

safe spaces



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Executive Summary

The "Safe Space" initiative, led by Vicky Owens, Shari Benyousky, Nichole Fifer, and Mary Lepird from the Kosciusko Leadership Academy, addresses the critical need for a secure and neutral environment for foster children to have supervised visits with their biological parents in Kosciusko County.

Problem & Solution: The current practice of conducting supervised visits in public spaces exposes children and parents to judgment and discomfort. The solution is to establish safe spaces that prioritize privacy, comfort, and family interaction during these visits.

Inspiration: The initiative was inspired by the challenges faced by foster families during supervised visits in public settings, which often hinder the reunification process and all parties' emotional well-being.

Research: Extensive research, including interviews with foster parents and collaboration with organizations like Bowen Center, The Cooper House in Noblesville, Mission Point Church, and other potential partners from Kosciusko County, provided insights into the need for safe spaces and what they could provide.

Solution Partners: Key partners such as Bowen Center and various churches and nonprofits around Kosciusko County have committed to providing safe spaces, demonstrating strong community support for the initiative.

Conclusion: The initiative's success lies in providing multiple safe space options, ensuring a warm and nurturing environment for supervised visits. Bowen Center's commitment to utilizing these spaces further strengthens the project's impact on fostering family reunification.

Grant Request: As a bonus for our partners in this project, we request funding to offer Safe Space locations a mobile cart loaded with puzzles, games, books, and cleaning supplies to aid parents and caseworkers with the reunification efforts.



The Safe Space Initiative

The Problem:

Kosciusko County Courts require reunification visits between biological parents who have been separated from their children and are in foster care. Kosciusko County does not have spaces where these visits can occur in a safe and comfortable place conducive to reunification. These visits can be emotionally challenging and stressful for the children and their parents.

The Solution:

A neutral and secure environment with a homelike atmosphere would provide a better experience for all parties involved and help ease the transition for children who are often caught in difficult family situations. We must prioritize these vulnerable children's well-being and safety and create a supportive and nurturing community for them by providing a safe location to build a family relationship.

Inspiration Background:

Imagine your children have been placed in foster care by the court and you are working to regain custody. Supervised visits are ordered so that you can display your increased level of parenting skills. Your home is not an option, because the children were removed. You're working on the issue of remedying problems and learning new skills, but it takes time. In the meantime, supervised visits are ordered by the courts. Where do these visits take place? In Kosciusko County, visits often happen in the public's eye in places like the library, a park, or the McDonald's play place. As your child plays, you notice that people are watching, judging you, and wondering why you are being observed. These public locations limit your actions with your child and make you feel like you are on display for all to see. This is what a supervised visit looks and feels like in Kosciusko County. One group member, Vicky Owens, works in this field. She sees families struggle during visits with judgments and accusations from the public. This made her think about the ineffectiveness of the system.

As a KLA group, we all took the initiative to speak with some foster parents. It was apparent that they too feel that the supervised visits are not an ideal situation and do not represent or encourage reunification. Families meet with their kids, so that checks the legal box, but are they effective meetings? The visit is observed by an individual caseworker and others in these shared environments. As a parent how does that make you feel to have every move, action and conversation being watched and documented? How can you, as a parent, interact with your child/children and show your parenting skills knowing this is happening?

What is Reunification?

In foster care, reunification refers to the process by which a child who has been placed in foster care is returned to their biological parents or primary caregivers. The primary objective of the foster care system is always to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

Reunification offers the following benefits:

- Improved outcomes for the child, including safety, security, and stability, pave the way for futures in which children and their parents can thrive.
- A positive impact on parents, since foster care reunification means parents can get the assistance they need to care for their children and lead productive lives.
- Allows the child to be raised by their parents and grow up surrounded by their birth family eliminating the child's question about their identity (Bergren, 2024).
- Prevents further grief and trauma that is caused from being removed and separated from their home (Bergren, 2024)

Kosciusko County Numbers:

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) 2022 data (see Appendix A) states they have served a significant number of children in Kosciusko County. The numbers are staggering, with 143 children being served, 690 visits conducted, and 395 team meetings held by the end of 2022. It's commendable that most families (75%) saw reunification, while 10% were adopted, 12% were placed in guardianship/3rd party, and 2% aged out (CASA, 2024). These numbers prove that there is hope for reunification. Why not try to increase those numbers by pushing our community to work together and provide a more neutral and secure environment with a homelike atmosphere to build a family bond between the foster child and their biological parents?

We heard and listened to the need, took charge of the situation, and made it our mission to find a neutral and secure safe space for these vulnerable children and their parents. We knew that we couldn't wait for someone else to do it for us, so we hit the ground running and put in the effort to identify multiple options for safe spaces. Our story resonated with organizations and businesses. We first visited The Cooper House in Noblesville, Indiana, which is actively performing our vision successfully. Then, we met with five individuals to start our journey and fulfill our mission here in Kosciusko County.

Model

“The Cooper House” - Noblesville Visit



Image 1 – Brooke and Kyle Howe Founders of the Cooper House in Noblesville with the word *FOREVER* meaning forever home (Howe & Howe, 2019).

Brooke and Kyle Howe founded "The Cooper House" (see Appendices B & C) in January 2019 to provide support and guidance to foster parents and children in Noblesville, Indiana. They started their foster care journey in 2017 and established a strong relationship with their foster children's biological parents, which inspired their vision. They realized that many parents lacked the necessary support and guidance to overcome their challenges and achieve success. Therefore, they decided to create a safe and welcoming place where everyone involved in foster care could feel loved, seen, heard, and chosen (Howe & Howe, 2019).

Since its establishment, The Cooper House has served 371 households and 691 children (Howe & Howe, 2019). Our KLA group traveled to Noblesville and spent the day observing and learning from the Howes on Thursday, January 11, 2024.

Solution Partners for Kosciusko County:

Interview 1 – Kearstin Criswell Mission Point Coordinator

After learning from our Cooper House visit, we clarified that our goal is to implement The Cooper House's mission by collaborating with various businesses in Kosciusko County to provide a homelike space for foster families to use during their reunification journey. We needed to reach out to multiple businesses in Kosciusko County to start our journey and find those who are passionate about our mission. We reached out to Kearstin Criswell from Mission Point church, who informed us about several support groups and committees working towards assisting foster families and reunification.

Kearstin Criswell, Mission Coordinator at Mission Point Church, is actively involved in the Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO) committee, which aims to inspire and equip to care for orphaned and vulnerable children (Louder, 2024). She informed us about support groups and committees working towards a similar mission. Kearstin is a foster parent who has a goal to reunify foster children with their biological parents. Kearstin said, “Our kids have a long list of needs, but it all comes down to building relationships with kids, parents, and schools. Being a foster parent and being involved in our community I see that many families don’t have the support systems we take for granted” (Criswell, 2024).

Kearstin also mentioned Lost Sparrows, A mission-driven organization that advocates for the worth and potential of every child and empowers families, caregivers, and communities to protect vulnerable children (1Eighty Digital, 2024). Additionally, she informed us about Another Plate at the Table, yet another group working towards supporting foster families. Our interview with Kearstin was full of informative information to get us started on our successful journey and our first potential commitment to a safe space.

Interview 2 – Eric Lane, Fellowship Missions

Our second meeting was with Eric Lane from Fellowship Missions. Eric’s nonprofit recently purchased a location at 109 E Market St Warsaw, where they will open “The Gathering Place.” Right away, Eric saw our mission and was on board to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) (see Appendix D), committing to offer space at his new location once renovated and open. Eric reviewed the layout plans with us, which showed a lounge area, multiple meeting rooms, a small kitchen, and two bathrooms. He mentioned a room for discrete visits with a small play area available for visits between foster children and their biological parent(s). The Gathering Place will be a warm and welcoming environment that will provide an excellent opportunity to work towards building reunification.

Interview 3 – Department of Child Services DCS

It was essential to gather information and data about the foster care system to help us understand the children and families' needs. The Department of Child Services (DCS) is a key entity that provides valuable insight into the number of children in the foster system and the frequency of visits they receive. We met with Sara Cole, Local Office Director and Chayse Thompson, Supervisor at DCS, to learn more about the organization. In this meeting, we discovered Kosciusko had approximately 86 Children in Need

of Service (CHINS) and 31 Informal Adjustments (IA) currently in the system. Approximately 60 of those children under 11 years of age receive three supervised visits per week, and children over 11 have one supervised visit per week. DCS stated that once the child/children are removed from the home, it is Bowen Center's responsibility to schedule and arrange supervised visits that correspond with the child and parents' schedules.

Interview 4 – Jessica Mikesell and Mike Murphy of Bowen Center

After meeting with DCS, we met with Jessica Mikesell and Mike Murphy from the Bowen Center. Our meeting was very informative and eye-opening. They provided firsthand information about the requirements for supervised visits. They shared some documentation (see Appendix E) showing the court/DCS supervised visitation rules used during a supervised visitation. They also gave us access to the document used by the observer.

Jessica says that Bowen Center supervised visits are scheduled as late as 5 pm on weekdays and 7 pm on weekends. It's worth noting that approximately 37 weekly visits are conducted between the foster children and their biological parent(s), with 20 of them taking place at the Bowen Center in an office-like setting.

It's clear that safe spaces, large and small, are needed to help regain privacy and encourage interaction between the children and parent(s). Jessica and Mike's firsthand account emphasized the importance of having a safe space for supervised visits. It's crucial to ensure that the children and parent(s) have a comfortable and non-threatening environment to interact, and Bowen Center agreed to utilize the safe space locations that we provide to them.

Interview 5 – Amanda Clark, Branches Vineyard

The involvement of Branches Vineyard church in the foster community is commendable. They have opened their doors for supervised visits, providing a safe and nurturing environment for parents and foster children to bond and strengthen their relationship. The church's indoor gymnasium, complete with a basketball hoop and a seating area, along with two rooms, a kitchen, and an outdoor playground, offer endless possibilities for interaction and growth. It's heartening to hear that Amanda Clark was receptive to our project and signed an MOU (see Appendix F) committing to the use of their facility. With Branches Vineyard's support, families seeking reunification can take a step forward towards rebuilding their lives.

Interview 6 – Chris Frank, Country Bible Church

We identified a significant need for a secure location in northern Kosciusko. We contacted Chris Frank at Country Bible Church, located in North Webster, Indiana, to address this issue. Chris welcomed us with open arms and enthusiastically provided a safe and homey environment. He offered the parsonage on their property as a space where foster children and their biological parents could have supervised visits. The parsonage, has a kitchen, living room, bedrooms, and a bathroom, providing a comfortable environment for parents to interact with their children, play games, bake cookies, or even enjoy outdoor activities on the play structure. Chris signed a MOU (see appendix G) committing to providing a secure space to facilitate future supervised visits.

Interview 7 – Greg Demopoulos, Warsaw Community Church

Greg Demopoulos, a member of the Warsaw Community Church, has shown incredible commitment to making a difference in Kosciusko County. After hearing about our mission to create a safe space for foster children to have supervised visits with their biological parents, Greg offered his support by providing two spacious rooms equipped with bathroom facilities, a comfortable seating area, and a kitchen (see Appendix H). This generous act will impact the Kosciusko Community foster children and their families. It's inspiring to see individuals like Greg willing to go above and beyond to support their community and make a positive change.

Interview 8 – Tonya Blanchard, Animal Welfare League

Tonya Blanchard, Executive Director of the Kosciusko Animal Welfare League, approached us after learning about our project. She expressed interest in providing families a calming, fun, and therapeutic space. Tonya proposed that supervised visits could be conducted in their board space, a safe and enjoyable meeting area. If the families desired, Tonya could bring in a pet for the children to cuddle with, providing them with a fun way to interact with each other and work towards the reunification process.

Conclusion:

After conducting extensive research and speaking with various stakeholders, it is clear that a safe place for foster kids to have supervised visits with their biological parents is necessary in Kosciusko County. Such a place would ensure that the children are not exposed to any distractions or that the biological parents are not being judged during the visits. By providing a safe and comfortable environment for these visits, we can help children maintain and/or develop positive relationships with their biological parent(s) while learning to interact as a family. Without such a space, the emotional and psychological well-being of those foster children and the biological parent(s) can be severely impacted.

With six different locations (see Appendices I-L) spread throughout the county, there are neutral and secure environments now available where participants of supervised visits can feel welcomed and comfortable. These vulnerable children and their parents can start their journey of rebuilding their relationships.

Bowen Center has agreed to be the entity that receives all the Safe Space information collated to show location, amenities, and information relevant to scheduling a reunification visit. Appendix M presents a current list of locations, addresses, contact information, and other relevant details.

To continue our mission, our team's proposal (see Appendix N) to allocate the Northenor Award funds will go to purchasing and supplying a game cart to some of our safe place locations. Providing a sturdy mobile cart stocked with games, puzzles, coloring activities, and cleaning supplies (see Appendix O for an example) will foster interaction and strengthen relationships between foster children and their biological parents. This initiative will have a remarkable impact on their overall well-being.

Future KLA White Paper Ideas:

The information garnered through this project and the head start achieved presents a wealth of possibilities for future Kosciusko Leadership groups. The need for additional safe spaces in our community is imperative, as is the availability of locations for emergency removals by DCS. The project's potential to meet these needs is significant, and the success can inspire other Kosciusko Leadership groups to pursue similar initiatives. We discovered that there are many other locations in Kosciusko County that are willing to lend their support and open their doors to provide safe spaces. Another option for a future KLA group would be to collaborate with Bowen and develop an online scheduling system that includes the available safe spaces to provide a more convenient and efficient scheduling system for supervised visits.

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Appendix

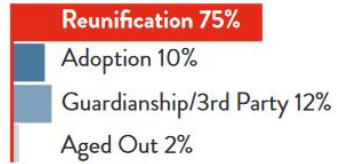


Change a Child's Story™

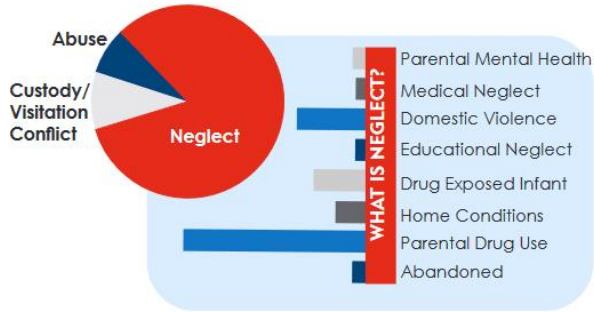
CASA IN 2022...



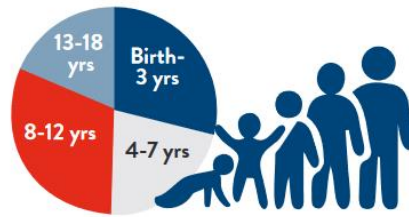
50 CASES CLOSED



REASONS FOR CASA IN 2022



AGE OF KIDS CASA SERVES



(CASA, 2024)

APPENDIX B



(Howe & Howe, 2019)

IMPACT REPORT

2023



Fostering HOPE for families and children in crisis!

(Howe & Howe, 2019)

NOTE FROM BROOKE AND KYLE


2023 was an exciting year! The Lord's faithfulness overflowed in abundance through The Cooper House ministry, allowing us to purchase our very own home in order to serve and support more vulnerable families and children in our Region. We joyfully acknowledge the privilege it is to walk alongside our families and children and are expectant as we embark on 2024, that the Lord will continue to do even greater things and transform more lives through the power of the gospel.

As a ministry, we remain dedicated to prayer and following the Lord's lead, committing to seek God's will and glorify Him in all we do! Our prayer is that the seeds of hope we get to plant each day will have ripple effects in the lives of our families and the children we serve for generations to come.

Throughout the past year, we provided support, encouragement, and prayer for individuals experiencing hopelessness. We ensured families could stay together and safe with our crisis benevolence outreach funds (aka barrier busters), and sustained our El Roi home which provides temporary housing for reunified families. This ministry and our programs would not have been possible without the support, generosity, and kindness of our board, staff, volunteers, prayer warriors, and donors! Thanks to each one of YOU, who have played a part in fostering hope for families! We couldn't do this without you, it truly takes a village.

Our work is far from over, and we humbly request your partnership through prayer and giving. With anticipation and gratitude, we look forward to witnessing the Lord's abundant blessings as we strive to do even more through our ministry in 2024.

in faith & love,
Brooke & Kyle Howe
Co-Founders



(Howe & Howe, 2019)

A FEW FUN HIGHLIGHTS

Bought a house!
From utilizing donated space at a volunteer fire department in 2020, to renting our cute blue house from 2021-2022, to the Lord providing a way for us to purchase a house! We are still in awe and SO thankful!



13
JULY



Community Garage Sale
Hosted our 2nd annual FREE garage sale for our community, which included free kid haircuts and lunch! Over 80 people attended! We love serving our people!

Bright as the Noonday Sairee!
Our 3rd annual fundraiser presented by Kirsh & Kirsh Adoptions raised over \$150,000! We love coming together with our community to host a fun night out, while raising money for families in crisis!



26
AUG

Moved into the new house!
The house needed a kitchen and a full bath put in before we were able to move over! Worked on it throughout the summer, thanks to all who helped! Finally, moved over on a Monday, and started programming on Tuesday.



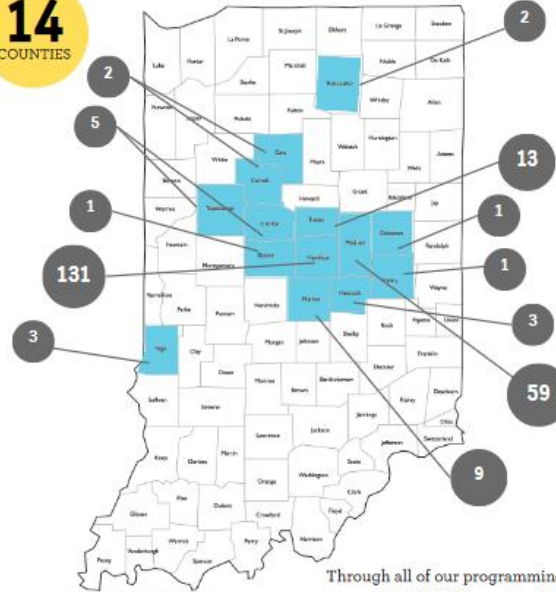
**31
OCT**


30
SEPT

Other highlights included serving our local DCS office with lunch, in March, for social worker appreciation month & again at the end of the year with a coffee truck! We also celebrated a mother and daughter's accomplishment of moving out of our transitional home, El Roi, into their own home!

(Howe & Howe, 2019)

14
COUNTIES

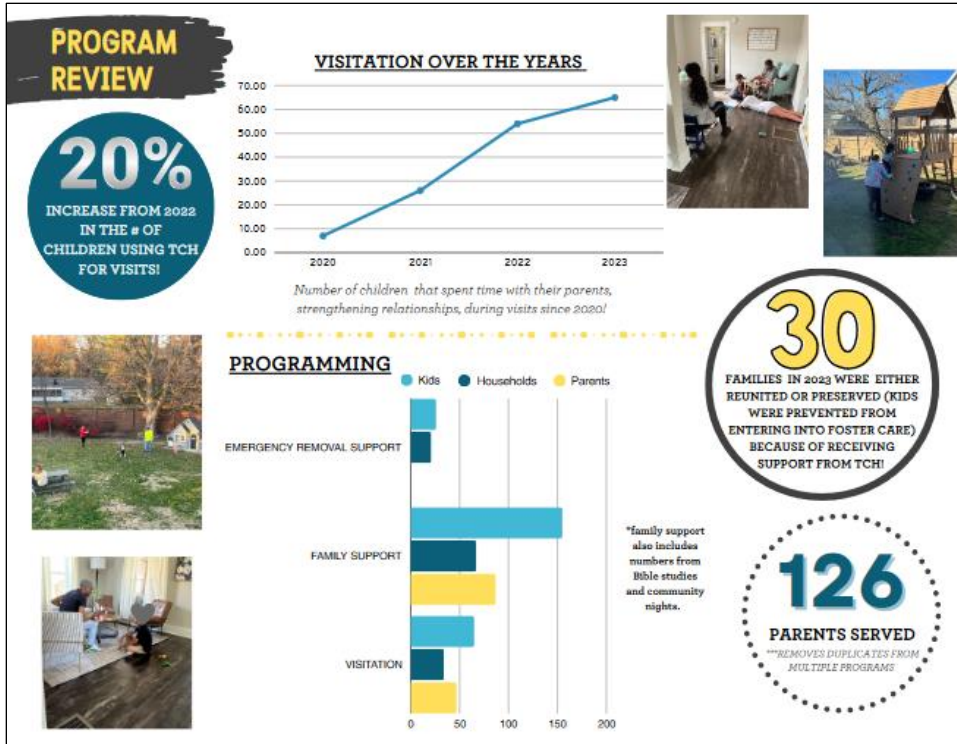




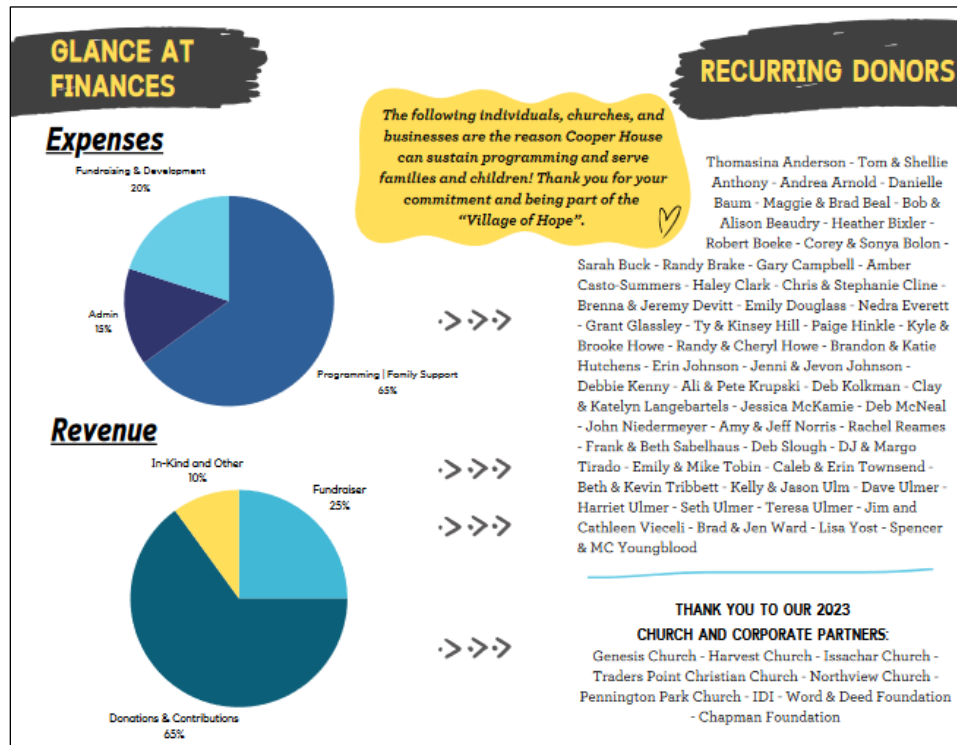
230
Children served

Through all of our programming, we served many families, spanning across FOURTEEN counties. How cool is that?! Coming alongside families during times of crisis and impacting the lives of 230 children in 2023 brought us so much joy. Thank you to all of our volunteers, donors, staff, and board members for being a part of what God is doing here.

(Howe & Howe, 2019)



(Howe & Howe, 2019)



(Howe & Howe, 2019)

Appendix D

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE FELLOWSHIP MISSIONS AND KLA SAFE SPACE GROUP

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is agreed to on [Date], between Fellowship Missions 501c3, hereinafter referred to as the "Nonprofit," and Kosciusko Leadership Academy KLA Safe Space Reunification Group, hereinafter referred to as the "Safe Space Reunification Group."

BACKGROUND:

The Nonprofit is dedicated to being a hub for the community as they help those struggling with addiction connect to treatment resources.

The KLA Safe Space Reunification Group is committed to being the spark which connects those in the community who help to provide safe and supportive environments for the reunification of parents with their children, primarily foster children. This population often overlaps with the nonprofit population and needs comfort, mentoring, and coaching services.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this MOU is to convene and illustrate community support to support the Nonprofit as it provides a Safe Space Location for DCS and assigned supervising representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline to use while helping to facilitate the reunification of parents with their children. The Safe Space KLA Group is committed to being the connector of all related entities to get this project off the ground.

This space, which we hope will eventually be one of multiple spaces around the county for this purpose, is the building located at: and is owned and operated by Fellowship Missions in downtown Warsaw, IN.

TERMS:

1. Safe Space Location:

1.1 Nonprofit agrees to provide this designated Safe Space Location (once it is ready) for the use of representatives of DCS such as Bowen Center and Lifeline who meet and oversee foster parents in the process of reunifying with their children. The Nonprofit will communicate their opening hours and any needs for scheduling or cleaning.

1.2 The Safe Space Location will be equipped with facilities and amenities conducive to providing a comfortable and secure environment for the reunification process.

2. Usage Agreement:

2.1 The Safe Space Location as used by DCS supervising Representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline is intended solely for the purpose of reunifying parents with their children.

2.2 The Nonprofit will provide rules and regulations for the Safe Space Location that align with the mission and values of itself.

3. **Duration:**
3.1 This MOU is effective as of [Date] and will remain in force until either party terminates this agreement with written notice.

4. **Responsibilities:**
4.1 DCS representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline will be responsible for coordinating and managing the reunification events held at the Safe Space Location.

SIGNATURES:

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION: Fellowship Missions

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Eric Lane', written over a horizontal line.

Eric Lane Executive Director January 30, 2024

KLA SAFE SPACE REUNIFICATION GROUP,

Appendix E

COURT/DCS SUPERVISED VISITATION RULES

- The time and length of the visits must be pre-arranged.
- Directions given by the monitor must be followed. The monitor will not discuss the rules with the child(ren) present.
- Any questions about activities or rules that need to be asked of Court/DCS need to be taken care of prior to the session.
- The monitor will not discuss the court case or visitation restrictions with the visiting person.
- There will be no attempt to get the monitor to side with anyone. The monitor must remain impartial.
- Child(ren) must be within the monitor's hearing and sight at all times. Parents should remain with the child at all times.
- Use of foreign language or unfamiliar words to the monitor is not allowed. A translator may be provided, if necessary.
- Negative comments about the other parent, caretaker, child, child's siblings, or family case manager will not be tolerated. No asking questions or using comments that make the child/monitor uncomfortable.
- Discussions that are offensive, sexual, or derogatory in nature are inappropriate and will not be tolerated.
- Other behaviors that are unacceptable include: whispering, passing notes, using hand signals, talking loud, name calling, ridiculing, or swearing.
- The visiting person (if an adult) is responsible for managing the child's behavior. No spanking, hitting, or threatening. The monitor will help, if needed.
- Unless previously agreed upon, the visiting person will be the only person allowed into the visit.
- Parents will not "arrange" or "happen" to meet unauthorized persons while in session. This includes while at the Bowen Center, in the community, and at pick-up times. Unauthorized persons should maintain distance from the child and will be asked to leave if necessary.
- Children are not allowed to leave the session to say "Hi" to unauthorized persons.
- Under no circumstances will visits occur if the visiting person appears to be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or illicit prescription medication use.
- Cell phone use is unacceptable. Only emergency calls will be allowed by the monitor.
- Water activities (pools, ponds, splash pads, etc.) will not be allowed.
- Changing of the child's appearance (cutting and dying hair, piercings, etc.) is forbidden.
- Exchange of gifts, money, or cards must be authorized through Court/DCS prior to visitation.
- Parents of children in diapers must bring supplies to the session.
- Parents are responsible for healthy snacks and/or meals during session.
- Parents can bring toys/games from home to session, however, must return home with the parent unless authorized by Court/DCS.
- Cancellations must be done 24 hours prior to the appointment unless it is an unavoidable emergency (ex. Car breaks down on the way to the visit, illness, etc). Cancellations less than 24 hours in advance will be treated as a "no show," and will not be made up.

C734 (R02) (02/13/2023)

Court/DCS Supervised Visitation Rules

Bowen Center

(Tab:Legal)

Page 1 of 2

Patient Name: _____

MRN: _____

Location: _____

Attendance at Visit; Time, location, and type of visit _____ Who is present _____ Who facilitated the visit _____				
Greetings between visiting person and child(ren)	Food provided and what	Ability and willingness of parent to meet child's needs	What EBP being implemented by provider	Planned activities by parent
Interventions required and parents response to intervention	Were tasks given to parent prior to visit and were they completed	Were any visit rules broken? How did parent respond?	Did the parent seek guidance or support from provider?	Departure interaction between parent and child(ren)
Additional info to add to narrative:				
Strengths				
Concerns				
Recommendation What did you observe and does the parent need to continue or not and why				

APPENDIX F

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE BRANCHES VINEYARD CHURCH AND KLA SAFE SPACE GROUP

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is agreed to on [Date], between Branches Vineyard Church, hereinafter referred to as the "Branches Vineyard," and Kosciusko Leadership Academy KLA Safe Space Reunification Group, hereinafter referred to as the "Safe Space Reunification Group."

BACKGROUND:

The Branches Vineyard Church describes itself as a group of people intimately connected with Jesus, with a heart to branch out to the community of Warsaw, and see lives changed for God's kingdom.

The KLA Safe Space Reunification Group is committed to being the spark which connects those in the community who help to provide safe and supportive environments for the reunification of parents with their children, primarily foster children. This population often needs comfort, mentoring, and coaching services, and needs safe and welcoming spaces to aid in this goal.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this MOU is to convene and illustrate community support to support Branches Vineyard as it provides a Safe Space Location for DCS and assigned supervising representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline to use while helping to facilitate the reunification of parents with their children. The Safe Space KLA Group is committed to being the connector of all related entities to get this project off the ground.

This space, which we hope will eventually be one of multiple spaces around the county for this purpose, is the building located at: and is owned and operated by.....

TERMS:

1. Safe Space Location:

- 1.1 Branches Vineyard agrees to provide this designated Safe Space Location (once it is ready) for the use of representatives of DCS such as Bowen Center and Lifeline who meet and oversee foster parents in the process of reunifying with their children. Branches Vineyard will communicate their opening hours and any needs for scheduling or cleaning.
- 1.2 The Safe Space Location will be equipped with facilities and amenities conducive to providing a comfortable and secure environment for the reunification process. These needs may vary and can be discussed as the project moves along.
- 1.3 The Safe Space KLA group will aid in helping the above come to pass for multiple Safe Spaces locations provided should the group be awarded a KLA end Grant.

2. Usage Agreement:

2.1 The Safe Space Location as used by DCS supervising Representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline is intended solely for the purpose of reunifying parents with their children.

2.2 The Branches Vineyard will provide rules and regulations for the Safe Space Location that align with the mission and values of itself.

3. Duration:

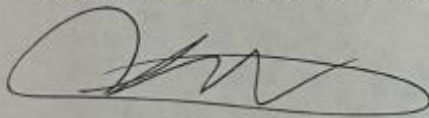
3.1 This MOU is effective as of [Date] and will remain in force until either party terminates this agreement with written notice.

4. Responsibilities:

4.1 DCS representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline will be responsible for coordinating and managing the reunification events held at the Safe Space Location as required by Branches Vineyard.

SIGNATURES:

BRANCHES VINEYARD ORGANIZATION:



Amanda Clark, Pastor

574-529-4334

KLA SAFE SPACE REUNIFICATION GROUP.

amand2@branchesvineyard.org

Appendix G

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE COUNTRY BIBLE CHURCH AND KLA SAFE SPACE GROUP

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is agreed to on [March 22, 2024], between Country Bible Church, North Webster, hereinafter referred to as the "Country Bible Church," and Kosciusko Leadership Academy KLA Safe Space Reunification Group, hereinafter referred to as the "Safe Space Reunification Group."

BACKGROUND:

The Country Bible Church describes its mission as providing ways to grow in our relationship with Christ and share the hope of the Gospel

The KLA Safe Space Reunification Group is committed to being the spark which connects those in the community who help to provide safe and supportive environments for the reunification of parents with their children, primarily foster children. This population often needs comfort, mentoring, and coaching services, and needs safe and welcoming spaces to aid in this goal.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this MOU is to convene and illustrate community support to support WCC Warsaw Community as it provides a Safe Space Location for DCS and assigned supervising representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline to use while helping to facilitate the reunification of parents with their children. The Safe Space KLA Group is committed to being the connector of all related entities to get this project off the ground.

This space, which we hope will eventually be one of multiple spaces around the county for this purpose, is the building located at: 8766 E. 500 N. and is owned and operated by Country Bible Church.

TERMS:

1. Safe Space Location:

- 1.1 WCC Warsaw Community agrees to provide this designated Safe Space Location (once it is ready) for the use of representatives of DCS such as Bowen Center and Lifeline who meet and oversee foster parents in the process of reunifying with their children. WCC Warsaw Community will communicate their opening hours and any needs for scheduling or cleaning.
- 1.2 The Safe Space Location will be equipped with facilities and amenities conducive to providing a comfortable and secure environment for the reunification process. These needs may vary and can be discussed as the project moves along.

2. Usage Agreement:

- 2.1 The Safe Space Location as used by DCS supervising Representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline is intended solely for the purpose of reunifying parents with their children.

2.2 The WCC Warsaw Community will provide rules and regulations for the Safe Space Location that align with the mission and values of itself.

3. Duration:

3.1 This MOU is effective as of [April 1, 2024] and will remain in force until either party terminates this agreement with written notice.

4. Responsibilities:

4.1 DCS representatives such as Bowen Center and Lifeline will be responsible for coordinating and managing the reunification events held at the Safe Space Location as required by Country Bible Church.

SIGNATURES:

Country Bible Church:

Rev. Christopher Frank

Rev. Chris Frank, Pastor
March 22, 2024

KLA SAFE SPACE REUNIFICATION GROUP.

Appendix H– Pictures of safe space rooms and café area at Warsaw Community Church

Room 52 located in lower level: 35' x 35'



(Photo provided by Pastor Greg Demopoulos at Warsaw Community Church)

Room located middle level with bathroom: 20' x 21



(Photo provided by Pastor Greg Demopoulos at Warsaw Community Church)

Café/ Lounge area



(Photo provided by Pastor Greg Demopoulos at Warsaw Community Church)

APPENDIX I - Mission Point Building 1003 Presidential Dr. Winona Lake



(Photo provided by Nichole Fifer)

APPENDIX J –Reservable Board Room at the Animal Welfare League.



(Photo provided by Shari Benyousky)

APPENDIX K- Country Bible Church, North Webster Indiana



(Photos provided by Pastor Chris Frank)

APPENDIX L- Branches Vineyard Church, Warsaw



(Photos provided by Mary Lepird)

Appendix M

Safe Space Locations and Contact Information						
Name of Facility	Address	Contact Person	Contact #	Onsite Person	Outside Options	Water
Warsaw Community Church	1855 S County Farm Rd Warsaw	Greg Demopoulos	574-253-3971	Yes	Lg grass area/ picnic area	Pond
Mission Point	1003 Presidential Dr. Winona Lk	Kearstin Criswell	317-417-6303	No	Sm grassy area	None
Branches Church	765 W Market St Warsaw	Amanda Clark	574-529-4334	Yes	Playground equip	None
The Gathering Place	109 E Market St Warsaw	Eric Lane	574-268-9555	Yes	None	None
Country Bible Church-Parsonage	4782 N 850 E North Webster	Chris Frank	260-229-0290	Yes	Back yard, play set, field	None
Animal Welfare Clinic	1048 S 325 E Piercetn	Tonya Blanchard	574-267-3008	Yes	Small grassy area	None

APPENDIX N– GRANT PROPOSAL FOR SAFE SPACE GROUP

Mobile Carts for Safe Space Project for Parent Reunification with Child(ren) in Foster Care

We propose the implementation of mobile carts at the following Safe Space Locations to support parents in their reunification process with their children in foster care. These carts will serve as a vital resource, providing essential cleaning supplies, educational games, and puzzles to enhance family bonding during supervised visits. The mobile aspect of the carts allows easy storage in a closet during periods when the space is used in other ways.

The **Parent Reunification Support Program** aims to create a nurturing environment for parents and children during their reunification journey. By equipping social workers and visitation supervisors with mobile carts, we can facilitate meaningful interactions and promote positive parenting experiences.

Budget Allocation Mobile Carts (Qty: 5):

- Sturdy, lightweight carts with ample storage compartments
- Customizable to accommodate cleaning supplies, games, and puzzles.
- Cost per cart: **\$200**
- Total cost: **\$1000**

Implementation Timeline:

Procurement and Assembly (Month 1):

- Purchase mobile carts and assemble them.
- Train staff in cart usage and maintenance.

Rollout and Feedback Collection (Months 2-3):

- Deploy carts during supervised visits.
- Gather feedback from parents, social workers, and supervisors.

Evaluation and Adjustment (Month 4):

- Assess the impact of mobile carts on parent-child interactions.
- Make necessary adjustments based on feedback.

Budget Justification:

The requested \$1000 will cover the purchase of five mobile carts. These carts will be strategically placed in visitation rooms across our foster care centers. We believe this investment will significantly contribute to successful reunification outcomes.

Conclusion:

By providing mobile carts, we empower parents, strengthen family bonds, and create a supportive environment for reunification. We appreciate your consideration of this grant proposal and its potential impact on the lives of vulnerable families.

Thank you for your support.

APPENDIX O



Slide Deck