

## Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery offers hope to families in need

Written by Mehgaan Jones  
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Tucked away in a quiet corner in Golden Valley, MN is a safe haven and beacon of hope for many. The Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery is the only residential nursery in Minnesota and one of only 20 in the country. The nursery has assisted families for 26 years in Hennepin County. It has built a great reputation, which has allowed for the nursery to build trusting relationships.

“Reputations can be lost in a day, but they are earned over years,” explained Joel Bergstrom, who is the Development and Communications Director of GMNC. The nursery has developed strong roots within the community it serves. GMNC also has a long-standing relationship with United Way.

The Nursery has several programs which include a 24-hour crisis hotline, crisis counseling, 72-hour residential care, medical care to children, referrals, home visits and parenting classes. Although childcare is an important aspect of GMNC, the nursery can only provide shelter for so many children at a time. The initial phone call to the hotline allows for the family advocates to provide crisis intervention and connect parents with the resources that they need. “The family advocates take the time to let families know that their issues are important even if we cannot provide their children with shelter,” said Molly Kenney, GMNC Family Services Director.

The families who use the nursery’s services are usually isolated, low income and in need of assistance. These families are experiencing a tremendous amount of stress in this time of economic hardships. Kenney explained that as a result of the economy the issues are greater than before and the resources are less.

Many families who are in need of assistance are extremely brave. “A lot of the families who reach out to us are eligible for services that are out there. They either don’t know how to get them or are uncertain,” said Mary Pat Lee, Executive Director of the nursery. They understand their need for help, and they have a tremendous amount of strength for reaching out. “The parents who pick up that phone and ask for help are very strong. We want to make sure that their children are well taken care of because they trust us,” said Bergstrom.

The mission of the nursery is to end child abuse and neglect. The staff and volunteers at GMNC display an amazing amount of dedication to reaching this mission. They believe in the

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families they work with and pride themselves on making a difference.

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month. Lee explained the importance as a community to take this opportunity in April to assure the safety of children and to understand that extra steps need to be taken to help end child abuse and neglect.

### **Tips for Child Abuse Prevention**

*In the moment:*

- Take deep breaths – in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Think about things that have worked for you in the past
- Count to 10 or 100 if needed
- Remove yourself from the room if you are able to do so while keeping you and your children safe
- Ask or call someone for help

*Learn to recognize you are stressed before it becomes too overwhelming:*

- Listen to what your body is telling you (tightness in your stomach, tension in your neck/back, headaches, easily frustrated)
- Try to recognize what it is that is really stressing you out
- Take care of yourself (sleep, eat healthy, exercise, journal)

*Feeling alone can increase stress:*

- Recognize asking for help is a sign of strength
- Talk to friends or family for support if they are available
- Anonymously contact a hotline so you can get the help you deserve
- Go to a support group

### **Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery**

Serves all of Hennepin County, offering a 24-hour crisis hotline, crisis counseling, up to 72-hour overnight residential care, community referrals, parent education, parent support group, and a home visiting program.

For more information or if you need services: (763) 591-0100.

Services are accessed voluntarily by families through the Crisis Hotline.

### **Pillsbury Crisis Nursery—A program of Pillsbury United Communities**

Serves all of Hennepin County, offering a 24-hour crisis hotline, crisis counseling, emergency day care, and limited 72-hour overnight home based care.

For more information or if you need services: (612) 302-3500.

Services are accessed voluntarily by families through the Crisis Hotline.