

Visitor

Fall/Winter 2013

The official newsletter of



www.childabuse.org or www.tennysencenter.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Operation Santa

Ongoing through Jan. 3
For information or to participate, call Trish at 720.855.3358.

4th Annual Mile High Country Q & Brew

NEW DATE: Sat., Feb. 22
Mile High Station
2027 Lower Colfax Ave.,
Denver

2014 Northern Colorado Dinner

Friday, April 11
Embassy Suites Loveland

For information on these or any other events, call Sally at 720.855.3317.

Contact Tennysen Center for Children: 303.433.2541

Colorado Gives Day is Dec. 10th!!!

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Quieting the Monsters at Night / Dave Sevick

We all remember the line from Clement Moore's famous Christmas poem, "Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse." And while that line applies to so many homes around the world not only on Christmas Eve but on any other night during the year, it's not always the case in the cottages at Tennysen Center for Children (TCC). So many of the kids in our residential treatment program come from such unimaginable environments that, once the children are removed from those homes, they often experience nightmares and many sleepless nights, particularly upon first arriving at Tennysen Center.

Our youth treatment counselors are among the most dedicated of professionals. On a daily basis, they not only witness the trauma of a child's past coming to the surface, but they also know how to help the child work through that trauma in order to get them back on track. It's not an easy task, however, since each child is different and not every child is



With the help of an overnight Youth Treatment Counselor, a child talks through the bad dreams that often awaken him during the night.

ready to reveal the pain of their past on the same schedule. Some of the children have locked away the memories of their past in such a way that it may take months for those memories to be revealed. Others are able to deal with their pain almost immediately. With some children, not surprisingly, that pain only comes to the surface at

night. The kids living in the cottages at TCC require around-the-clock care and helping a traumatized child through the night can be a bit of a challenge. Consequently, being an overnight cottage youth treatment counselor (NYTC) requires a special commitment. Not only

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Operation Santa Brings the Magic to Life

The holiday season is always a special time of year at Tennysen Center for Children (TCC), particularly because so many of the kids in our care have rarely before experienced the joys, warmth and traditions most of us associate with this time of year. Additionally, so many of the families served through our Community-based services division struggle simply to get by on a daily basis.

TCC's Operation Santa program has long been instrumental in

providing the kind of holiday season these kids and families would otherwise never be able to experience. In existence for over 35 years, Operation Santa first began as a simple toy drive for the kids in our residential treatment program. It provided those kids with the experience of waking up on Christmas morning with a gift or two from Santa with their name on it. From the beginning, the program was not only a huge success thanks to our donors, it also presented the children with positive and long-

lasting memories of the holiday season, an experience that was a critical part of their therapeutic protocol.

Over the next few years, Operation Santa expanded to include toy and gift drives for the kids served in our day treatment and education program and, within the last decade, it expanded even more to acquire much-needed items for our programs, cottages and

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“

When I see what a child can become, after growing up among uncertainty, turmoil and insurmountable challenges, when simply given some help and an opportunity, I know our future is bright.

”

—Rod Witte

Visitor Staff

Bob Cooper

Chief Development Officer

Dave Sevick

Marketing Director/Editor

A Message from the President/CEO

Wow...110 Years!!! / Rod Witte

On June 6, 2014 Tennyson Center for Children will celebrate 110 years of helping children! Any organization that makes it over 100 years is rare, and it is more rare for a non-profit agency to do so. Throughout 2014 we will be celebrating, remembering and digging out archives as we recognize not just the thousands of children who have passed through our doors, but the thousands of staff and tens of thousands of supporters who have kept the dream alive. That dream of Mary and John Warren to provide a “home for children” is what created The Loveland Christian Orphanage Association and is now called Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home.

One can only imagine that if the Warrens could see what their dream grew into 110 years later, they would be pleased. Originally in Loveland, Colorado and members of Loveland Christian Church, they recognized a need and felt a calling to begin to serve that need – helping children. After relocating to Denver, they purchased and built on the current day site at 29th and Tennyson in 1910. Much has changed, but much has stayed the same. The buildings on our property have changed, but the location in Northwest Denver stayed the same. The neighborhood grew up and changed from farmland into homes, but the passion of the staff and supporters to give kids the chance they deserve has stayed the same. The focus of providing a place for kids to live and grow up changed to a place where kids can find hope and go live as a family. The ability to be safe and to be kids has remained the same.

I mentioned in the last issue of The Visitor that I am only the 7th chief executive in the history of Tennyson Center for Children.

Such consistent leadership demonstrates the strength of the mission and the resolve of those involved. But there is something more than just the leadership driving the mission of this place. There is a spirit working here. There is a spirit among the staff, a spirit among the volunteers, a spirit among the supporters, and a spirit among the kids. It is a spirit that recognizes right from wrong, love from hate and hope from hopelessness. It is a spirit that has been here, driving the passion to help children, for 11 decades.

Through the years the names continue to change, but the faces of the children who have come through here have all been familiar. The frowns, the tears, the fear and the anger on the faces that enter here for the first time gradually begins to soften as smiles, acceptance, trust and love flow back into their eyes. There is a saying that “the eyes are the windows to the soul.”

Many times when a child arrives here the challenges they have endured have pulled shades down in those eyes. Over time, with a lot of work by our very amazing staff, those shades are gradually raised and the light of the child behind those eyes begins to shine out.

There is another saying that “the children are the future of the world.” Some say that the future is clouded. There is so much uncertainty, so much turmoil, seemingly insurmountable challenges and so much violence. When I see what a child can become, after growing up among uncertainty, turmoil and insurmountable challenges, when simply given some help and an opportunity, I know our future is bright. Celebrate with me 110 years of “Changing Lives and Giving Hope to Children”, and know that the next child that walks through our doors steps into a dream that began in 1904!

What our kids are saying...

Tennyson elementary school teacher John Rubano recently asked the kids in his class, “Tennyson Center is going to be 110 years old next year. What to you think life was like 110 years ago?” Below are some of their responses:

“I think life was a lot different back then. They didn’t have computers or anything like that and I don’t think they even had cars, either. They rode horses and cows and stuff like that.” —Michael, age 7.

“My grandma told me that way back then, people didn’t even have bathrooms inside their houses. They had to go outside at night when it was cold or raining or thundering. I’d hate that!!!” —Nick, age 8.

“I don’t think there were dinosaurs or anything like that 110 years ago. I think that was more like 500 years ago.” —Bailey, age 7.

“I’m pretty sure TV wasn’t invented until, like, 20 years ago so I know they didn’t watch shows or anything like that. I guess they just sat around and told stories and stuff.” —Emily, age 8.

“110 is a LOT! I don’t even know if I can count that high!” —Jacob, age 6.

“I don’t think grown-ups hurt kids back then.” —Becca, age 7.

Give Where you Live: Colorado Gives Day/ Dave Sevick

The countdown is on for one of the most important days in the Colorado non-profit community. Colorado Gives Day, the annual 24-hour charitable giving marathon, will take place on Tuesday, December 10. Presented by Community First Foundation and in partnership with FirstBank, this unique opportunity allows roughly 400 charitable organizations to benefit from the support of thousands of online donors who have been encouraged to give to the charity of their choice.

In addition to fundraising, Colorado Gives Day raises awareness of the state's nonprofit sector and educates communities on the benefits of online giving. For the past four years, Tennyson Center has been among the top five charities in total philanthropic income raised from the event, which is important since the top charities receive additional bonus revenue courtesy of the FirstBank incentive fund. FirstBank will continue its role as corporate partner of Colorado Gives Day, committing \$600,000 to the 2013 campaign. FirstBank committed \$600,000 to Colorado Gives Day 2012, \$500,000 in 2011 and \$300,000 in 2010.

"Thanks to generous Coloradans and hardworking nonprofits, we've seen the impact of Colorado Gives Day build dramatically over the last three years in every way," said Marla J. Williams, president and CEO of Community First Foundation. "Not only the dollars raised, but the number of nonprofits and donors contributing to the success of the day has also grown tremendously. We look forward to continuing this momentum through Colorado Gives Day 2013."

"Since its launch in 2010, Colorado Gives Day has helped raise \$36 million and has



brought our state together to support this initiative," said John Ikkard, CEO of FirstBank Holding Company. "It has truly become a philanthropic staple in Colorado and we're proud to have contributed more than \$1.4 million to Colorado Gives Day since its inception. We look forward to Colorado Gives Day 2013 and anticipate it will be the most impactful yet."

What makes this day even more unique is that every dollar given will go to the donor's designated charity since credit card and processing fees will be covered by Community First Foundation, FirstBank and other sponsors to ensure 100 percent of Colorado Gives Day donations go directly to nonprofit organizations.

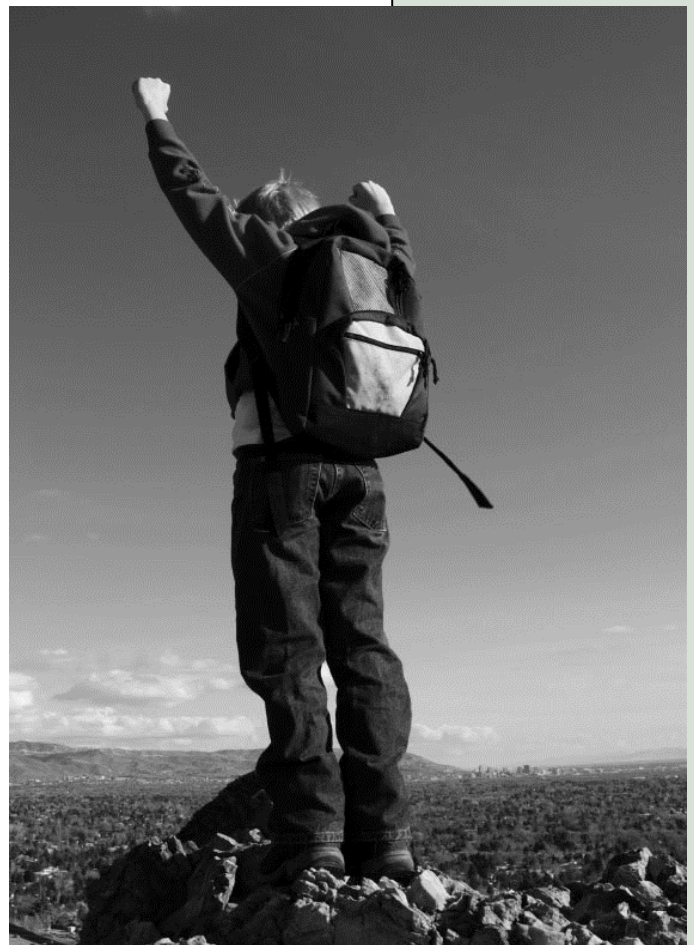
"We are excited to be a part of this amazing day," said Tennyson Center CEO, Rod Witte. "For us, it's all about the kids and the more money we raise, the more we can do for them. A significant portion of our annual donor revenue comes in through Colorado Gives Day. All of the participating charities including Tennyson Center receive a tremendous benefit through the additional incentive that is offered by FirstBank."

It's important to note that the website through which donors can make their gifts has changed domain names. The new site is now at www.coloradogives.org. Beginning at the stroke of midnight on Tuesday, December 10, donors will have a 24-hour

window in which to participate in Colorado Gives Day. The event raised \$8.7 million for Colorado nonprofits in 2010, \$12.8 million in 2011 and a record \$15.7 million in 2012.

Be sure and mark your calendar for this wonderful day and help keep the kids served by Tennyson Center for Children at the top of that list!

Below: Gifts from Colorado Gives Day support many of our secondary programs such as Challenge-by-Choice, in which children get to experience the wilderness of Colorado through hiking and camping, giving them a renewed sense of self-confidence and self-esteem.



Monsters (cont'd. from 1)

“
I tell them that
the best thing
about bad
dreams is that
they're not real.
”

—Jason Conn,
Overnight YTC

Right: Helping a child sleep through the night after awakening from disturbing dreams is just one of the many responsibilities of an overnight youth treatment counselor in the cottages at Tennyson Center.

are the hours difficult and demanding, those amazing professionals are the ones who have to deal with the nightmares and many of the children's subconscious demons that only reveal themselves during sleep.

Jason Conn has been an NYTC at Tennyson since 1995 with all but two years spent as an overnight YTC. “It's fairly common for most of the kids to have an occasional nightmare related to their past. At any given time and on any given night, one or two in the cottage will have difficulties either getting to sleep or staying asleep,” Conn said. “If they do have trouble sleeping due to bad dreams and are able to verbalize it, those dreams range from the expected such as monsters, to the more specific, like dreams about family members they miss or those who have hurt them. They often experience realistic dreams where they relive the traumatizing experiences from their past.”

Overnight YTCs will utilize a variety of therapeutic techniques to help the kids through their night-time trauma. Most of the children are receptive to a calming presence if they are anxious or frightened in the middle of the night. Conn says that simply trying to acknowledge their fears is a good first step,

followed by reassuring them that they are now in a safe place where no harm can come to them.

“I tell them that the best thing about bad dreams is that they're not real and, while frightening in their minds, the dreams can do no physical harm to them. Also, little things like a quick tuck-in-bed and a quiet but reassuring ‘good night’ do wonders to help ease their return to a restful sleep.”

With as many as 10 children in a cottage, the overnight cottage YTCs have their work cut out for them. Not only are they playing the role of guardian and night-watchman, they are required to play the additional role of pseudo-parent and human comforter.

One might wonder why someone such as Jason would maintain such a demanding work schedule for such a long time. To that, Conn responds, “I love what I do, so I wouldn't have it any other way. I'll admit that it takes its toll over time, being exposed to these kids' trauma, abuse and neglect, as all direct-care staff are. But I know in my heart that anything we can provide to get these kids back on track—no matter how small—is what matters most. I couldn't be more proud of the work I do. The

bottom line is that I'm making a difference in the life of not just one child, but in the lives of many children. How many people can say that about what they do for a living?”

When asked about a moment that stands out above all others over the course of his career at TCC, Jason shared this story. “I recall a 5 year-old boy in one of the cottages in which I was working at the time. He awoke one night crying and stood by his doorway. I asked him what was wrong but instead of answering me verbally, he simply walked up to me, put his hand out—still crying—and he jumped in my lap and said, ‘I miss my mom and dad.’ I did my best to let him know that he would be taken care of and that I understood he missed his parents. I also told grown-ups sometimes make ‘mistakes’ and that those mistakes his parents made weren't his fault. As he sat on my lap, still crying, I could see him slowly releasing the pain and I found the event incredibly touching—and it made me realize, as I need to do from time to time, that instances like that make me realize how lucky I am. I made a difference one night, no matter how simple it may have been, in the life of a troubled child. It made me realize that, as crazy as this job can be, it's so worthwhile.”

Conn added, “The idea that one client who leaves here may one day recall a calming, safe and supportive adult in their life who played a small role in allowing them to rest easy when they had nowhere else to go is almost mind-boggling. I truly believe that even the smallest moments—a tuck-in, a few minutes to listen and to validate a nightmare—can have an impression that will last a lifetime. That's what we, as youth treatment counselors, do. It's our job but, more importantly it's our passion. I've made a difference in the life of a very troubled child. Does it get any better than that?”



Operation Santa (cont'd. from 1)

Classrooms—items which are vital to the success of every child in our care.

Items on these wish lists include therapeutic tools, learning tools and items to make the cottages a more home-like environment for the children.

While the toy/gift wish lists for the children in both the residential and day treatment programs are still an integral part of Operation Santa, those lists are usually and not surprisingly adopted first, often within the first two weeks of the program's launch in early October, since many well-meaning donors prefer to shop for the children's gifts, knowing they've helped put a smile on a child's face during this special time of year. But with so many critically-needed items for the programs, classrooms and cottages on the wish lists, it's important for donors to realize the value of those items in regards to the healing and therapeutic protocol for the children. Items on those wish lists might otherwise never be acquired, without the help of donors who choose to purchase from those lists.

Most recently, in 2007, the "Adopt-a-Family" program was added. Hundreds of families, most served through our Community-Based Services division, have a difficult time simply making ends meet. The idea of a joyous holiday season is simply beyond the means of far too many families. The Adopt-a-Family program invites donors and supporters to help fulfill wish lists of families in need so that they might have an easier time this holiday season.

"The inaugural year for the Adopt-a-Family program was a humbling experience for me," said Operation Santa program manager, Tricia Muniz. "As the families were sharing their wish lists, I kind of expected to see things on their lists such as toys for the kids, maybe a new TV for



the family, things along those lines. But much to my surprise, many of these families were simply asking for the most basic items—things like diapers, formula, a lamp for the living room because, while they had electricity, the family had no light source for the room at night. I realized they were asking for help to simply survive, let alone have something resembling a decent Christmas."

Muniz went on to share some of her fondest memories of families whose lives have been enriched from donor support for the Operation Santa program.

"A few years ago, one of our donors who had adopted a particular family-in-need was delivering the items on their wish lists to Tennyson Center. Upon arrival, the family's case worker was telling him how much this would mean to the family, since they couldn't even afford a Christmas tree. It was still a couple of weeks before Christmas so later that day, the donor went out and purchased a

tree—complete with decorations and lights—and had it delivered to the family's home. The family called the next day and said it was a dream come true for them. That's really what this program is all about. It's about making dreams come true and making the magic of the season come alive for the children and families in our care."

When the wish lists for the children currently admitted at Tennyson Center have all been fulfilled, donors can still help make this year's Operation Santa program the best ever by making cash donations, by fulfilling entire wish lists or purchasing individual items from a particular wish list for either a family, a program, cottage or classroom.

To participate in this year's Operation Santa program, you can call Tricia Muniz at 720.855.3358. You can also make a cash donation to support the program on our website at www.childabuse.org. Operation Santa runs through January 3, 2014.

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It's about making dreams come true and making the magic of the season come alive for the children and families in our care.

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—Tricia Muniz

For more information on any of our events, call Sally at 720.855.3317 Or you can email her at sally.kittredge@tennysoncenter.org.



Above: Colorado's own Walker Williams will once again be the opening act at the 4th annual Mile High Country Q & Brew.

Q & Brew is Coming!!! / Sally Kittredge

Dust off your cowboy hat and polish your boots! It's almost time for the 4th annual Mile High Country Q & Brew, one of the biggest events of the year benefiting Tennyson Center for Children. This annual favorite, presented by Sprinkle Financial Consultants and the R.J. Clark Family Foundation, will take place Saturday, February 22 at Mile High Station in Denver. Returning sponsors for the event include PCL Construction, Lockton Companies, Noble Energy and BlueSky Restoration, to name a few.

This year's headliner is J.T. Hodges, one of the hottest new names in country music. His new single, "Hunt You Down," has already climbed the country charts. Hodges has worked with several well-known producers including Mark Wright, Don Cook, and Mark Collie, who collaborated for the first time to bring Hodges' name and talent to the public. He has also worked with top veterans like Rivers Rutherford and Vince Gill, who even adds harmony and a guitar solo to one key ballad. Fans are quickly discovering that Hodges is a seasoned soul of a country-rock classicist.



Country music star J.T. Hodges will be the headliner for the 4th annual Mile High Country Q & Brew in February.

For the fourth straight year, Colorado's own country singer, Walker Williams, will open the show. He has been named one of the top three male vocalists by a *Denver Post* readers' poll, has won a *Battle Of The Bands* contest, and continues to open for some of the top artists in the country including, Chris LeDoux, Tracy Lawrence, Wade Hayes, Lonestar and Bryan White. Guests at the Q & Brew will enjoy an open bar, dinner courtesy of Brothers BBQ, live music from

Williams and Hodges, dancing as well as a live and silent auction. And, of course, the mechanical bull—a favorite from past Q & Brews, will return to this year's event for guests to take a ride and see how long they last. Mark your calendars and get ready for this fun, boot-scootin' event! For more information, contact Tera Prim at 720.855.3316.

What's been happening around the TCC Campus...



The past several months have been rather productive around the campus of Tennyson Center for Children, thanks to the efforts of numerous mission groups, individual and corporate volunteers. Projects have ranged from landscaping improvements to barbecues and mentoring with the kids, as well as everything in between.

Our friends from organizations and companies such as **DaVita**, **Nobel Energy**, **Concerts for Kids** and **Anadarko** along with so many others, have spent countless hours on campus during the work week as well as

on weekends putting forth numerous hours of their time to help out with all sorts of labors of love. The photo on the left shows workers from Anadarko single-handedly building a series of approach-steps to one of the playgrounds on campus. The steps were made out of 350-lb. slabs of flagstone, which were carried and installed by five workers over the course an afternoon.

We are grateful for the dedication of all of our volunteers who have worked so tirelessly on behalf of the kids in our care. Thank you!!!

Child Care Tax Credit; It's Not Complicated / Bob Cooper

It is back! For the first time in 3 years the state of Colorado's fiscal situation is healthy enough in 2013 for the Child Care Tax Credit to be available to individuals who make qualifying donations. Some of Tennyson's programs for children qualify for this credit and it has, in some instances, provided an opportunity for the children's supporters to make contributions larger than they would otherwise been able to make without the credit. This is a "tax credit" not a "tax deduction." This means that up to 50% of a qualifying gift can be applied to reduce your Colorado income tax liability.

Additionally, a portion of qualifying gifts from 2011 and 2012 can also be carried forward

and applied as credit when filing 2013 state income tax returns. Many of you have asked us to restrict your gifts to the children to those programs that qualify for the credit. We have done so and will notify you in your year-end contributions statement that includes the form you will need to file your Colorado return. These statements will be sent out in January 2014. We also sent these forms with 2011 and 2012 giving information.

In the beginning I titled this as "It's Not Complicated," that may have been a bit of a stretch, as there are some calculations that have to be made. Tax laws and regulations change frequently, and their application can vary widely based on the specific facts

and circumstances involved.

Consult with your own professional tax advisor concerning specific circumstances.

Tennyson Center for Children does not claim any responsibility for the accuracy or adequacy of any positions taken by you in your tax returns. Thank you legal counsel!

If you would like for us to restrict your future gifts to this credit, please contact me by email at bob.cooper@tennysoncenter.org or call me at 720.855.3320 and we can make that happen. Thanks so much for making the children we serve a priority in your life! We couldn't do what we do without you.

Have you considered adding the children served by Tennyson Center in your estate plans? For more info, and to receive a free copy of the book, Provide & Protect, call Dave Killen at 720.855.3324.

Local Music Duo Helps Kids Through Music and Theater

Harnessing the healing powers of the arts, local musicians Stephanie Bettman and Luke Halpin are joining with the Tennyson Center for Children (TCC) to help hurting children get in touch with their emotions through music and theater.

Bettman & Halpin, along with TCC Chaplain, Angela Sanders, are teaching a four-week workshop for TCC, the Rocky Mountain region's leading treatment center and K-12 school for abused, neglected and crisis-affected children.

More than a year ago, TCC board member Jim Bradburn heard Bettman & Halpin's Folk/Americana music and recognized the artists' ability to combine the light with the dark in a way that uplifts people's spirits. He invited them to write a song about child abuse and perform the song for the TCC children. As a result, Bettman & Halpin dug deep into the children's fearful yet hopeful circumstances and channeled those emotions into an original song written for Tennyson.



"Diamond" captures healing and joy while shining a light on what everyone has in common rather than how we're different. The duo plans to use the song to raise awareness and charitable funds for the organization.

The workshops were born after about a year of getting positive responses from the children in a small group setting. The curriculum is designed to help the kids tap into their emotions by participating in artistic activities ranging from dancing to

music of all kinds to creating theatrical characters or writing songs. The exercises help the children connect to their bodies and their emotions, an important lesson after experiencing the numbing sensation of abuse or neglect.

"Our program is all about strengthening emotional intelligence," said Bettman. "These kids have been through a lot of trauma and don't always know how to manage their emotions in a healthy way."

Left: Tennyson Center Chaplain, Angela Sanders, with Stephanie Bettman and Luke Halpin during one of the workshops for the kids in TCC's residential treatment program.



2950 Tennyson Street | Denver, CO 80212-3029

Fall/Winter 2013



www.childabuse.org

Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home

Tennyson Center works with children, youth, and their families to overcome a variety of life crises, including abuse and neglect.

Tennyson Center is a community of people dedicated to serving children and youth and strengthening families. As professionals and concerned citizens we strive to provide competent and caring treatment, education, and advocacy services that are community-based, family-focused, and child-centered.

The agency provides services to children and families regardless of religion, creed, age, race, color, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender expression, disability status, or military status.

Colorado Combined Campaign (CCC): #0955

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC): #38586