

The Villages has a long and deep history of helping children in need going back to our founding in 1966 by Dr. Karl Menninger, a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom Award (the highest civilian award of the United States) who had a deep love and passion for all children in need, irrespective of their background, their origin, their history, or their circumstances.

Since 1966, The Villages has helped thousands of children in need by providing them with supportive homes in Topeka and Lawrence with a level of care that provides for safety, love, trust, medical care, education, and hope for the young children during their stay with us. Every child that has ever walked through the doors of The Villages, despite their many and varied backgrounds and circumstances, have all needed at least one consistent thing – our help and assistance.

The Villages does not control the paths that precede the children in our care. The troubled paths of the many children that we have served span emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, drug abuse, criminal activity and parental abuse. It surely is hard to believe that any of these children asked for or desired the paths that took them to The Villages. No matter the path that brought them to The Villages, we are here to help and have been helping children for over 50 years and plan to help children in need for another 50 years and beyond. As long as there is a need for loving homes, emotional support, and adults who care for children who need our help, we intend to serve. It is our mission to serve.

The Villages serves many children including those classified as Unaccompanied Children with the Office of Refugee Resettlement, an agency of the Federal Government. These children have varied backgrounds – the children come to us from varied countries of origin, they come to us from varied hazards, they come to us with varied levels of trauma, they come to us experiencing varied levels of abuse. They do not come to us with a varied need – our help and assistance.

While in our care, The Villages works diligently to reunite Unaccompanied Children with family members or other qualified sponsors and we have had great success to date. There really is no rule about how quickly Unaccompanied Children can be reunited – the answer has been and will continue to be – as soon as it is possible to do so in a safe manner. The Villages is here to help the Unaccompanied Children, to support the Unaccompanied Children, to make their experience with us a bright spot in an otherwise dark path that preceded their need for our help. They need our help and assistance and we are here to provide it to them.

The path the children took which has necessitated our care may have originated in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Florida, Texas, Michigan, California, Hutchison, Salina, Junction City, Kansas City, Lawrence, Holton, Topeka or any other city, state or country in the world. Our program does not discriminate against children in need – our program exists to serve children in need.

In order to serve those in need, we must continually have a work force that meets the demands of the children that we are serving. We are continually adapting to serve those needs, including hiring qualified professionals such as teachers and mental health clinicians who speak the language of the children who need our care. At The Villages, we serve and care for children and strive to equip ourselves in the best way possible to enable us to do just that – help children in need.

There is no secret – The Villages is proud of our heritage and history of success of helping children in need, irrespective of background or circumstance. We will continue to utilize our talented and

dedicated staff, our seven homes in Lawrence and Topeka, and our private nature preserve to continue our mission to serve all children in need.

Joseph W. Wittrock

President

The Villages, Inc.