Our History

The Children’s Home Association of Illinois

KNOXVILLE CAMPUS
2130 N Knoxville Ave.
Peoria, IL 61603

ACADEMY CAMPUS
404 NE Madison
Peoria, IL 61603

GOOD BEGINNINGS
233 Leadley Ave.
East Peoria, IL 61611

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER
2011 N Knoxville Ave.
Peoria, IL 61604

SCOTT’S PRAIRIE
2009 N Taylor Rd.
Hanna City, IL

YOUTH FARM CAMPUS
7225 W Plank Rd.
Peoria, IL 61604

GENERAL INFORMATION
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www.chail.org

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The Children’s Home Association of Illinois

Our History
**Our Mission**

Giving children a childhood and future by protecting them, teaching them and healing them, and by building strong communities and loving families.

**Our Vision**

Building a healthy community where families and children come first.

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**Past Board Chairs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Erastus D. Hardin</td>
<td>1876 – 1889</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lucie B. Tyng</td>
<td>1890 – 1905</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. E.S. Willcox</td>
<td>1906 – 1915</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. E.J. Case</td>
<td>1916 – 1918</td>
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<td>Mrs. Walter Barker</td>
<td>1919 – 1924</td>
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<td>Mrs. Jeremiah McQuade</td>
<td>1925 – 1926</td>
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<td>Mrs. Warren Sutliff</td>
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<td>Mrs. Walter Barker</td>
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<td>Mrs. Rolland Oliver</td>
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<td>Mr. J.H. Franke</td>
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<td>Mrs. C.S. Jones</td>
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<td>Mrs. William E. Stone</td>
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<td>Mrs. John D. Wilson</td>
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<td>Mrs. Bentley Hamilton</td>
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<td>Mrs. H. R. Topping</td>
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<td>Mrs. George L. Luthy</td>
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<td>Mrs. George C. Davis</td>
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<td>Miss Sue Ward</td>
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<td>Mrs. William McKenzie</td>
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<td>Mr. Herbert B. White</td>
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<td>Mrs. B.L. Sommer</td>
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<td>Mr. J. Mahler Wilson</td>
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<td>Mr. L.E. Roby, Jr.</td>
<td>1954 – 1955</td>
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<td>Mrs. Warren Miles</td>
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<td>Mr. J. Chase Scully, Jr.</td>
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<td>Mrs. John D. Blossom</td>
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<td>Mrs. Glenn M. Belcke</td>
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<td>Mrs. Stanley Vermeil</td>
<td>1962 – 1963</td>
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<td>Mr. Warren M. Webber</td>
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<td>Mrs. Russell B. Nelson</td>
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<td>Mrs. Wheeler K. McDougal, Sr.</td>
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<td>Mrs. Walter Owen</td>
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<td>Mr. Arthur F. Szold</td>
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<td>Mrs. Donald Birks</td>
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<td>Mrs. Homer W. Keller</td>
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<td>Mr. Richard Kavanagh</td>
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<td>Mrs. Richard Ullman</td>
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<td>Mr. Paul Strehlow</td>
<td>1981 – 1983</td>
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<td>Mrs. Thomas Foster</td>
<td>1984 – 1986</td>
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<td>Mrs. Wendell Cleaver</td>
<td>1986 – 1988</td>
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<td>Mr. Jack F. Russell</td>
<td>1990 – 1992</td>
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<td>Mr. Frederick J. Stuber</td>
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<td>Mr. Timothy L. Elder</td>
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<td>Mr. Gary Schmidt</td>
<td>1997 – 1998</td>
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<td>Mr. James L. Russell</td>
<td>1998 – 2000</td>
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<td>Mr. Raymond W. Lees</td>
<td>2000 – 2002</td>
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<td>Mr. Timothy T. Fogerty</td>
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<td>Mr. Joseph E. Dondanville</td>
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<td>Mr. Phillip B. Lenzini</td>
<td>2006 – 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Virnette House-Browning</td>
<td>2007 – 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bill Connor</td>
<td>2009 – 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Voni Flaherty</td>
<td>2012 – 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Ken Snodgrass</td>
<td>2013 – present</td>
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Children’s Home has been caring for the children and families in our community since 1866, and our work has earned us a reputation as a leader in our field. The kids we see today have more clinically complex issues than ever before, and families can struggle in a variety of ways. Every day our professional employees rise to the challenge with genuine care and compassion to protect, teach and heal. We pride ourselves in our ability to forecast and respond to changing needs and, as a result, have developed an array of services ranging from prevention and early intervention to live-in care and treatment.

Our goal: for all children born and raised here to grow up, meet their full potential, and ensure that our community is one of the healthiest in the nation.

In 1866 when Peoria was a community of less than 25,000 people, a group of civic-minded women met at the First Universalist Church and formed the “Christian Home Mission” (CHM). Their goal: to alleviate suffering among the poor and to provide a shelter for homeless women and children. The women implemented “district visiting” where they sought to find families in need of assistance such as groceries, coal, blankets, clothing, medication and payment of rent. Because they sought to eradicate the causes of destitution, not to simply provide chronic relief from its effects, the group quickly established the “Industrial School” to teach young girls sewing and mending skills so they might learn thrift and industry.

The CHM lacked the funds necessary to achieve their third goal of establishing a shelter for homeless women and children. They were, however, able to secure a charter from the State with Mrs. Walter Strickler named as the first president of the organization. And in 1875, the first “Home for the Friendless” was opened in the home of Mrs. M.C. Lander, who served as its first Matron. The Home had a capacity for 6-8 women and children.
Another civic-minded women’s organization with similar goals, the “Women’s Christian Association,” formed at about the same time. In 1875, the two groups merged, creating the “Women’s Christian Home Mission, Incorporated” (WCHM). Mrs. Erastus D. Hardin was the first president of the newly-formed group, and a state charter was obtained in 1876.

In 1876, the Home for the Friendless needed additional space and moved to a building owned by Mrs. Lydia Moss Bradley (a charter member of the WCHM) that provided space for 10 women and children. For the rest of the decade, the WCHM offered district visiting to 500 people per year, sewing skills training through the Industrial School to 300-400 girls per year and shelter to 20-30 homeless women and children per year.

To alleviate overcrowding in 1880, the WCHM moved to the Judge Kellogg homestead to accommodate up to 25 women and children. Purchase of this home was personally underwritten by the members of the WCHM. For the first and only time in its history, the organization solicited capital support from the community.

Need for services continued to tax the Home for the Friendless. Due to lack of space, the Kellogg Home was sold in 1891, and the WCHM bought the Bell Place. Later that year, the cornerstone was laid, and in 1892 the newest Home for the Friendless was officially opened - housing 60 women and children plus live-in help. Epidemics of scarlet fever, whooping cough, mumps, measles, chicken pox and other diseases often resulted in the Home being quarantined.

The Industrial School was closed in 1901 (most likely due to a threatened scarlet fever epidemic), but district visiting still occurred on a regular basis. The need for the services of the Home for the

Children’s Home is known throughout the State of Illinois for our programs, training and expertise in the field. Much of our emphasis today is on home-based programs to remove the risk of harm to the child instead of removing the child from the home. This approach demonstrates that we can be far more successful working with families in their own homes and linking them with community services.

Over the years, our obligation and commitment toward all children hasn’t changed. We continue to care for kids and prepare them for a better future and are deeply indebted to everyone who makes it possible for us to fulfill our mission. We thank you for your generosity and support, and for helping us improve the lives of the children and families in our community!

To learn more about our programs and services, volunteer opportunities or how you can make a donation to support our mission, please contact us at 309.685.1047 or visit us online at www.chail.org.
As our development efforts grew, we didn’t lose sight of those who were instrumental to the success of Children’s Home. In 1998, we established the Walter and Mary Barker Society to recognize individuals who include Children’s Home in their will or estate plans.

Children’s Home continued to grow, particularly in the area of community-based programming, with an increasing focus on juvenile justice programming. We are proud to offer services in this area ranging from actually preventing criminal activity to trying to prevent a youth from entering the juvenile Department of Corrections.

In September of 2004, Jim Sherman retired as President and CEO, a position he held for 25 years. After having served in various service and administrative roles since 1979, Arlene Happach was named President and CEO by the Board of Trustees.

In 2007, the Children’s Home merged with Youth Farm. Our combined histories and like missions indeed make us stronger. The young men from our Knoxville Campus moved to the “Youth Farm Campus” and truly appreciate the setting and living space they didn’t have in the city. Some of the young men from Youth Farm transitioned into the Supervised Independent Living Program and have better job opportunities available to them in the city and a greater ability to transition to independence and adulthood.

In March of 2009, Arlene Happach left Children’s Home to pursue a position out of state, and Clete Winkelmann was named President and CEO by the Board of Trustees. As of October 2014, we had an operating budget of $24 million and a staff of nearly 450. We offer programs in three categories: Community-Based Programs, Special Education and Live-In Care & Treatment. These programs are provided through six primary locations: our Knoxville Campus, Academy Campus, Behavioral Health Center, Scott’s Prairie, the Tazewell-Woodford Head Start building and the Youth Farm Campus.

Friendless continued to grow, with the capacity often reaching more than 70 children. By 1912, the Home for the Friendless was again overcrowded, and the house next door was rented and converted into an annex to house 16-20 older girls.

In 1914, bequests from Phoebe Rose and Henry C. Block were used to build a small school for kindergarten behind Bell Place. In 1919, Mrs. Mary Barker (a Board member since 1900) ordered plans to be drawn for a larger building next to the Home for the Friendless on property she had purchased in 1916. The new building (named the “Walter Barker Memorial” in honor of her late husband) and its grounds, along with the “Laura Nelson Jobst Memorial Playground” were officially turned over to the WCHM in 1921. By the late 1920s, the staff was serving nearly 100 children.

At this time, the Home for the Friendless was no longer able to self-sustain itself through memberships, private contributions and boarding fees as the founders intended. The needs of children, however, were increasing. In 1935, the name Home for the Friendless was replaced with “The Children’s Home.” Two years later, the economic realities of the Great Depression resulted in the WCHM joining and receiving support from the Community Chest. District visiting ended around this time, and the first professional social worker was hired. In 1939, the Block/Rose School building (which had been closed for several years) was rented.
Through hard work and good fortune, the organization survived the Great Depression. However, by the late 1940s, an even more serious crisis arose. Major gains were being made in the field of foster care and there was little need for boarding homes.

Discussions occurred concerning closing the Children’s Home or merging it with Child and Family Services. A compromise was made and a Joint Executive Director for both two agencies was hired, though they remained separate in all other ways. In 1950, Child and Family Services (now Counseling and Family Services) moved into the “old” 1891 building. All residential services were then offered from the Walter Barker Memorial building.

In 1954, the Women’s CHM received a nearly $1 million bequest from Mable Moir Lockwood and stopped seeking financial aid from the Community Chest. At the same time, Children’s Home also began accepting emergency admissions from the police and other community agencies.

Leon Lyle was hired as the first Executive Director of Children’s Home in 1959 and discussions of merging with Child and Family Services ended. His wife, Mrs. Prudence Lyle, was the primary social worker. More severely disturbed children were now accepted for treatment and the capacity of Children’s Home was reduced to 20-30 children because modern ideas of treatment required more space.

As the age of children in treatment increased, the Board saw the need for aftercare services for youth who would soon be leading independent adult lives. In 1964, Sommer House (an aftercare group home for five high school-aged girls) opened. The success of Sommer House prompted the opening of a boys’ group home in 1967.

The Pre-School Family Center and its child abuse program merged with the WCHM in 1976. One year later, Children’s Home resumed use of the 1891 building by moving the Pre-School Family Center into the first floor. Services provided not only included therapeutic day nursery, but also included services to socially/emotionally disturbed and behaviorally disordered children from 6-12 years of age. This program became known as Barker School.

During the 1980s, Children’s Home opened a series of community-based programs to reach children and families earlier and to help prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their homes. As a result, Children’s Home tripled in size in a decade.

Since one-third to one-half of its clients lived in Tazewell and Woodford Counties, the Children’s Home opened its “Family Service Center” in 1986 in East Peoria. Then, in 1987, both our corporate and public names were changed to “The Children’s Home Association of Illinois.” Later in the decade, Children’s Home opened two Supervised Independent Living facilities for older teens to transition from supervised living to independent adult living.

In order to expand residential and educational services to teens placed in out-of-state facilities, Children’s Home purchased the former Academy of our Lady high school building, the Behavioral Health Center and several other parcels of property in our first-ever capital campaign in 1990. Through this capital campaign and a named gift opportunity, Barker School was renamed Kiefer School.

A new logo and mission statement were unveiled in 1995 as part of a marketing plan designed to increase visibility and create greater awareness in the community. The new logo imparts a sense of hope, optimism and a vision for the future while the new mission statement communicates that Children’s Home is part of something greater than just our own programs, tying us to the larger community.