



Contact: Kenny Holton
Tel. 229-559-5944
Email: kholton@raintreevillage.org
Date: August 4, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY LEADERS JOIN TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF SERVICE AND HELP LAUNCH THE RAINTREE VILLAGE 50th ANNIVERSARY CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

First Annual Raintree Village Benefit Auction Event will be held at the Rainwater Center in Valdosta on October 8th

Valdosta and Lowndes County community leaders met today at Raintree Village in Dasher, GA to help celebrate 50 years of service to our area and its children. Attendees included Valdosta Mayor John Gayle, Lowndes County Board of Commissioners Chairman Bill Slaughter, Dasher Mayor G.R. Holton and Citizens Bank CEO Glenn Copeland.

Raintree Village Executive Director Kenny Holton thanked the community leaders for their support and announced a 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign to help Raintree Village modernize some of its facilities.

This Campaign will start with a major fundraising event, the first annual Raintree Village Benefit Dinner and Live Auction. The Benefit Auction will be held on the evening of October 8th at the Rainwater Conference Center in Valdosta.

How Raintree Village Serves our Community

In Georgia alone, 30 children enter foster care every day; that's over 10,000 children each year. When foster families aren't an option, it's up to organizations like Raintree Village to care for them.

For many children, foster homes provide excellent care and stability; however, the need for group homes still remains. For a variety of reasons, such as behavioral problems, some children require the structure and support of a group home such as Raintree Village. Raintree Village also accepts sibling groups that might otherwise be separated when placed in foster care.

Without homes such as Raintree Village, children at need in Lowndes County would have to be relocated to homes farther away from their families, which would make family visitations more challenging. The need in our community is real, and Raintree Village needs your help to continue meeting that need.

Raintree Village Needs Community Support

Beginning in 2004, Georgia's Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) revised its child placement policies, favoring the placement of children in foster homes rather than group homes such as Raintree Village. This change in policy has resulted in less state funding for group homes, as well as reduced and less predictable occupancy. This has put a strain on the operating budgets of group homes, making charitable donations vital to their continued existence and operation.

Funds raised in the Capital Campaign will be used to meet a number of pressing needs at Raintree Village, including:

- Improved campus security to insure the safety of our residents
- Upgrades to our cottage interiors
- Renovations to our campus facilities
- New Signage
- Reliable transportation

About Raintree Village

Raintree Village is a Christian community, closely linked with the Churches of Christ, where children who have suffered abuse, abandonment, and neglect find healing, nurturing and love. Raintree Village provides a home for the most difficult cases in the foster care system, children with behavioral issues as well as juveniles who have been discharged from Youth Detention Centers. We serve children aged 12-21 as well as pregnant teen mothers.

Many children in foster care experience multiple placements, but Raintree Village strives to be a child's final placement before they return home, find independence, or enter college. To learn more, please visit www.raintreevillage.org.

Testimonials from Community Leaders

"Raintree Village changes lives and helps build healthy and productive young people. We are proud to have Raintree Village in our community; it's a good example about what's best about Valdosta – people who really care about our youngsters."

--**Myrna Ballard, President**, Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce

"Unfortunately, some of our community's kids are not blessed with a stable home and committed parents. The staff at Raintree Village gives these kids the loving and nurturing environment that enables them to succeed in life."

--**Ellis Black**, Georgia State Senator, District 8

"I've been privileged to serve as Raintree Village's primary banker for almost 40 years. Their leadership and management have always performed with integrity and perseverance, in good and bad economic times. Raintree Village helps these children and gives them a new start in life."

--**Glenn Copeland**, CEO Citizens Community Bank

"Without hesitation or reservation I wholeheartedly recommend the Raintree Village organization, its leadership and staff! I have seen firsthand the good work they do with children in our community, and on numerous occasions have encouraged local court judges to consider Raintree Village for a youth's placement. As a Christian organization, they truly make a difference in the lives of children. I am extremely pleased to be associated with them!"

--**Chris Prine**, Lowndes County Sheriff

MORE TESTIMONIALS TO COME

Annual Benefit Dinner and Live Auction – October 8, 2016

Raintree Village Executive Director Kenny Holton announced the First Annual Raintree Village Benefit Dinner and Live Auction. This will be an annual event and will be an opportunity for everyone in our community to learn about and support Raintree Village.

This fun-filled evening will include dinner, a silent auction, testimonials from children served, and a live auction as the highlight of the event! Doors will open at 6:00pm, with the event scheduled to end by 9:00pm.



**October 8, 2016 from 6-9pm
Rainwater Conference Center – Valdosta, GA
\$25/ticket or \$250 for a table for 10**

**For information on sponsorships and donations, or to purchase a ticket, please visit
www.raintreevilage.org or call 229-559-5944**