

# A Word From the Executive Director



Dear Third Way Center's friends and family,

Happy May! So much to look forward to; Graduation, School appreciation, Mental Health awareness month, Mother's day, Hope on the Range...

According to SAMHSA, ***Research has shown that traumatic experiences are associated with both behavioral health and chronic physical health conditions, especially those traumatic events that occur during childhood. Substance use, mental health conditions, and other risky behaviors have been linked with traumatic experiences.*** Sep 27, 2022

This is not new information, and it makes sense; trauma and mental health are related; *no one messes up their life on purpose*. These are the kids and families we work with at Third Way Center. It's what we have been doing for over 50 years. Treatment is about healing, not stabilization. For traumatized kids, *connection* is often missing, and what is needed for healing. By the time a kid is placed at Third Way, they usually have experienced several other treatment modalities without success, their behaviors have gotten so out of control that they are a danger to themselves and others, and sometimes no one wants them, including their families. It is difficult to get past the behaviors, but not impossible. Relationships help us heal.

Why is it so hard to recognize mental health for what it is? Why does it continue to be stigmatizing? Why is it so hard to get help? And why does it take so long? Imagine a world where we all work together, where it is everyone's responsibility to care for our children and each other. Residential treatment actually offers an opportunity for traumatized kids to see that they are not alone, to make connections with others who struggle, to learn from each other, to be helpful to each other, and to be a part of a collective. Learning to connect with others is a skill that will benefit them for a lifetime. To find their voice and to be seen- who doesn't need that?

I had the opportunity to attend the Child Welfare Conference in DC last month. It

gave me some perspective. Child Welfare does not want to be responsible for our children's mental health. They don't seem to be against Mental Health; they just don't see it as their job.

**“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” —Nelson Mandela**

A big shout-out to Third Way Center's Joan Farley Academy school staff- both Brill and Lowry campuses! They are truly amazing, and we appreciate them for their expertise, creativity, and dedication. So many of our youth have struggled in school, and come with a variety of fears, behaviors, and learning disabilities when it comes to learning. Mental health often interferes with school. They work closely with the treatment staff and provide a supportive and safe school setting. The majority of our school staff have worked through the pandemic, while other public and private schools struggled to retain their workforce. Our teachers, social workers, paras, and administrative staff were showing up to work with the kids in very creative ways. Their perseverance and care for these kids show in their students' academic success. We are lucky to have them! Thank you, Third Way Center's education staff!

*With gratitude and thanks!*

*Renee*