



CONNECTIONS

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



In every community devastated by a natural disaster, at least 25 percent of those affected are children. But all too often, we fail to understand their special needs and behavioral issues, let alone meet those needs, the impact of which can last a lifetime.

Unfortunately, services and programs that could support children before, during and after a disaster are not well understood or easily accessible. Funders interested in supporting children after a disaster rarely understand what programs exist to mitigate the impact on children and/or how to connect their resources to those agencies who have programs and services to support children before and after a natural disaster.

Five organizations working to support children before and following low-attention disasters in the Midwest are: [Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota](#), Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, Save the Children, [Child Care Aware of America](#) and the Center for Disaster Philanthropy. These five organizations hosted a special convening in Minneapolis in October to begin an open and frank discussion about filling the gaps in services to

children experiencing the trauma along with the special challenges natural disasters bring to their lives, their families and caregivers.

It was a great start to a project we all hope to continue in 2019. In my final newsletter of the year, I wanted share some good stories from the field to inspire us all “to remember the children” in our disaster giving this holiday season by supporting organizations that do this work.

Happy Holidays!

[Nancy Beers](#)

Director, Midwest Early Recovery Fund

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Renewed Hope for Children on Crow Creek Reservation

In June 2015, a severe storm, with 6” hail and winds over 100 mph, wreaked havoc on homes on the Crow Creek Reservation, most of them old, flimsy trailers. We found an amazing partner in [Diamond Willow Ministries \(DWM\)](#) who, after more than 20 years of serving this community, agreed to add disaster recovery to their already heavy workload. They did an outstanding job repairing and rebuilding dozens of homes, bringing hope and healing to more than 100 children and families.

The focus of DWM has always been supporting their community’s children. Life is hard on the reservation. In 2017, the suicide rate was 4.3 times higher than the U.S. average, a heartbreaking indication of the breadth of despair for so many of the youth and families that call Crow Creek home.

But there is renewed hope for children living on Crow Creek! DWM recently

purchased land to build an expansive, new Tokata Youth and Family Center.

“Through the Tokata Youth Center, lives of youth are now transforming, families being strengthened. Youth are finding connection with their rich history, acquiring life skills that enable them to cope with the challenges they face, and learning positive ways to resolve conflict. They are being empowered to imagine their future, reach for it and possess it,” said Rod Vaughn, the director of DWM.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Tokata Youth and Family Center and the great work of Diamond Willow.

GRANTEE CONNECTIONS



Supporting Schools

Following another historic flood in Missouri in 2017, the small, rural community of Van Buren lay in ruins with 90 percent of their business district and nearly 50 percent of their homes severely damaged.

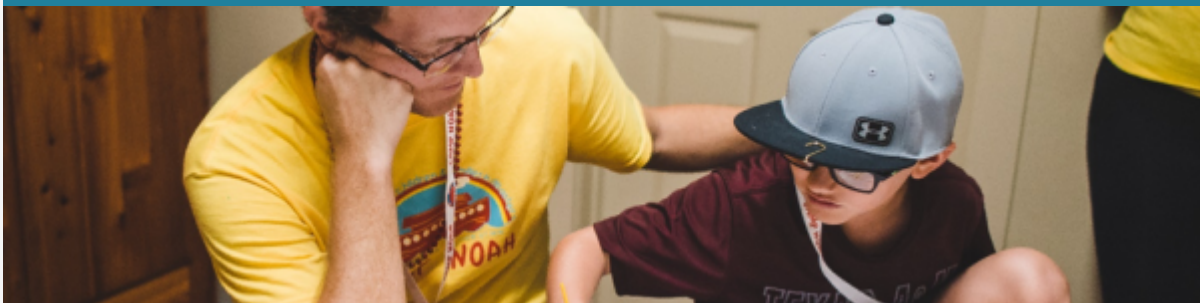
A grant from CDP allowed [Ozark Vitality](#), a small, local nonprofit, to do a [Whole Community Recovery Assessment](#) to better understand the community's priorities and develop a recovery timeline. From those interviews, school leadership identified an immediate need for additional staffing for their school's sole, overwhelmed social worker.

With the support of [Whole Kids Outreach](#), a staff member was quickly hired who has been working with dozens of children and families impacted by the floods. At a gathering last week, the outreach worker shared compelling stories of the increased stress and associated behavioral issues for the children of families struggling to recover from the financial loss of homes and

jobs. Her work has proven to be incredibly important to students and teachers.

Since this first grant, the [Midwest Early Recovery Fund](#) has now made two similar grants. One in nearby Ripley County, Missouri after several suicide attempts by high school students in yet another flooded community; the other to support the elementary school in [Seeley Lake Montana](#) after the horrific 2017 wildfire season.

PARTNER CONNECTIONS



Camp Noah

[Camp Noah](#) is a nationally acclaimed preparedness and resiliency program for children, hosted across the U.S. in communities that have been affected by natural disasters and other collective trauma. Camp Noah began in 1997 as a response to flooding in the Red River Valley of North Dakota and Minnesota. In 2006, Camp Noah grew dramatically in response to Hurricane Katrina.

To date, Camp Noah has been hosted in 29 states and Puerto Rico in response to a wide range of natural and manmade disasters. Since 1997, they have held 273 camps with more than 4,000 adult volunteers and have served nearly 14,000 elementary-age children.

As a past director of Camp Noah, I have witnessed the amazing healing power of this wonderful, resiliency skills-based program. To learn more about Camp Noah and how to bring a Camp Noah to your community, contact David Peet, director at: David.peet@lssmn.org. It's a program every disaster-impacted community should host!

RESOURCE CONNECTIONS



- Join us for our webinar [Midwest Early Recovery Fund: Supporting Children in Disaster](#) on Thursday, Dec. 6.
- Mary Gaudreau Hughes [shares nine keys things](#) to know about emotional and spiritual care following disasters.
- A thoughtful and heartfelt [blog from a wildfire survivor](#) sharing how we can all help our friends or neighbors after a disaster.
- Helping Children Cope from [Ready.gov](#)
- [Supporting schools following disaster](#)
- The Midwest Low Attention Disaster Children's Working Group's next meeting is in St. Louis on Monday, Jan. 28 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. If you would like to join us, contact nancy.beers@disasterphilanthropy.org.

CONNECT WITH US

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