



Work and Welfare Subcommittee Hearing on Modernizing Child Welfare to Protect Vulnerable Children - August 28, 2023

Rep. Greg Stuebe, [R-FL] waved on to the Work and Welfare Subcommittee Hearing on Modernizing Child Welfare to Protect Vulnerable Children on September 28, 2023. He thanked the committee chairman for allowing him an opportunity to speak in support of H.R. 3852 – Create Accountable Respectful Environments for Children Act.

Rep. Stuebe is one of the thirteen Florida cosponsors that signed onto the Act filed by Dr. Dunn [R-FL] on June 6, 2023.

Addressing the committee, Rep. Stuebe stated that the Act addresses the shortage of foster home options for children by allowing cottage family homes to be eligible for federal funds that other programs already have access to receive.

He said: “This bill is simple and straightforward and direct. The bill simply adds Cottage family homes to the options of federally supported housing for foster children.

Rep. Stuebe was forthright in stating: “Make no mistake, our country is facing a foster care crisis. Mr. Chairman, I’d like to enter into the record a recent news article entitled ‘Inside America’s critical shortage of foster homes’ which reads there’s a critical shortage of foster homes. More than half of all states saw significant decline in licensed foster homes last year. Some states saw cuts as high as 61% (Without objection).

<https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2023/07/20/inside-americas-critical-shortage-of-foster-care-homes>

He added: “I’d also like to enter into the record an NPR article titled ‘Kids Housed in Casino Hotels. It’s a workaround as U.S. sees decline in foster homes.’

(Without Objection)

He added: “Casino hotel rooms is not really the best options for our children.” The article can be found at:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/06/14/1181975688/foster-kids-in-casino-hotels-decline-in-foster-homes>



Rep. Greg Steube

Rep. Steube stated: “Cottage family homes offer a family-like living environment in a single family residence with no more than two children per bedroom unless it is in the children’s best interest. For example, in the case of keeping biological sibling groups together.

“The cottage parent can supervise and nurture around the clock creating a healthier stable environment.” He indicated that critics of the bill allege that cottage homes are not safe. He was very clear: “Make no mistake, the safety, health and general well-being of children is critically important”.

He added: “My bill stipulates requiring the implementation of a trauma-informed approach to care, prohibiting the use of seclusion, mechanical or chemical restraints, requiring providers to have a system in place for children to alert a staff person if they have concerns or feel they have been unfairly denied their rights, requiring a continuous quality improvement methodology that regularly solicits information from children concerning their perceptions of the quality of care.”

He addedHe added that his family is in law enforcement. His brother is a deputy and his father is a former sheriff. Consequently, he has had the opportunity to see first-hand the impact that Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches cottage family homes has on children. The kids in care tend to be a little older (not young children). They include youth experiencing difficulty in middle school and high school and it is a great environment. He stated: “It lowers recidivism rates and has great outcomes and to not include them in federal funding, I think is a mistake and an opportunity to close this gap on the 61% of the need in foster homes.

“The time is now to solve this crisis. I look forward to working with the subcommittee to pass this bill and protect our children...”

[View Welfare and Work Sub-Committee Hearing on Modernizing Child Welfare to Protect Vulnerable Children: <https://gop-waysandmeans.house.gov/event/work-welfare-subcommittee-hearing-on-modernizing-child-welfare-to-protect-vulnerable-children/>]

CORE Members Scheduled to Visit Capitol Hill October 17-18, 2023

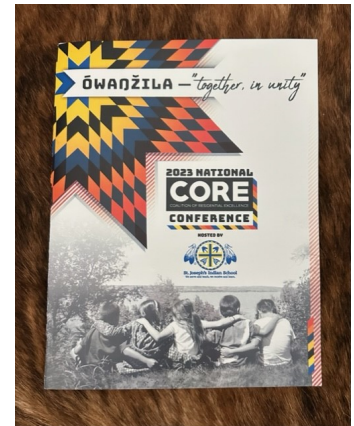
The meeting is identified as “Children’s Homes and Residential Schools – Information Sharing”. Plans are in place to meet as a group at 9:00 a.m. on October 17th in the Rayburn Foyer - located on the first floor Rayburn House Office Building - 45 Independence Ave SW - Washington, DC.

The time we spend on Capitol Hill with legislators and their staff is important. H.R. 3852 is aimed at increasing capacity, keeping sibling groups together, and providing children a normalized home and community environment. It requires that children be provided opportunities for age-appropriate normalized extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities and the same freedoms afforded peers living with their own families.

Please make plans to attend.

Expression Of Thanks

Words cannot adequately express our level of gratitude to St. Joseph's Indian School for hosting the 2023 CORE National Conference. Mike Tyrell, President of St. Joseph's and Julie Soulek, Corporate Services - Special Project (and CORE board member), figuratively pulled out all the stops to make the conference a huge success and the travel of CORE members to South Dakota a treasured memory.



The invitation for CORE members to observe the 47th Annual Pow Wow provided insight into the commitment St. Joseph's devotes to celebrating the cultural heritage and traditions of those they serve. Perhaps nothing captures the Native American Spirit like a pow wow.

Actually, from St. Joseph's perspective, everyone in attendance was a participant. I found myself moving my feet as I sat in the stands.

The background sounds of drums and the visual beauty of dancers in colorful regalia gracefully moving around the circle was captivating. Many of the dancers sat in the stands with family members until it was their turn to participate. It was clear through observation that St. Joseph's is fulfilling their commitment to serve both children and families while celebrating the rich heritage and traditions of the Lakota people.

For the fifty participants privileged to join the chartered bus tour of the Badlands, Mount Rushmore, and the Crazy Horse Memorial, the day could not have gone better and there was a level of excitement for everyone on the tour. Perhaps nothing draws people closer together than a 17 hour bus tour. There were plentiful stops and in the process of getting on and off the bus, CORE members had unprecedented opportunities to visit. Several were accompanied by their spouses.

From a personal perspective, it was my sense that this conference brought our membership together in ways not previously experienced. Friendships were strengthened from the time and activities we shared together.

The 2023 CORE Annual Conference was nothing short of amazing. Every topic and every presenter shared information that was both new and refreshing. Yet, in reality that is the way best practice always works. It is always laced with new information and fresh ideas that can strengthen the foundation of knowledge that we build upon.

I suspect everyone that participated in the 2023 CORE National Conference left feeling better equipped to serve children and families from hard places. Two are better than one; they have a good return for their labor.

2023 Catherine Hershey Awards

The Catherine Hershey Awards are always a highlight of the CORE National Conference. This year was no exception. All of the nominees were exceptional. Tom Robinson, Milton Hershey School, served as this year's Emcee. He stated that in a couple of categories, the selection committee chose to name two winners rather than one because both individuals were deserving of the award.

I am identifying the winners of the awards along with the supporting information provided for the selection committee's review.

2023 Catherine Hershey Award for Administrator of the Year

Maria Knapp – Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches

Nominated by Bill Frye, President – Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches

When I think of the positive characteristics of a leader/Administrator, I think of Mrs. Maria Knapp. Character traits like compassion, drive, determination, trustworthiness, diligence, humility, and devotion immediately come to mind. Along with being a leader, Mrs. Knapp is also a visionary, teacher, and constant advocate for children across Florida and our nation.

Mrs. Knapp currently serves in the role of Executive Vice President and oversees all our programs including our residential campuses, school, camping services and family engagement center. She also oversees donor relations and legislation. She is a TBRI practitioner and has guided the Youth Ranches into becoming a fully engaged TBRI community.

Over the years, she has encouraged her employees to seek out further educational opportunities, help them advance into new positions, advocated to our board for the on-campus school to become fully privatized and accredited and extend our educational programs to children within our surrounding communities.

Seeing a need for additional opportunities for our female students, Mrs. Knapp reached out to friends in various businesses and encouraged them to get involved with our girls. Mrs. Knapp used her own personal funds to pay for various excursions which included art classes, professional hair and makeup classes, trips to the spa and more. Recently two of our young ladies in a discussion with me spoke very highly of Mrs. Knapp. They stated that Mrs. Knapp really cares and that while her expectations are high, she helps them succeed and that they trust her completely. One of the young ladies Savannah had recently achieved one of the most prestigious awards on the Boys Ranch campus because of her hard work and perseverance. Much of that can be contributed to the example Mrs. Knapp puts forth daily. Our young men also highly respect Mrs. Knapp and they often seek out her advice on educational and work opportunities. It can be easily stated that Mrs. Knapp is viewed by our students as a positive and caring individual who can be trusted to be honest and forthright in all situations. Most importantly she is respected by both our youth and staff.

Mrs. Knapp is also a fearless advocate on behalf of residential care programs. She is well known in Washington by our Florida Congressional delegation and because of her efforts and perseverance we now have a national bill on the house side. H.R. 3852

– Creating Accountable Respectful Environments for Childre Act (CARE ACT) was largely sponsored and co-sponsored because of her work with various legislative staff within our Florida delegation. While it has been a team effort, Mrs. Knapp is recognized for getting Congressman Neal Dunn to sponsor the bill and Congressman Greg Stuebe to co-sponsor. This was a major accomplishment for CORE.

Finally, it is because of Mrs. Knapps abilities that I as President recommended her to succeed me when I retire in 2025. This recommendation was accepted by our Board of Directors and Mrs. Knapp is set to become President/CEO on January 15, 2025.

She is extremely deserving of this award as well as being recognized for all that she has contributed to our children, our communities and to our members of CORE.

Michelle Maikoetter – Cal Farley’s Boys Ranch

Nominated by Adrian Jackson

I am writing to wholeheartedly nominate or esteemed leader, Michell Maikoetter, for the prestigious Catherine Hershey Administrator of the Year award. Michelle’s exceptional dedication to driving positive change within our program has been short of remarkable. Her unwavering commitment and resilience in the face of challenges have truly set her apart.

Michelle’s impact on our organization has been profound throughout her impressive 15-year tenure with the CFBR family. As the Chief Program Officer, she has taken on significant responsibilities overseeing various key areas, including Homelife, Youth Services (case management), Training and Certification, and Alumni Services, as well as Community Relations.

One of Michelle’s crowning achievements has been her pioneering role in introducing Trauma Informed movement at CFBR. She spearheaded the organization’s engagement with renowned experts in the field, such as Dr. Bruce Perry, and currently holds the esteemed position of Fellow in the Child Trauma Academy. In addition, Michelle fostered invaluable relationships with TRBI founders, Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross. These partners have significantly strengthened CFBR’s ability to implement trauma informed care techniques effectively, not only within our organization, but also as a resource for other institutions seeking to make a positive impact.

Michelle’s remarkable efforts often occur behind the scenes, and it is not uncommon for individuals in her position to be overlooked when it comes to awards. However, I am confident in saying that there is no individual more deserving of this nomination than my supervisor and mentor, Michelle Maikoetter. Her guidance, leadership, and innovative approaches have not only elevated our organization but have also served as an inspiration to everyone fortunate enough to work alongside her.

In closing, I wholeheartedly recommend Michelle Maikoetter for the Catherine Hershey Administrator of the Year Award. Her transformative contribution, dedication, and lasting impact make her an exceptional choice for this honor. Thank you for considering her nomination.

2023 Catherine Hershey Award for Educator of the Year

Tiera Reinhert – Milton Hershey School

Nominated by Danielle Peirson, Assistant Principal

I am thrilled to nominate Tiera Reinert for the esteemed Catherine Hershey Award Educator of the Year. Tiera's unwavering dedication to her students' growth, her exceptional leadership, and her profound engagement with the Milton Hershey School community make her an exemplary candidate for this prestigious recognition.

Tiera's role as a 5th grade math teacher goes far beyond the classroom. She has seamlessly integrated Milton Hershey School's sacred values—positive spirit, mutual respect, integrity, and commitment to mission—into her teaching philosophy. Her classroom is a nurturing environment where these values flourish, creating an atmosphere that encourages both academic excellence and personal development.

Tiera embodies the essence of community engagement and professional leadership. Her tireless efforts outside of the classroom are a testament to her commitment to her students' holistic well-being. Whether she's volunteering her time to tutor students in need, attending school events to offer unwavering support, or coaching cheerleaders, Tiera showcases her dedication to the students' growth beyond academics.

As an educator, Tiera stands as a beacon of high-quality teaching. Her innovation, enthusiasm, and high expectations inspire her students to rise above their potential. Tiera's commitment to raising the bar in her classroom sets an example for her peers and elevates the standard of education at Milton Hershey School.

Tiera's impact reverberates through her students' lives and within the larger community. Her ability to cultivate a supportive and inclusive environment empowers her students to not only excel academically but also to thrive as individuals. She exemplifies the essence of an educator who understands the pivotal role she plays in shaping young minds and future leaders.

Tiera Reinert's potential for even greater contributions to the healthy development of children is boundless. Her commitment to her students' growth, her embodiment of Milton Hershey School's values, and her dedication to fostering a strong sense of community truly set her apart.

In recognition of her outstanding teaching quality, professional leadership, and remarkable engagement with families and the community, I wholeheartedly endorse Tiera Reinert for the Catherine Hershey Award Educator of the Year. Her impact echoes the very essence of the award's purpose—to honor and reward educators who are catalysts for positive change in the lives of children.

Claire Nehring – St. Joseph’s Indian School

Nominated by Sharmel Olsen, Principal

Claire Nehring grew up in a house full of books. Today, she infuses every inch of the library she stewards at St. Joseph’s Indian School with her imaginative spirit. She uses her sky’s-the-limit imagination to engage students, foster a love of reading and work across classrooms to support other teachers with their lessons.

Claire worked on several transformations when she first took charge of the library. One that caught on quickly with sometimes fidgety students was reading buddies, large stuffed animals to cuddle while drifting into the world between book covers. Buddies included an alligator, bee, lion, elephant, shark and more.

However, when COVID-19 struck, the buddies had to go into quarantine in the library closets. Ever imaginative, Claire didn’t want to lose her progress with the students and reading with the buddies. So she switched it up a bit.

Bruce, the shark, began writing notes to individual students, and they, in turn, wrote him back: Dear Bruce, thank you for the card. Are you bored in the cupboard? Are there other animals with you? Love, Jason - Dear Jason, I am not too bored in the cupboard. I play cards with the other animals sometimes. You have to watch the alligator, though. I think he cheats.

Don’t tell him I said that. He’ll cry. Love, Bruce

When quarantine ended, Bruce began helping Claire with lesson plans, such as Internet Safety. In ocean terminology, he teaches about “clickbait” and “phishing links.” Bruce is one of many ways Claire taps her remarkable imagination to make learning fun.

Tea parties, sushi days, “I Have a Dream” essays, and more are other examples of Claire’s ingenuity applied to unlock the power of young minds. Her students even write and publish their own books, which Claire dutifully catalogs and has on the shelves for other students to read.

As a faculty member, Claire is valued for her willingness to support other staff in any capacity and collaborate for the greater good. Partnering with the computer science teacher for a lesson on coding, Claire utilized the star quilt, a favorite of Native Americans, and other quilt blocks as examples of patterns with hidden meanings used for sending coded messages.

For a STEM lesson on programming Sphero robots, Claire had her library students create a maze for the Spheros to run while uncovering a story along the way. And, when it is time for the eighth-grade history presentations, Claire is ready, sourcing students on their topics and ensuring they have whatever they need to succeed.

Claire is no less generous off-the-clock when sharing her gifts to open new worlds for the students. She sews, knits and weaves with interested students. During the summer months, Claire applies her knowledge and love of books working four out of six runs around the state on the school’s bookmobile.

She helps to stock and organize the shelves and brings the same sensitivity she has in the classroom to assisting visitors to pick out books that match their reading level and interests.

Claire, who has a Master's in Counseling, wasn't always a librarian, though there was a brief stint working in a library as a college student. In fact, when she was first drawn to work at St. Joe's in 2008, she was a houseparent.

But her lifetime love affair with books ended that career when the librarian position came open in 2018; she applied and was accepted.

Claire took the opportunity seriously, immediately pursuing certification as an elementary and secondary school librarian, qualifying her as a teacher of library skills. Simultaneously, she updated the library's out-of-date system, migrating to an automated catalog system and barcoding, weeding and organizing all of the books.

Catherine Hershey Award for Student of the Year

Mariah Quigley – St Joseph's Indian School

Nominated

by Travis Hallock

What artists and architects, designers and decorators know through principled study, Mariah Quigley knows as a student of life: There is elegance in simplicity. This 2023 graduate of St. Joseph's Indian School's High School Program keeps it simple in a world that hasn't always come easy, and in doing so, she has a unique elegance that touches everyone around her.

Mariah first arrived at St. Joe's in 2010 for the first grade. She struggled academically and had to repeat the grade. She seems to have come to an early acceptance that schoolwork would be a struggle, but steadiness and a pleasant outlook were her best tools.

There isn't a staff person who has worked with her who didn't find her easy-going and diligent despite setbacks that might have made a saint swear. What would later on manifest as a strong work ethic emerged early. Learning hadn't become much easier for Mariah.

During her fourth-grade year, one of the school's special education teachers and National Honor Society coach Robin Helton invited Mariah and a few other students to begin their school days early. "It was an opportunity to boost morale and answer any questions they had from the day before to get ahead of the game," explains Helton. Some computerized learning games were also involved to sweeten the offering and tantalize participants.

Mariah would bound up the steps to the classroom early, bright smile and ready disposition, something you might not expect from anyone asked to put in extra time. She began to make small but noticeable gains.

Julie Lepkowski became Mariah's mentor when she was in the second grade. At two years older than her classmates, Mariah was always bigger than them, but despite her struggles, she never became the object of bullying. "She was a quiet leader who

smiled and responded naturally to any situation,” notes Lepkowski. She adds, “She was not a shrinking violet, though.”

Lepkowski says that, albeit gently, Mariah doesn’t stand for things she disapproves of and doesn’t go with the crowd or cave into temptations. She knows who she is and will not give in to pressure. “She won’t even eat Flaming Hot Cheetos.”

When friends made bad choices, Mariah did not, and tried hard to help them stay on the right path. In 13 years, she never had an incident that resulted in a restriction of privileges,

As a junior, after years of listening to how other students disliked doing dishes, Mariah volunteered to do the dishes every night. She knew how the negativity brought the mood down in the home, and said she had learned to enjoy this simple task. The warm soapy water was calming, and it was a nice time to talk with houseparents as they dried and put away the dishes.

The academic struggles honed her work ethic, and she became a valued employee during her last years in high school at the local Dairy Queen. Steady and pleasant, she was appreciated by patrons, co-workers and supervisors alike.

Rituals nourish us by tapping into the power of healing and connection in everyday practices like eating together. Lepkowski told about a weekly mentoring ritual that she, Mariah and her brother, Richard, enjoyed. “We’d join up before the school bus headed up the hill to Chamberlain High School and go to McDonald’s for coffee and breakfast.

It was always an easy-going time when we experienced appreciation for one another. We’ll miss that,” she adds. “Mariah finds such goodness in simplicity,” Lepkowski observes. “Things like playing cards and board games at my house or really reveling in her new kitten, Socks.”

That joy in the simple things is at the heart of who Mariah is. Until the end of senior year, Mariah hadn’t expressed plans for further education. Transition Specialist Krista Lepkowski was somewhat taken aback when that tune changed. Mariah said she wanted to attend Mitchell Technical College and pursue an IT degree.

Then, with the same easy-going approach that she brings to all things, she won the Dakota Indian Foundation Nyal Brings Scholarship awarded for evidence of successful academic progress. Mariah is presently moved into an apartment and awaiting the start of classes – same appreciation for simplicity and steady as she goes.

Catherine Hershey Award for Houseparent(s) of the Year

Stephan and Robbie Chapman – St. Joseph’s Indian School
by Deanna Handel

Nominated

When Stephan and Robbie Chatman arrived to become new houseparents in St. Joseph Indian School’s 1- 3 Residential Program five years ago, they brought their Louisiana “lessez les bon temps rouler”* vibe and so much more. Any circumstance with the Chapmans becomes a good time because of their ability to make it so.

Their Louisiana-style approach brings a sense of community to their work with students and other staff. When they plan an activity or community service project for their home, without a doubt, other homes and staff will be invited to participate. The powerful outcome of these arrangements is increased student connections with other supportive staff members.

A good level of staff cohesiveness can be hard to strike in the residential setting, where gatherings occasionally devolve into vent sessions about struggles, student issues and home management, but not so when the Chatmans are in the mix.

Not only do other houseparents on their team enjoy a good rapport with the couple, but also, the “good times” approach lifts the spirits of the overall residential group. Always brimming with Louisiana-bred hospitality, the Chatmans host an annual Thanksgiving event for other houseparents and include support staff and teachers in the celebration. When many of those in the houseparenting role are from out-of-state, such a feast makes for an especially good time.

In the home, they strike a balance of nurturing and structure. The couple ensures each student has regular one-on-one time with one of them. They understand that connection is “king” when developing a positive home environment and extend this to include the parents and guardians who are part of their student’s lives.

Residential Coordinator Sean Johnson regularly receives comments from guardians that they feel welcome and appreciate the maturity and positive habits their children develop under the Chatman’s care.

The couple widened their circle of care when they had their dachshund, Penny, go through special training to be part of the school’s Houseparents and Pets in Homes Program. Penny has become essential, often providing TLC to a struggling student. In general, Penny contributes to the day-to-day environment with her calm demeanor.

Like Penny, the “bon temps” vibe exists because the Chatmans don’t get riled. “Oh, they have buttons,” says 1-6 Residential Director Deanna Handel. “But they aren’t going to show it when they are pushed. They keep things running smoothly.”

And what happens when times aren’t so good? The Chatmans find ways to step in with goodness that buoys spirits and fills the gaps. One student had a grandfather who was ill and in long-term hospital care. The Chatmans took the child for weekly visits to assure him that his grandfather was in good care and still a part of his life.

In another example, when twins in their home had to be hospitalized, the Chatmans found a way to be present until the parents could arrive. The Chatmans fill in throughout campus when needed, teaching in the school or taking other shifts.

Stephan even subs for Student Coordinator and all-around kid whisperer Jennie Schilling – a role few would have the savvy and confidence to fill. The couple has participated in the school’s bookmobile outreach, traveling the state during summer to distribute reading material in students’ home communities.

Other community volunteerism includes active membership in their church community and stepping up neighborly to mow lawns and help with chores for elderly neighbors. *Lessez le bon temps rouler!* Let the good times roll.

Steven Wright – Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches

Nominated by Maria Knapp

Mr. Steven Wight is a dedicated member of the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches. He started his time at with the Youth Ranches as a Family Social Worker in 1998 and continued on to be Unit Director and Program Director. Now, the students in the Scholarship House on the Youth Villa have the opportunity to learn and grow with the help of Steven. While his official title is Residential Life Coach, he performs the duties of a House Parent with the same dedication he has shown throughout his time serving in the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches.

Steven is friend, mentor, guide, confidant, and support for the students living in the Scholarship House. He spends countless hours with our students to ensure that they are cared for and capable of success. He works individually with students to help them grow and learn from mistakes they have made. He allows students their freedom, as well as holds them accountable for the responsibilities they have inside and outside the Scholarship Program. Steven provides a safe environment where students can feel comfortable being true to themselves and free to share their experiences and interests with others.

In Steven's time as Residential Life Coach, he has built lasting relationships with students. Students who have left the Scholarship House continue to contact Steven to share in their triumphs and downfalls and to seek advice and knowledge from their mentor. Steven strives to build community and respect among his students lasts long after they have moved on.

Steven not only takes knowledge from his past working with kids for many years, but he is also open to hearing suggestions and allowing others to help him in difficult situations. He learns from his mistakes and chooses to be better than he was before. The work that Steven has done creates a lasting impression on the students and colleagues he works with. It is truly inspiring to watch him work.

Catherine Hershey Award for Alumnus of the Year

David Rainey – The Baptist Children's Village

Sean Milner, Executive Director

Nominated by

I remember the day five year old David Rainey moved into my cottage, Gaddis Cottage, at The Baptist Children's Village (BCV). Immediately, we were friends. I also remember the day David went "home for good" three years later. David's "home for good" only lasted till he was 13 years old. For his safety, the state of Mississippi had to remove him for his home. I remember the day he came back to the BCV. Immediately, we were friends.

It was apparent that David would not graduate from high school, prompting the BCV to start looking for alternatives to a high school diploma. But David became a Christian and worked hard to turn his life around. He started passing. Conversations regarding education alternatives ceased.

I remember walking in downtown New Albany when David told me “. . . that’s the prettiest girl I’ve ever met. I’m going to marry that girl.” I told him “David, that girl’s daddy owns that bank right there, you better let that girl alone.” Her name was Martha. She and David were about to start the 10th grade. David and Martha went on to graduate as Mr. & Mrs. W. P. Daniel High School and have now been married for 33 years.

David’s appreciation for the BCV is matched only by his commitment to us. David has given me permission to share his story as I speak to the many different audiences around the state. As you can imagine, there is far more to David’s story than is shared here, and he has knowingly given me complete permission to share it. In fact, he has told me “Sean, you tell whatever you need to tell about me if it will help the Village.” David has and remains willing to travel throughout the state and share his story on behalf of the BCV. He has never refused me when I have asked him to speak.

Sometimes I call at the last minute, and he drops whatever he is doing to speak on our behalf.

David is also committed to the financial growth of the BCV. David has fully engaged support for the BCV through the Children’s Promise Act. That means he engages corporations, and individual, and he knows many, to donate to the BCV and receive a dollar for dollar tax credit for their gift. David engaged his own bank to become a high dollar donor to the BCV. I do not exaggerate when I say that the **BCV** would not have accomplished all that we have if not for David’s efforts on our behalf.

David is one of the BCV’s greatest role model. Many of our children are exactly where he was. Through David, our children can see what is possible for their lives. David engaged. He not only graduated from high school, he earned a college degree in business administration. Moreover, David is a current and longtime member of Board of Education for the City of New Albany. David worked hard in business and is respected as a leader in his community. David and Martha have three children, all of whom have college degrees and are engaged in the careers of their own choosing. David’s youngest child, Rachel, has a master’s degree in Social Work and is a social worker at the BCV, the very agency where David grew up.

Thank you for considering my dearest friend, David Rainey, as a candidate for the Catherine Hershey Alumnus of the year Award. He will make all of us proud.

CORE Award for Trustee of the Year

Crystal Rose – Kamehameha Schools

Nominated by Dr. Laura Perales

It has been said that, “Crystal Rose possesses the grace and dexterity of a hula dancer, and the courage and grit of a warrior, and the wisdom to know when to be each.” This was said by Kamehameha Schools Trustee Lance Wilhelm at the induction for Crystal Rose to her Trustee position in 2019.

Crystal Rose is indeed made up of grace, dexterity, courage, and grit, much of which stems from her foundation as a student and boarder at Kamehameha Schools. Trustee

Rose enrolled at Kamehameha Schools in 7th grade, and being from Hilo on Big Island, she moved into the dorms as a boarder to be able to get the better educational opportunity. Her parents instilled in her a drive and passion for education and taking advantage of all the opportunities given to her.

When Trustee Rose reflects on her time in the dorms, she has been quoted saying, “There were so many rules! The dorm rules dictated when we could take a shower, when we could wash clothes, when we could use an iron, when we could go off campus, and even what we could wear. But, being a boarder taught me to be independent, responsible, and how to handle various situations on my own. I think that the experience really prepared me for the next chapter of my life.”

Trustee Rose went on to earn her bachelors’ degree at Willamette University and eventually juris doctorate degree at the University of California Hastings College of the Law. Trustee Rose has been practicing law for over 35 years and founded her own law firm. Trustee Rose has litigated some of the most public facing cases in Hawaii. Trustee Rose has a reputation for being able to cry with empathy alongside her clients while being the toughest lawyer in the room.

When I first met Trustee Rose, it was during very challenging times in the transformational change process of the boarding, now called Residential Life, program at Kamehameha Schools. Trustee Rose has a vested interest in the changes due to her experience as a former alumni and boarder. Trustee Rose reached out to provide sound guidance, firm expectations, and a listening ear to help propel the changes in a forward and positive direction. Trustee Rose even opened up her home to provide a night of “talk story” time to allow me see her as a beautiful human who is larger than life in her reputation but as down-to-earth as a dear friend. Without Trustee Rose I would not have been able to muster the strength and courage to face the most difficult change management process I have undertaken in my professional career. Trustee Rose is “mana wahine” which translates to “strong woman.” Her grace and grit are evident in her everyday interactions, and with those characteristics she is able to make a significant difference in her role as a Trustee to better the lives of future generations of students that will be served at Kamehameha Schools.

CORE Award for Policy Maker of the Year

Congressman Darren Soto

Nominated by Maria Knapp – Florida Sheriff’s Youth Ranches

We are nominating Darren Soto for the Catherine Hershey Legislator of the Year. Darren Soto was elected to Congress in 2016 to represent Florida’s Ninth Congressional District, which includes all of Osceola County, and parts of Orange and Polk Counties. Darren is proud to be the first person of Puerto Rican descent to serve in Congress from Florida.

In our state, the districts seem to be restructured often over the life of a politician. At times we are his district other times we are not. However, Congressman Soto is always quick to sign federal legislation brought to him to benefit children. We can count on his support to help ensure our legislation is dropped bipartisan.

He was the lead democrat on our recent CARE Act and was quick to support the CHILD Act (The Democratic co-sponsor of the CHILD Act has since passed.)

He is supportive and generous with his time. He visits the program and ensures he is aware of child welfare issues in our state. We are grateful for his support and commitment to the residential education community.

CORE Lifetime Achievement Award

Bill Frye – Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches

Overview Provided by Maria Knapp – FSyr and Sean Milner - TBCV

Maria said of Sean: Bill Frye has been employed for the past 38 years with the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches in a variety of residential, supervisory and administrative roles. The position most enjoyed by Bill was Director of Camping Services.

In that role he had the opportunity to build many lasting relationships with staff, youth, and law enforcement. He held the position of Vice President of Programs from May 2000 until November 2013. He served as Executive Vice President from 2013 until taking on the role as President on October 1, 2014.

As an administrator, he has built a team that works diligently to support the front-line staff who care for the children in our care. He is invested in the kids we serve and takes the time to build personal relationships even though he has limited time at our programs. He is a problem solver and ensures that we are always evolving and investing in new ways to serve our children and families.

Bill had the foresight to advocate for the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches joining CORE twenty years ago when he first became the Vice President of Programs. While he is proud of his program, he continues to encourage his team to look at peer agencies for best practices. Bill has forged relationships with residential programs across the country and offers to share our practices and policies with others.

During this time, Bill has been a vocal advocate for Residential Care. "Advocate" may be far too mild a statement. He has fought legislative battles in the state of Florida and at the Federal level to preserve and promote residential care. Bill makes every effort to rally others to the call to share our successes and best practices so residential education is seen as THE quality option for children and families. He is invested in the success of all programs across both his state and the country.

Sean said of Bill: I am sure that many other administrators are as passionate about their agency as Bill. What sets Bill apart is his desire and willingness to support, invest in and help build other agencies. Bill has been a great friend and mentor to the BCv. Bill's leadership has grown other leaders who are willing to share their ideas and program resources. He led us in his continuing effort to protect residential child caring agencies. Bill encouraged us and showed us how to get involved and engaged.

Bill has reached out to other agencies in Mississippi. In fact, Bill took many of his leaders to a very small and extremely rural area of Mississippi known as French Camp. They toured and got to know French Camp Academy—a very new CORE member. Bill's reaching out and taking the time and investing the money and effort to get to know this new agency is a perfect example of his heart and willingness to help other CORE agencies across this nation.

Bill has announced his retirement and will soon step down as the executive director of one of CORE's leading members for 20 years. He made sure that his replacement was capable and ready to move forward with confidence, competence and grace toward others. That is what leaders do. Bill is an example for us all.

Mike Tyrell – St. Joseph's Indian School

Overview provided by Jennifer Renner-Meyer

Two very different narratives tell the story of Mike Tyrell, President of St. Joseph's Indian School. Together they paint the complete portrait of the individual whose career and leadership have substantially contributed to the organization we know today and the overall residential education field.

First, "Detour Home," written and published by Tyrell in 2022, provides a semi-fictional account of Mike and his wife, Kim's, planned-to-be-only-one year as starry-eyed new houseparents during the 1984-85 school year. The largely autobiographical book is a realistic telling of the joys and misgivings of their first year in the houseparent role, including a Thanksgiving "Let's run for it and never look back" moment. The narrative reveals a man of dedication, compassion, sincerity, faith and vision who assumed roles of increasing responsibility up to taking on the mantle of President in 2014.

Tyrell embraced the call to leadership in many ways, not the least of which was completing a Master of Science in Administration from the University of Notre Dame in 1997. The "detour" that brought Tyrell to the Chamberlain community enriched it with his presence.

He is well known as a community baseball and basketball coach. He helped to spearhead fundraising for the St. James Parish Community Center, a spacious, well-appointed facility that is an asset for broader community gatherings.

Junior Achievement is a long-time beneficiary of Tyrell's teaching gifts, which have blessed community efforts through fundraising and awareness. In his home parish and on campus, Tyrell's quiet but evident trust in God is the "just right" embodiment of a faith that inspires others to live with authenticity – never showy or preachy, always sincere.

To complete the picture, visualize a tall, broad-shouldered man in a blonde wig and pink formal strutting the runway to raise funds for breast cancer treatment in the Mr. Chamberlain Pageant.

The second narrative, the school's "Strategic Plan 2020-2023 – A Decade of Inclusion," tells the leader's story. Tyrell directed the shape of the plan that demonstrates the organization's solid standing and leads it into the future. Tyrell moved ahead with

developing the plan in the throes of the pandemic when other organizations would put such optimism and foresight on hold.

Each of its four main goals illustrates Tyrell's dedication to the success of students, staff and programs, all shared broadly to improve residential education. Stand firm in our strengths and knowingly maintain what we do well.

Under Tyrell's leadership, the organization engages in continuous program evaluation and accreditations. This stance brings about improvements such as adding Equine Therapy to Counseling Services and commitment to strategically communicating the best of our child services programs, such as our Circle of Care Model.

Recognize and rectify our flaws. Not all former students had positive experiences, and Tyrell is central to the school's Truth and Healing efforts.

Our school was founded toward the end of the Native American boarding school era, and through the Process to Advance Truth and Healing (PATH), the school recently undertook efforts to educate all staff on our nation's difficult history and our own past.

Reach and partner beyond our walls. Tyrell extends the benefits of our programs to strengthen other educational institutions through active participation in CORE and the American Indian Catholic School Network.

The school has hosted both organizations' national conferences. Through the school's Hóčhoka podcast, now in its fourth season, the school invites experts in education and other topics from around the country to share their wisdom through this broadly accessible platform.

Think and act boldly and ethically and lead the way nationally. The school's current re-energizing of its 30-plus-year scholarship for post-high-school students demonstrates Tyrell's ethical concern about strengthening support for alums once they leave our program.

In another bold effort, Tyrell forayed recently into the state arena to fund a position to help solve the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons situation.

Finally, the Hóčhoka podcast leads the way by elevating the best of the school's programs and sharing them nationally.

Others Honored by Nomination Include:

Catherine Hershey Award for 2023 Administrator of the Year

Kelalohi Puna	Kamehameha Schools
Dorothy Phillips	Methodist Children's Home
Chloe Hewitt.	Cal Farley's Boys Ranch
Sam Serna	CalFarley's Boys Ranch

Catherine Hershey Award for 2023 Educator of the Year

Mary-Beth Johnson	Black Mountain Home for Children
Shawn Read	Cal Farley's Boys Ranch
Joel Crowley	Milton Hershey School
Emily Gall0	Milton Hershey School

Catherine Hershey Award for 2023 Student of the Year

Grace Leeman	Cal Farley's Boys Ranch
Emily Morgan	Cal Farley's Boys Ranch
John Bartz	Cal Farley's Boys Ranch

Catherine Hershey 2023 Houseparents of the Year

Joni and Brian Smith	Cal Farley's Boys Ranch
Pam and Kevin Oxford	Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches

Catherine Hershey Award for Alumnus of the Year

Braden Maines	Milton Hershey School
Willie Nickerson.	Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches

Core 2023 Award for Trustee of the Year

Julie Peluso	Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches
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