

# **Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Youth Program Realizes Goal of Local Ownership**

In the fall of 1996, the doors opened at the Morgan County Tennyson Center, a unique therapy and education program located at Brush Middle School. The program was created in response to concerns about the number of students in Morgan County whose behaviors and/or disabilities were forcing them to be placed out of the community and into residential centers, detention, or the hospital. Representatives from local agencies got together and recruited Denver-based Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home to help develop an intensive day treatment program that could provide the support and therapy necessary to keep kids in their community. The partnering organizations included the Morgan County Dept. of Human Services, Centennial Mental Health Center, South Platte Valley BOCES, Ft. Morgan School District, Brush School District, Wiggins School District, and Weldon Valley School District. The Tennyson Center, a 100-year old agency with a long history of developing education and therapy services, agreed to manage the program and bring fundraising to help support its budget.

Nine years later, the program has served nearly 80 local students and their families, with rave reviews from all directions. Brush Middle School principal Ken Miller says, "It is a

great opportunity to give service to kids who have needs that can't be met in a regular school setting. We feel very lucky to have it as an option, and to have it located in our school." According to Heather Baier, Morgan County DHS Caseworker, the program fills a big need. "It's great to be able to keep kids in the community and to see them grow emotionally with the support of the Tennyson staff."

The program's funding sources demonstrate just how collaborative it has been. In addition to the school districts, the budget is supported by the Morgan County Department of Human Services, Centennial Mental Health Center, and donations from local groups and churches.

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, the program will host a celebration to mark another milestone - that of being locally owned. As of August 1, 2005, the official ownership and management of the program will transfer from The Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home to the South Platte Valley Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

"Since the beginning, the vision has always been for the program to eventually be owned by local community partners," says Tennyson CEO Bob Cooper. "We are proud to have helped provide the expertise and support necessary to give the program a solid foundation."

The local advisory board recommended the transfer of ownership to take the next step toward long-term sustainability. The BOCES was a logical choice to manage the program, as it already coordinates special education services for three of the four collaborating school districts. "We're pleased and honored to be able to take on the future administration of the program," reports Dale McCall, Executive Director. "We and are convinced there is an ongoing need for this program and are committed to continuing its success in the future." This summer, the South Platte Valley BOCES is merging with the Centennial BOCES, which covers 11 districts in Northern Colorado. Although the program will operate under the primary direction of the local board of directors in Morgan County, the Tennyson Center will remain involved in a consultative role while the other collaborative partners continue to support the program as they have in the past.

The upcoming celebration will feature a short ceremony to honor the past success and future plans for the program, including comments from students, families, and leaders involved in the program during the past nine years.

**PUBLIC WELCOME:** Open House and Celebration of the Morgan County Tennyson Center: May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005 from 4-6pm at the Brush Middle School, 401 Howard St. A short ceremony will be held from 4:30-5:00pm.