

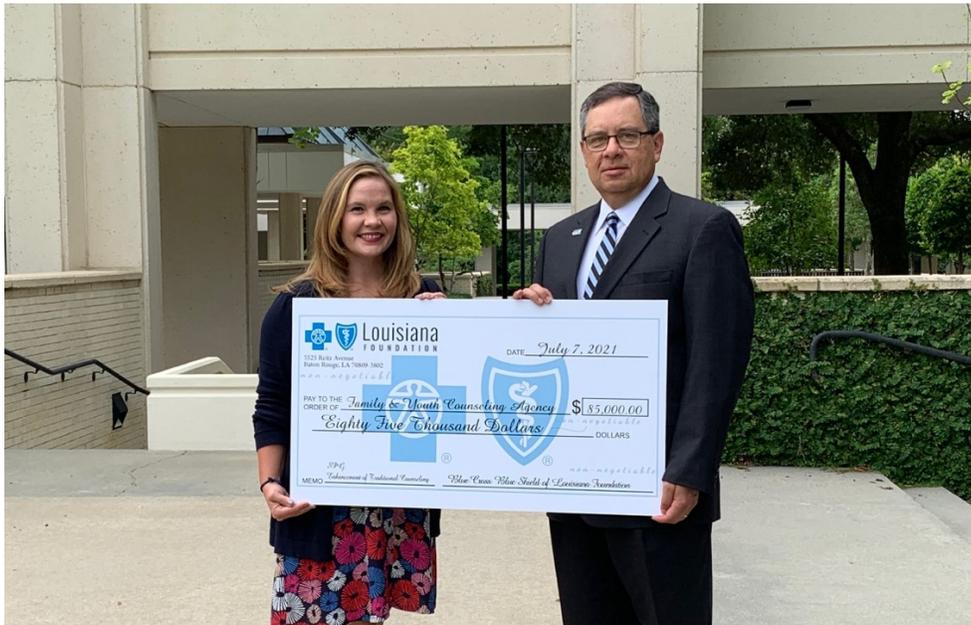


Autism Support Alliance
Children's Advocacy Center
Shannon Cox Counseling Center
The Leadership Center for Youth
Court Appointed Special Advocates
Human Services Response Institute
Children and Families Action Network
Performance Employee and Business Services

Contact: Elizabeth Davis
Email: elizabethd@fyca.org
Phone: 337-436-9533

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lake Charles-Area Agency Receives Grant to Provide Counseling and Equine Facilitated Services to Children Affected by Trauma



(Pictured L to R): Chloe Wiley, Initiatives Manager of The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation and Julio R. Galan, President and CEO of Family & Youth.

(Lake Charles)— For young people dealing with traumatic experiences, research is showing that working with horses can provide a powerful therapeutic experience. That's why Family & Youth Counseling Agency (Family & Youth), is piloting a program to provide Equine Facilitated Services to 50 children in Southwest Louisiana. The program is supported by a grant from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation.

Equine Facilitated Services for young people involves a therapist and a horse trainer working together with a child. Riding and caring for horses, who mirror and are highly responsive to human emotions, can provide therapeutic benefit for people dealing with a range of mental and behavioral health issues – but has shown significant promise for those who have experienced trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to a study published in *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*.

“People – especially young people – who have experienced trauma, neglect or abuse often struggle to form emotional bonds,” Julio Galan, President and CEO of Family & Youth, said. “That untreated trauma is often at the root of young people feeling disconnected from their communities and, later, possibly destructive and sometimes negative behavior.”

Children participating in the pilot will be selected based on recommendations from the Children's Advocacy Center and the Shannon Cox Counseling Center. Family & Youth will work with a researcher to measure how successful Equine Facilitated

Services are at helping young people make progress, particularly those who have not responded to traditional counseling services.

“Untreated trauma is a big factor in health and life outcomes that compound over time,” said Michael Tipton, President of the Blue Cross Foundation. “We are happy to be a partner with Family & Youth, who are also working to create a model of this kind of therapy that can be shared with other agencies across the state.”

The Shannon Cox Counseling Center’s licensed and professionally credentialed clinicians and para-professionals provide a wide range of constructive and life-changing services in the form of counseling, consultation and education to benefit individuals, couples and families in Southwest Louisiana. Based on the belief that all individuals possess the ability to solve their own challenges and live a healthy life when support is available, counselors and engagement specialists utilize a strength- based, client-directed and outcome-informed approach.

Family & Youth has been serving the community since 1970. It is the belief of Family & Youth that all individuals possess the ability to solve their own challenges and live full and healthy lives when support is available. It is the mission of Family & Youth to provide affordable and professional support through programs and services dedicated to the advocacy, counseling, and education for the people of Southwest Louisiana. Our effort and commitment to building family values will guarantee a stable and stronger community. For more information call 337.436.9533 or visit www.fyca.org. Family & Youth is a United Way supported agency.

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FAMILY & YOUTH
220 Louie Street, Lake Charles, LA
337-436-9533 | www.fyca.org