Dear Friends,

In 2010, D.A. Blodgett for Children and St. John’s Home merged to form one of our community’s strongest advocates for struggling children and families. Building on over 130 years of history, D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s (DABSJ) is the voice of hope and compassion for our most vulnerable children. With the help of hundreds of community volunteers and a dedicated staff, we serve nearly 9,000 children and families annually through mentoring, counseling, foster care, adoption, and residential care.

Today, we have an opportunity to serve more kids and families even better by consolidating all of our services to one location on our Knapp Street campus. This will allow us to operate more efficiently, save money, and most importantly, improve outcomes for those we serve. Our board is in full support of this effort. We’ve taken some big steps since 1887, but today, we look to you to help us make this next step a reality.

Over the next year, a group of dedicated community leaders will be working hard to raise $10 million in charitable gifts to consolidate all of our operations onto one campus. As a result of this effort and in partnership with our community, DABSJ will become even more effective at protecting children and keeping families strong.

Let’s come together for kids, for families, and for the future of our great community. Please join us in supporting the Together for Kids campaign by providing for those who need it most.

Sincerely,

George and Beverly Grant
Campaign Co-Chairs

Charles and Natalie Lott
Campaign Co-Chairs

Jim and Barb Weaver
Campaign Co-Chairs
BECAUSE THEY NEED US.
The History of D.A. Blodgett for Children

In the 1880s, Grand Rapids was a bustling commercial center fueled by the lumber industry. But left out of the city’s prosperity was an alarming number of children made homeless and orphaned as epidemics of typhus, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and cholera swept through West Michigan. Community leaders called for action. In 1887, a group of Grand Rapids women mobilized under the name of The Children’s Home Society — which soon became the D.A. Blodgett Home for Children. Their inspired leaders were Jennie Blodgett and Emily Clark. Jennie’s husband, Delos A. Blodgett, purchased a house for their use, which they soon outgrew. In 1908, Mr. Blodgett and his son John built a large, red brick institution on Cherry Street, where it stands today as a historical landmark.

The History of St. John’s Home

Not far away, Bishop Henry Richter and the Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids opened St. John’s Home in 1889, also in response to the number of abandoned children. The “castle,” as it was affectionately known, was made possible by the generosity of John Clancy, pioneer lumberman. Named for Mr. Clancy’s favorite patron saint, the agency served the dual purpose of caring for children and the motherhouse for the Dominican Sisters - Grand Rapids, who were called to staff St. John’s Home. In 1922, the Dominican Sisters’ motherhouse at Marywood was completed, and the Leonard Street building was devoted solely to the residential care of children.

Societal Changes and New Challenges

Both organizations began foster care programs in the 1920s as advancements in medicine and greater acceptance of foster care and adoption brought an end to traditional orphanages. In the years following World War II, societal changes created new challenges for children’s homes. Each agency continued to strengthen its programs and adapt to the evolving needs of the community.
2010

D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s: A Merger Meant to Be

A significant milestone in this legacy is the merger of the two agencies in 2010. The merger represents a unified organization and demonstrates what coming together for kids really means. Over 120 years and tens of thousands of children later, the legacy of these amazing advocates’ lives continue on through the work of D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s.

Out of respect for the founding fathers and mothers and thousands of donors and volunteers, the historic names were preserved as the agency was renamed “D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s.”

The Next Major Step...

Today, DABSJ is taking the next major step — consolidation of all services to one campus. One that will improve quality, double capacity, and enhance the sustainability of services to children and families in our community. As one of Michigan’s largest child welfare agencies, the agency serves nearly 9,000 families and kids each year and employs over 350 people.
...TOGETHER
In 1887, we responded to a dire need to care for vulnerable kids and help struggling families, and we’ve never looked back. Over the last 130 years, we’ve grown, and today we have more than 20 programs, addressing a wide range of complex needs for kids and families. We’ve been recognized with countless awards. We’ve forged valuable community partnerships. We’re one of the first agencies to offer foster care in West Michigan, and we offer the only emergency shelter in our area. We have an amazing staff whose passion is unmatched. We’ve set the standard for the work we do, and we have incredible success stories as proof.

And yet...

For as much as we’ve accomplished, the need keeps growing.
Children are physically, emotionally, and intellectually dependent on those who raise them. That’s a fact. But what happens when parents are unable to provide for the well-being of their children? The fallout is heartbreaking. We know because we see the unforgiving reality every day. Here are a few facts:

In Kent County last year, more than 1,800 cases of child abuse and neglect were confirmed.

400 kids were removed from their homes because they were no longer safe.

Experiencing abuse or neglect as a child hinders healthy development into adulthood.

From 2010 to 2016 the rate of children confirmed as victims of abuse or neglect in Michigan increased by 30%.

42% of children live in families in poverty or with low income. Child neglect is more likely to occur in families struggling economically.

The problem is a lot closer than you think.

It’s not in the next city or county. It might be right down the street, and you wouldn’t even know it. Despite these troublesome statistics — and the very real kids behind them — we know healing, hope, and success is possible. It’s why we exist. It’s what drives us.
THE NEED.
At D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s, our programs are spread across three properties on three streets — Knapp, Leonard, and Fuller. For years, we’ve made it work, but the time has come for improvement.

- **Space is extremely limited, especially in our on-campus school.**
- **We lack a multipurpose center for the kids for fitness, recreation, and performing arts.**
- **We do not have adequate space for a centralized medical clinic.**
- **Heating and cooling in our old buildings is inefficient and costly.**

In order to serve kids and families the best we possibly can, we need a single physical space that is integrated, responsive, and exceptional, one that matches our standard for what these children need and deserve.

Strategy, foresight, years of planning, and a feasibility study show us that building **ONE** centralized facility is the right move for the kids and families we serve.
With your generous support, we can come together for kids. We can build a multipurpose facility, integrate our campuses, and further our mission. We can increase our impact and decrease costs dramatically. Most importantly, we can boost collaboration and provide the most seamless, highest-quality care possible to children and families.

Let’s picture this together: Under one roof on Knapp Street, a child who comes to us won’t be shuffled around among different locations. Instead, he’ll have all his needs met on one campus. Under one roof, he can see a therapist, find mentorship, visit his biological parents, and participate in recreational activities that enrich his body and soul. Under one roof, he can find the hope he may have assumed was gone forever.

What the Together for Kids Campaign Makes Possible:

• Integrates our programs and facilities, improving our effectiveness and outcomes.
• Saves $2 million in operating costs over 20 years.
• Doubles our capacity over 20 years.
You see, this is about more than a building. It’s about coming together for neglected and vulnerable kids. It’s about strengthening families — the fabric of our community. And it’s about doing what absolutely needs to be done.

**ONE MISSION.**

The Together for Kids campaign will save $2 million over 20 years.

**MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY:**
- Health Clinic
- Family Visit Rooms
- Youth Cafe
- Activities Center
- School Classrooms
- Meeting Rooms
- Counseling Rooms
- Administration Offices
Mentoring, Counseling, Foster Care, and Adoption programs will all be offered in one facility.

**CAMPAIGN BUDGET**

**BUILDING AND CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION:** $11,000,000

- Large multipurpose facility
- Parking, landscaping, and lighting
- Walking/biking trail and bridge
- Facilities annex

**TECHNOLOGY, SECURITY, AND PHONE SYSTEMS:** $300,000

**ADVANCEMENT CAMPAIGN EXPENSES:** $200,000

**PROJECT TOTAL:** $11,500,000

**LESS LEONARD CAMPUS SALE:** -$1,500,000

**TOTAL CAMPAIGN GOAL:** $10,000,000
The Together for Kids campaign is seeking $10 million in community philanthropy. You can help us achieve this important goal by supporting this campaign through:

- **A one-time cash gift.**
- **A multiple-year pledge commitment.**
  (May be paid over a three-year period.)
- **A gift of appreciated assets (e.g., stock).**
- **An estate gift.**

Your charitable gift is tax-deductible to the full extent of state and federal law. Please check with your tax advisor to determine how your gift may affect your personal tax situation.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

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MISSION
Helping children and empowering families by providing safety, advocacy, and support.

VISION
Be the leader in creating a community where all children are treasured and families are strong.

OUR SERVICES

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES:
Providing a safe place for children’s healing

FAMILY PRESERVATION:
Counseling and mentoring services that provide hope and help for those who need it

FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION:
Providing homes for abused and neglected children