

# Children’s advocacy center in Stockton specializes in ‘victim-centric’ support

BY GRACE BURWELL  
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STOCKTON, Ill. — Tyler’s Justice Center for Children aims to serve as a comforting and accessible resource for children who have experienced sexual and physical abuse, rather than an intimidating, institutional one.

“We just try to make them feel as comfortable as possible so it doesn’t feel systematic when they’re here,” said Kim Digman, the center’s multidisciplinary team coordinator and forensic interviewer.

The nonprofit children’s advocacy center opened in 2002 after the death of a local 2-month-old named Tyler was caused by abuse.

The center supports child victims of abuse in Jo Daviess, Carroll and Stephenson counties, mainly through forensic interviews and referrals for resources such as crisis counseling, victim advocacy and support, and legal advice.

It is staffed by a team of three: Digman, Program Coordinator and Family Advocate Kendra Mosley and Executive Director Jasmine Stoewer.

Stoewer started as executive director in June, taking on the position after Alegra Koser retired.

“I love what they stand for (at Tyler’s),” Stoewer said. “I have my own past trauma, and it just seemed like the right fit for me and for my family, for me to be able to continue to serve in the community, and what better way to do it (than) to help our children that are often silenced.”

Jo Daviess County State’s Attorney Chris Allendorf said the center’s victim-centered, multidisciplinary approach sets it apart in the community.

The center’s team works with the State’s Attorney Office, local law enforcement agencies, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and nonprofits such as Riverview Center and VOICES of Stephenson County.

The team also includes Medical Evaluation Response Initiative Team staff from the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Rockford who conduct medical exams.



STEPHEN GASSMAN • Telegraph Herald

Jasmine Stoewer is the executive director at Tyler’s Justice Center for Children in Stockton, Ill.

“Having someone do those interviews that has training to be kind of victim-centric like that is very helpful,” Allendorf said. “I think you’d have a different result maybe if you just had a law enforcement officer interviewing a child.”

All of the center’s services are free. Tyler’s provides transportation assistance and gas cards to help families travel to the center, Digman said.

As a nonprofit, Tyler’s relies on funding from grants and donations. It would be “devastating” for the community if the center ever lost financial support, Allendorf said.

“Tyler’s serves three counties,” he said. “It’s sad to say, but it’s kind of a luxury in a rural county to have a resource like that, versus having

to send victims and their families to Rockford or some of the larger areas to have these interviews done and to have access to people who can help them navigate resources and stuff like that.”

The center does not offer housing or counseling. Its primary function is conducting interviews, which are provided to law enforcement officials so children do not have to go through that process multiple times, Digman said.

The center sees an average of 15 cases a month. While the work can be difficult and heavy, Digman said, it is rewarding to know she is helping a child, protecting them from further abuse and possibly preventing future abuse of others.

## How to support the center

Tyler’s Justice Center for Children is hosting a fundraising gala in November that will feature live music, food, drinks and a silent auction.

**What:** FALL-ing for Tyler’s Gala

**When:** 6 to 8 p.m. Nov. 1

**Where:** Ehrler Ranch Wedding and Special Event Barn, 11866 W. Chetlain Lane, Galena, Ill.

See the center’s website for more information: [www.tylers-justicecenter.org](http://www.tylers-justicecenter.org)

## news in brief

### Police: 2 arrested after Dubuque altercation involving gun, pepper spray

Police said a Dubuque woman assaulted a man, who later pointed what she believed was a handgun at her as he chased her in the street.

Antwan M. Hardia, 20, of 28 E. 15th St., was arrested at 4:11 p.m. Thursday in the 1400 block of White Street on a charge of assault while displaying a dangerous weapon.

Faith L. Cook, 21, of 1561 Jackson St., was arrested at 4:10 p.m. Thursday at the intersection of 14th Street and Central Avenue on a charge of assault causing injury.

The court documents for the two arrests offer conflicting stories provided by Hardia and Cook when talking to police.

Both agree that an altercation occurred at Hardia’s residence over Cook going through Hardia’s phone.

Hardia reported that when he tried to grab his phone, Cook struck him in the face, leaving visible injuries. Cook reported that Hardia and two of his relatives “began attacking her by slapping, punching, scratching and pulling her hair,” documents state. She had injuries to her face, arm and chest.

Cook reported pepper-spraying Hardia and his family as she tried to flee the residence.

Cook reported that Hardia chased her on Central Avenue while pointing a handgun at her. Hardia reported grabbing a “hollowed-out airsoft gun” to scare Cook. That gun was recovered by police, and it was unable to be fired.

Hardia was later taken to MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center for treatment.



Antwan M. Hardia

### Dubuque County Fairgrounds seeking board members

The Dubuque County Fairgrounds seeks residents to join its board of directors.

Board members can help shape the future of events and programs at the fairgrounds, according to an online announcement. In addition to the annual county fair, the fairgrounds hosts more than 300 events annually.

There are two types of board positions: directors and associate directors.

Directors on the board have voting rights. They must volunteer at least 50 hours annually at events, in addition to mandatory volunteering during fair week and at Vintage Torque Fest and the Blue Ribbon Banquet.

Associate directors do not have voting rights. They must volunteer at least 30 hours annually at events, in addition to mandatory volunteering during fair week and at Vintage Torque Fest and the Blue Ribbon Banquet.

Those interested can email [b.morgan@dbqfair.com](mailto:b.morgan@dbqfair.com) for an application, then attend the board’s meeting at 7 p.m. Aug. 19 in the Grand Ballroom to introduce themselves and discuss why they are interested.

### New auto repair shop coming to Dubuque

An auto shop chain is building a new location in Dubuque, city planning and development officials confirmed.

A Brakes Plus location will be located at 2533 Northwest Arterial, between Starbucks and Tidal Wave Auto Spa.

Brakes Plus locations primarily offer brake repair and replacement, oil changes, wheel alignments, transmission and engine diagnostics and minor light repairs.

Representatives of Brakes Plus LLC declined to comment on the development, but the project’s architect, Norm Herman, with Arcodev Architects, based in Littleton, Colo., said the facility will open in 10 to 12 months.

## police

### The Dubuque Police and Dubuque County Sheriff’s departments reported:

• Gregory J. Sovinski, 34, of 1540 Ruann Drive, was arrested at 10:16 p.m. Thursday in the 400 block of Valeria Street on a charge of domestic assault with injury.

• Nicholas J. Baker, 34, of 556 Angella St., was arrested at 8:44 p.m. Thursday at his residence on charges of controlled substance violation, possession of drug paraphernalia and dominion of a firearm by a felon.

# Platteville leaders dive into next steps of pool project

## Optimism abounds that the new facility could open next summer.

BY KONRAD STRZALKA  
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PLATTEVILLE, Wis. — About four months after Platteville voters signaled their support for the construction of a new municipal pool, city leaders are chipping away at the project.

Several elements of the project are in the works as city officials prepare to bring new pool-related items before the Common Council and the community prepares to launch a fundraising campaign.

Thus far, work has gone smoothly and city officials are cautiously optimistic that the new pool could open next summer. Originally, a 2027 opening was seen as the goal.

“Right now, 2026 is the target,” said Common Council Member Bob Gates. “If everything goes well — and it’s weather dependent — we could open by summer of 2026.”

Parks and Recreation Director Robert Lowe shared a similar sentiment.

“Until we hit a snag, we remain optimistic,” he said.



Bob Gates

The pool at Platteville Family Aquatic Center experienced catastrophic cracking when being filled ahead of the 2024 season, forcing its permanent closure.

An aquatic recreation subcommittee of the city’s Parks, Forestry and Recreation Committee formed in August 2024 to address this issue, gauge support for building a new pool and research whether constructing the pool would be more feasible at its current location or a new location.

Ultimately, the city decided to build at the current location.

City voters on April 1 overwhelmingly approved a nonbinding ballot measure for the city to incur debt and raise its property tax levy to fund up to \$6.9 million for the construction of the pool.

In a meeting later that month, Common Council members unanimously voted to allow city leaders to produce a funding solution that includes borrowing up to \$6.9 million for the design and construction of the new pool and facility updates at the aquatic center.

The council still would need to approve the funding solution. City Manager Clint Langreck told the Telegraph Herald that the item would appear before the council in “the near future,” but he did not have an exact timeline.

At the same April meeting, council members

voted to proceed to the next stage of the project with JEO Consulting Group, including survey, schematic design and design development, finalizing the construction plan and bidding. The engineering firm had been involved with the project since February, producing preliminary schematics of the pool ahead of the referendum.

Lowe said work on this stage of the project is finishing up.

“The design is in its final stages,” he said. “It’s probably 90% complete.”

Lowe said the next request for proposals pertaining to the project will be for the demolition of the current pool.

“We anticipate that ... will go out in the first or second week of August,” he said. “The demolition itself will only take a couple days.”

Several amenities requested by community members in the survey, such as a water slide and splash features for children, are not a part of the \$6.9 million plan and will be subject to a community fundraising campaign.

Gates said a committee already started to meet and prepare for a fundraising campaign but has not launched it yet. He said the campaign aims to raise \$800,000.

“The \$800,000 should cover the big slide and the (splash) feature and have a little extra left over,” Gates said.