

A Word From Our Executive Director



Reflections on Independence, Leadership, and Our Mission

Dear friends and family of Third Way Center,

Happy July, Happy Summer!

July brings a natural time of reflection. As we celebrate the 4th of July and look at the changing landscapes around us, we are reminded of what true freedom means: the opportunity for our youth to break free from the chains of trauma and build a self-sufficient future.

Amidst a changing political climate and shifting local and national administrations following the primary elections, it is natural to ask: *Should we be hopeful?* At Third Way Center, our answer is **yes**. While political tides and administrative leadership inevitably turn over, our core mission remains entirely independent of politics. We remain hopeful because our trajectory is defined by the resilience of the human spirit and the unwavering support of our community.

While SB26-188 delayed the implementation of Medicaid capitation by one year, it tasked the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) with establishing a collaborative steering committee to shape the state's path forward. There is no federal mandate requiring this transition, nor is there evidence that capitation ensures cost savings; additionally, concerns remain regarding the protection of Child Welfare Medicaid funds. HCPF is leading this effort, and the steering committee mandate requires participation from all relevant entities. As members of the Colorado Association of Family and Children Agencies (CAFCA), we—along with Shiloh and Denver Children's Home—are actively participating on the steering committee. CAFCA's lobbyist, Ben Teevan, has played a vital role in championing the needs of our residential programs.

Building More Than Walls: A Promise to Colorado's Youth

Our Bannock facility, which unfortunately closed during the pandemic, is due to open in the near future (if we can manage all the continued inspections, permits, licensing, specific designations, and regulatory uncertainty). We were delighted to showcase this program during a well-attended event on June 8th. However, it is not just about the beautiful design or the building itself—it is about the promise we are making to our state's young people. This program will allow us to house and treat 12 more Colorado youth who need mental health treatment.

Honoring Our Foundational Truth

As we look toward the future, we continue to anchor ourselves in the enduring legacy of our beloved founder, **Dr. Hildegard Messenbaugh**, whom we lost this past January. Hildegard taught us that "truth and hope" are the absolute bedrock of healing. No matter who is running the offices down the street or how the administrative structures shift, her pioneering trauma-informed methodologies remain our North Star. We honor her by keeping our promises and maintaining the uncompromising quality of care she championed for over fifty years.

Why We Are Here: Remembering the Kids

Ultimately, everything we do comes back to one fundamental truth: **we are here for the kids**. The adolescents who come through our doors have often faced unimaginable hurdles. July is **Disability Pride Month**, a vital time to honor and accept the diverse psychological, emotional, and physical neurodiversities of the youth we serve. Many of our teens are fighting unseen battles with complex mental health challenges and

developmental trauma. This month, we celebrate their unique strengths, amplify their voices, and reaffirm our commitment to providing a safe, empowering space where they can heal at their own pace.

Thank you to our donors, staff, and partners for ensuring that—no matter the season or the political climate—Third Way Center remains a steady beacon of hope and healing.

Happy July!

With gratitude and appreciation,

Renee