



TENNYSON  
CENTER *for*  
CHILDREN

HOPE AND JOY

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2020



# FROM THE CEO

Tennyson closed its 2020 fiscal year on September 30, and I could not be prouder of the wins our staff, kids, families, and community have brought home this year! In FY20 – among other things – we celebrated:

- Seven students who graduated from our high school;
- 25 children finding permanent family or family-like homes;
- The 520 children and over 2200 family members we worked with across Colorado who persevered during COVID-19; and
- The replication of our **Rewiring** work into five states outside of Colorado.

There's more. Tennyson officially merged with Families Together, an organization some of you know as Foster Together. By bringing on Families Together as a program of Tennyson, we can support more kids and families in new ways. We are incredibly grateful

for this partnership and all it brings. We are broadening and strengthening the circle of support around kids and families by building communities from the inside out.

2020 has been a year of tragedy and triumph for the entire nation – and it's not over yet. But we are beginning our new fiscal year stronger than ever thanks to people like you – those who learn about, support, advocate for, and care for Tennyson.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward D. Breslin".

Ned Breslin  
President & CEO, Tennyson Center for Children

## WALK A MILE PROJECT



Our kids and staff shared their stories with one another and with those offering support from beyond our walls through the Walk a Mile Project, a narrative art installation made up of shoes decorated to be as complex and colorful as the kids, staff, and histories that make up Tennyson.

Kids and staff "practiced" their narrative designs with a paper template and created their own art to represent healing, growth, and the future. After they completed their paper "practice shoes", the kids decorated real shoes.

These shoes are symbolic of our kids and staff, walking out of the painful stories of their past, beyond our campus walls, and into the new stories they're writing.



# STAFF SPOTLIGHTS



**Jessica Snider** | Director of Development

“I have always understood that children are one of our greatest resources. I was raised to believe that we all need community - a ‘village’ - and safe places to grow. I am fortunate to work with other amazing people every day who support the programs at Tennyson Center for Children. We are changing the world for the better, and I’ve seen the impact in my own family. Tennyson has not only changed my life, but my daughter’s life as well. She volunteered to be an intern

during the first summer I was at the center. She quickly became more confident, and the experiences she had while working with the children at Tennyson, the Corporate Volunteer groups, and the mission groups showed her the value of simple human attention and that we all just want to be seen. It changed her life. She shared her powerful experiences volunteering with the children at Tennyson with our family and friends. As a family, we believe in being inclusive. Tennyson is a

place where that philosophy is lived and breathed. It is a blessing to connect with our donors and share our impact as well as our challenges. I am so proud to be part of this organization that is a champion of children, wants to help everyone make good choices, and leads the way towards healthier lives. I am grateful that Tennyson Center for Children has the compassion, talent, and courage to do what is best for kids and families.”



**Tiara Hill** | Student Engagement Specialist

“I attended Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, Colorado and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice. Today, I am a Student Engagement Specialist (SES) at Tennyson. My daily role as an SES is to provide support and encouragement to both teachers and students, regardless of whether it is in the education building or the cottages. My favorite part of being an SES is being able to build

relationships with the students while providing them with the support and solid foundations they need. In my brief time at Tennyson, I am proud to say I am quickly learning the practical part of my role (paperwork, operations) as well as relationship-building, which allows me to be helpful to both students and staff. Every day, I am encouraged and inspired by my role as a support to the kids and by how important it

is to show them how much I really do care for them and their futures. I love helping those in need, but my passion is with young people in particular because it is a vulnerable population. Because young people are our future, it is very fulfilling and heartwarming to be a part of their lives.”



**Hope Forti** | Director of Families Together

“Families Together (the new community support program at Tennyson Center formerly known as ‘Foster Together’) invites caregivers into a friendly ‘village’ to help them get through the hard days of parenting. Through the help of volunteer ‘Neighbors’, the program offers families practical and emotional support, like a

monthly dinner delivery and friendly note. Every day, families do the hard work of rewiring children’s brains so they can see their own inherent worthiness, and we want to cheer them along. Kids heal when a few consistent adults peel off those ‘bad kid’ labels over and over again, replacing them with messages about their true human

worth. Getting to know the child, noticing their interests and desires, and encouraging them sets them up for success. In our first year as a program of Tennyson, our Families Together team has sent cheers (and warm dinners!) to the moms, dads, foster parents, and grandparents helping children live without labels.”



2950 Tennyson Street  
Denver, CO 80212-3029



**Operation Santa** brings the magic of the holidays to the children and families Tennyson serves. We rely exclusively on donations from businesses, donors, and our community to help brighten the holidays for kids and families in need. You can make a difference!

*Learn more at [tennysoncenter.org](http://tennysoncenter.org)*

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT



### Nancy May | Supporter

"When I was a child in Colorado Springs, every Christmas season First Christian Church would have a birthday party for Jesus. We were asked to bring wrapped gifts for a child which were then placed under a Christmas tree. I knew these gifts were meant for children at the Colorado Christian Home (Tennyson Center's previous name), and I enjoyed picking out a gift I thought a child would like. I hoped it would help give them a more meaningful Christmas, as it did for me. Fast forward a few years and I realized that my father was very involved at the Tennyson Center, serving on the board and as Chairman for a term. He and others proposed the idea of a 'free' fundraising dinner in Denver and proceeded to inaugurate these dinners. I attended many of those

**"Tennyson Center has been the heart of my mission work and I am dedicated to seeing the children receive the care they deserve."**

over the years and watched them grow into the major events they are today. My father and mother also started and continue to sponsor the Mayall Volunteer Award, given to outstanding volunteers each year. I was honored to receive one of these awards, along with my husband, for the work we did in starting the Colorado Springs fundraising dinners. We just wrapped up our 22nd dinner, and although it was mostly virtual, it was a great success. I have enjoyed serving on the Tennyson Board of Directors for several years and working with the Program and Development Committees. During those years I was a strong advocate for developing a Tennyson program here in Colorado Springs, providing evidence of the great need and lack of services in this county. After years of discussion, lots of hard work, and more than a few tears, a satellite office was established in El Paso County. First Christian Church donated a renovated office space for the therapists to use. The Community-Based Program here has grown and continues to be a much sought-after source of professional therapy for our community. We are happy to be partnering with Fostering Together here in Colorado Springs to bring together the community and foster parents in a supportive relationship. Tennyson Center has been at the heart of my mission work and I am dedicated to seeing the children receive the care they deserve. The children have touched my soul and I am continually humbled by their courage and strength."