

A Word From the Executive Director



Hello Colorado Community, we sell truth and hope!

We work with teenagers. Really difficult teenagers who don't trust and have little hope that things will be different or get better. They see right through you; you can rarely fool them. They know when you are lying, or pretending, or uninterested, or preoccupied. They see all your faults, imperfections, and inadequacies, and may even tell you about them. They don't always have the words, but they will respond accordingly. It's not personal, and why should they trust? Generally, they have been in many places before arriving at Third Way Center. It is a difficult task to see beyond their behavior, because they can be so rejecting and so hateful, with good reason. These children are dysregulated, impulsive, and angry, and invested in not feeling or thinking about what they truly need to deal with to heal. We are also seeing many more kids with issues associated with brain injury. Most of the time, talk therapy doesn't work as well as it should for a bunch of reasons. They may have made little bits of progress here and there, but they wouldn't be with us if whatever happened somewhere else had worked.

We see the truth as the correct diagnosis, and the hope is what they need to do about it. Sounds simple, but it is personal to the individual and generally very complicated. Adolescents are all about doing, and they watch us closely to see whether we will follow up, follow through, see them, hear them, and help them learn to help themselves. The kids at Third Way Center are the most vulnerable and need a place to feel safe. We are fortunate to have staff who are dedicated and experienced in handling the complexity of the treatment process.

I want our community to know who we are and what we do, while also protecting our clients. The work they do with us is sensitive, painful, and very private. As some know, Third Way Center is a private non-profit residential treatment program for males and females with a continuum of services for 13-21 year olds with complex mental health issues. Our child welfare system is in flux, and it is more complicated for our youth to get the services they need. However, they are treatable; they may not be ready, and we may not always be good enough. I think what makes a difference is recognizing that they make mistakes and need consequences. As long as they do not keep making the same mistakes and are willing to work with us, we will continue working with them.

I am fortunate to have a fabulous team of dedicated, intelligent, intuitive, and experienced people working with me. Having good people makes the job so much easier. We have 15 women who have been with Third Way Center for at least 20 years, who we will be honoring at our True Grit Gala this year! Our founder, Dr Hildegard Messenbaugh, continues to work closely with us, teaching, advising, researching, and guiding. Grit, fortitude, and determination make a difference. ***We sell truth and hope!***

I do want to recognize that July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, also known as BIPOC Mental Health Month. It is important to begin with awareness and recognize how community and connection are ways to support people facing systemic racism and oppression.