

# A Word From the Executive Director



## Moving Forward with Purpose

Dear friends and family of Third Way Center,

Happy April!

This April, we find ourselves in a season of profound transition. As we continue to **honor the legacy of our late founder, Dr. Hildegard Messenbaugh**, we carry her vision forward with heavy hearts but unwavering resolve. Hildegard taught us that "nature pushes towards growth," and that even the most "hopeless" circumstances can be transformed through **Truth and Hope**.

The need for high-acuity residential treatment has never been more critical. For the children in our care, "healing" requires more than just a safe place to stay; it requires intensive, 24/7 clinical support designed to stabilize and transform complex trauma. This seems like an uphill battle given our state's current budget and capitation struggles.

The recent resignation of Colorado's Medicaid Director, Kim Bimestefer, amid scrutiny over billing and spending, underscores a vital truth: we need a system that prioritizes children rather than saving money. The truth is, **if we prioritize mental health**, it will save everyone money in the long run. Colorado kids deserve a system that is responsive to their needs, works together, supports the healing process, and is sustainable.

## Advocacy in Action: The Promise of EPSDT

In honor of **National Child Abuse Prevention Month** this April, we renew our steadfast commitment to delivering high-acuity care.

A cornerstone of this mission is our dedication to the **EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment) benefit**. This federal law, enacted by Congress in **1967**, guarantees that Medicaid-eligible children receive all medically necessary treatment to "correct or ameliorate" their health conditions. We advocate for treatment excellence and accountability, recognizing that quality care, aligned with the original intent of the EPSDT benefit, leads to better outcomes for children and can contribute to budget savings for the state.

## A Season of Renewal

April is also **Autism Acceptance Month** and **National Minority Health Month**, reminding us that true healing requires a holistic lens. We recognize the significant traditions our community observes this month, from the themes of liberation in **Passover** to the promise of renewal in **Easter**. These milestones remind us that hope can emerge from even the most challenging circumstances.

*Our Third Way Center mission* lives on because of our dedicated **staff** - the very heartbeat of our organization. They deserve full support and recognition for their specialized expertise and incredible patience in working with complex young people. Our donors are the vital bridge, providing the increased opportunities these youth need to reach their full potential. **Together**, we are committed to ensuring that even after facing loss, hardship, and a broken system, our kids receive the individualized care and specialized treatment they need to succeed and thrive.

*"When they get better, they really get better... Nature pushes towards equilibrium and growth." — **Dr. Hildegard Messenbaugh***

With gratitude and appreciation,

*Renee*