

Summer 2021  
Jackson, Wyoming



# Caring Compass

Newsletter from Teton Youth & Family Services



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Helping children and families  
find their way to fulfilling and  
constructive lives.

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Dan Oas, Juvenile Diversion Program  
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Cassidy Creel, Juvenile Diversion Officer  
and Family Advocate  
Margaret Brigham, Family  
Advocate/ Therapist

### VAN VLECK HOUSE

Jeremy Silcox, Director of Van Vleck House  
Arty Polo, Group Home Manager  
Matia Wilson, Therapist  
Patty Schengber, JH Leadership  
Program Coordinator

### RED TOP MEADOWS

Tom Concannon, Director  
Kyle Knudson, Director of Education  
Ted Nichols, Wilderness Program Director

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## Stay Connected:



## A Letter from Sarah

### Lots to be Grateful For

"In the deep of the summer heat and **spark** I am thinking about a quote I heard recently about gratitude- "At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."  
-Albert Schweitzer



For me there are four reasons I am grateful for you and for TYFS and keeping the spark alive:

**#1- Our Community-** Because of you we have **been able to survive and thrive for children and families** in our community. Your phone calls, emails, letters and gifts have kept us focused on our mission of "helping children and families find their way to fulfilling and constructive lives." YOU did this- you ensured we had the resources to serve - thank you!

**#2- Our Clients-** Over the past year I have been overwhelmed by how hard families are struggling. From finding housing, securing childcare, to seeing young children and families grappling with depression and anxiety. What makes me grateful is that **we have the ability to help**. At TYFS we know what trauma and crisis mean - and COVID has made this real for many people who may have not ordinarily experienced this.

**#3- Our Staff-** At TYFS we employ about 50 full-time staff members to provide intensive care for the children and families we serve. 85% of our \$3.4 million budget goes to employee salaries that provide **care, case management, therapy, family support, education services, and ultimately kindness** to those who need it the most. Over the past year, our employees came to understand their essential worker roles and stayed healthy and safe to ensure services were available. Our staff have the expertise and experience to help - thank goodness for these wonderful people.

**#4- Our Board-** A deep thank you to **Mitch Dann**, he has served on the TYFS Board for the past five years, and during the past two has served as our Board President. During his tenure, Mitch has helped TYFS navigate significant changes in Executive Leadership, worked with the Leadership Staff and the State of Wyoming to confirm a block grant for Group Home services, brought the capital needs of the organization to the forefront, and provided needed guidance through the pandemic. **Mitch has been instrumental in bringing TYFS into the next chapter** and we could not be more grateful to him for his time and expertise.

As Mitch departs and as President **Jim Hesser** steps in with over 8 years of service and lots of passion for the organization, we look ahead at what is to come: **facility up-grades, access to care, and employee support**

At the end of the day we need our community to ensure we are able to keep keeping on. State funds have been reduced three-fold, town and county governments have

stepped up and are providing additional support, and we need you (the private sector) to help and support us through Old Bill's Fun Run or through other project focused areas.

I am so grateful for each and every one of you who has chosen to connect with us over the past year. YOU have made a difference for children and families who need you the most. And if we have not connected - and you are reading this - I am grateful to you for making the time to learn more and engage with some of the hardest issues our community faces. Please feel free to reach out for a tour - we would love for you to see what we are doing in person.

Happy  Year!



Sarah Cavallaro  
Executive Director, Teton Youth & Family Services

## Welcoming New Board Members

TYFS is excited to announce our newest Board Members: **Lisa Lord Clementi** and **Faye Campbell**. 

Lisa brings a wealth of experience to the board serving as Development Director for the Nature Conservancy for 11 years, as a professional consultant, and continues in her efforts to support and serve on multiple boards over her last 30 years in Jackson.

As a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT), Faye Campbell has quietly supported and transformed the lives of many families and couples as a professional counselor in the valley.

We are very fortunate to have such talented and caring community members join the ranks of TYFS!

**Serving  
Children &  
Families  
Since 1977**



## OUR WISH LIST

### Van Vleck House

School supplies, i.e. book bags,  
notebooks, pens & pencils  
Acrylic paints and brushes  
Bracelet making kits  
Puzzles  
Skip-Bo, Phase 10 (card games)

### Hirschfield Center

Day or Annual Activity Passes  
Gift Cards for Gas  
Gift Cards for "Take a Kid to  
Lunch" (Quiznos, Whole Foods etc.)  
Dominoes  
Tempura Paints  
Mixed-media paper

### Red Top Meadows

Mountain bike maintenance:  
-27.5 bike tubes  
-'on-the-trail' repair kits  
-bike gloves  
Pillows  
Weighted blankets

Items donated to Teton Youth &  
Family Services are tax deductible

**Make a Difference for a Child**

# Red Top Meadows

## Red Top Meadows Wilderness Experience

By Tom Concannon

Red Top Meadows has been running wilderness trips as part of our residential program since the mid 1980's. This is an expedition style backpacking trip that lasts 21 days, spans two mountain ranges and covers 100 miles of trail.

We believe that spending extended time in a wilderness setting promotes personal growth and healing. There are a million teachable moments in the wilderness and participants have the opportunity to learn from their environment by facing both natural and logical consequences. These trips can often accelerate the therapeutic process of our residents who typically suffer from a lack of confidence and traumatic experiences. It is by no means a surprise that in the late 1990's, we wanted to add a trip for young men who could not otherwise access or benefit from the wilderness experiences we offer.

What makes this trip so impactful is how the Red Top staff and families plan for success. At the start of the expedition, the boys don't know each other or the trip leaders - but once on the trail, the boys will learn to build relationships and hone their social skills to learn how to work together as a team. Our unbelievable staff are another key feature; their presence is paramount to a team's success. Red Top staff are trained in wilderness skills to be effective trip leaders, and at the same time, balance the technical and emotional/behavioral challenges that often arise while out in the field.

Another important factor for trip success is that participants get to identify individual treatment goals to work on during the trip as well. We have a trip therapist who meets with each boy and family at the start to identify goals. The therapist then meets with each boy on resupplies to discuss progress and challenges. The boy and family have a final wrap up meeting with the therapist at the end of the trip to recognize gains and generalize them to home life.

This year we had a great group of boys for the trip. Most of them were local to Teton County, with two others from

around the state. We are always excited to share our Red Top wilderness trip with a wider group of young men. These boys really do gain the courage to practice "new things" when their needs and safety are taken care of in a challenging environment, and they start to build trust in caring adults. And they overcome many internal and external challenges to complete a very difficult trip, which earns these boys a sense of accomplishment and a boost to their self-confidence!



# Van Vleck House

## Jackson Hole Leadership Program

by Jeremy Silcox, Director of Van Vleck House

The Jackson Hole Leadership Program (JHLP) kicked off this summer for its 30th year!

JHLP is a program for children ages 9-15 and is open to all community youth. The program teaches kids problem-solving skills through outdoor recreation, which naturally creates a framework for kids to practice how to communicate more effectively, build self-confidence and leadership skills through outdoor activities. Our focus is to create a fun and meaningful summer opportunity for kids as they transition into adolescence.

JHLP Program Coordinator Patty Schengber, who has demonstrated a passion for working with kids and experiential education, has built an amazing team with Megan Tattersall, Eliza Merritt, and Megan Millstead. This team's enthusiasm is infectious as kids line up every morning, excited for another day of fun-filled, outdoor adventure. Starting each week, the team guides new and returning kids through a progression of "just getting to know you" on the first day to the development of new friendships by the end of week.

For some kids, JHLP serves as an opportunity to meet new classmates for the upcoming school year; for others, they get to see and experience new terrain that they would not normally access. But what really sets JHLP apart from other camp programs is how the programming really encourages kids to not just participate, but expand beyond their comfort zone and gain more confidence in themselves.

Phase I of our program is designed for boys and girls (5th/6th grade - ages 9-12). This is a day program (with one overnight camping trip) during which children participate in a variety of games, team-building initiatives and fun outdoor activities. A key component of our Phase I programming is the Doug Walker Challenge Course. This was not available to us last year due to COVID restrictions and we are very excited to be back "on course" this summer. Located at the Jackson Campus of the Teton Science School, this challenging course is composed of a series of low obstacles (two to three feet above ground) and high obstacles (ten to forty feet above ground) made with rope, cable and wooden pillars/posts. The course offers a unique experience for kids to work their way through the course obstacles with peers helping and cheering them on!

The challenge is increased for participants of our Phase II (7th/9th grade - ages 12-15) sessions. During these single-gender backpacking trips, participants spend five days and four nights exploring the valley's beautiful back country while expanding their leadership skills and outdoor knowledge. The Phase II trips conclude with a white-water rafting trip down the Snake River Canyon.

This year 132 youth participated in our Leadership Camps.



# Hirschfield Center for Children

## Importance of Routine

By Chris Moll, M.S.W, LCSW, Director of Licensing and Accreditation at Hirschfield Center 

It sure is hard to believe that another beautiful summer is winding down here in Jackson. Summer is nice in that it provides more opportunities for increased family outings such as camping, floating the rivers, and BBQ's. But as the sun begins to set a little earlier, it stands as a subtle reminder that school is right around the corner. Many children look forward to the beginning of the school year as they are reacquainted with friends, teachers and the increased structure that school offers. For other students who do not enjoy school so much, this can be a very challenging time of year. Issues can often arise from struggles with peer relationships, academic stress and family expectations.

There are some things that parents can do to ease the transition back into the academic year that will help the entire family. Parents may have different priorities when it comes to school, but one thing is certain, they hope that children will be successful in their endeavors. As parents, we need to be clear how we envision our children progressing through the school year. Some good questions to ask yourself might be:

- What type of grades do you think your children are capable of earning?
- Are there consequences for not achieving the expected grades?
- How will behavioral problems at school be handled?
- If my child has difficulty learning, where can I seek assistance?
- What are the expectations for completing homework and the time frame that this will take place?

Parents need to have this type of conversation with one another as children tend to do much better when there are consistent expectations. This is especially true in split families. If you are able to have this conversation with a former partner and construct similar expectations and structure around school



in two separate households, your children will fare better and have less anxiety.

Without fault, many parents will express concern about the summer learning loss or summer slide that can occur for many students after summer break. One way to combat this phenomenon is to keep your kids connected to school related activities over the course of the summer, such as setting aside daily time for required reading. Another factor that may be overlooked is basic rest and sleep, which is critical to your child's success. Since the days are quite long in the summer months, we tend to push our kid's bedtime back a little bit. Perhaps a few weeks before the beginning of school, start to get your child in the routine of going to bed at 'school time' and waking up accordingly. These are just a few simple suggestions that may help to set children up for a successful school year.



# Gratitude



## GROWING STRONGER *Together*

Joining Forces, Giving Hope  
to Families in Crisis

### Growing Stronger Together

In collaboration with Community Safety Network, Teton Youth & Family Services launched a groundbreaking fundraising effort this summer: Growing Stronger Together. The six-week online campaign featured themes that define the trajectory of many of our shared clients and their families. From finding safety in the immediate aftermath of crisis, to forging meaningful connections, to the journey of healing, and achieving stability, to celebrating resilience, and finally, rediscovering hope — the campaign highlighted the unique ways in which our organizations complement one another.

An overwhelming success, the campaign exceeded its initial goal of \$500,000. We enjoyed widespread and outspoken support from a diversity of high-profile community members. Ultimately, the innovative approach of the Growing Stronger Together campaign was extraordinarily successful. The generosity of the community — including several substantial matching grants from enthusiastic supporters — meaningfully offset the expanding gap in funding as our state-issued funds diminish.

“Thanks to the pandemic, we’ve seen the need for our services increase dramatically over the past year. Community Safety Network is witnessing a similar trend. [redacted] reflects Executive Director Sarah Cavallaro. “At the same time, we’re receiving less state funding. We were forthright with the community through this campaign: our services are more critical than ever for local families. And in order to provide those services, we need your help.”

Teton Youth & Family Services staff, board, and leadership is profoundly grateful for the community’s overwhelming support of this innovative fundraiser. “Not only did we exceed our monetary goal,” said Cavallaro. “But we also were deeply assured that the

community appreciates the profound value of what we do.”

A special thanks to our Campaign Sponsors and community of supporters for joining forces and giving hope to families in crisis.

#### Title Sponsor



#### Challenge Sponsors

**Carrie Kirkpatrick**  
**Henry McKinnell**  
**Ted and Noa Staryk**

#### Presenting Sponsors

**Margot Snowden and Yves Desgouttes**  
**Community Safety Network Board of Directors**  
**Teton Youth & Family Services Board of Directors**



This winter, when many felt restricted by the pandemic, the local 4H Troop 1365 saw an opportunity to give back. This creative and caring group selflessly constructed care packages of fleece blankets, coloring journals, and pajamas to help children and families in need. When asked what inspired this project, they responded with hopeful messages.

“We hope the comfort packages will make them happy, along with make them feel safe and comfortable,” said Annabelle.

“I learned that our town is giving and will always help out,” said Brooke.

“This was meaningful because we know kids that have been there and it feels good to be able to help them,” said the Troop leader.

You did an amazing job Troop 1365! From all of us at Teton Youth and Family Services, and every child and family in need, we want to thank you for all your efforts.



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Please remember to donate to **Teton Youth and Family Services** during Old Bill's. The giving season ends on **September 17th**. For more information, please stay tuned to **oldbills.org**.