

A Word From the Executive Director



Dear Family and Friends of Third Way Center,

Happy December! So much to look forward to, and for some so much to avoid.

We have all lived through something; something devastating, something painful, loneliness, something we may not want to think about. Holidays can also often remind us of what we don't have, or more importantly, *whom* we don't have. The key to most everything is connection; connection with another *person*. That is why our staff are so incredibly important, especially through the holidays, and beyond. Their ability to be consistent, brave, and see beyond the behavior takes patience and the ability to tolerate discomfort, conflict, and avoidance.

Many kids come to Third Way with a long history of disconnection or connection in the wrong places. Sometimes they don't even have the ability to connect, at least not at first. They have done their fair share of pushing everyone and everything away. Of protecting themselves from the pain. What we have learned is that sometimes we need to get the brain ready for treatment to be possible. The natural pull is to avoid feeling bad, avoid the pain. There is shame in trauma, and Victims often take on the responsibility of being victimized. If it's our fault, we are in control.

We act out to manage our feelings, to feel more in control. So, it makes sense that the holidays would serve as an opportunity for our staff to take on the most difficult behaviors, to lean into the discomfort, to make the connections needed for healing to take place. To offer a safe place to do the most significant work. The staff who stick it out are quite remarkable. They see what needs to be done, they work closely with their teams and the families (if there are families), and learn as much about themselves in this process as they do about the kids we are working with. As stated before, *this job ain't for sissies*.

Like most of us involved with Third Way, the joy of helping others (even though we can't always see it clearly) becomes for us the magic of the holidays.

`In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity." -- Albert Einstein

We wish you a magical holiday season.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Renee