

A Word From the Executive Director



Dear Friends and Family of Third Way Center,

Happy November!

True Grit, our annual fundraiser, was a success! It warmed my heart to witness the support from all of you who attended and/or contributed to our cause. It shows how, together, we can all play a meaningful part in Third Way Center's mission.

This is Native American Heritage Month.

A time to remember and celebrate the first inhabitants of the United States. The truth is, we have not always been as appreciative, knowledgeable, or embracing of differences throughout history. Being inclusive means being open to understanding differences and being comfortable admitting what we don't know. Easier said than done. We gravitate towards people who are like us, and it takes self-awareness, commitment, and perseverance to change the status quo. Being inclusive benefits everyone.

It is also National Runaway Prevention Month.

Third Way Center often serves kids with a significant history of running away. There are many reasons to run away, and it is not for no reason. The behavior serves a purpose; it always does. Whatever they are running away from, or running to, matters.

Runaway children and homeless people are more vulnerable to human trafficking. According to a survey by the National ClearingHouse of Homeless Youth and Families; *36% of runaways traded sex for a place to stay or another need.* Traffickers offer a false sense of security; they promise shelter, protection, caring, and often drugs. Traffickers often target residential programs to recruit, considering these kids are the most susceptible to false promises.

As a result, our staff have developed a protocol, hired security, and work closely with law enforcement and the national task force to keep our kids safe. It is our job to educate, recognize the signs, and see beyond the behavior. For youth, it is about making sense of their story and how their behavior contributes to their troubles. Once they decide the behavior doesn't work, they can take a more active role in their treatment. Then there is hope that things can be different, that things can be better. We all need hope.

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” Winston Churchill

Holidays are difficult for many people, but especially for the kids and families at Third Way Center. There is so much hype about how holidays should be, how we should feel, what we are grateful for, which can highlight what we don't have.

The staff works overtime to meet the needs of our most difficult population. It's an opportunity to do quality treatment with so much reality all around. It takes putting the kids' needs ahead of our own- something many of the youth have not experienced. When done well, healing is possible.

Your giving does not go unnoticed and allows our staff to focus on the treatment needs of our clients and their families. It is comforting to feel the generous support of our community. It gives hope, and it is an investment in our future. Together we can accomplish so much more!

Thank you, and remember *Third Way Center* on Colorado Gives Day!

With gratitude and appreciation,

Renee