A Safe Place: Leigh’a Story

My son Oliver and I love the Nursery too!

Hello! I’m Leigha and I’m a single mom. My son, Oliver, is 3½ but since the day after he turned 3 he has been telling me & everyone he meets that he’s almost 4!

Oliver makes me laugh, wonder, think very hard, and sometimes cry.

He tests my patience and yet I am always inspired by him.

Oliver is universally adored for his innate ability to bring genuine joy to everyone he meets. He is a little magnet of sunshine.

Being a mother is complex. Those of you who are parents know exactly what I’m talking about.

Being a single parent is a bigger and more demanding job than I could have ever imagined or prepared for.

Fortunately, I found the Crisis Nursery and I feel less alone in my parenting journey.

I was having a hard time with the integrity and reliability of my support system. I needed help but felt minimized and disregarded any time I expressed my feelings.

I just hoped and hoped that with time and hoping our situation would improve… and I would feel more equipped to meet both of our needs.

When Oliver was 2, we had a change in his childcare situation. I felt isolated. I was increasingly feeling behind, underprepared, and not equipped to keep him busy and safe throughout the day.

Turns out he is a very busy kid! Unfortunately, my support system could hardly notice our difficulty or acknowledge any concerns.

I connected with another organization to help me understand Oliver’s behavior & why I felt so exhausted. They did assessments and eventually offered insight, understanding, and support for his sensory, speech & developmental needs.

They also recommended the Crisis Nursery’s Home Visiting program & that’s when we met Kari Bennett. She came to our apartment to listen to me and learn about Oliver.

Before our meeting, I was nervous about the possibility of being judged. But I quickly felt her kindness and never felt like she was judging me.

Kari was there to support me.

Honestly, I was surprised at how different I felt after just one meeting. I’ve been fortunate to meet with Kari weekly for nearly two years now. Every time we meet, I always feel like I am the most important person she’s meeting with that day.

She honors me as a parent and prioritizes my experience beyond any set expectation.

No one prepares us for how to be a good parent but through Kari, I’m learning the concept of good enough parenting.

Today I have hope.

When she shares bits and pieces of her own experience as a single mother who is thriving… I believe I can thrive too. Kari also told me about the respite services offered by the Nursery.

As any mom would be, I was very skeptical and nervous about leaving Oliver overnight at the Nursery.

The questions rolling through my mind were:

How safe is this place?

How can I leave my son somewhere with people I don’t even know?

Am I a failure as a mom if I need a break from my son for a few days?

A big fear of mine was that Child Protective Services would be flagged. I had been told people who use services like the Crisis Nursery are tracked and reported. That’s not true. I’m so glad I overcame that fear because when I absolutely needed help & had the courage to make the phone call to schedule my intake…. I felt relief…but I was also still scared.

At that first meeting, a ton of questions were asked about what Oliver likes and how he navigates his day–that’s when I knew this is a safe place.

People were taking the time to make sure my son would feel as loved and cared for as he does at home.

I’m a better person because of the Crisis Nursery & I’m a better mom.

I’m becoming a “good enough” parent because I’ve realized there’s no such thing as a perfect parent.

I’m learning coping skills that help me reduce feelings of overwhelm and now have a community I trust.

Isn’t that what everyone wants?

To have a safety net?

To know we aren’t alone?

If you ever wonder, does the Crisis Nursery really make a difference?

I’m here to tell you that for me and my little magnet of sunshine, Oliver, we know it does.

Thank you for your support of the staff who are kind, who don’t judge, and who continue to support me and my son.