

Our Mission

Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home is a community of people dedicated to breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect, serving and strengthening children and families. As professionals and concerned citizens, we strive to provide competent and caring treatment, educational and advocacy services that are community-based, family-focused and child-centered.

Visitor



The official newsletter of Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home

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Getting to the Top of the Mountain / Karen Cowling

Editor's Note: Challenge-By-Choice (CBC) is Tennyson Center's experiential education program that enables our kids to achieve what at one time were unrealistic goals, which in turn builds their self-esteem, confidence and inner strength. The program, which is similar to the Outward Bound program, focuses on wilderness skills and goal-oriented responsibilities which the children would not normally encounter in their typical daily routine.



It had been a long time coming. The culminating activity for the eight week summer program was to climb Mount Elbert, the highest fourteener in Colorado. Those who would partake

were not just your average, everyday youth. Far from average, these were ten extraordinary kids, all with their own stories and eight compassionate adults who cared enough to coach, and sometimes coax, them to the top.

My role was that of volunteer and soon-to-be foster mom to Carlos. I felt humbled and honored to be asked to take part in something none of us would soon forget. I set my expectations at a mediocre

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Children Stop Forest Fire / Dave Sevick

Several new honorary, volunteer firefighters were recently recognized by the Denver Fire Department and featured on KUSA-9News for extraordinary bravery when they extinguished a rapidly spreading wildfire at a campsite in Summit County, just outside of Leadville. But, unlike the other brave members of Denver's finest, these heroes are all under the age of 13.

On Monday, July 18, a group of Tennyson Center

Challenge-by-Choice (CBC) students were approaching what would be their own campsite for the next two days, when they happened upon a campfire that previous campers had left burning. The fire had jumped its ring and was beginning to spread to nearby timber. Unable to call for assistance due to the unavailability of cell phone service in that particular area, the group of youngsters and their youth treatment

counselors knew that action had to be taken.

Under the supervision of Treatment Counselors Ian Long, Dave Kelley and Jamie Bonnema and armed with only mess kits and bowls, the children utilized the resources at hand by running down a hillside to the river below, filling their cups and bowls with water and hiking back up the slope to douse the

Continued on page 2



Bob Cooper,
President/CEO

A Message from the President / Bob Cooper

It has been a year of high drama for Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home. The suspense could have almost made a television pilot! It started in October, 2004 with the Friends of Children Board of Directors' dramatic 11th hour acquisition of the programs and assets of the agency as the bankrupt NBA was preparing to close this 100-year old Rocky Mountain resource for children and families.

It continued in March with more 11th hour suspense through the sale of the property at a bankruptcy auction in San Antonio, Texas. That episode of the story ended with a media blitz which helped to foil a developer's efforts to take the campus and enabled our rescue by the Gary-Williams Foundation. An associate of the foundation had seen a two-by-two inch classified advertisement in the Sunday *Denver Post*

announcing the bankruptcy sale of the Colorado Christian Home. Thirteen days later the foundation secured title to the campus and secured our future here for the next 100 years.

In addition to these two events, as we close the books on this first year of our next 100, there is much to be thankful for at Tennyson Center. As always, first, is the safe haven for children which thrives through all of our programs. Over 225 children and their families are helped everyday from the metro Denver area, the eastern plains, and throughout all of Colorado. Miracles of healing take place every day through the dedicated work of the many staff and volunteers who make these children a top priority in their lives.

All of this is possible, however, only through the generosity of thousands of individuals like you. You hung in there with us, for the kids, while we "got our act

together". I know you could have taken your support elsewhere to other worthy causes...but you didn't. You helped us put a quality program in front of the children. Quality doesn't come unless we have people like you making the kids a priority in your lives.

Through all of the turmoil I am thrilled to report the children and families barely noticed the frenzy of dramatic events going on in the background. The healing just continued. Equally, if not more importantly, from a management standpoint I am very pleased to report we have finished our first year as an independent organization **in the black!** With your continued support we will successfully serve children and families for another 100 years.

Thanks for making the children a priority in your life.

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We couldn't be
more proud of
them...and, more
importantly, they
couldn't be more
proud of
themselves.
”

Firefighters (cont'd. from 1)

spreading wildfire. Through teamwork and perseverance, the makeshift firefighters worked to extinguish the flames, after which they used a camping shovel to bury the embers.

Tennyson's CBC program has proven to be quite a success in helping children achieve goals and attain new levels of confidence which are key elements in their emotional development.

"The personal accomplishments realized by the kids in the CBC program are almost immeasurable", said Tennyson Center Executive Director Bob Cooper. "Most of these



Tennyson Center's junior firefighters are interviewed on TV.

kids endured more pain in their short lives than any of us will experience in a lifetime. We're normally amazed if they make it through the day without an outburst or incident of some kind, and

here they are putting out wildfires. We couldn't be more proud of them...and, more importantly, they couldn't be more proud of themselves."

Animal Therapy: A Mutual Understanding / Dave Sevick

Just by watching them interact, it was easy to see that they understood one another. They seemed to know exactly what the other was feeling as Chelsea and Noche looked lovingly into each other's eyes. It was the kind of silent language that could only be spoken by the two of them. What makes this love story so extraordinary, however, is that Chelsea is an eight-year old girl...Noche is a three-year old horse.

It sounds like a tale out of a children's fantasy novel, but something is happening at a local horse ranch that lends credence to the theory that certain animals actually have the capacity for compassion. Tennyson Center's Littleton Day Treatment program is taking advantage of an innovative type of equine therapy that gives at-risk children a chance to interact with and care for abused and injured horses in a type of mutual healing, which is proving to be quite successful.

The Equine Assisted Guidance Program is a cooperative effort between Tennyson's Community-Based Services division and Trail of Hope Horse Rescue and Rehabilitation Facility in Sedalia, Colorado. By assisting with the rehabilitation process of horses that have been rescued from abusive and neglectful environments, the children have the opportunity to provide the kind of nurturing and care that is an integral part of their own therapeutic treatment. As a result, the bonds that are developing between the children and the animals are not only truly special, but are proving to be an invaluable



Chelsea and her new best friend, Noche.

part of their healing as well.

Elizabeth Moock, Littleton Therapist, is excited about the weekly program. "There is very strong interest in animal-assisted therapy these days. We are confident that this opportunity will provide our kids with some very successful results."

In fact, this type of therapy is garnering so much interest that the University of Denver has engaged student-interns who are working

towards a degree in social work to co-facilitate and initiate research on the program.

Trail of Hope, operated by Rena Ludwick and Regina Prevosto, offers equine care and treatment until such time when the horses are ready to be adopted into a caring and stable environment. More information can be found at www.trailofhope.org.

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Mark Your Calendars!

28th Annual Denver Dinner

Friday, November 18, 2005 at Marriott City Center; for details contact Tera Boehmer at 720-855-3316.

Operation Santa

October 1, 2005 through January 6, 2006; Special Events throughout the season; for details contact Dave Sevick at 720-855-3326.

Quilt Sales

Friday & Saturday, November 11 & 12 at Tennyson Center; Library; Friday from 3pm to 6pm and Saturday from 10am to 2pm; for details contact Lindsay Scoby at 720-855-3317.



The Evolution of Operation Santa / Tricia Muniz

For the past several years, our annual holiday fundraising campaign and toy drive, has been successful but has never really grown to what it could be. That's all going to change this year. Operation Santa 2005, with the theme of "Tennyson Center's Home for the Holidays", will feature an entire season of agency-wide events, holiday traditions, donor appeals and corporate sponsorships. Additionally, Operation Santa will include a series of special events for the kids, highlighted by the first annual Painted Reindeer Festival and Auction as well as holiday lights, garland and wreaths adorning the main administration building and campus.

For the first time in the program's history, Operation Santa will be sponsored in part by KUSA-9News, which will provide media coverage of some of the events associated with the fundraising drive. We're also securing corporate sponsorships on a variety of giving levels to help further our fundraising efforts.

Another exciting addition to this year's campaign will be the "Painted Reindeer Festival", sponsored by Denver's KUSA-TV/9News. Local celebrities and renowned artists will design, paint and autograph three-foot tall, papier mache and acrylic-coated decorative reindeer. The finished pieces of art will be sold through a silent auction during the first

week of December.

Our children have been busy choosing toys and gifts for their holiday wish-lists. Additionally, staff have been compiling wish-lists for the cottages, classrooms and programs as well. Tennyson Center supporters will be invited to become "Secret Santas", where they'll purchase gifts from their choice of several wish lists so that we may secure all the items on each list.

For details on any of the Operation Santa events or if you're interested in volunteering or donating to the Operation Santa fundraising drive, call Dave Sevick at 720-855-3326.

Thanks to Corporate Supporters and Sponsors

The success of the past year here at Tennyson Center has truly been a collaborative effort, not just among staff and supporters but from the help of numerous businesses and corporations as well.

We'll be seeing them again in November as Morton's will serve up a delectable holiday dinner for all the kids we serve at Tennyson Center...

Thanks to the **Italians of America** for raising \$15,000 in support for Tennyson Center during their annual classic car show this past summer...

This was our most successful ChildSpree ever and we're grateful to our friends at **Mervyns** for once again helping us to provide our kids with new clothes for the 2005-2006 school year...

Denver area **Applebee's** restaurants along with **Alice 105.9 FM** did their part to help us raise over \$40,000 as part of this year's "Bee a Sucker for Kids" campaign...

Stuff-the-Bus '05 brought us an abundance of school and classroom supplies. Thanks to **Denver Rescue Mission,**

Chrysler Financial, Arrow Electronics, BlueLinx Colorado, ViCorp and Epsilon Sigma Alpha-Beta Alpha sorority for their generosity...

Thanks to **Big Bill's NY Pizza** in Centennial for choosing Tennyson Center as a beneficiary for this year's 9-11 Memorial Fundraising Drive. In honor of all those affected by Hurricane Katrina, proceeds were split with the hurricane relief efforts...

A special thanks to **Bridges Music Ministry and Legacy Christian Fellowship** for their help with the Tennyson Center Music Festival. To list all of our many friends from area churches and organizations who have continued to show their unending support would occupy this entire publication, but we're grateful to have you all as part of our family!



ABOVE: Broncos QB Bradlee Van Pelt and friend supporting Tennyson Center at the annual wine tasting event at Morton's

The folks at **Morton's-The Steakhouse** in LoDo once again showed their support for Tennyson Center by inviting us to benefit from their annual wine tasting event this past June. The event was a huge success and we're grateful to Morton's for their generosity.

Mountain (cont'd. from 1)

level, thinking we'd make our best attempt at summiting, but it would be okay if we didn't make it to the top. We would soon both discover that mediocrity won't take you to the top of the mountain. The day began in the dark...4:30am. It was obvious that the kids had been in training for weeks preparing for this culminating event.

After slamming a power bar breakfast and some water, we walked to the trailhead five minutes away, matched kids with accompanying adults, and began what we didn't know at the time would be a seven hour trek uphill. As we climbed we did some talking about life. Carlos made the comment "this hike goes faster and easier when we talk...I don't even realize it's hard then." Other kids joined us at times talking, too. Many of them asked questions about my relationship with Carlos. I was able to tell how we started out as his volunteer family with no intentions of becoming his foster family, but we soon fell in love with him.

Some kids passed us while we were sitting and would encourage Carlos saying, "Come on Carlos, I know you can do this." All the kids showed immense support to each other in their own unique ways.

There were many times when it seemed Carlos would give up. He would state, "this is too hard, I can't do it...why do I have to do this anyway?" I would say, "you're right, this is a very hard thing to do and you don't have to do it. Think how good it will feel when you've made it to the top and can say you did this really hard thing...that you and I climbed our first fourteener together.



This is something you and I will always remember.

About two hours from the top, just at the base of the first of two false peaks, it became extremely windy and difficult to move forward. It was cold and the elements were bombarding us. There were times when we'd both crumple down from exhaustion and the child would see that I too was in the same place as he. He would take my hands and try to heat them up; he would put my coat over my face in attempts at warming me. At one point I had tears in my eyes to which he showed surprise. This was a turning point...him caring for me and encouraging me. He still stopped and thought he couldn't finish. He turned back once and took a few steps down the mountain, but quickly turned around to move forward again.

With only five minutes to the summit, we could actually see the final peak and knew it was within our grasp. Fear of falling off the edge pervaded this child's mind. He said, "it's too scary...I need you to hold my hand." The analogy to life ahead for the two of us in attempts to navigate the obstacles before us was uncanny. It seems so often a fantastic thing is just up ahead or just around a corner and if

we can merely muster up the strength and faith to push ahead and ask for the helping hand we so desperately need from one another, we can accomplish one goal.

I excitedly told him, "only two more minutes and we're there." He smiled, as he knew he could do it at that point, but the ridge with the drop offs was scary. So we held hands and did it together with cheers all around as we reached the summit. What a moment of exhilaration and joy!

All ten extraordinary kids made it to the top and we documented our accomplishment by signing our names on the scroll at the summit which is held in a waterproof container.

This CBC program allows these kids to encounter life in ways they never could have otherwise. They have accomplished arduous tasks and gained pride and strength in the process. They have learned that if they stick with something and push through it for long enough they can and will make it to the top.

Karen Cowling and her husband, Keith, have been mentoring children for the past five years and volunteering at Tennyson Center for the past year.



ABOVE LEFT: Climbing to the top of Mt. Elbert allows much time for contemplation and thought.

ABOVE: Students learn how to purify water from a mountain lake.

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BELOW: Desiree enjoys her 9News television debut with putting partner Susie Wargin.



Golf Tournament a Huge Success / Dave Sevick

The 2005 Chopper Travaglini Memorial Golf Tournament Presented by Re/Max was an unparalleled success, as a variety of supporters, area business VIPs, local celebrities and six of Tennyson Center's residential children were brought together for a day of fun, friendly competition.

On Monday, July 25, **Sanctuary Golf Course** provided this year's participants with a backdrop of

natural grandeur on a picture-perfect day. Twenty-four teams were sent out on their golf carts to compete in a modified scramble format on one of Denver most beautiful courses.

The event kicked off with a dinner and VIP reception the night before, courtesy of **Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar**, where guests were treated to an evening of Skyy Vodka martinis, fine wine, a delectable

dinner and a fabulous silent auction.

But on the morning of the tournament, it was time for the children to enter the spotlight as six Tennyson Center kids were paired with local business leaders and television celebrities for the Sprinkle Financial Children's Putting Championship. News crews from two television stations covered the event, giving the kids an opportunity to not only show off their putting skills, but to achieve their own fifteen minutes of fame as well.

Several new faces were added to this year's VIP line-up, in addition to many returning participants.

Tennyson Center Special Events Director Tera Boehmer said, "This is a premiere golf tournament in Colorado and we're so pleased with the new introductions that were made to our agency and the children we serve."

Boehmer added, "We're grateful for everyone who stepped up to the plate to make this year's event such a success. We're confident that next year's tournament will be even more successful!"



Children's Putting Championship VIPs included (back row, left to right): Brad Andersen; Stan Sprinkle; Susie Wargin, KUSA-TV sports anchor; Steve Gottsegen, KMGH-TV sports anchor; Jim Benemann, KCNC-TV news anchor; Stephanie Riggs, KCNC-TV news anchor.



ABOVE: Stan Sprinkle and his putting partner, Jaime.

Denver Dinner Preparations Underway

Nearly 1,000 guests will gather for Tennyson Center's 28th annual Denver Dinner on Friday, November 18th at Denver's Marriott City Center.

Entitled "Through the Eyes of a Child", the gala event will feature entertainment, dinner and dancing as well as performances by the children and presentations from Bob Cooper and select other Tennyson Center staff.

Additionally, the black-tie-optional celebration will premiere the new Tennyson Center promotional video, "These Are Our Children".

"This event is a favorite among Tennyson Center supporters", said Special Events Director Tera Boehmer. She added, "It lets us join together in celebration of the work being done every day for the children we serve."

Guests are invited to become "table-hosts", where they are asked to fill a table of ten with friends, colleagues or business associates. Table-host packets are now available for the event.

For reservations or if you are interested in being a table-host, contact Tera Boehmer at 720-855-3316 or tera.boehmer@tennysoncenter.org.

Tennyson Center's Greatest Need / Lyn Woods

Today, I met a refugee from New Orleans. He was plucked from his hurricane-torn community and flown to Denver. The young man has a new job, accommodations at a nice hotel, and life is back on track. He has decided to make Denver his home. Our generous community has raised millions of dollars to help in the relief effort because we know all too well when the storm passes, the destruction remains.

Just hours later, I ran into another refugee. I hugged her... I know her personally. She is an 11-year old child at Tennyson Center. She endured a different kind of storm, a familial storm of abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Tennyson Center is her safe haven, her shelter from harm and homelessness. And our generous community responded and helped raise funds to clothe, feed, counsel and educate her and many other children this past year. The storm has passed, but the destruction is long-lasting. It

will take time to heal.

Interesting isn't it, that New Orleans and Tennyson Center have something in common. Great is the need for both to figure out how to prevent large-scale devastation before the next storm hits one of our communities. And for Tennyson Center, another storm is brewing on the horizon. Medicaid is forcing funding cuts for residential treatment centers across the nation. And when these cuts come into effect, fewer children will have access to the care they need.

So how do we as an agency and community brace ourselves for the next storm in child protection? How do we prepare for the historical, cyclical funding cuts? Do we allow classrooms to sit empty when the state doesn't have the money to send the children? Can we in good conscious let facilities go underused when we know children are suffering and it's simply a matter of economics?

To gird ourselves and protect our children, we must

endow Tennyson Center programs to the degree that we will be resistant to economic slumps. If the state cannot send the children because they don't have the funds to do so, we need a solution. Endowing our programs will allow us to weather economic hardships and continue to serve the maximum number of children in need.

You can help Tennyson Center realize this goal. Estate gifts are the single largest source of funds for our endowment. Have you considered making a provision in your will or estate plan for the children and the home? If you would like to help with our greatest need, insuring programs for abused, neglected and at-risk children, help us help them by joining our effort to rebuild the endowment.

If you have questions, please call Lyn Woods at 720-855-3340 or Karen Wibrew at 720-855-3344.



Lyn Woods,
Chief Development
Officer

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Endowing our programs will allow us to weather economic hardships and continue to serve the maximum number of children in need.

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Help Us With our Needs List!

Tennyson Center for Children needs your help. Can you help us get the following items for our cottages, classrooms and programs?

14-Passenger Vans—Preferably GMC Savana or Chevy Express. Contact Rick Thorgren at 720-855-3310.

Color Ink Cartridges—HP Deskjet cartridge #C78. Contact Tricia Muniz at 720-855-3358.

Video Conferencing Equipment—Higher technology needed to better accomplish long distance family therapy sessions. Contact Jan James at 720-855-3441.

Gift Cards—From stores, movie theatres, restaurants, amusement venues, etc. Contact Jan James at 720-855-3441.

Restaurant-sized toaster—To replace our kitchen's current toaster which is outdated and often out-of-service. Contact Rick Thorgren at 720-855-3310.

Miscellaneous—elementary age magazines and books, buttons, marbles, egg cartons, and fabric for bulletin boards. Contact Wallace Brummett at 720-855-3203.

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

Visitor is the newsletter of
Tennyson Center for Children at
Colorado Christian Home and is
published three times a year by
Tennyson Center for Children,
Denver, CO.

To protect our children's privacy,
in most cases pseudonyms
are used.

2-day Quilt Sale!!!

Tennyson Center's Annual Holiday Quilt Sale

Friday, November 11 from 3 pm to 6 pm
Saturday, November 12 from 10 am to 2 pm
Tennyson Center Library
2950 Tennyson Street / Denver

Handmade quilts from around the Rocky Mountain West

Proceeds from Quilt Sales will benefit Tennyson Center for Children

For Information, call Lindsay Scoby at 720-855-3317



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