

Media Release

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Youthville to share powerful traveling art exhibit, allowing audiences to *Walk A Mile* in a child's shoes in the child welfare system

Now Showing...



Art Exhibition

August 1 - 31

Towne East Square, 7700 E Kellogg Dr, Wichita, Kan.

Hours: M-Sat 10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Sun 12 p.m. – 6 p.m.

September 1 - 30

Towne West Square, 4600 W Kellogg Dr, Wichita, Kan.

Hours: M-Sat 10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Sun 12 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Youthville invites audiences to experience this moving showcase. The Walk A Mile project serves disadvantaged youth in Youthville's care through artistic expression.

Micala Gingrich-Gaylord, Expressive Arts Center Coordinator in Newton creates a way for youth to tell their story of life in the "system" through art by having each child transform an old shoe into a piece of art. The old adage, "If only you could Walk A Mile in my shoes..." is used to promote compassion and understanding of the experiences of disadvantaged youth.

"When I see the Walk a Mile project, I am always humbled by the courage our youth continue to show even in the face of great adversity," said, Gingrich-Gaylord. "We are allowing the kids to tell a story, their story, so that healing happens. It's the way the soul speaks when words cannot."

One child writes: *"My name is Rickey and I am 11. I have been in Youthville for a while. I am here because I was using drugs and getting into trouble with the law and family. My shoe talks about all the times my heart has been broken and the times that I have broken other peoples hearts. I feel trapped a lot by things inside my head and the things that I have done. I hope that I can change while I am here."*

Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs) are for children ages 10 to 18 years who need time away to address issues and remove barriers from becoming a family again. This 24-hour, highly structured treatment is for youth whose behaviors threaten the safety of themselves or others. Youthville has two campuses, one in Dodge City and the other in Newton. Youthville is committed to caring for children in an innovative way that encourages growth mentally, physically, and creatively through creative forms of expression. Only 8 percent of the children in foster care reside in PRTFs.

Youthville is one of the largest nonprofit, child welfare agencies in Kansas, specializing in foster care, adoption, counseling and psychiatric residential treatment. The agency's vision is to provide the best sources of help to children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected with its mission of ***Giving Children Back Their Childhood***. Over 3,000 children are cared for annually by Youthville. To learn more about Youthville visit www.youthville.org.

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