



# Caring Compass

Newsletter from Teton Youth & Family Services



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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and Family Advocate  
Margaret Brigham, Family  
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### 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

### Oh, what a year!

2020 was one for the books as we navigated quarantines, community closures, new rules and new ethical dilemmas. I found myself creating multi-page policies around how to operate residential living centers during an ever changing pandemic landscape. Turns out there is no rule book.

How do you manage such turmoil? How do you understand and help employee concerns, family fears, and community needs?

We did it together by creating community. We leaned on each other when we were unsure, we asked questions when we did not know the answers, and we sustained our families through crisis. We did it by leaning on you, our supporter, who has provided incredible attention and resources to solve and navigate the complex situations we faced as an organization.

The world has changed from one year ago; with change comes pain, but also opportunity for growth. This past year we grew closer, stronger and more responsive to changing needs. I look forward to 2021 presenting many opportunities for hope and healing.

I am proud of all of us for holding steady and making sure our children and families have the resources they need. Thank you for being there with us along the way, it means we can be there for you or someone you may know or care for.

Happy New Year!

Sarah Cavallaro  
Executive Director, Teton Youth & Family Services



Helping Children and Families Find Thier Way

# In Memory: Bill Campbell

Board Member and Friend of TYFS

In October, we said an unexpected good-bye to one of our most faithful Board Members Bill Campbell. Bill was a great friend of Teton Youth and Family Services and his work with us will be greatly missed. Bill brought his legal acumen and gentle soul to the table to make sure our organization was on the right path. In honor of Bill, his wife Faye will be completing Bill's term on the Board. Faye brings her own expertise through her years as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. We are lucky to have this level of care and dedication to helping children and families in our community.



Bill Campbell

## OUR WISH LIST

### Van Vleck House

Winter Hats and Gloves  
in good condition  
School Supplies: Notebooks,  
Binders, Pencils etc

### Hirschfield Center

Day or Annual Activity Passes  
Gift Cards for Gas  
Gift Cards for "Take a Kid to  
Lunch" (Quiznos, Pearl St. etc.)  
Floor Lamps for Interview Room  
Legos  
Dominoes  
Tempura Paints  
Winter Boots for Middle  
School Students

### Red Top Meadows

Ipods/Mp3 Players  
Vacuum  
Tele Ski boots Sizes 8-11  
Board Games  
Puzzles  
Weighted Blankets

Items donated to Teton Youth &  
Family Services are tax deductible

Make a Difference for a Child



"I love seeing the progress that the kids make over time knowing that they have worked hard to achieve their goals. TYFS programs are all about developing relationships with kids and their families."

-Jeremy Silcox, Director of the Van Vleck House



"I cannot overstate the importance and depth of the relationships between our staff and children. I cannot overstate the profound healing that occurs in our programs for children who have been hurt."

-Cheyenne Syvertson,  
Hirschfield Center Family  
Advocate and Therapist

# Red Top Meadows

## Escalante Provides Opportunity for Self-Reflection

By Teddy Nichols, BA, Wilderness/Program Director

Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions into the backcountry of southern Utah, Red Top Meadows was unable to experience the traditional trip down to desert country this past spring. Fortunately, students and staff were able to get this opportunity this past fall instead.

This wilderness trip is by no means our most physically exhausting and creates a significant opportunity to focus on its theme of self-reflection and spirituality. The southern Utah desert can be the perfect setting for self-reflection and self-discovery. There, among the natural formations, immense scenery, and fresh desert air, one's thoughts easily turn inward. Students think about questions such as: What are your strengths? What are your goals for the future? What's the biggest thing holding you back from your goals or becoming the person you want to be?

The Red Top community spent a total of 9 days in the backcountry of Grand Staircase National Monument, exploring the slots, sleeping in alcoves, and chancing upon all sorts of natural and historical wonders. This trip can be eye-opening to students at Red Top. After a long, full days drive from Wyoming, all of a sudden, they find themselves in a completely novel and foreign landscape.

This year's crew was especially empowered with a sense of adventure and exploration, leaving students curious to figure out what cool trips they could plan with their own friends and families once they return home. Red Top staff and students returned back to the Red Top Meadows campus, yes with a whole bunch of sand in their shoes, but also a new-found sense of self and a better understanding of how that self fits into the bigger world.

*"This year's crew was especially empowered with a sense of adventure and exploration."*



"TYFS offers them a second chance and options for their future when they feel trapped and hopeless in the situation they are in."

**-Jackie Fisher, Red Top Administrative Assistant**



"Red Top has a forty year track record of success with the populations that we serve. We help students make life-long changes and become positive influences in their communities, not hurtful."

**-Kyle Knutson, Red Top School Principal**

# Van Vleck House



## Grief and Loss During the Pandemic

Reducing Stress in Children's Daily Lives  
by Jeremy Silcox, Director of Van Vleck House

This past year has presented all of us with a great many challenges. For the residents of our programs it has been no different. On top of trauma they may have experienced or the difficulties they may have in their relationships, there has been the added burden of grief and loss imposed by the pandemic.

Due to concerns about transmission of the virus, we have had to take precautions that severely restricted the amount of time that kids can spend in the community. This has been difficult both programmatically as well as for the well-being of the kids as they have had to miss out on a number of social activities and events that are a normal part of growing up.

During the initial phase of the lockdown last spring, we did not allow any visitation between kids and families other than by Zoom. During the summer and into the fall we have intermittently allowed overnight visits and are currently only allowing daytime visitation.

In addition, schools have shut down and have only been open intermittently. From a program perspective this has presented us with novel situations on a weekly basis. One of the main components of our program is home visits which allow kids and their families to practice new skills. Likewise we normally would encourage kids to engage in sports or activities that interest them or that they have always wanted to try. They can also earn the privilege of free time to practice responsibility and planning.

All of which went out the window when school and the rest of the community shut down.

In response to this unprecedented situation, we had to shift gears in our program expectations and respond in meaningful ways to the grief and loss that the kids were experiencing on a daily basis. One of the most important things we had to do was to engage in empathetic listening with the kids. This was helped in large part by the staff's willingness to put themselves, as much as possible, into the kid's position to understand their point of view.

Our natural tendency as adults is to do a lot of the talking in an effort to share our wisdom. Kids, however, need a welcoming environment to share their feelings so as to better process them and not feel judged for what they are experiencing. Empathetic listening begins with open ended questions such as "how are you feeling about all the changes that are happening right now." Afterwards it is important to reflect back on what they say so that they feel heard and you can get a clearer understanding of what they're thinking and feeling.

We also had to stay present with them by giving them our full attention. We then could share where our own feelings overlapped with theirs to help normalize that we were all having a hard time with the situation. As a result of listening to them and validating their feelings and experience we noticed that they quickly became very capable of handling themselves more maturely. They became more supportive of each other and seemed better able to grasp what was happening around them. They also seemed better able to let their guard down and became a much more cohesive and supportive group.

Over the summer they were able to participate in many activities like; hiking Snow King, playing smash ball, fishing, biking, basketball which helped keep them engaged with each other rather than ruminating on negative thoughts. They seemed better able to relax and be more genuine as opposed to trying to look cool and posture for each other.

For children, this pandemic is a particularly formative experience. It will shape how they see the world. The more we can do to help them learn to handle difficult emotions in a healthy way, the stronger their futures will be. The good news is that in helping children process what they're feeling, we help ourselves as well. It's a chance to think through and gain insight into some of what we're feeling as adults.

# Hirschfield Center for Children

## Managing Family Stress

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

For many families the Hirschfield Center for Children serves, there is a common theme that they have difficulty advocating for their own needs. Often times this is the result of struggling with a variety of issues such as mental health, traumas from the past that have not been resolved, substance abuse and significant financial strains over a long period of time.

For these families, the anxiety of a 'big picture' view of life is simply too overwhelming and they must focus on what faces them in the moment. Sometimes this involves choices that parents make with their children. Often times, parents are too overwhelmed coping with daily life and have little energy and capacity to effectively parent children; this leaves children with little guidance when they are making choices about their behavior. Another scenario is that parents demand extreme compliance from their children in order to make life feel less chaotic. Sometimes these children draw the attention of day-care providers, school counselors, law enforcement, public health nurses or physicians.

The Family Advocate Project (FAP), through the Hirschfield

Center for Children, is designed to work with families who are at-risk of abusing their children. One of the common themes of abuse is that families have unrealistic expectations or no expectations of their children. When a child is not compliant, some parents lack the skills to effectively consequence their children and the result is reactionary behavior that may be abusive. When these children are identified by community partners, often times that provider will talk with the family and make a referral to the Hirschfield Center.

When a family comes to the Hirschfield Center, an advocate will conduct an interview to gather necessary information that will guide the case. The FAP advocate will complete a comprehensive family assessment using standardized measures, evaluate the results and write a report and make recommendations for the family.

We will work with a family on a number of different issues including parenting education, appropriate consequences and structure for their household, mentoring for the children, counseling and referrals to appropriate community agencies. One of the primary goals of the FAP is to empower families to seek resources within the community using their voice to get the needed services. Initially, this may involve the support of the advocate and over time the goal is to have the family be more connected to the community, both socially and through available resources.



**We are Operating and We are Here for YOU!**

- Parental support • Co-parenting support for separated parents • Family therapy • Individual children's therapy
- Crisis residential services • Mentoring for children

307.733.6440 • [teton youth and family services.org](http://teton youth and family services.org)



"What makes TYFS so unique is that each staff member brings a different education and professional background to the table for the youth and their family's benefit. We all can see different perspectives of a problem to find a great solution together."

-John Morley, Childcare Staff

# THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY OF DONORS

YOU MAKE SURE WE CAN BE THERE TO HELP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

## Donated Items:

Rebecca Griber and MJ and Dan Forman for the Donation of Turkeys  
 Ann Dwan for the computer and printer donation  
 Pat Headricks for the luggage  
 Kate Lucas for the American Girl Dolls and Stuffed Animals  
 Yellow Iron Excavating & Waste Removal, Karen and Dave Garvin for the Office Chairs  
 River and Pearls for the grill, prints, sheets for beds, area rugs  
 Betsy and Jim Hesser for the pair of skis Pair of skis  
 Azadi Fine Rugs Sherie Gervais for the Gift cards to Smiths for Families  
 Ed and Carole Liebrecht for the cloth masks  
 Caryn Flanagan for the Autographed Book  
 Pete and Jeanine Karns for the lamp, hats and gloves  
 Carl Goldfischer for the vacuum  
 Mitch Dann for the Snow King lift tickets

## For Holiday Gifts:

Julie Bratspis  
 Santa Fund  
 Secret Santa gifts from DFS  
 Angel Tree from Bank of Jackson Hole  
 Nancy Lang  
 Marty Anderson  
 Betty Andrikopoulos  
 Shawn Cripps and Robert Huggins  
 The White Family  
 Farm Bureau

## For Services Provided:

Option 1 for replacing our heater in a hurry  
 Premier Green Cleaning Services for deep cleaning the Holding Facility  
 Mountainscapes, Inc., Helen and Sean Macauley for snow plowing our facilities



"TYFS feels like home. It is a place where kids, families, and staff can feel safe, heard, and cared for. The TYFS family works hard to cultivate these spaces where kids can learn and grow into their best selves."

-Blair Crumpler, Red Top Meadows Staff



"Raising a family in Teton County is truly a blessing, but no family is immune from the unexpected incidents. TYFS serves as the community's direct line of support for families in crisis."

-Dan Oas, Diversion Program Officer



"TYFS is about healing, building relationships and providing opportunities for vulnerable populations. I'm honored to work with individuals who are unparalleled in their endless compassion and dedication to those we serve."

-Dana Woods, Red Top Meadows Teacher



"Not all children receive the same upbringing. TYFS provides unique and beneficial character building opportunities to youth that have found themselves without guidance or meaningful purpose."

-Wesley Gabel, Red Top Meadows Science Teacher



"TYFS is available to support their kids and anyone's kids in a safe, positive and productive way. Kids can gain a lot from all-around skills from TYFS, so invest in their future."

-Molly Bussen, Childcare Staff



"I think supporting students to work through trauma, achieve growth, and eventually rejoin their home community is invaluable."

-Eric Doyle, Red Top Meadows Staff



"I could never have dreamed of discovering a more nurturing environment for growth than what I was able to find at Red Top Meadows."

-Mike Shouvin, Red Top Meadows Classroom Aide



"I love being a part of an organization that makes a tremendous difference in youth and families in our wonderful community."

-Martina Hansen, Director of Finance and Operations



"TYFS impacts and improves the lives of youth and families in our community who have been affected by adverse experiences including trauma and abuse and offer therapy to support emotional and mental health"

-Margaret Brigham, Hirschfield Center Family Advocate and Therapist

# 3 Reasons to Give



1. We're open **365 days per year** to help children and families in crisis.

2. We're an essential human service **non-profit** that relies on community support.

3. It's **FUN** to **join the TYFS team** and help children and families in our community.



"Getting to see each child have the chance to work through the things they struggle with and to find their footing again is my favorite part of the job."

-Laura Morley,  
Childcare Staff



"Stability is very important for children and their families. Having a support system like TYFS help ensure stability for families and children in crisis."

-Adam Galadima,  
Childcare Staff



"The youth in this community really are our future. If we help take care of them, we are helping our community grow stronger."

-Rose Wenck, Jackson  
Hole Leadership Program  
Staff