



SECOND BRIGHT SPACE DEVELOPED TO GIVE LOUISVILLE'S CHILDREN A DEDICATED PLAY AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Bright Horizons Supports Local Children and Families At Risk

Louisville, Kentucky – Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, Bright Horizons Family Solutions, and Volunteers of America, cut ribbons on Monday, March 16th to officially open Louisville's second **Bright Space** for children whose mothers are in recovery for substance abuse at **Grace House**. Bright Spaces are designed to provide children in shelters with a dedicated warm, enriching area to play and learn. The first Bright Space was created at Volunteers of America's Family Emergency Shelter.

Volunteers of America Grace House, in operation since 2004, is a residential drug treatment program for pregnant and post-partum women and their children. Recognizing that children can be a compelling catalyst to recovery or a significant barrier to treatment, this award winning program welcomes children to live with their mothers during treatment and offers specialized services to the children in order to break the cycle of addiction

Bright Spaces Enable Children in Shelters to Discover the Magic of Childhood

Studies have shown that children of all ages thrive when they have a safe place in which to explore the world around them, filled with books, toys and activities that are developmentally appropriate and provide an opportunity for them to discover the magic of childhood. Children experiencing the stress of homelessness especially need access to these kinds of child-friendly spaces in order to develop social, cognitive, gross motor and language skills, which are vital to their development and success later in life.

A special playroom designed just to meet their needs can become a valuable tool for children and families trying to maintain a sense of normalcy and routine in a very difficult situation.

The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, the nonprofit organization of Bright Horizons Family Solutions, the leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education, and work/life solutions, established the Bright Spaces program to create appropriate play and learning areas for children of all ages living in shelters. A Bright Space is a room transformed by a team of early education and design professionals to create a warm, inviting area where children at risk can simply be children.

Curtains are put up, cozy nooks are strategically placed around the room to give children of all ages a comfortable place to explore, and shelves overflow with award-winning children's books, educational toys and games and soft toys. Dramatic play areas are set up so children can act out their fantasies and learn to socialize with their peers. Each Bright Space is designed specifically for the individual shelter by early education professionals from Bright Horizons, who create the Bright Space to help meet the needs of the children living in the shelter.

“We are inspired and energized by this partnership with Volunteer's of America to provide engaging and educational places for the children to play, learn and find security and warmth. It is our mission to raise the bar for the quality of care and early education for young children across this country, and this partnership ensures that children in need in Louisville get an early start and opportunity to begin a never-ending journey of success in school and life,” said Amy Vandever, Regional Manager, Bright Horizons Family Solutions.

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Bright Horizons Family Solutions is the world's leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education and work/life solutions. The company operates more than 600 child care and early education centers across the United States, Europe and Canada. **The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children** was founded in 1999 to help forward the vision of Bright Horizons Family Solutions to make a difference in the lives of children and families. Bright Spaces is a program of the foundation, creating dedicated play areas in homeless shelters. There are now more than 175 Bright Spaces located in shelters in more than 30 states around the country and Europe, serving thousands of children each year. More information is at www.brighthorizons.com/foundation.