

The Treehouse

A Unique Mother/Child Outreach in Wichita

By Amy Torkelson, KFL Communications Director

As I walked into The Treehouse for the first time, I could feel that it was a peaceful place where moms can step out of the hectic pace of life with toddlers, take a deep breath, and refocus on their goals.

The staff and volunteers here work to help all Treehouse Moms set goals and achieve them. Their combination of educational programs, incentives to complete those programs, and a pleasant atmosphere in which to do it, is a great asset to the community. Come with me on this “virtual tour,” and see some of the good works being done to help those moms who have chosen to keep their babies.



Lee Ann Vandervort (Treehouse Executive Director), Amy Torkelson (KFL Communications Director), Cristin Coats (Treehouse Operations Manager).

Christina: the Story of One Treehouse Mom

In 2010, Christina came to The Treehouse for the first time. She was pregnant with her third child and would soon have two kids in diapers. Her boyfriend was barely paying the bills and they were receiving state assistance. Every month was a struggle. Her boyfriend began using and selling drugs, which led to the destruction of their family.

Christina now had to face the harsh reality that she was a single mom with three kids and no job or home. She moved into a family member’s home and eventually purchased a car with her income tax refund. The Treehouse became her escape where she could learn about parenting while earning diapers and formula for her children.

Christina and the Treehouse staff immediately bonded. “Rachel and Jaleen showed me that The Treehouse wasn’t just about free stuff, it was a place where I could learn how to take better care of myself and my family. I loved earning baby bucks to finally be able to buy clothes and shoes for the kids ... one of my favorite classes was the Nutrition class. I learned so much about healthy eating and tried out many new recipes. The veggie wrap became our family favorite.”



Treehouse Moms learn to cook healthy meals for their families at a cooking class.

There continued to be many ups and downs for Christina and her family, and she has continued to rely on her mentor, Rachel, and the resources provided by The Treehouse. Christina says, "I'm very thankful for Rachel and The Treehouse, which is my family, my home, and my comfort. My piece of sanity that I know will always be there for me so I can be here for my children."

About The Treehouse

The Treehouse was established in 2002, after a group from the Orthodox Christian Church decided to investigate what needs were not being met in the Wichita community, and to try to meet those needs. The organization has been at its current location at 151 N. Volusia since 2008.

Clients are referred to The Treehouse from one of their partner agencies, including crisis pregnancy centers and other crisis agencies in Wichita. After becoming a Treehouse mom, each family is provided with a gift of baby care necessities, and moms can earn "baby bucks" to shop in the Treehouse thrift store.

"Baby bucks" can be earned by attending classes, watching educational videos, and completing "homework" projects. Childcare is provided on site during classes, so that children can play in the center's playroom while their mothers attend class.

All of these are offered in a pleasant atmosphere which includes personal relationships with The Treehouse's staff and volunteers.



The thrift store at The Treehouse stocks good-quality items which are donated by the community.



Childcare is provided in the center's playroom so that mothers can attend classes.



The Treehouse is a safe haven for moms in need of assistance.

**Contact information for
The Treehouse:**

**151 N. Volusia
Wichita KS 67214
316-686-2600**

www.wichitatreehouse.org

Donations Needed:

- new baby clothes of all sizes
- diapers
- baby wipes
- baby formula
- bibs and burp cloths
- infant toys
- board books
- baby lotion and baby wash
- receiving blankets / quilts
- pacifiers
- outlet covers / safety devices
- children's educational DVDs and CDs
- children's board games
- gently used baby and children's clothes up to size 16
- new and gently used strollers, play pens, high chairs, etc.
- food (non-perishable items or frozen / refrigerated items)