



# Refuge Offers Support to Children in Need, Collects Toy Donations to Brighten Kids Christmas

by Leanne Guthrie, Reporter  
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WOOD RIVER - Refuge in Wood River is an impactful non-profit offering support and resources to help children who are victims of violence. They are currently accepting donations of toys to help make Christmas brighter for the children they work with.

The mission of Refuge is to help kids and families by offering them healing and hope. Refuge focuses on children ages 0-11 and provides support through therapy, and other resources. The ever-expanding non-profit that started in February 2015 continues to grow and add new programs. Through their work, they are changing the lives of children every day. Because of Refuge, these children are shown that they are not alone, through the help of a caring staff that help the children work through obstacles.

“Refuge exists to bring hope and healing to children exposed to violence, abuse and neglect. At Refuge we provide free counseling and caregiver support to children from birth to 11 years old in Madison County at no cost to the family,” said Erin Bickle Executive Director of Refuge.

Their support and care for the families they work with go much deeper than just offering therapy, they are also working to help make sure families have a happy Christmas. They are accepting donations of new, unwrapped toys for boys and girls ages 0-11. Gifts will be given out as they celebrate Christmas with the kids that Refuge works with.

Refuge is currently located inside the building that also houses Riverbend Family Ministries a host for many much-needed non-profits within the area.

“We are only here because of our community, because of the support that Riverbend Family Ministries gives, because of that support that private donors and businesses and

local foundations give. We have a lot of kids on our waitlist right now, we are a small team that is impacting a lot of children, hundreds of children, but we are only doing what we can do with the resources that we have,” said Bickle.

To learn more about Refuge or to make a donation, visit their website <http://www.refuge4kids.org> To keep up with everything happening at Refuge, follow them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/refuge4kids/>

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