

# Community Haven Provides Peace of Mind

**Agency:** Dell Rapids Community Haven

**Service:** Provides before, after and summer school care for Kindergarten-8th grade children in Dell Rapids area. The program includes fun activities, healthy snacks, and homework help.

**Need:** An estimated 28% of children in South Dakota take care of themselves after school. In addition, many Dell Rapids parents work in Sioux Falls, creating a difficult schedule of ensuring their children are at school on time and have a safe place to be after school.

**Impact:** Over 200 children attend Dell Rapids Community Haven throughout the year. Children who attend quality after school programs have better peer relationships, homework completion, and conflict resolution skills.

“We moved to Dell Rapids because of job opportunities in Sioux Falls,” Kristen explains about how her young family came to live in this community.

With two young children at that time, Kristen’s first priority was child care. “The Haven was something everyone in the community knew about, but being new to the town I didn’t realize it was available right away.”

A referral to the program provided Kristen with a safe place for her kindergartener to be before and after school. Emily, who is now a 6<sup>th</sup> grader, has attended the program since they were referred, and her younger brother Jaden, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader has also started attending.

“Having to be to work at Sioux Falls by 8am would be extremely difficult without the Haven,” says Kristen. “It’s made it easy for me to be able to drop them off in the morning before work. They get a small breakfast through the school and I know they are getting to school on time.”

Dell Rapids Community Haven utilizes a partnership with the local schools and the city to provide their services. The Haven is located in the Dell Rapids Elementary School lunchroom and gymnasium. Along with serving the elementary students that attend school there, the Haven also is available to Dell Rapids Middle School and St. Mary’s School’s students by bussing those students to their appropriate school in the morning and back to the Haven in the afternoon.

“I love the computer lab and the gym, and the fun trips we take during the summer,” Jaden shares excitedly about the program. “They also set aside at least an hour each afternoon to help the kids with their homework,” adds Kristen. “The homework help has been so nice for Emily, to be able to have her homework finished before I pick them up.”

Thanks to Sioux Empire United Way, over 200 children are able to attend Dell Rapids Community Haven. Funds from United Way are used for tuition assistance. The funds ensure that families like Kristen’s are able to have a safe place for their children to be during non-school hours.

“The program doesn’t just help my children with homework, socializing and other things, it helps me. I’m able to work and have peace of mind, knowing my children have some place to go after school,” says Kristen.

