

# WE ARE daniel®

WHAT HAPPENS EVERY DAY BECAUSE OF YOUR GENEROSITY

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SPRING 2023

## THANKS TO DANIEL, I LEARNED TO BE VICTORIA

Most of Victoria's life had been closed doors and obstacles she couldn't overcome. Blinded from shaken baby syndrome, thrust into foster care, and subjected to abusive childhood relationships had left the teen lacking hope and struggling with mental health issues.

Facing homelessness in 2021, she made a call for help that ultimately connected her with Daniel – and that changed everything.

"Daniel was the best thing that ever happened to me," said Victoria, who hopes to eventually earn a doctoral degree in social work. "At Daniel, I could finally breathe. They showed me I can do everything I want to do, and now the sky is the limit."

Foster care was not kind to Victoria. She was among more than 30 foster children who cycled through the home where she grew up. Because of her blindness, she spent much of her childhood alone, playing with blocks. Her foster mother, who eventually adopted her, was physically and emotionally abusive.

Her attempt to escape this abuse by reconnecting with her birth family also ended badly with all her belongings abruptly left on the sidewalk one day.

She remembers calling a helpline and telling the operator she'd been kicked out and had nowhere to go. The operator asked her if she'd ever heard of Daniel.

"I was like, 'Oh great, another program,'" she said. "But I reached out to Daniel, and they put me in touch with Ms. Johnson (a case manager at Daniel's Independent Living Village). She said she loved my tenacity, and they moved me in that week."

Daniel's Independent Living Village is a supervised, agency-owned efficiency apartment complex that's part of its Project Prepare program. Project Prepare also offers case management, life skills training, school and job placement, and counseling to help young adults like Victoria become productive members of the community.

Johnson's and Daniel's support were a turning point for Victoria. "She gave me what no one else could," Victoria said. "She was like an angel, who knew exactly what I needed. She was so much more than a case manager. She was like the mother I never had."

Two years later, Victoria is attending college on a scholarship provided by Daniel donors, working full-time in an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) school and part-time at Daniel as a peer recovery specialist. She also volunteers as a Guardian Ad Litem and is currently planning two child-serving nonprofits she wants to establish.

Victoria says her experiences gave her the perspective she needed to help others, and years of lacking control gave her the motivation to make ambitious plans. But without Daniel, she doubts she would be where she is now.

"My life was controlled by a lot of different people, and I never really had a say in it," she said. "When I went to Daniel, all that changed. I learned how I could be Victoria."



(L) Lesley Wells, Daniel CEO and (R) Jackie Daniel Cook, Daniel Trustee, presenting Victoria with a check from the Glyn Cook Memorial Scholarship Fund

### SAVE THE DATE

#### Daniel's 23rd Annual Hank Haynes Golf Classic

*Presented by Enterprise Integration*

**April 29, 2024**

Timuquana Country Club

#### Sponsorship Opportunities Now Available

Contact Dave Cognetta at  
dcognetta@danielkids.org  
or 904.296.1055 ext. 1033  
or visit [danielkids.org/events](https://danielkids.org/events)  
for more information.

## CELEBRATING THE NEW MORALES COTTAGE

This year's 1884 Giving Society event featured something special – the dedication of the new Morales Cottage that will offer support to youth who have mental health issues coexisting with intellectual and developmental differences, like autism. The fully renovated cottage was named in honor of Zoie and Michael Morales who have championed Daniel's capital campaign with a particular focus on the children's residences. Some 140 attendees listened to Zoie speak about the importance of the cottage's renovation as it will provide the optimal healing environment for a group of children who had no other place to receive care locally before now. After the dedication, Daniel guests toured the cottage.



Jorge, Margie, Michael, Chandler and Zoie Morales with Billie Haynes



## **BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE**

The current school year is almost over, but we're already preparing to help kids in 2023-24. Supplies can be dropped off at our corporate office, located at 4203 Southpoint Boulevard.

We're accepting donations starting June 1 through July 31, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m – 4 p.m.

**For more info visit**  
**[danielkids.org/seasonal drives](https://danielkids.org/seasonal%20drives)**



## **WELCOME NEW TRUSTEES**



**Joni Poitier**  
Moseley Prichard  
Parrish Knight & Jones



**John-Paul Saenz**  
Haskell



**Jordan McCrary**  
Dalton Agency



# 1884 GIVING SOCIETY EVENT - APRIL 20, 2023

On April 20, Daniel hosted its annual 1884 Giving Society event at its Belfort Road campus in Southpoint, celebrating the generosity of the nonprofit's loyal donors.





# SPECIAL THANKS

## TO THESE 1884 GIVING SOCIETY MEMBERS:

Abentras	Raymond L. Creasman	John and Geraldine Hayt	Pivot CPAs
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*\*list updated 5.1.23*