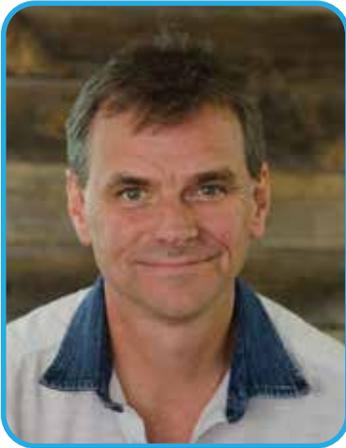




# GRATITUDE

**NEWSLETTER** Spring 2020

# FROM THE CEO



"April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month, which means our kids are 'seen' more than ever. Between now and April 30, we will tell the stories of the 'faceless' in child welfare and ramp up advocacy efforts to end child neglect and abuse.

91% of Tennyson kids have experienced neglect, trauma, and/or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Studies show that these kids are at much greater risk of homelessness, suicidality, substance abuse, PTSD, incarceration, and unemployment. They deserve better—and we are committed to delivering that.

Along with our community of child welfare leaders, advocates, and supporters, we are building a world

that keeps more kids out of welfare, keeps families together, and helps all to heal and thrive.

In 2019, we began leading a statewide effort called **Rewiring** to provide earlier support to children and families, prevent and divert families from entering child welfare, and track the journeys of our kids into adulthood to make sure our efforts are always producing better lives for children and families.

Thank you for your engagement and support! Together we are changing the world for our children."

Ned Breslin  
President & CEO,  
Tennyson Center for Children

## The Tiger's Roar



The community wrote words of encouragement for the youth of Tennyson Center. Some excerpts will appear in each edition of The Tiger's Roar\* in the coming months.

I think you are. . .

- Wonderful and special.
- Going to experience joy and accomplishment.
- Strong. Intelligent. Valuable.

My wish for you is. . .

- To be the best version of you there is.
- To grow strong.

Love, happiness, success and peace of mind.

- To feel safe and cared for.
- Happiness in your life.

I want you to know. . .

- That we all support you.
- People care.
- That I'm rooting for you and believe in you.
- You are loved and valued.
- That I care!

\*Tiger's Roar is our monthly student publication



## Sandra Hergenreder Legacy Donor

“**B**ack in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, when Tennyson Center for Children was an orphanage called Colorado Christian Home (CCH), I was one of the younger members of Edgewater/Bethany Christian Church. We hosted kids from CCH for Christmas Eve services and other special days.

In the 1980’s, my mom and dad volunteered for the CCH phone-a-thons as did my younger brother and I a few years later. In those years, Glen McKerrow hosted an annual event to gather church leaders from primarily Colorado and Kansas so they’d commit to promoting the ministry of CCH in their home churches. I represented my church for three years.

Another favorite memory is the annual back-to-school clothes shopping event. Early on a Saturday morning in August, each kid was paired with an adult shopper and disorganized chaos reigned at the store for about an hour. I vividly remember one boy named Kevin in my second year shopping; he wanted a special green shirt because it had a clip-on tie. Unfortunately,

it was a size too small. Many of the 13 or so years that I shopped, more than half of the adult shoppers were my friends or family. Afterwards we’d head to a debriefing breakfast (adrenaline running high) and then we’d go home exhausted but elated. What fun! I also fondly remember the Denver Dinners with my parents until they passed away and I was persuaded to become a table host. I was honored when I was asked to be on the Board of Directors, and I proudly served from 1999-2008. At every board meeting, we would interact with the kids. I remember one little boy doing the ‘worm’ on the floor (a popular dance move at the time), reading to the kids during DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) time, working on their math homework, and helping them get ready to take standardized tests. My favorite thing was the ‘Friday Song.’

It was also a tumultuous time because we didn’t know if the ministry would survive the bankruptcy of the National Benevolent Association, our ‘parent’ company. The tireless work of several board members truly saved the agency.

Over the years, I’ve been involved in a number of programs and activities: I’ve read with kids as a Reading Buddy, watched the speech contests, cooked for the end-of-year staff BBQ, cleaned the main building with other members of my home church (Fireside Christian Church), gathered at volunteer dinners, helped with a kids baseball game, and attended tea at a donor’s home. Being part of the agency as it has grown has been one of the most special associations of my life. I have seen the expansion in community based services and day treatment programs as well as the changes in developing a continuum of care and residential treatment, which has drastically reduced the time a child spends in a facility instead of a healthy home.

I have so many treasured memories over more than 60 years of loving the kids, the staff, the board members and the mission of Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home.”

*Thank you, Sandra, for your many years of dedication and support to Tennyson’s kids!*

# April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month

Every April, the Children's Bureau observes National Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month to raise public awareness of child neglect and abuse, recommit efforts and resources aimed at protecting children and strengthening families, and promote community involvement through activities that support the cause. Tennyson is committed to furthering this cause this April—and in every month.

Since January 2015, more than **1 million** calls have been made to the state's hotline system. On an average day in Colorado, **14** children and teens are placed in foster care. Today, there are more than **2,000** children and teens living with a foster family in Colorado.

## Tennyson Center By the Numbers

We served **554** children and **1,964** family members from every social, economic and ethnic background across the state of Colorado.

Approximately **91%** of our children have survived emotional, physical or sexual abuse and neglect and/or other forms of trauma.



*By its very nature, the pinwheel connotes whimsy and childlike notions - it has come to serve as a reminder of the safe, stable, and nurturing childhoods we want for all children. It is the national symbol for child abuse prevention.*





# GALA RECAP

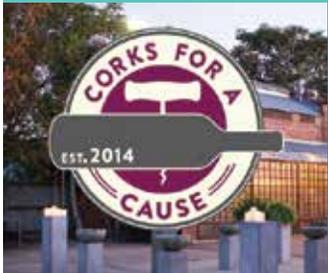
A heartfelt thank you to all the supporters, volunteers, sponsors, partners, board members, committee members, and staff who made our November 2<sup>nd</sup> gala, The Backyard Ball at the Denver Dinner, a success. Thanks to your support, we raised \$345,000 for children and families! All children deserve joy, love, support, and hope. Every day at Tennyson, we are working hard to make sure our children have a future that is brighter than their past, and to make Colorado a better place for every kid to grow up in, forever. None of this is possible without our dedicated and passionate community of supporters like you!

# UPCOMING EVENTS



Get out your boots and your rhinestones because our 10th Annual Mile High Country Q & Brew is just around the corner! This year, we are hosting Q & Brew in April, Child Abuse Awareness Month, to spotlight the stories and needs of Colorado’s kids experiencing neglect and abuse. This spotlight will also shine on all of you who choose to support them in their journeys toward healing. Their success doesn’t happen without you! Join us on April 25 at the Buffalo Rose in Golden.

Tickets and sponsorship information at [milehiqandbrew.com](http://milehiqandbrew.com)



Our annual wine tasting and social event is a great way to celebrate summer, experience new wines, mingle, and support Tennyson Center for Children! Local and national wineries will pique your taste buds while you relax and enjoy a beautiful Colorado evening against the eclectic backdrop of blanc Events Center in RiNo. Join us June 25!

Tickets and sponsorship information at [tennysoncenter.org/events](http://tennysoncenter.org/events)



Don’t miss your chance to play at Sanctuary, Colorado’s most exclusive and picturesque course, and support the healing journeys of Tennyson’s kids. The event will be held August 17th at Sanctuary Golf Course.

Tickets and sponsorship information at [tennysoncenter.org/events](http://tennysoncenter.org/events)

# STAFF SPOTLIGHTS



Erica Sullivan, Community Based Services

“As a case manager in New York City, I was part of a supportive housing program for four years. I worked specifically with single parents with very young children. Eventually, I was able to complete an Early Childhood Mental Health internship with these families, and wow, did I love the work! I moved back to Colorado from New York and was waiting for my social work license to transfer when I saw the job posting for an Early Childhood Clinician with Tennyson. I thought, ‘This is it! This is what I’ve been looking for!’

There were several things that interested me about working at Tennyson--most importantly, its focus on treating child trauma, providing in-home services, and working specifically with single-parents who are also dealing with housing insecurity (as families are at Warren Village, a community we work with). Everything about this position was totally my cup of tea!

Tennyson, and specifically the Early Childhood Program with Warren Village, is a great fit for me because I am deeply invested in helping families with very young children build a stable foundation for lifelong healthy development. There is a whole-family/whole-system focus. Caregiver mental health, housing stability, high quality childcare, and sibling support (among other things) are all part of the work.

Ned’s BIG idea, the *Rewiring*, is just one more reason Tennyson is a good fit for me. I wholeheartedly support him and all the advocates out there working to flip the child welfare system.

Before becoming a social worker, I worked in public health and was simultaneously fascinated and convinced that social determinants of health are exactly where we need to intervene for lifelong positive outcomes. Waiting to intervene

until chronic illness pops up is simply not working. Just as living next to a bus depot can cause asthma in young children, so can social adversity—be it childhood neglect or multi-generational discrimination. Prevention is a whole system approach to lifelong wellness and I’m totally on board.

On a personal level, I just love working with families with young children. The whole family is still in the process of adjusting to making space for a new life to develop. It can be a very isolating time in our culture. (How much time do caregivers have to socialize with other people?!) However, it’s also an exciting time of growth for the whole family with changes that are tangible, visible, and rewarding for everyone.”

## GRATITUDE

We recently received an incredibly generous bequest of \$227,000 from Mrs. Helen M. Kreoger of Denver. Ms. Kreoger lived to be 98 years old, and had a history of giving to Tennyson as far back as our records go--at least 31 years! We are incredibly grateful for donors like Ms. Kreoger who remember Tennyson’s children in their end of life planning.

"Every child deserves a champion: an adult who won't give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be".

- Rita Pierson, educator



Joyce Thomas, Campus Based Programs

"This quote resonates with me and explains what I enjoy most about teaching at Tennyson Center. Being a part of this team gives me the opportunity to be that champion for students who may not have one in their homes. One of the most satisfying - and challenging - parts of my work is to help students recognize their self-worth, which is essential for their success. Teaching students with challenging behaviors can be difficult at times, but it is undeniably worth it. As the saying goes: 'Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations.'

While teaching at Tennyson I have been able to witness students who had exhausted all other placements and had nowhere else to go, but through the amazing work of clinicians, educational staff, residential staff, etc. were able to be discharged. This teamwork is a hallmark at Tennyson Center. I am blessed to work with peers who are supportive, passionate about helping students, and just plain fun to hang out with! I thank God for placing Tennyson Center For Children in my pathway."



Kara Angelini, Development

"I joined the Tennyson Center team because I want to make sure that my career, first and foremost, is centered on the principle that I am using my abilities in service of others. I was raised by two non-profit workers who were deeply committed to service and giving back, even in their free time. Whether we were preparing meals on Thanksgiving Day for the homeless or fixing up trailers in Appalachia, my family always emphasized that we had a responsibility to use the resources we had to better the lives of our neighbors and our community.

After college I started my career in political fundraising, but I quickly found myself feeling like I couldn't make a true impact in today's polarized environment. I wasn't interested in doing work that was performative—I was ready to look at the pressing

needs of my community and use my background in fundraising to help in any way possible. I wanted to be part of a mission dedicated top to bottom to a social good that was rooted in creating a more robust community. I got the sense right from the start that Tennyson was not here to uphold any status quo, instead this team was determined to imagine a better future for the kids in our state and respond to the rapidly changing needs of child welfare services in Colorado. I could see that it wasn't enough for Tennyson to give Colorado kids just the services they need, but the services they deserve.

Since I started at Tennyson, I've watched this transformational vision work, day in and day out. My favorite part about working at Tennyson is that even though I am in a development

role and not a direct services staff member, I get to witness firsthand how lives are changed. It is such a privilege to come into work every day to see our clinicians and educators working hard to make the small things in life transformative for our kids. Over the past year I've learned that, above all else, our kids truly just want to feel safe and be seen. Our direct care staff knows that the smallest gestures can make the biggest difference, and I am constantly in awe of their ability to connect with Tennyson kids and begin the healing process. The work our direct care staff does every day is unbelievably challenging, and it is an honor to help support the life changing work that happens at this organization. I feel incredibly lucky to work with a team that knows we have the responsibility to be there for every child, no matter what."



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*"I want to grow up as a zookeeper because I want to take care of animals... they'll be safe in a cage. My favorite part is to help to check how they feel and how to make them better. To stay healthy.*

*I will feel proud because I did great at some of the jobs."*

Allen, Tennyson student

