

SAVE THE DATE

BINGO FOR BABIES



Staff Update:

We have new hires this Spring!

- Volunteer Program Coordinator, Sterling Moran
- Special Events Manager, Meghan Hilterbrand

These employees joined us last year and hit the ground running.

- Community Relations Coordinator, Marcella Morgan (6/24)
- Communications Manager, Modisane Kwanza (12/24)

Legacy Giving:

Making a legacy gift has a lasting impact. Healthy and well-fed babies and toddlers have promising futures. Donors are remembered for supporting our mission that no baby should go hungry. There are immediate perks also, such as tax benefits for you and your loved ones. Legacy gifts can be made by including Infant Crisis Services in your will or trust or adding Infant Crisis Services as a beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance policy. To discuss the different options for including Infant Crisis Services in your giving plans, call us at (405) 778-7638, or email Lisa Perry, Senior Development Manager, at lisaperry@infantcrisis.org. Please consult your legal or financial advisor for guidance on making charitable gifts that best match your philanthropic goals.

SPRING 2025

BABY TALK

The Newsletter of Infant Crisis Services

A Community to Lean On

Stories like Ika Bookman's demonstrate that when life gets hectic, we need a caring community to support us.

In 2017, Ika's mother passed away unexpectedly. Suddenly, she was forced to juggle working through the process to adopt her brother, Camilo and going to school. Most of all, she had to be mom for her 4-year-old daughter, Ellie, and her 1-year-old son, Eli.

"It was big life stuff," Ika says about those days. "It was just chaotic."

Ika decided to reach out to Infant Crisis Services. She first came to ICS in 2013 when she was 19 to get a car seat for Ellie. At the time, she had a soft cloth car seat, but she couldn't afford one of the sturdier models. This time, she hoped she could at least get some clothes for baby Eli.

Ika admitted that she was nervous on her second visit to ICS, not knowing what to expect. What she found, she says, "was a friendly and caring environment."

"They were really sweet. They asked questions, asked me my needs, made me feel really comfortable."

Ika lived in Georgia for a while, until she moved back to Oklahoma in 2022. Her family had grown to include her infant son, Emerson. The family was homeless for a stretch during that time. So, Ika returned to ICS to get assistance for Emerson, hoping to find that same caring community from before. She did.

"It's been a blessing," Ika says.

Infant Crisis Services was there each and every time Ika needed resources for her children. She was able to get what she needed and more — all while being shown respect and compassion by ICS staff.

"You get to go somewhere and there's a community, and they're like 'hey what do you need help with,'" Ika says. "It's dope what you do here. It really is!"

We want all our clients to find a caring, loving resource

for their babies and toddlers at ICS. While we wish parents didn't have to struggle to feed and diaper their children, we find solace in knowing that we are here to help. Providing life-sustaining necessities for little ones sets them up for healthy and bright futures.

Ika says all her children are flourishing. At school, everyone wants to be 12-year-old Ellie's friend. Eli, 3, who has autism and ADHD, is doing amazing. Camilo, 17, and Emerson, 9, are well. Ika, now 31, is in a good place herself. She has an associate's degree in sociology with a counseling and social work focus, and she plans to go back to school for a bachelor's degree. Her goal is to find work that makes a difference helping people, especially children. For now, she assists with Seas the Day, her sister's nonprofit mobile library.

"Community is give and take," she says.



Summer Teen Program:

We welcomed a new crop of students to the Infant Crisis Services Summer Teen Program for their orientation in April. We have a total of 92 teens in the program — 32 volunteering only, 20 virtual, and 40 volunteering and collecting donations. They will be onsite Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in June and July. The teens will work on projects including packaging food and diapers, labeling formula, sorting clothing, cleaning and beautifying our building, and playing with toddlers in the playroom! For the students participating virtually, they will collect donations of diapers and monetary donations. Teens can still register for the virtual program option if they would like to work on their fundraising skills and earn service hours. The application is on our website, www.infantcrisis.org/teens.

Last year's Summer Teen Program brought in over 78,000 diapers and raised over \$18,500.



Mission Moment with Miki



It is so encouraging to me that you want to help babies for another 40 years. Thank you for your gifts! If you have not given to the campaign, please help us make this push toward our goal.

An endowment fund is crucial for the sustainability of an organization as it provides a perpetual source of income. Each year, Infant Crisis Services will receive a percentage of the fund as a distribution, allowing us to plan long-term, respond to emerging needs, and innovate our services with a strong financial footing.

Nationally, Oklahoma continues to rank poorly in child well-being. Our leaders and organizations across the state are working to improve outcomes for our children. Yet, 1 in 6 Oklahomans relied on SNAP benefits in the last fiscal year, according to national data, suggesting that a large population of Oklahomans still goes hungry. ICS wants to play a continuing role in the efforts to raise Oklahoma to the top ranks of children's well-being.

I think of how parents want to be prepared to provide for their babies. At ICS we want very much the same, to always be ready to assist a baby in need. Your support of the 40th Birthday Endowment fund ensures that we can provide future generations of babies and toddlers with the same level of care and support that has defined Infant Crisis Services for the past four decades.

Thank you to our Visionary Partner and lead endowment donor, Lauren Von, supporting partners, and donors. Your support means a great deal to us and the future of our littlest citizens.

If you would like to learn more about the endowment fund, you can visit our website at www.infantcrisis.org/endowment or call Lisa Perry, (405) 778-7638.

Always for the babies,

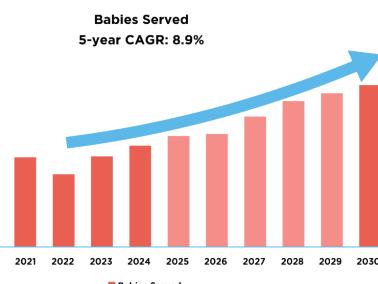
Miki Farris



Event Wrap-up:

BABY STEPS 1-Mile Fun Run & 5K

The Infant Crisis Services Teen Associate Board continues their winning streak as they hosted another successful Baby Steps 5K and 1 Mile Fun Run on April 12th. Through their efforts, the Teen Associate Board raised more than \$75,000 to help feed and diaper babies! Our teens were at their posts bright and early. The enthusiastic crowd of participants was treated to a gorgeous day. We are grateful to all who ran, jogged or walked the course. Thank you to our sponsors and Oklahoma Race Company. The Teen Associate Board hopes to see everyone again next year!



Did you know?



This is why an endowment important to Infant Crisis Services.

Over the last 5 years, Infant Crisis Services has seen the number of babies we serve annually rise from around 15,000 in 2019 to over 25,000 babies in 2024. If this rate of growth continues for ICS, we will be serving nearly 40,000 infants annually in 2030. With a client growth rate of 8.9%, ICS needs to secure additional revenue streams to meet the growing need. A 5% annual distribution from the 40th Birthday Endowment will become one of ICS's largest single sources of income, providing care for 3,245 babies who visit the BabyMobile. Please consider making a gift to the 40th Birthday Endowment today. For more information, visit www.infantcrisis.org/endowment.

'25-26 Board Members

We proudly introduce our Board of Directors for 2025-2026! Annette White-Klososky assumes the role of Chair. Thank you to outgoing Chair, Jeff Bonney, for your leadership. We give a hearty welcome to new board members Jason Osborn, Steven Propester, and Danielle Pullen.

Current board members include:



Chair: Annette White-Klososky, **Vice Chair:** Clay Taylor, **Treasurer:** Holly McLaughlin, **Secretary:** Brooke Townsend, **Board Governance Chair:** Afiya Wilkins, **Members:** Andi Bledsoe, Jeff Bonney, David Cottrell, Ainslee Crum, Tiffany Eitzmann, Sara Ghajar, Carolyn Hansing, Libby Howard, Kyle Impson, Melanie Marshall, M.D., Vilona Michael, Stacy Murray, Jason Osborn, Lauren Ottawa Johnson, Mark Pahl, Steven Propester, Danielle Pullen, Cherish Ralls, and Meredith Woods.