

FOR
THE

children

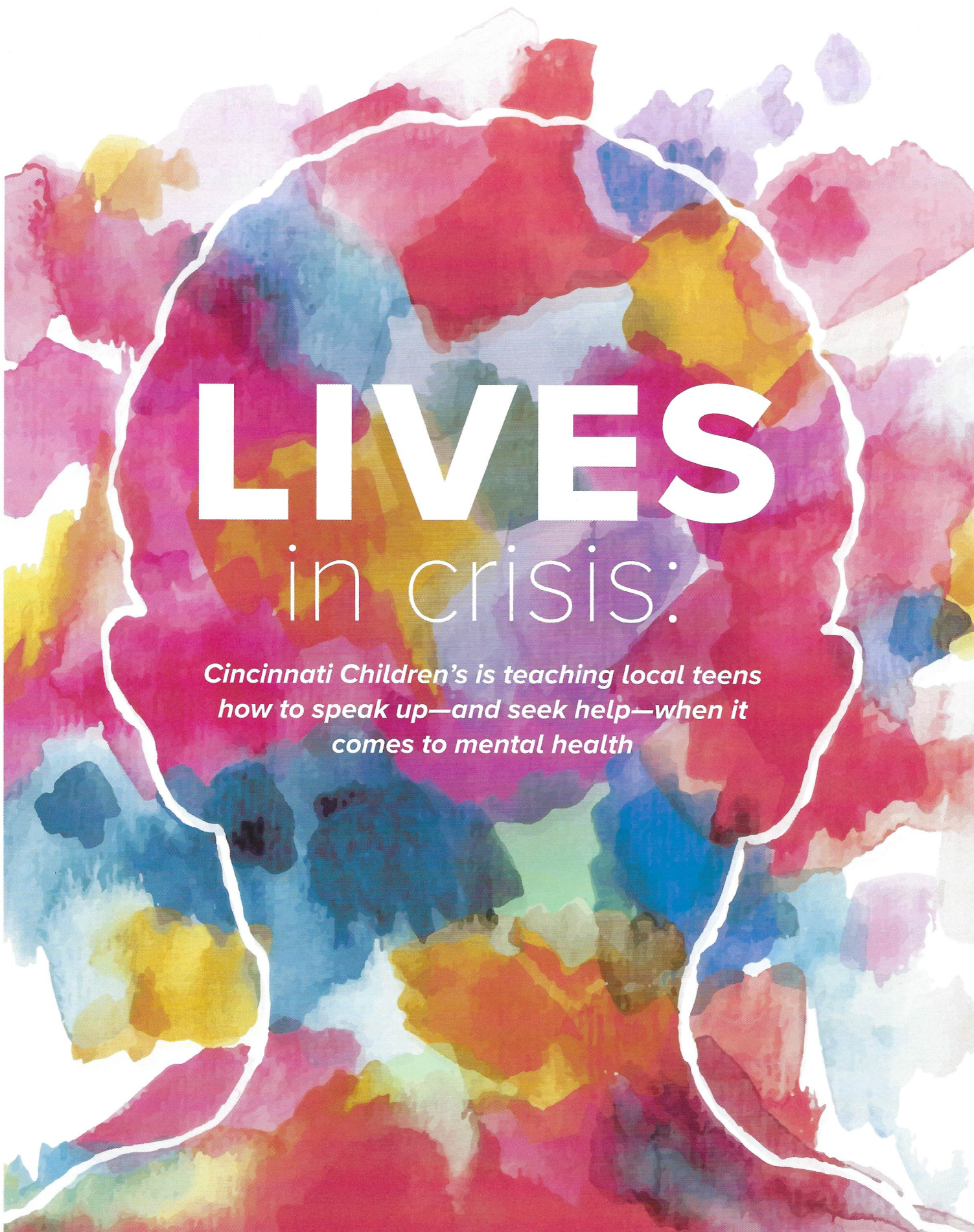


SPECIAL
EDITION

A Year in Review

AN ANNUAL REPORT CELEBRATING ALL
WE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER IN 2017





LIVES

in crisis:

*Cincinnati Children's is teaching local teens
how to speak up—and seek help—when it
comes to mental health*

Angie* received the call from William's* high school one cold day in February, four years ago. "Come pick up your son," the school's counselor told her. "He's not well."

William had just confessed to hearing voices in his head. They were telling him to do unthinkable things. Unbeknownst to Angie, the voices had been around for years.

Within a few days, William was checked into a mental healthcare facility—the first of many he would visit over the course of the next two years.

"It was like dealing with a whole other person," Angie says, her voice breaking. "I had no idea that William was in such a dark place. He needed help."

Greater Need for Care

After bouncing between a few different facilities, William found hope at our College Hill campus. There, he responded well to the attentive care of his doctors and mental health specialists.

"It took a few years after that first visit, but the doctors at Cincinnati Children's helped him establish a sense of balance," says Angie. "They treated us with compassion and respect. It felt like we were in a partnership for William's healing."

Stories like William's are becoming increasingly common in our community. Trends in Cincinnati mirror those nationwide: More and more teenagers are requiring treatment for mental health needs.

From 2011 to 2015, the medical center saw a 60 percent rise in the number of children coming to our emergency department for psychiatric evaluation and a 70 percent rise in inpatient admissions.

"The jump in these numbers is concerning," says Michal Sorter, MD, director of our Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. "Teens experiencing a mental health crisis are at real risk for self-harm, even suicide."

"I had no idea that William was in such a dark place. He needed help."

ANGIE, grateful mom of William

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, suicide is the second leading cause of death in youth ages 10–24.

Which means that—even though it took a few years to regain his well-being—William is a success story. Not all teens get the help they desperately need. Some never even have the chance to ask.

Learning to Speak Up

Rick Rockwell is used to making himself heard. During the school day, he has to capture the attention of his boisterous students at Madeira Middle School. Then, in the evenings, as head coach of the men's basketball team at Madeira High School, he paces the sidelines, shouting instructions to his players.

A long teaching career has taught him that some students aren't as good as he is at speaking up. Even when they have something urgent to say.

"Several former students have told me they didn't feel comfortable seeking help for themselves or others," says Rick. "They were only able to do it because Surviving the Teens taught them how."

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*These names have been changed to protect privacy.

Developed at Cincinnati Children's, Surviving the Teens (STT) helps teens, parents and teachers recognize the warning signs of depression and suicide risk. It also teaches them concrete steps on how to help those in crises. It's delivered in local schools—in classrooms like Rick's—by our mental health experts.

"I've seen firsthand how this program saves lives."

RICK ROCKWELL, Madeira Middle School teacher

STT is a great example of how Cincinnati Children's is providing teens with the tools they need to seek help before they find themselves in a crisis. The program also gives teachers and parents the tools to recognize at-risk behaviors in students and training on how to intervene.

"Over the past 10 years, I've seen firsthand how this program saves lives," says Rick.

Partnership Enables Outreach

Surviving the Teens was created 17 years ago by Cathy Strunk, MSN, RN, a nurse at Cincinnati

Children's. She introduced it in a few local schools, wondering whether the program would resonate with teens. Since then, the program has spread to 48 local schools, touching the lives of some 100,000 students, teachers and parents.

The program's growth wouldn't have been possible without help from generous donors like Nancy Miller and the 1N5 Foundation. The foundation's name alludes to the fact that one out of every five teens are estimated to be living with a mental health condition.

"Our mission at 1N5 is to combat the rising rate of youth suicides in the Cincinnati area by equipping schools with quality, evidence-based mental health and suicide prevention programming," says Nancy. "We couldn't be more excited about our continued partnership with the Surviving the Teens program. To see practical and proven successful mental health education programs being placed in area schools is truly a realization of the goal I created when I began 1N5. There's still so much work to be done, but this is exactly what we've been called to do."

Help from 1N5—along with a new commitment from Kohl's—will allow the program to expand to 75 new schools over the next two years, more than doubling its reach. For Cathy and Nancy, an expanded role for STT is exactly what our community needs.

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1N5 partnership

Named for the fact that one in five teens is estimated to be living with a mental health condition, 1N5 seeks to raise awareness of mental health in teens and adults.

"When the course is over, so many students will tell us, 'I no longer feel so alone,'" says Cathy. "We're giving teens the tools to recognize warning signs in themselves and others—and to speak out."

Growing and Thriving

Now away at college, William is doing great. He is happy and well-adjusted among his new friends, and has even seized the opportunity to spend several semesters abroad. Angie couldn't be happier to see her son thriving. And she wants the same for other teens.

"It's great to see schools bringing in mental health specialists to educate students, teachers and parents. I think it's so important for adults to learn how to spot signs that children are in trouble," Angie says.

She's thankful William received help before it was too late.

"We're so grateful for the incredible people who have cared for him," Angie says. "And we're hopeful now. William is in a good place, and he has a bright future."

To support mental health services at Cincinnati Children's, contact **Ashley Rich** at ashley.rich@cchmc.org or **513-803-6593**.