



Annual Report

2024



Who We Are

The Heart Leaf Center opened in May 2021 with the purpose of serving children and families that are often unable to access mental health services due to logistical or financial barriers.

Since opening, The Heart Leaf Center has served more than 410 children. 135 of these clients were from military families and approximately 140 were from lower income families.

Our Mission

Improving access to high quality play therapy mental health counseling for children and families through low-cost services and professional education



Letter from the Executive Director

The Heart Leaf Center (THLC) is proud to be known as an organization that professionals can refer to and families can find high quality, affordable mental health counseling in the Northern VA area.

We are proud to have provided mental health counseling to over 200 children and families this year, for a total of 410 since we opened our doors in 2021. We continue to specialize in serving young children with 66% of clients being 10 years old or younger. We are the only Medicaid provider in Northern Virginia that specializes in play-based mental health therapy services for children. 40% of our clients utilize Medicaid or pay a minimum rate of \$10 per session. 40% of our clients are military families, with 78 children currently receiving services.

We continue to grow the number of staff and hired 4 new therapists this year, 3 of whom were former interns. We continued our partnerships with area universities with 5 graduate clinical interns and 2 macro social work students. The interns are an integral part of the THLC program. We provide an enriching learning environment for them and have specialized training to teach them how to work with children, adolescents and families.

We continue to partner with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) through our Community and School Therapy (CAST) program to provide in-school mental health services at two elementary schools. Matt Beebe, Resident in Counseling and leader of CAST, was recognized as Virginia Health Care Foundation's Mental Health Champion of the Year for his work providing counseling to students in the schools. We are hoping to expand this program in 2025, to additional schools in the area.

We held 3 fundraising events this year which drew over 200 attendees: The Heartfelt Tea Party, The Golf Tournament, and The Playful Heart Training Conference for mental health professionals. We appreciate and thank our volunteers, sponsors and generous donors for their contributions, without which, we would not be able to provide the mental health services which are so urgently needed in our community.

As we enter our fifth year of operation, we look forward to continuing to provide quality mental health counseling for children and families.

**Sheri Mitschelen, LCSW, RPT-S
Executive Director**



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Executive Director

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MARIAM ABDELWAHAB,
M.ED



O'NEIL NATION, M.A.

Interns



Amanda Williams



Dega Sabrie



Rohini Aadipudi



Makeez Qaderi



Amanda Confair



Rachel Enser



Community and School Therapy (CAST) Partnership Team



Executive Director
SHERI MITSCHELEN
LCSW, RPT-S

**Clinical
Consultant**
ELIZABETH GILLIAM
LCSW



Program Director
TRACEY WILSON
LPC



CAST Coordinator
MATT BEEBE, M.ED
RESIDENT IN COUNSELING



Therapist
MARIAM ABDELWAHAB, M.ED
RESIDENT IN COUNSELING



Our Clients

199 clients served in 2024
86 new clients in 2024
42 future clients are waiting for an available therapist

Age	%
0 - 5	12%
6 - 10	55%
11 - 14	20%
15 - 18	8%
Over 18	5

Rate Type	%
Tricare	40%
Medicaid	22%
Min. Rate	18%
Sliding Scale	12%
Full Rate	4%

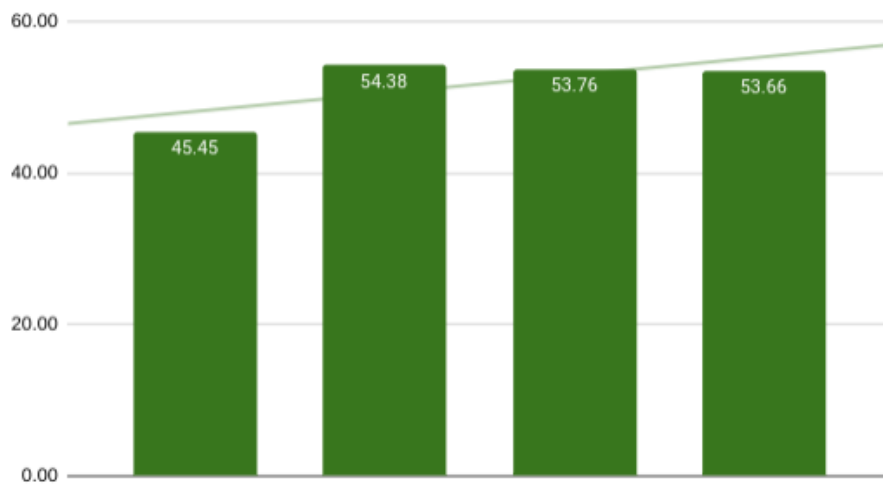
Race/ Ethnicity	%
White	40%
Hispanic/ Latino	27%
Black	12%
Asian	5%
Multiracial	5%

- **65% are 10 years old or younger**
- **60% are from racially underserved communities**
- **40% pay with Medicaid or pay our**
- **minimum rate of \$10 per session.**
- **12% pay reduced rates based on income.**
- **40% of clients are from military families.**

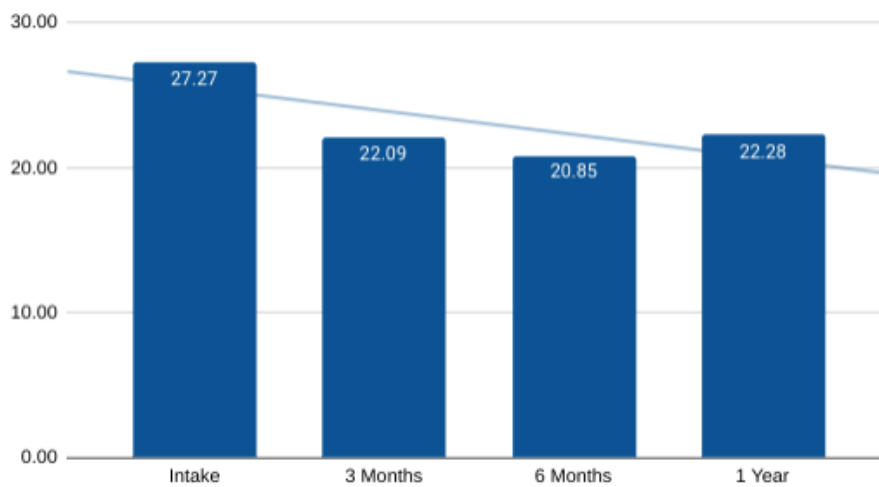


Client Outcomes

Average Level of Functioning Scores Over Time



Average Problem Severity Scores Over Time





School Partnership



THLC is partnering with two schools in Fairfax County to provide outpatient play-therapy services to students during the school day. This reduces logistical barriers for some families that have difficulties transporting children to sessions and have behavioral/emotional difficulties.



**40 children are served in the school program.
74% are from racially underserved communities
71% use Medicaid or self-pay the minimum rate.**



Group Services

Growing Connections Workshop

Two in-person group sessions focusing on helping you build a connection with your child. A chance to explore your own attachment style.

GROUP THERAPY FOR CHILDREN SOCIAL SKILLS



THERAPEUTIC DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS GROUP



Mental Health Champion Award



Virginia Health Care Foundations Mental Health Champion Award

Matt Beebe, THLC Therapist won this prestige award in June. This award is eligible to any provider in a mental health field for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Matt received this award for his work increasing access to play therapy services in the school system and increasing connections with families in the community.



Parent Feedback

“Keep growing and spread the word... your services are so needed, even for parents that are on the fence, your services do improve kids life.” - Claudia, parent of 7-year-old



“I am very thankful this was an option for my son. It has made a big difference in his life. I have noticed a big change in his personality. He seems confident and happier.” - Parent of 8-year-

98% of our families report satisfaction with their services at the Heart Leaf Center after 6 months of treatment.



Professional Development

THLC CONTINUES TO BE DEDICATED TO OFFERING TRAINING AND SUPERVISION FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIANS WORKING WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.



- THLC PROVIDED INTERNSHIP AND SUPERVISION EXPERIENCES FOR 7 GRADUATE-LEVEL STUDENTS.
- WE SUCCESSFULLY HELPED 5 STUDENTS COMPLETE THEIR GRADUATE PROGRAMS AND ENTER THE MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE.
- WE HAD 3 INTERNS TRANSITION INTO STAFF MEMBERS
- WE CURRENTLY HAVE 6 GRADUATE-LEVEL INTERNS.
- THLC PROVIDED 278 HOURS OF CLINICAL SUPERVISION AND PLAY THERAPY SUPERVISION TO GRADUATE STUDENT INTERNS.
- THLC PROVIDED A SUPERVISION STIPEND TO 8 STAFF MEMBERS WORKING ON THEIR CLINICAL LICENSURE.
- THLC PROVIDED 20 HOURS OF SPECIALIZED PLAY THERAPY SUPERVISION.
- THLC PROVIDED 46 HOURS OF PLAY THERAPY TRAINING TO ALL STAFF AND INTERNS.
- THLC PROVIDED 12 HOURS OF CLINICAL SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT TO ALL STAFF DURING A MONTHLY CASE CONSULTATION



Trainings Offered

January

Lindsay Scharfstein, PhD
Takira Ward
Sheri Mitschelen LCSW, RPT-S
Playful ways to help Children with School Refusal

February

Dave Edwards, LPC
Play Therapy for Teen and Adolescent Boys

March

Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S
Attachment-Focused Family Play Therapy

May

Paige Frasso, LMFT
Playfully STEPPing into a New Family System: Using Play Therapy with Step and Blended Families

June

Kristian Owens, LCSW-C, RPT
Breaking Barriers: Play Therapy with Resistant Parents and Children

August

Michelle Walker, LCSW, RPT-S It's all about the intention! Using Play themes and intention to develop thematic responses in play therapy

September

Holly Martinson, M.Ed, RYT-200 and Angela Benetiz, MA, Resident In Counseling Mindfulness and Yoga
Jennifer Glacel, LCSW, RPT-S,
Symbols in the Sand

Kristian Owens, LCSW-C, RPT Nature Play Therapy for Children and Teens:
Cultivating Well-being through Outdoor Exploration

Lula Lambers, LPC, ATR-BC, RYT-200
Expressive Modalities in the Playroom: Bringing art-based interventions & creativity in Play Therapy

October

Samantha Carrico, Fairfax County CPS
Mandated Reporter Training

Masumeh Fartchi, LMFT,
This Might Pinch a Little:
Healing Medical Trauma in the Playroom

November

Healing through Play: Using Play Therapy to Cope with Loss and Grief for Children and their Families,
Darah Curran LCSW

December

Dissociation in Play Therapy,
Nik Johnson MS, LPC-S,, RPT

Michelle Walker, LCSW, RPT-S
Child Centered Play Therapy: Overview and Advanced Skill Development 6, week



Fundraising

**The Heartfelt Tea Party
April 6th, 2024**

**Silent Auction
May 25 - June 9, 2024**

**2nd Annual Golf Outing
June 3rd, 2024**

**The Playful Heart Conference -
September 27th and 28th, 2024**

**Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser
October 23-27, 2024**

**All event proceeds fund counseling for
local children and families**



2024 Tea Party





2024 Tea Party



Thank you to our Sponsors!



Queen Table Sponsors

Bee Swartz Family

Kelly Beyer Family

Cabush, Paul & Associates

Jeannine Garcia



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Golf Tournament

2nd Annual Golf
Tournament





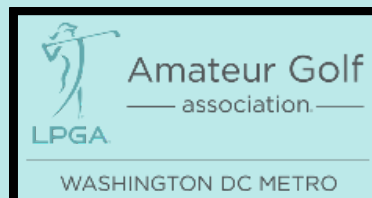
Golf Tournament Sponsors



Thank you!



Questor Realty, Inc.





2024 Playful Heart Conference



- **4** training sessions
- **60** participants
- **5** sponsorships
- **\$4,800** raised

Thank you to our Sponsors!





Marketing and Outreach

Fall Community Day at London Towne Elementary School October 26th

This is a special day where the students and families visit the school grounds to learn about community resources while enjoying fun activities and receiving free items/goods donated by community partners





Getting Involved

Donate

Your generous contribution enables us to continue our mission, providing vital services and support to children and families in need. Every donation makes a meaningful impact!

Fundraise

Support our fundraising efforts by attending our events, sharing our social media posts, and advocating for support from your network. Join us today!



Volunteer

Our volunteer efforts are key to our success, and there is a role for you! Consider offering support for our events, participating on committees, engaging on social media, or providing clinical support like supervision. We would love to collaborate with you!



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