

A person is sitting on a metal bench outdoors. They are wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt with dark horizontal stripes, blue jeans, and colorful sneakers. They are holding a brown teddy bear by its ears. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a fence and trees.

Meet Kyle

He's already had a
lifetime of hurt

This is his story

Abused by his mom's boyfriend at age 7.

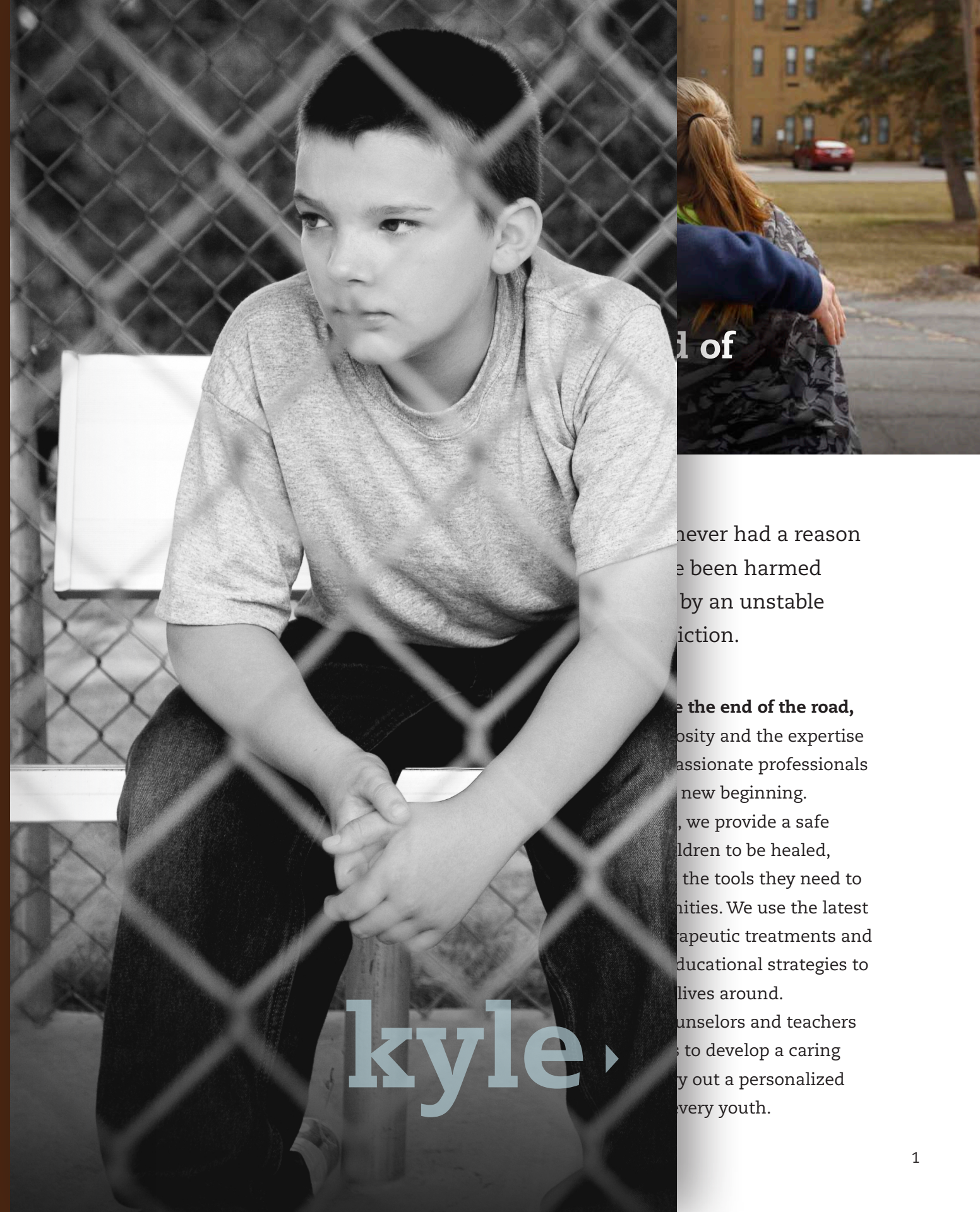
Separated from his siblings at 9.

At 14, after five foster placements and four different schools, he was out of options. He had nowhere left to go.

He was placed at the Varick Campus, a residential treatment center of Hillside Children's Center.

This may be his last chance to get help turning his life around.

Kyle's story desperately needs to be rewritten. But it won't happen without your help.



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“I was abused as a child. I was just a little kid. I didn’t realize that wasn’t supposed to happen—I thought it was normal.

“Ever since, I’ve had all these flashbacks in my brain of the terrible things that happened to me. That’s what led me to make some bad decisions.

“That’s why I came to Varick.”

KYLE, AGE 14, WEEDSPORT



Chances are you’ve never heard of Hillside’s Varick Campus

If you’re lucky—if you’re like most of us—you’ve never had a reason to wonder what happens to kids like Kyle. Kids who have been harmed emotionally or physically. Kids who have been damaged by an unstable family situation or mental illness or abuse or family addiction.

These are children who, for a variety of reasons outside their control, aren’t safe in their communities, their schools, or their homes. They’ve been moved time and again from one school to another. They’ve been taken from their families and placed in the homes of strangers or institutions.

And sometimes, in the very saddest of cases, they find themselves with no one to care for them and nowhere left to go.

That’s when they are sent to us at the Varick Campus, a residential treatment center for children and youth, ages 10 to 18, in Romulus, New York.

It may sound like the end of the road, but with your generosity and the expertise of the deeply compassionate professionals at Varick, it can be a new beginning.

Because at Varick, we provide a safe environment for children to be healed, educated, and given the tools they need to rejoin their communities. We use the latest evidence-based therapeutic treatments and the most effective educational strategies to help kids turn their lives around.

Our dedicated counselors and teachers do whatever it takes to develop a caring connection and carry out a personalized treatment plan for every youth.

Typical kids in atypical circumstances

Varick kids are just like other kids anywhere. They are figuring out who they are, finding their way through the twists and turns that every child navigates growing up.

But somewhere along the way, an unlucky stroke of fate landed each of our kids in situations where they've been physically or emotionally hurt. In response, they've developed behaviors that their families, schools, or communities can't handle safely or effectively.

They need help learning to manage their behavior so they can get back on track—and **they can't get the help they need at home.**

Our youths are referred to Varick by one of the many state agencies that oversees the welfare and education of New York's children. Public funds pay for the care and services they receive here.

"Our kids come from all over New York state, from New York City all the way to Buffalo," says Varick's residential services director. "They are young people who've been harmed, young people who have no families."



meet ashley

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“Just because you’re at Varick, it doesn’t mean you’re a bad kid. It just means that you have some struggles that you have to work through, and there’s staff here to help you work through them.”

“I feel like I have to make people understand that there’s no such thing as a bad kid.”

ASHLEY, AGE 13, CORTLAND

HER STORY

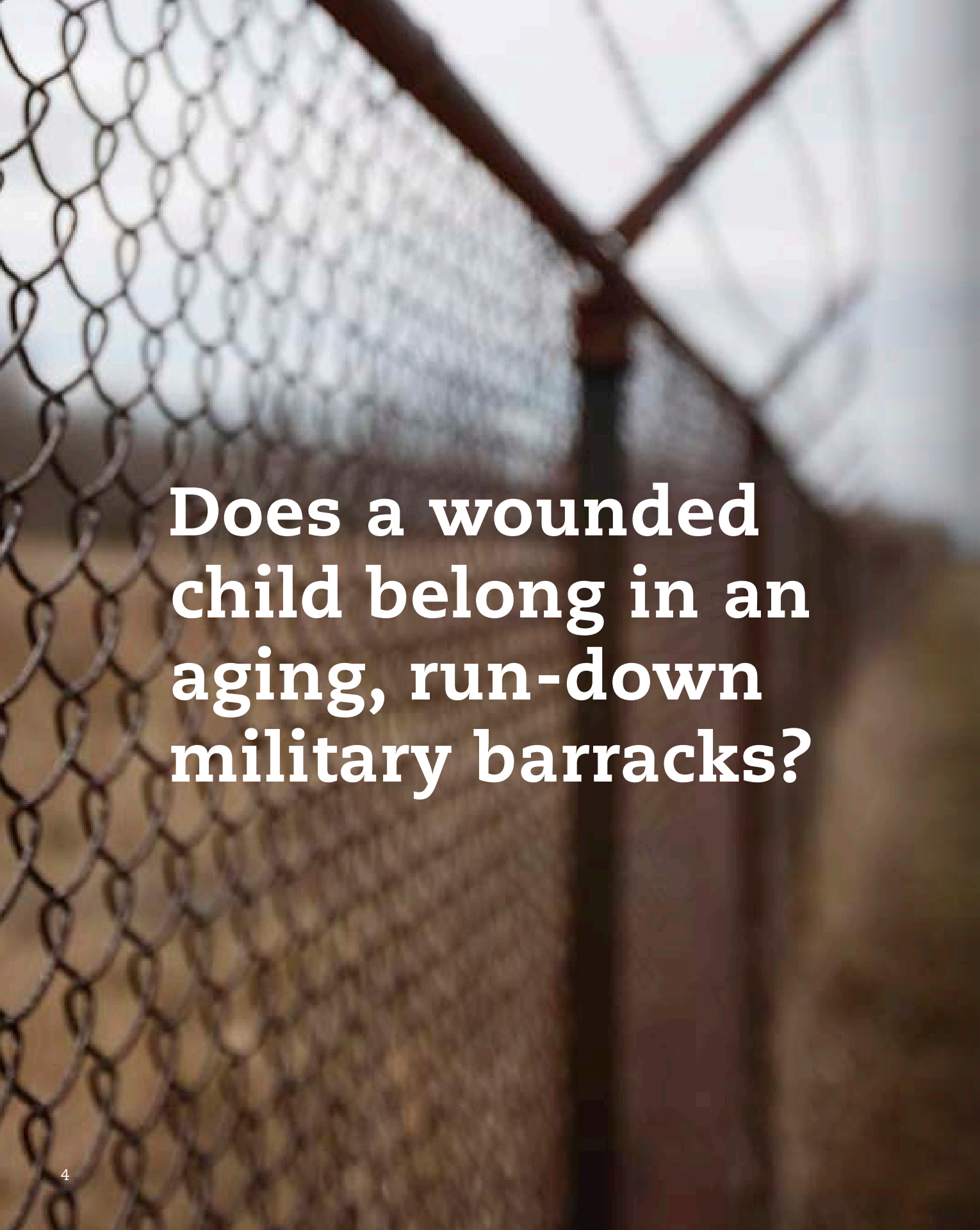
Ashley lived with one relative after another, each of whom passed away suddenly—first her mother, then her grandmother, and finally her uncle. She was placed in foster care, but the profound loss, disruption and trauma she experienced made it difficult for her to adapt.

Now 13, she has made wonderful progress. Varick staff located a relative that she didn’t know about—a grandfather, who was unaware of Ashley’s situation. He wants her to come live with him when she’s ready to leave Varick.



“We’re a place for them to heal, to take a breath and learn to trust people. And to learn to feel safe, because most of their lives, they haven’t ever felt safe.”

SARAH DONOVAN, PSYCHOLOGIST



Does a wounded child belong in an aging, run-down military barracks?



meet **jayden** ▶

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“I remember the day I arrived at Varick. It was scary coming up the driveway, because I thought it looked like a jail, to be honest.

“I know it’s an old army base, and maybe that’s how army bases are supposed to be. But it looked so dark, so gloomy, so sad. It sure didn’t look like a place where kids would be living.”

JAYDEN, AGE 12, UTICA

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HIS STORY

Jayden and his brothers were placed in foster care to protect them from their mother’s substance abuse. He was told that if his mom remained sober for six months, he would be able to return home.

She wasn’t able to do it, and Jayden couldn’t help feeling that she chose alcohol and drugs over him. After two more foster placements, he was struggling in school and having difficulty managing his behavior. He came to Varick at age 11, where staff are working with him to overcome his feelings of abandonment, and helping him learn to trust again.

A 1950s-era military barracks. That’s what our staff and kids have to work with.

The Varick buildings and campus were built as part of the former Seneca Army Depot, originally a munitions storage and disposal facility. Hillside Children’s Center took over the property in 2004, to house, heal, and educate youngsters with nowhere else to turn.

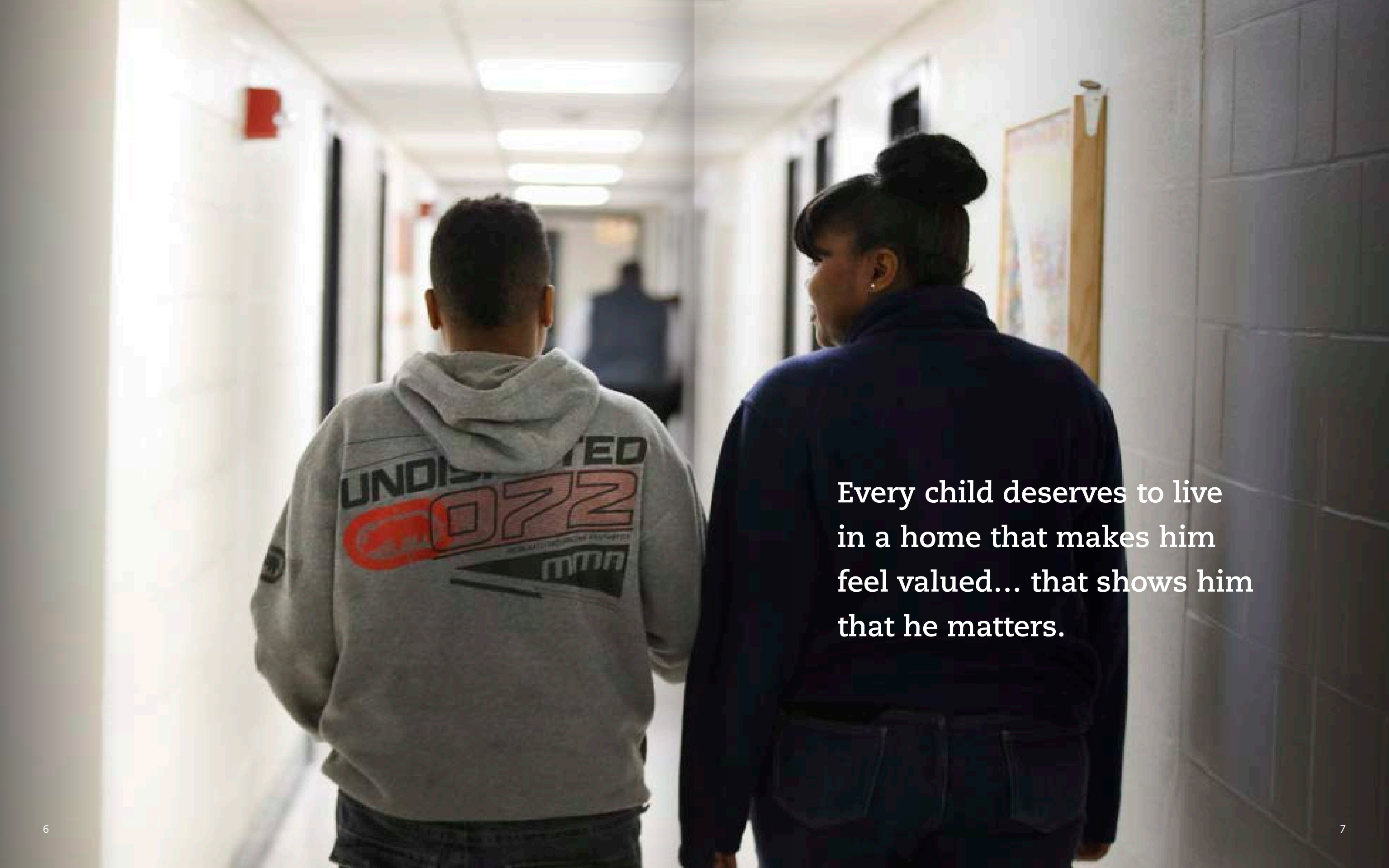
Even brand new, an army barracks couldn’t be a welcoming sanctuary for children. But after more than sixty years, all the buildings are also in desperate need of update and repairs.

Hillside has done its best to keep the facilities safe and clean over the last fifteen years. But “safe and clean” are not nearly enough. Although public funding pays for the services our youths receive, there has never been funding

available for maintaining or improving the buildings and campus.

Our kids—in fact, all kids—deserve to live in a home that makes them feel valued and addresses their needs. And after all they’ve been through, our children and youth have far greater needs than most.

The kinds of emotional trauma, mental illness, and educational gaps that Varick youths struggle with cannot be addressed effectively without facilities that are designed to promote treatment and healing: dorm rooms that are cozy and warm, spaces that aid therapeutic care, recreational areas that encourage healthy behavior, and a school that is fully equipped and up-to-date.



Every child deserves to live in a home that makes him feel valued... that shows him that he matters.



The facilities at Varick should match the outstanding quality of the services we provide. With your support, we can make that happen. Here's how:

Reconfigure, renovate, and repair dormitories

The current residential buildings—originally designed for military officers—are cold, dingy, and in need of major infrastructure repairs. The latest data on therapeutic residential design shows that reducing our current eight-bed units to six or four beds each will result in significantly better outcomes.

We also plan to add kitchens to the units, providing opportunities for residents to learn basic life skills. Cosmetic improvements will make the rooms, recreational spaces, hallways, and bathrooms feel welcoming and comfortable.

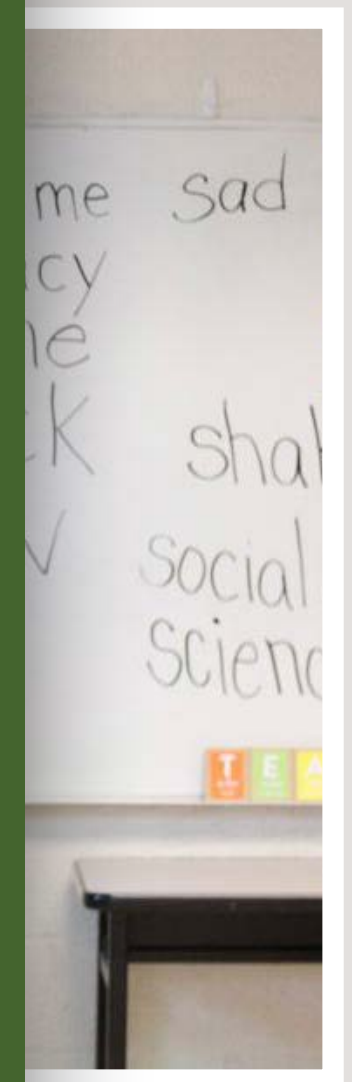
“What you see on our campus conveys the message to our kids that they just don’t matter.”

“Being here should not be a punishment. They’ve been punished enough.”

MARSHA WHITLEY,
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR

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“Our kids need an excellent education just as much as every other child in America—even more so, given their disadvantages.”

“That’s why it’s simply unacceptable that our school buildings are so crowded and cramped, that we don’t have up-to-date technology, or spaces appropriate for teaching critical work-related skills.”

“The only way our kids will ever move forward is if we invest in their education today, and give them the skills and confidence they need.”

COLLEEN HILL, PRINCIPAL

The facilities of the services we provide. Here’s how:

Reconfigure, renovate

The current residential building was designed for military office use, and in need of major repairs. The latest data on residential design shows that our current eight-bed units will result in subpar outcomes.

Build a new, state-of-the-art school, from the ground up

Our current school is a repurposed, 1950s-era military administration building. The hallways are narrow, the rooms are small, the ceilings are low, and the lighting is inadequate. There are no facilities for music, science, or technology education.

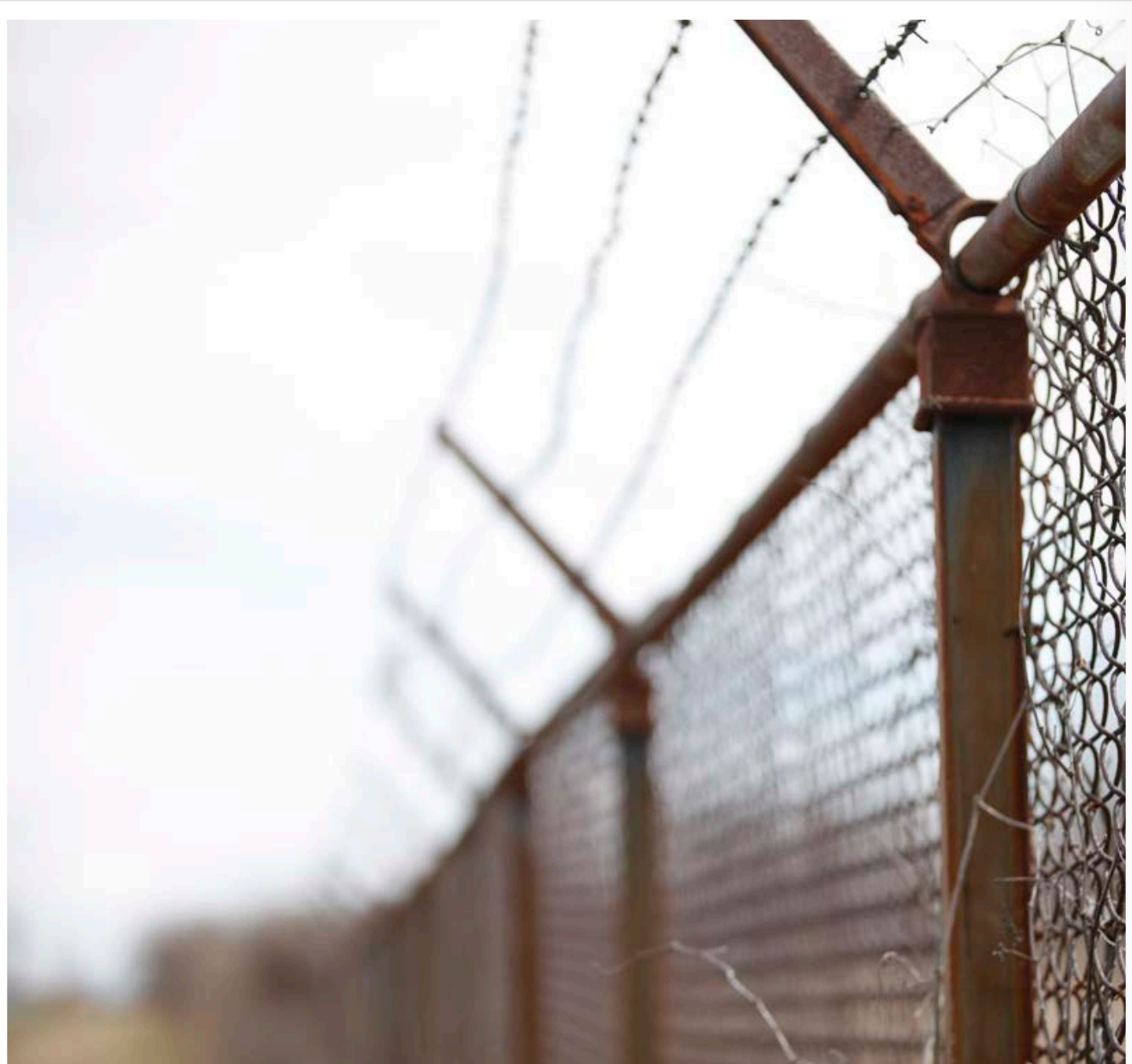
Rather than try to make these unsuitable spaces fit our students’ educational needs, we plan to build a new school with 21st century technology advancements, single-story construction, and spaces for arts and vocational education.



General campus and entryway improvements

The current entryway is stark and sterile, with a long winding driveway and barbed wire fencing. It creates an ominous first impression on children and youth arriving at this remote, unfamiliar destination.

New landscaping, friendly signage, and blacktop repairs will transform the appearance of our campus from a stark military depot to a welcoming, youth-centered home.

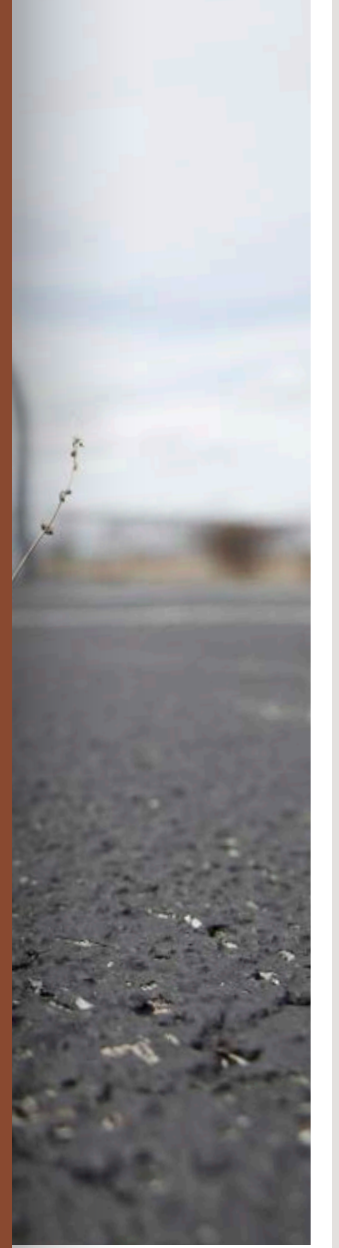


“Imagine how a child feels when she drives up and sees the barbed wire and broken pavement.”

“What message does that communicate about what we believe about her and her family?”

SARAH DONOVAN, PSYCHOLOGIST

plan to build new fields
the center of campus.
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airs to bring it up to an
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General campus &

The current entryway is with a long winding drive and wire fencing. It creates an impression on children at this remote, unfamiliar



“Our kids are so resilient. Every day, I’m amazed to find that our ten-year-olds have experienced more than most adults experience in a lifetime.”

“Yet they still have smiles on their faces. They’re still interested in learning about the world and connecting to people.”

“If we can help them heal from the trauma they’ve experienced, they won’t need to rely on a system to take care of them in the future.”

ANDREW BAKER,
RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM MANAGER



Build new athletic fields

Athletic activities are crucial to Varick kids as recreation, entertainment, and an energy outlet. Our softball fields and basketball courts, built nearly 60 years ago, are tired and overgrown, and so far from the dormitories that security and supervision

are challenging. We plan to build new fields and courts closer to the center of campus. In addition, the original swimming pool needs significant repairs to bring it up to an appropriate level of safety.



Our kids need you

There are many reasons why a donation to the Varick renovation project is a good and smart investment.

Hillside's reputation for excellence is well known and widely trusted.

You already knew that the Hillside Family of Agencies, now over 180 years old, has a long-standing reputation as one of the finest children's services organizations in the country.

And after reading this, you know that Varick's expert staff of counselors, teachers, and caregivers are willing to move mountains to help our kids.

Your gift will help rescue kids from the hopeless cycle of trauma and mental illness that often leads to a lifetime of costly, tragic dependence on society.

But most of all, *your support* of the Varick renovation project is a testament to how strongly you believe that every child is precious, every child deserves a chance.

Will you help?

matter.

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***Thank you for your
kind consideration.***

***With your generosity,
Varick's children and their
families will find healing,
love, and a path to a hope.***



Show them you believe they matter.

We invite you to have a conversation with us to learn more.

Hillside Children's Foundation



Hillside Children's Foundation

1183 Monroe Avenue
Rochester NY 14620

