care caseworker that my wife, Cheryl, told me about, simply to earn some money before returning to graduate school. That experience of working with foster children and both their biological and foster families is what rocked

my world and changed the trajectory of my career and life. It was demanding work professionally and personally, but perhaps more importantly, it helped me begin to recognize some of our community's deepest needs within families, and how the Church can live out the heart of Christ in responding to those needs.

What is your personal experience with fostering/adoption?

Working in the field of child and family welfare resulted in me and my wife doing respite care to support foster families, doing foster care ourselves, and ultimately having two of our four children join our family through adoption. I can hardly begin to describe how much Cheryl and I have been changed by and enriched through these experiences, albeit some of them painful. However, it seems to me that God makes the most of challenging experiences for both our growth and His glory. With a couple of decades of hindsight, I can now say that authentically.

You've talked about how you were recruited for FIVE18 at just the right time. What was enticing to you about this organization?

So when Claudia Fletcher, our Chief Program Officer, called me out of the blue to tell me about a C.O.O. position in her organization, it was one of the very few times I had considered leaving my former organization where I had spent 22 years. It certainly caught my attention after my wife had also been strongly encouraged to apply for a professor role at Liberty University less than two weeks before my phone call with Claudia. Learning more about Patrick Henry Family Services (our name at that time) and its focus was certainly intriguing. I had worked in faith-based agencies throughout my career, but the emphasis on faith here and having a different kind of financial sustainability that was more heavily reliant on donors and less on chasing federal, county, and state contracts was intriguing to me.

What is your role at FIVE18 Family Services, and what is your job all about? Why is it important to you?

I serve as the Chief Operating Officer which ensures that the “backshop” of FIVE18 – HR, Accounting, I.T., Events, etc. – is effectively supporting the client-facing portion of the agency. We believe that the Operations team members are the ones who hopefully eliminate most of the friction that any organization is bound to experience, and to serve our colleagues with excellence, so that our clients and partnering organizations get the very best care. And taking a page from Jesus’ teaching on the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, serving each and every person as unto Christ is a high calling and privilege.

How do you approach leadership?

Drawing further on that notion of serving others, I think the quintessential characteristic of effective leaders is the degree to which their heart is about serving others (their community, target clients and staff) rather than serving their ego. Of course, vision

I can hardly begin to describe how much Cheryl and I have been changed by and enriched through these experiences...

setting, strategic planning and execution, inspiring others and wise use of resources to advance the organizational mission are all part of leadership, but it all starts with reckoning each day who we are before God, and humbly bring a servant mindset to every interaction we have in the way we have been lavishly served and loved by God.

What's new and exciting in your life these days?

I have a few responses to this question. First, Cheryl and I continue to add grandchildren, most recently a brand new grandson in March. I also have to mention that by the time our Orator readers are reading this story, I'll have earned my doctorate in traumatology, the study of how traumatic experiences impact individuals, families and communities. It's been a nearly 6-year road, but I have learned so much through this process of how we (as individuals and as an organization) can help to heal and reconcile brokenness and broken relationships. And lastly, I couldn't be more excited about FIVE18's vision for the future, including equipping many in our community to be champions for reconciliation and planting our community collaboration center right in the middle of the city (4009 Murray Place). What an exciting time to be part of FIVE18 Family Services!

Connection *Changes Everything*

By Jacob Vanderbleek, Church Coordinator

In CarePortal circles nationwide, you may commonly hear network leaders say, “Connection changes everything.” On the surface, the most obvious understanding of this unofficial slogan is that connection changes everything for the families this national network serves; and that is definitely true. If a family in poverty is approaching a dead end and doesn’t know what to do next, a faithful community wrapping around them can change their daily lives, shifting a crisis into a turning point. However, we recently had a story from our local network show us that connection means just as much to the service providers as it does to the families being served.

This story comes to us through CarePortal from our friends at Lake Christian Ministries. A mother and her son relocated from West Virginia and moved in with the child’s grandmother. This child is ventilator-dependent and the treatments needed for his condition are most available at UVA. This arrangement was the best means by which they could live in a nearby area. Between these and other recent hardships, the household fell behind on rent and eviction was imminent. Lake Christian Ministries was able to support some of the finances needed, but the service worker involved in this case was determined not to give up on this family.



If a family in poverty is approaching a dead end and doesn't know what to do next, a faithful community wrapping around them can change their daily lives...



She personally advocated for this family around the community and was able to obtain support from two other phenomenal organizations in the community: Parkview Community Mission and Interfaith Outreach.

Despite all of this dedicated effort, the resources gathered still weren't enough. A significant amount of money was still needed; \$1,254 to be exact. At this point, Lake Christian Ministries posted a CarePortal request advocating for this family. Within minutes of posting, an anonymous donor felt the call to donate the rest of the money. This equipped a local church to use that donation to pay the remainder of this family's bill and invite them into a faithful community.



Connection changes everything. Yes, the family's trajectory was drastically changed by the dedicated community members who showed up for them. However, I'd like for you to realize what this means for the social worker who went to bat for this family on multiple occasions. Imagine the peace and rest she felt knowing this family wouldn't be on the streets, or the thrill of encouragement from seeing Vision30 become reality for this household. Because of this encouragement, she's that much more empowered to continue impacting more families each day because everyday people chose to show up for this family. Connection changes everything; and at FIVE18 Family Services, we hope you choose daily to be part of that change.



A Tool That's Shaping Us

By Amy Foster, Vision 30 Community Partner Strategist

"I'm from the church up the street, here for you if you need anything."

There's something about being able to say those words - that for a moment at least - lets us feel the embodiment of what it means to "be the church."

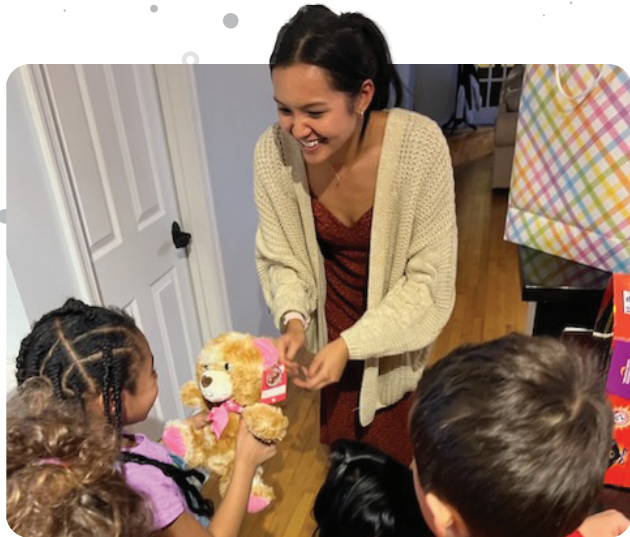
We have to face it. We live siloed lives. The church building often sits empty and the people who visit it run fast-paced lives. So how do we love our neighbors well when we don't live or work in the community where we attend church? How can we be sure of how to love our neighbors well, anyway?

At Gospel Community Church, CarePortal has helped us begin to answer these questions.

We are so thankful for how it has helped us connect to our community. Because of the technology, we can actually look at a map and see very real and dire

needs in our own church neighborhood. CarePortal gives us an invitation to visit a family. An invitation! How special is that?! A sacred gift. We get to meet our neighbors and tell them they aren't alone in the hard times, and that we are near and we care. It allows us to help in a way that is truly meaningful to the family. And it's having an impact.

From the time Gospel Community Church started using CarePortal in November 2022 to the time of writing this, we have responded to 72 requests, which have served 141 children with a total economic impact of \$48,576. Considering the work we do is completely volunteer and donation driven, those numbers are truly mind blowing. It's a testament to what is possible when we make a decision to intentionally pay attention to the needs around us, challenging ourselves to radical generosity.



I'm from the church up the street, here for you if you need anything.



We are grateful for the impact CarePortal has brought to families, but it might be how we as a church have grown spiritually that has had the deepest felt and most lasting impact.

For every person we meet, yes, we give them resources that they truly need. And sometimes those interactions lead to long-lasting relationships. But we have come to realize that much of the beauty of the CarePortal process is that it gives us something we as a church need – something the Lord wants to teach us about who we are and how He wants us to live and love. It's been a deep discipleship journey of sorts. We are pushed to hospitality as the Bible defines it (philoxenia, a Greek word which means "love of strangers"), we learn about leaving our comfort zones with the help of the Holy Spirit, about how we co-labor with Christ, about how the Lord gives us words

when we don't have them (Luke 12:12), about loving without expectations (Luke 6:35), about pure religion (James 1:27), about expanding our family, about drawing near to the Father's heart, about sitting with others in their pain, about sharing the hope we have been given, and the list can go on and on.

Developing relationships through CarePortal isn't easy, but neither is what we have been commanded to do as believers. CarePortal has revealed how vastly out of practice we are with putting ourselves in a position where we desperately need His guidance. We are so humbled to be on this journey. We are just everyday people who don't know much, but we are learning to listen to His voice and learning to love as He does. As it turns out, learning to trust He will meet our needs, as we meet others' needs, is where we often feel His comforting presence the most.

Board of Trustees Highlight

Tommy Clark

By Taylor Melvin, Marketing Communications Specialist



Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I grew up in Northern Virginia and went to college at the University of Lynchburg, which is where I met my wife. We started Mission House Coffee in 2018, and I became a pastor at Passion Community Church in 2019.

How did you first learn about FIVE18?

We were looking for organizations for Mission House to collaborate with through our “Round-Up” program, and we came across what was then Patrick Henry Family Services. Through the years, I’ve continued to get to know people and see the impact of what happens when FIVE18 cares for and loves people. The more I learned, the more I continued to fall in love with the work that they do.

What made you want to join the board?

When I was offered an invitation to join, my first question was, “Is this just going to be something that looks good on a resume?” Thankfully, I was assured that they were asking for exactly what I wanted to provide. I want to help to mesh the perspectives of the community, the church, and local businesses with tangible impact and theologically-sound approaches.

How does our mission resonate with your personal values and experiences?

The goal we’ve set out with Mission House is really the goal I’ve set out for my personal life. I want to move throughout my community with love, care, and acceptance. With FIVE18, this looks like being able to provide comfort through not only words and connection, but also through tangible provision in people’s life circumstances.

How do your previous experiences help you serve on our board?

I think what really helps is the amount of mistakes I’ve made. I’ve learned so much just by messing things up. Then I’m able to share the wisdom I’ve learned with others so they don’t have to experience the pain that I went through to develop that wisdom. Also, because of the nature of my business, I feel that I’m really able to understand what’s going on in the community.

In your opinion, what is the most critical need we should address in the community related to ensuring children are safe and families are restored?

I would say the first and most important thing is awareness. I genuinely don’t think there’s a lack of resources in the community. If you don’t know the needs around you, how can you possibly know if you’re able to meet those needs? If we can continue to help people understand what goes on in this city, that’s where we’re going to see people become more generous, more bought-in, more caring. If someone cuts you off in the road, you immediately get angry at them because it’s just a car, it’s not a person. But as soon as you know who that person is, all of a sudden it changes your perspective. It changes how you treat the situation. If we can break broad, dehumanizing concepts like poverty down to the individual level, then that gives someone an entry point from which they can care.

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF Aubrey Mason

Board of Trustees Highlight

By Taylor Melvin, Marketing Communications Specialist

Shortly after we interviewed board member Aubrey Mason, we were saddened to hear of his passing. Please enjoy the following article in his memory.

“Aubrey, like his father before him, faithfully served this ministry for many years. He was always positive and supportive of our work. He was usually first to second a motion, and would be quick to contribute some humor to a serious conversation. I will remember him for his smile, sense of humor, and especially, for his kind disposition.

-Robert Day

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I was born and raised in Lynchburg. I graduated from the College of William & Mary in 1972, and that same year I entered the financial services industry as a wealth advisor for 48 years, retiring about 4 ½ years ago. Coincidentally, I still live about 2 miles from where I grew up. So I've basically been a Lynchburg resident my whole life.

How did you first learn about FIVE18?

Well, I've known about the organization since the 80s, I guess. My dad was on the board for several years and, having my own relationship with the organization, I was asked to step in for him when he became ill in 1992. I've been on the board ever since, which really just means I'm old. But don't worry, I've still got some Peter Pan in me.

How does our mission resonate with your personal values and experiences?

I really enjoyed the organization in its original form, but as things in society have changed over the years, the organization has changed with it. And thanks to Robert's leadership, I think they were very thoughtful and careful in each step that they took, and I've been very pleased with the results. But to answer



your question, I just like helping children. I mean, who doesn't like helping children and families in need, and just people in general? I just like the mission they've set up, and I think they're accomplishing a great deal. It makes me feel good to be a part of that.

What types of programs or services do we have that most align with your heart for our community?

I think counseling is extremely important. I think the camp is a great asset for the community, and of course the outreach to help broken families. And trying to end the need for foster care is outstanding. I think they've done a great job of constantly evaluating the programs they do have and how they can do better, and whether they need to do better. And hopefully they continue to improve. If you think about it, every program is needed in its form. There's really no redundancy, which I think makes a lot of sense and speaks to the efficiency of this organization.

What is your most proud accomplishment as a member of the board?

I think attending almost every meeting, continuing to be involved, and listening more than talking have been very important for me. I just like to help where I can help.

IMPACT Update

2200

children served
through CarePortal

141

adults and

414

children served
through Dare2Dad

813

Children Served
by Hat Creek Camp

8155

units of
counseling service

120

families served by
Family Care*

3993

unique children
served and

1521

adults served total





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What is an orphan?



RECOVERING
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coming spring 2025



recoveringorphan.org

Donor Highlight

Jean Yates



By Taylor Melvin, Marketing Communications Specialist
and Liz Mahan, Donor Care Coordinator

Jean's story is one of loss and pain turned to a story of incredible impact and an outpouring of the love of Jesus. Facing a life of poverty and having a father who struggled greatly with substance abuse, Jean's life began with great struggle. Her mother worked tirelessly, but since her job doing laundry for a local college was their only income, her family would have to call on their neighbors to get food and shoes to wear to school, but sometimes wouldn't have any food to eat. In Jean's retelling of her story, she shared that her childhood was a life no one would want to live because of the horrific treatment she, her sisters, and her mom endured from her father.

Jean's mother took her children to church every Sunday and, in the summers, they were always in Vacation Bible School. Ever since she was a little girl, she has remained heavily involved in her church and serving others through the ministries she was involved in. Jean remembers as a teenager praying to God, "I've got to get out of here, and I want my life to be usable and valuable to others." She wanted to give to others, and she has done that and abundantly more through her generosity.

Jean and her husband, Tommy, were married for 63 years, and since they shared a similar upbringing, they agreed to be generous because "God gave it to us, we don't just make the money- God gives us the money, and He expects us to use it wisely." They used their marriage to take in children who had difficult home lives and found beautiful ways to minister to many

children through their marriage, up until Tommy passed away four years ago. Even in the loss of her husband, Jean still loves on the children in her life; at her church, she's even called "Granny Jean" and she loves spoiling them rotten, and she says "they're just my life." When sharing why she gives so generously and loves others so well, she said, "I just hope the seeds that I'm planting will help humanity. I enjoy every day, I make the best of it, and I give all the thanks to the Lord above. He is so good to me." Jean's generosity will impact children and families for generations to come, and we are so thankful for her heart for children, evident in a life dedicated to serving others.

LEAVING A LEGACY

We all want to create lasting change and provide hope for others, and sometimes, it's difficult to even know where to begin. Leaving a legacy through planned giving is a meaningful way to align your philanthropic goals with long-term change in our community.

Planned giving is more than just a gift—it's a powerful way to ensure that your values live on, supporting children and families for generations to come. Whether it's through a bequest in your will, a charitable gift annuity, or other giving options, your legacy can help us continue to create lasting change and transform lives well into the future. Planned giving can be tailored to align with your legacy goals, whether you wish to support a specific service or program or provide unrestricted support.

You are an integral part of our future, and we are here to help you craft a plan that reflects the lasting legacy you wish to leave.

Together, we can create a legacy of hope. Thank you for considering this meaningful way to support FIVE18 Family Services. To learn more, reach out to us directly or visit our website (five18legacy.org)—we're honored to be your partner in planning for the future.

Sarah Phelps

Director of Donor Engagement

sphelps@five18.org

434-376-4673x204

Crescendo Introduction to Planned Giving.
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Marilyn & Michelle

**Donor
Highlight**



Marilyn



Michelle

By Taylor Melvin, Marketing Communications Specialist and Liz Mahan, Donor Care Coordinator

Sisters Michelle and Marilyn have turned their Christmas tradition into a powerful example of giving that's making a real difference!

Nearly ten years ago, Michelle was preparing her shopping lists for Christmas presents, and when she thought of her sister, Marilyn, she asked herself, "How many sweaters do we really need?" They both wanted their presents to one another to be meaningful. Michelle then asked herself, "Instead of exchanging gifts, why don't we donate to each other's charity of choice?" And here started a tradition that makes an impact!

Around that time, Michelle remembers hearing FIVE18 Family Services' (at that time Patrick Henry Family Services') advertisements on the radio, and she would pass the boys and girls homes on her commutes. Hearing about the services we provided, Michelle decided to make FIVE18 Family Services her organization of choice. Marilyn, passionate about prevention services and the importance of early intervention, wholeheartedly agreed and chose an organization that focused on similar values located in her community. The sisters had been taught by their parents, "To whom much is given, much is required." They were grateful for the Sunday

school teachers and leaders who instilled in them the importance of putting Jesus first. Both sisters believe that investing in families and strengthening communities is key to creating lasting change, and that it all begins with healthy, thriving families. As they put it, prevention is the key, and there is a great need for education and support. They both quoted the famous saying, "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime."

FIVE18 Family Services is on a mission to help families thrive and mend futures. Thanks to the generosity of people like Michelle and Marilyn, the vision of mended futures for every family is closer to becoming a reality. They're not only making an impact now, but they're also creating a legacy that impacts generations to come. For the sisters, it's not just about giving money—it's about investing in families and helping them thrive. As they shared, "It's healthy families that produce healthy adults."

***Give a man a fish,
feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish,
feed him for a lifetime.***

The Honor and Memorial Register

The following donors have made honor or memorial gifts to FIVE18 Family Services in recognition of those who have made a difference in their lives. These generous donations not only help our ministry, but they also leave a lasting legacy to those who are honored.

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William and Peggy Abbitt

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who reconciled
himself to us
through Christ
and gave us
the ministry
of reconciliation.*

— 2 Corinthians 5:18

