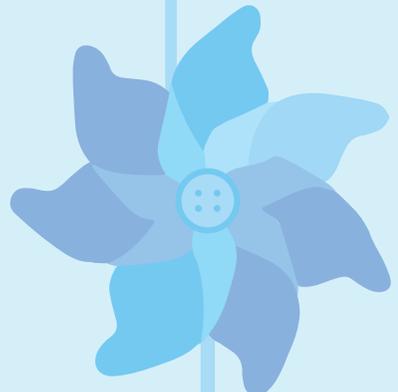


MY VOICE MATTERS

A SAFE PLACE TO TELL MY TRUTH



RYLEE TUGGLE
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Child Advocacy

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To the children who trusted us with your stories, thank you for believing in us. For the children we have yet to see, we look forward to earning your trust.

– From your friends at the
Children’s Advocacy Center of Gratiot County



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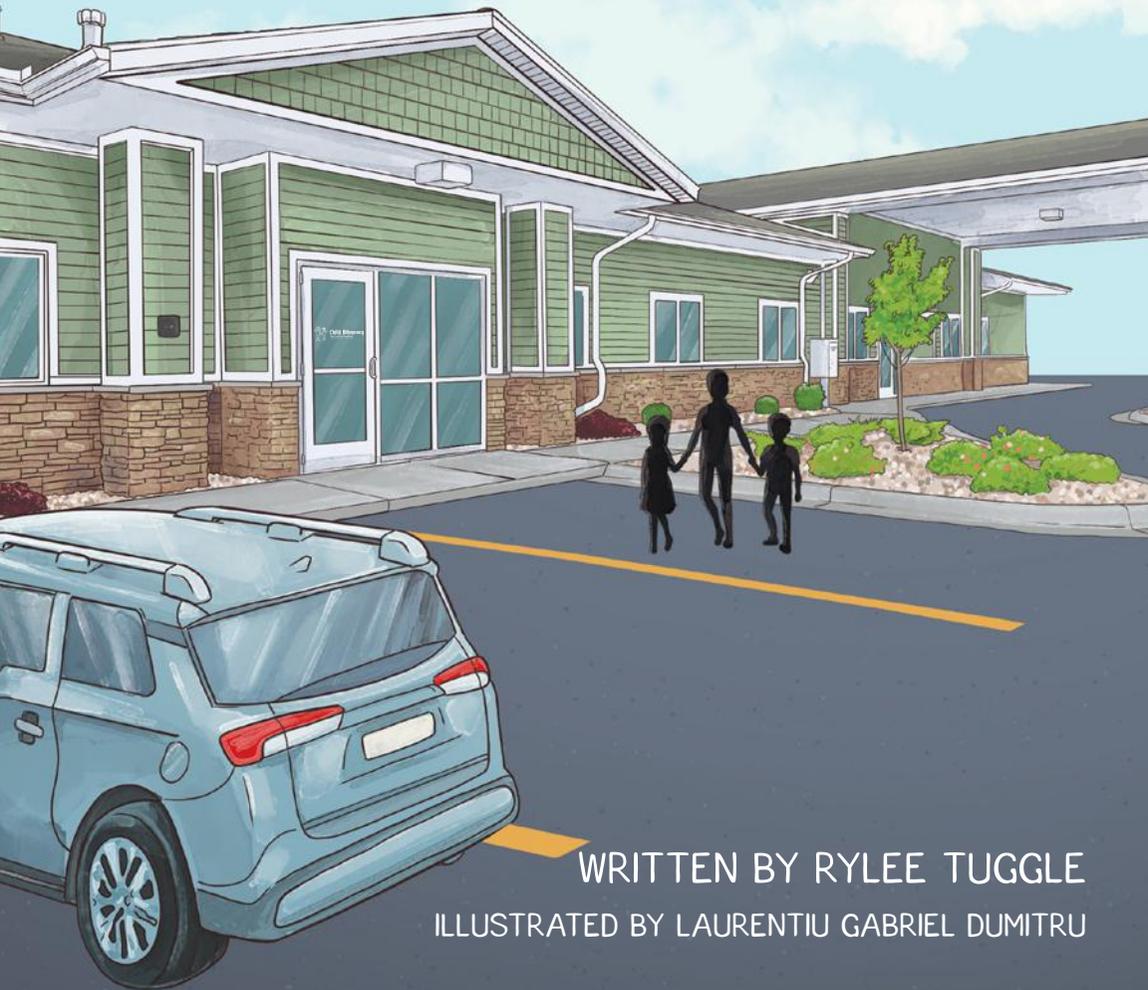
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This is a support tool. This is not a guarantee of the members assigned to your advocacy team. Your team may be comprised of different individuals than those listed in the book. Any names, genders, and resemblances of characters may differ from the people you work with during your multidisciplinary team process.

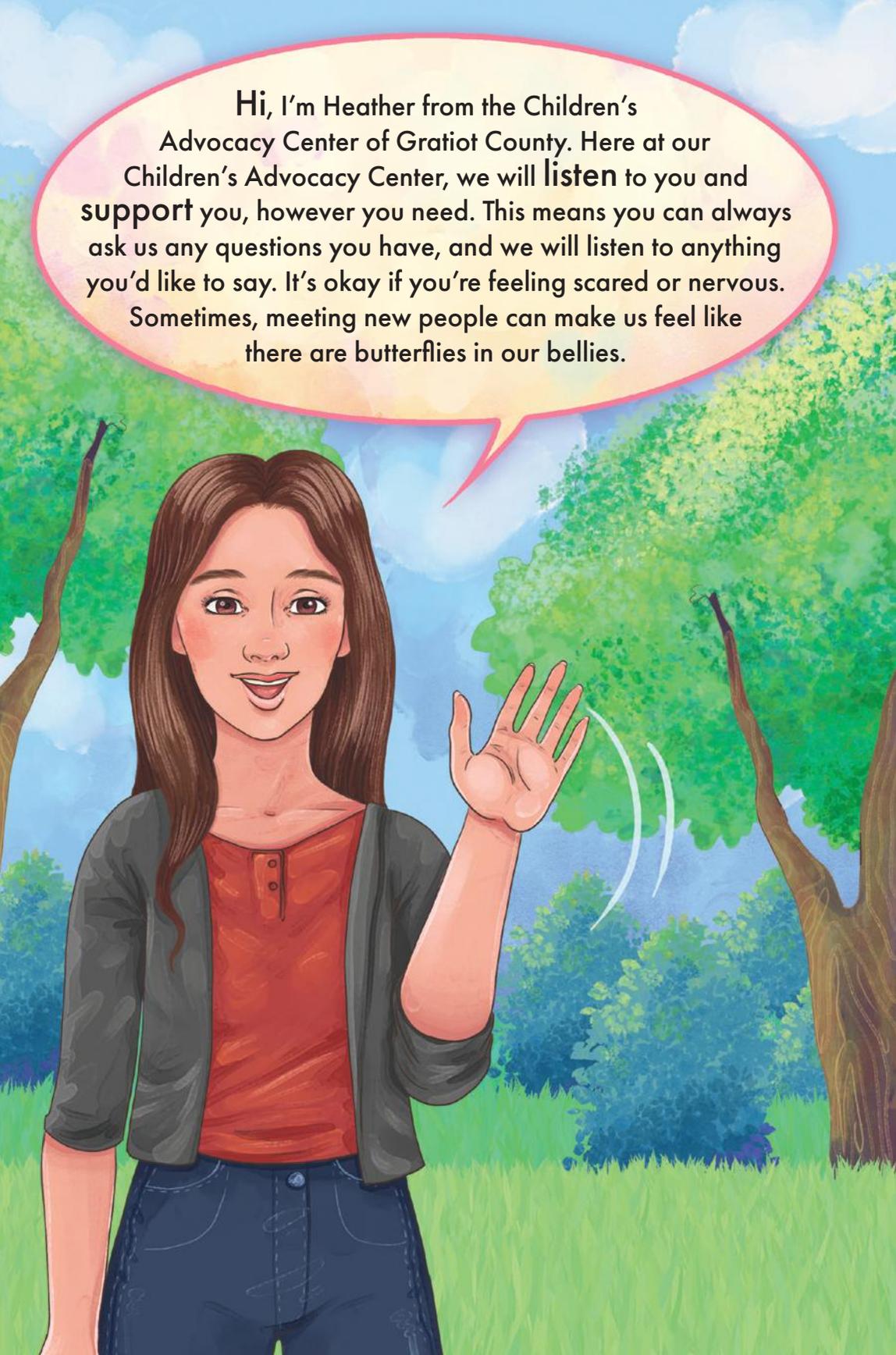
MY VOICE MATTERS

A SAFE PLACE TO TELL MY TRUTH



WRITTEN BY RYLEE TUGGLE

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENTIU GABRIEL DUMITRU

An illustration of a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a red shirt and a grey jacket, standing in a grassy park with trees and a blue sky. She is waving her right hand. A large, colorful speech bubble is positioned above her, containing text.

Hi, I'm Heather from the Children's Advocacy Center of Gratiot County. Here at our Children's Advocacy Center, we will **listen** to you and **support** you, however you need. This means you can always ask us any questions you have, and we will listen to anything you'd like to say. It's okay if you're feeling scared or nervous. Sometimes, meeting new people can make us feel like there are butterflies in our bellies.

I'd like to tell you about the team and what you will do when you visit our center. Your team is made up of **professionals** who work to keep you **safe**. Each of your team members has a special job, and they are ready to learn all about **you**.



This is Jennifer. She is one of your **advocates**.
When you come see us, Jennifer will be here to welcome
you and anybody you bring along. An advocate's job is
to help make sure you feel **comfortable** and **safe**.



Jennifer will stay with you most of the time you visit with us. When she is not with you, she will make sure you have another team member by your side. When it's time for you to meet the next member of your advocacy team, Jennifer will stay behind with your grown-up.



Next, you'll get to see our talking room. There, you will meet Nicole, the **forensic interviewer**. A forensic interviewer is someone who talks to kids. They ask questions and listen carefully to the answers. They listen carefully because **your voice matters**.





Nicole will have lots of questions for you, but she also knows you may not want to talk yet. When you are ready to talk, Nicole will be ready to **listen** and **learn** more about you.



When you are done talking with Nicole, your grown-up and Jennifer will be waiting for you. Jennifer or your grown-up can help you find some toys or start some activities. Then your grown-up may need to meet with the team.



Your advocacy team meets to make sure we take **very good** care of **YOU**. The team may meet with other people too, including a police officer. If you want to meet them, or have any questions, **you can always ask!**



Your advocacy team may recommend that you see some of our medical friends, like a **doctor** or **nurse**. Their jobs are to make sure **you** and **your body** are safe.



When you visit the **medical team**, you can ask them any questions about their jobs, your appointment, or your body.



After your visit to the Children’s Advocacy Center, you may feel like you need someone to help you understand your **feelings** and work through them. There are special **listeners** who will do just that! They are called **counselors** or **therapists**.







We are ready to answer any questions you have for us.
Remember, **all of us** on your advocacy team are here for **you**.



When you visit us, you can choose a button, make a wish upon it, and place it in our button jar. We, the Children's Advocacy Center of Gratiot County, pledge to keep that wish safe for you.



Do you see this **button jar**?
It's full of **wishes** made upon the **stars**.
Each **button** carries a child's **dream**,
Which we **guard** together as a **team**.

Now we'll **show** you what to **do**:
First, **find** the button that **speaks** to you.
Hold your button **near** and **dear**;
Whisper your **wish** just **loud** enough so it can **hear**.

Now **place** your wish in our **special jar**.
Remember, it'll stay **safe** even when you're **far**.
As **small** as they may seem,
Each of these **buttons** holds a **child's dream**.

This jar makes the number of **wishes** known,
And it shows, **no matter what, you're not alone**.
With all these buttons **old** and **new**,
We continue to **guard** these wishes for **you**.





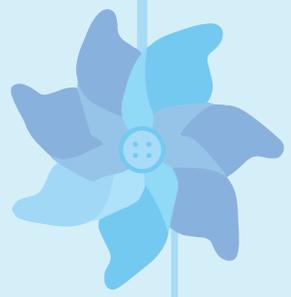
YOUR ADVOCACY TEAM

We are your advocacy team. We are here for you!
Here's how you can reach us:



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This book was created in partnership with the Northern Michigan Alliance for Children (NMAC), an organization that provides healing, hope, and justice to abused children in rural Michigan. It was their dream that the book could be replicated to help children across the world. If you have an organization in mind that might benefit from having their own customized copy of this book, please visit www.mikids.org/book or www.booksbyrylee.com/my-voice-matters.





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The Link for Families!

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