

# turning headwinds into healing

2016–2017 annual report



**clarity** | child  
guidance  
center  
healing young minds & hearts





# determined to make a difference

On behalf of the Clarity Child Guidance Center (Clarity CGC) staff, management team and governing board, we are pleased to present this annual summary of our community impact for our fiscal year ending June 2017. This report will also review the headwinds Clarity CGC faced in 2017, and how we were able to serve our community in spite of some of the most challenging conditions in recent memory.

As you are aware, from Austin to Washington DC, healthcare continues to be a priority without a solution. We don't know if the Affordable Care Act will be repealed and replaced, what the State of Texas will do to help, and how low and middle income families will be able to afford the treatment for their children.

What we do know is that there are kids who need care. In fact one in five kids, nearly 80,000 children and adolescents in Bexar County, will struggle with a mental, emotional or behavioral disorder. Many of these kids will require crisis assessment, inpatient hospitalization, day treatment or outpatient services. While the debates continue, so does our commitment to provide care to these children and their families, regardless of

their ability to pay. It's a commitment that began with the 13 ladies who founded this organization in 1886.

Our founders saw the challenge of abandoned and neglected children and faced it head on. They opened the Protestant Home for Destitute Children, which has grown to become Clarity CGC today. The challenges we face aren't that different from 1886 — more kids needing care, limited resources, and large numbers of uninsured or underinsured families. We use the example they set and continue to face these challenges head on.

Thanks to the dedication of the staff here at Clarity CGC, the leadership of our governing board, and the support of the community, we are making progress in removing the barriers our families face — access to care, stigma of mental illness and their ability to pay. In many ways, we're taking the headwinds, and turning them into the "Winds of Change" for children and their families.

Thank you again, on behalf of the entire Clarity CGC team, for your interest and support in our organization. It's a privilege to continue our legacy of hope and healing.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Scott  
Governing Board Chair



Frederick W. Hines  
President & CEO





Natalie then...

and now!

## ...and we did.

Her mom was an alcoholic. Her father was often absent. Her baby shower took place in a rehab center, which led to her middle name—Hope. Natalie Hope was born in Portland and moved to San Antonio at the age of eight. Natalie's childhood was one of neglect and trauma, caused by her parents' ongoing fights, separation and a painful divorce. In response, Natalie started cutting in sixth grade. By eighth grade she added heavy drinking and pills.

When her family discovered the extent of her cutting, it led to her first stay at Clarity CGC. "It scared the crap out of my parents." Natalie would make progress, but then personal difficulties would cause her to plummet back into crisis. Throughout the turbulence though, her one constant was Clarity CGC. After each stay, she would be better a little longer, showing imperceptible but real progress. "My life was so chaotic, staying at Clarity helped me get it together again for a month."

In 2012, things changed dramatically. That January, Natalie's best friend died of a heroin overdose. Natalie was also using heroin and nearly overdosed, but called the police to get help: "I thought of my little brothers and how they would feel about losing me. I couldn't do that to them."

This time after her stay at Clarity, she followed the staff's recommendation and went to rehab for the next four months. Natalie worked hard to understand the triggers of multiple addictions and how to manage them. Natalie has been sober for several years. She now works for Rise Recovery, speaking to groups at schools and to the media about her experiences. Reaching out to kids who, like her, were once unreachable.

Thanks to your faithful support, Clarity CGC is able to provide hope and healing to thousands of children and adolescents every year — like Natalie. And like Natalie, many are sharing the hope they received here at Clarity CGC.



# crisis control

This reporting year will go on record as one of the **toughest** in our history as a number of changes dramatically impacted Clarity CGC and the families we serve.

The first change took place in October 2016 (FY2017) when child and adolescent commitments were ended in Bexar County. The word “commitment” does not accurately define this compassionate treatment approach for children who are at risk. Clarity CGC physicians will only consider commitment for a child after several short-term (three to five days) admissions with no significant improvement. A commitment allows for more time to treat the child. A commitment from a judge is also an order to an insurance company to approve extended treatment for an individual with severe mental illness.



Without the commitment option, a severely mentally ill child does not receive the level of care needed and is not truly stable. This may create a cycle of emergency room visits that do not address the root cause of their mental illness. Uncommitted children with severe mental illness may also spiral out of control as Medicaid and private insurance cap the patient’s number of treatment days. This means a child could be admitted to Clarity CGC for five to seven days, released to the care of their family and then return a few days later in a more serious crisis than before their initial admission. Medicaid also penalizes hospitals like Clarity CGC for excessive readmissions, which further exacerbates the problem.

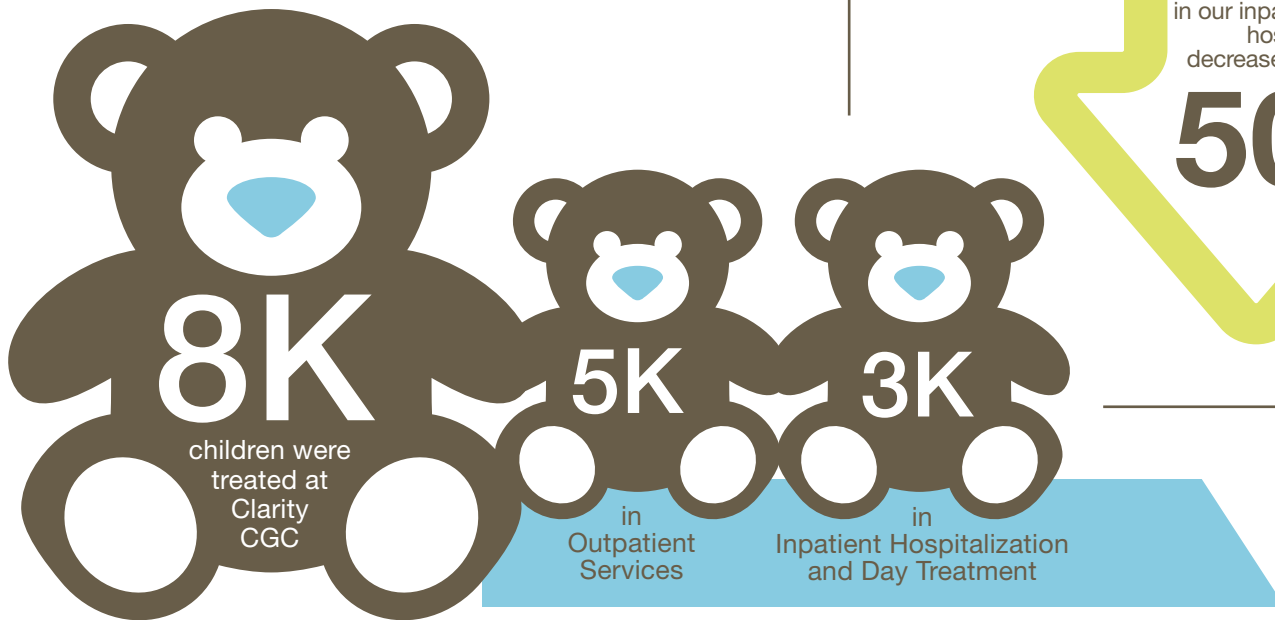
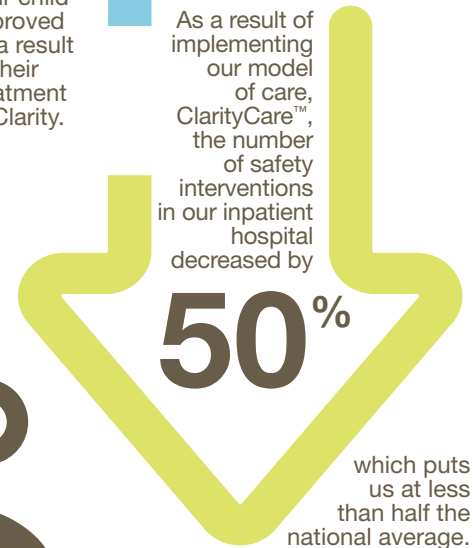
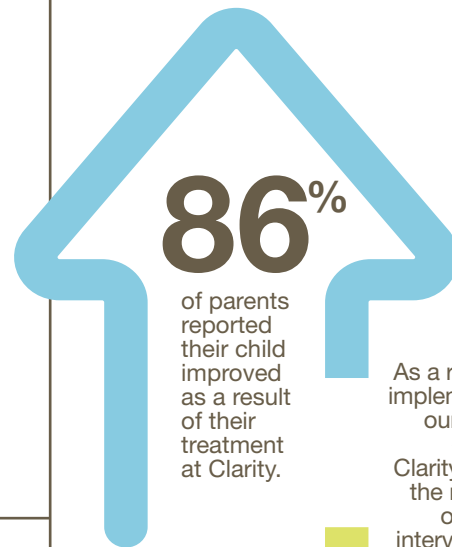
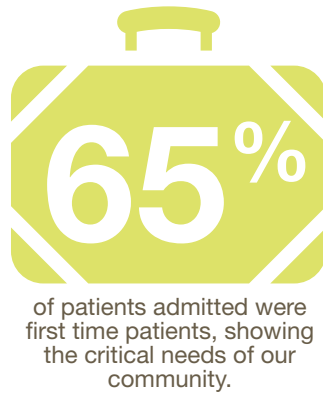
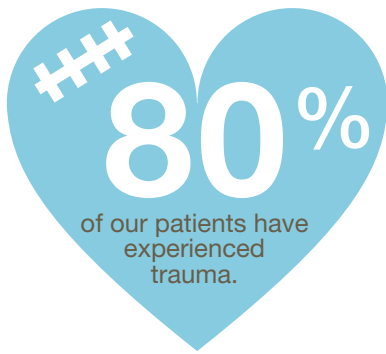
The second change was just as challenging. The San Antonio State Hospital (SASH), the only other nonprofit resource for adolescent hospitalization, closed for



more than eight months in 2017. That meant Clarity CGC was the **ONLY** not-for-profit resource for kids 3–17 in South Texas. The result was three times the number of walk-ins to our Crisis Assessment Center with a level of acuity that was the highest in memory. There was already a 45-bed shortage in our area with SASH fully-functional, so the closure multiplied the number of children in crisis, increasing the cost of care, and significantly straining our budget and resources.



What has kept us going is the staff at Clarity CGC. Through our model of care called Claritycare™, we continued to provide outcomes seen as Best-In-Class. Our teams are also working together to improve efficiency of care and create a lean environment. Your ongoing support helps us heal kids so they grow to become resilient adults.



The ratio of patient per direct care staff, not including LVNs and RNs, ensuring children in crisis feel safe and receive the attention they need.



# our donors

*The following list represents a portion of our valued donors over our 2016-2017 fiscal year starting July 1, 2016 and running through June 30, 2017.*



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Our 2016–2017 impact report reflects the growth of the organization and the need in our community. In fact, a large majority of the Clarity CGC patients live at or below the Federal Poverty Level, making Clarity CGC a disproportionate share hospital as a disproportionate number of our patients pay for services using Medicaid.

How do we continually provide the best care for ALL children, no matter their ability to pay? Through the generous support of our donors!



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Foundations, corporations and individuals who give to Clarity CGC know that when you treat a child experiencing mental illness when they are a kid, you can build resiliencies that help that child become a successful adult. An investment in Clarity CGC is not only helping a child, it is a commitment to grow a healthier workforce and economy.

We are so appreciative of every individual who provides support. On behalf of the children and families we serve, thank you.