

# A Word From the Executive Director



Dear Friends and Family of Third Way Center,

Celebrating Awareness and Legacy.

Happy February!

**This month, we focus on critical health issues, celebrate cultural diversity, honor the contributions of different communities, and say goodbye to one of our own.**

**February offers numerous opportunities to engage, educate, and inspire. It is a month for engagement, education, and inspiration, offering many chances to celebrate cultural diversity, honor community contributions, and focus on vital health issues. We'll celebrate the rich legacy and history of Black Americans and raise awareness of rare diseases, among other initiatives. This legacy is not just about the past; it is the foundation for present and future progress and understanding.**

*Grief in its early stages can feel all-consuming. Shock, denial, and a profound sense of numbness are common reactions. Many individuals describe this time as moving through a heavy fog, unable to fully grasp the reality of the loss. Overwhelming sadness can strike like waves, ebbing and flowing unpredictably. It's important to remember that these emotions, though painful, are natural parts of the grieving process. As an organization, our grief runs deep over the loss of our Founder and Medical Director, Hildegard Messenbaugh, but at the same time, we realize that we have been given an amazing gift that will last a lifetime.*

## **The Lasting Impact of Dr. Hildegard Messenbaugh**

This month, we pause to remember the extraordinary life and profound legacy of Hildegard Messenbaugh, who truly needs no introduction. This is hard for me to write. I have so many emotions; it's difficult to put into words who she was, who she still is, and who she will continue to be. She is forever with Third Way.

Hildegard was a visionary, a polymath, and a force of nature whose interests spanned from theology, medicine, history, adolescent psychology, shells, chocolate, sudoku, and whatever she was *taking on* at the moment. She was an expert in many areas; she often said her only true expertise was adolescents. She had a way of *hooking you into* what she was doing, whatever problem she was trying to solve. She was a problem solver and a master at getting people's attention.

Her spirit's wisdom and guidance live on in many of us across generations. Even in her passing, she teaches us that truth, hope, and justice (and maybe a little brain protocol) are what matter most when dealing with almost anything adolescent. Her life is a powerful reminder that one person's commitment to seeing beyond the behavior can enrich the world for generations. Her teachings are timeless and will live on forever. To read more about Hildegard, you can view her obituary [here](#).

**“This is not goodbye, my darling, this is thank you.” —Nicholas Sparks**

With gratitude and appreciation,

Renee