

*The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Conference*



2025

# *Strong Families Need Strong Communities*



**March 13-14, 2025**

*Riverside Hotel*

2900 Chinden Blvd, Boise ID 83714



The Board of Directors of the *Idaho Children's Trust Fund* Salutes the  
Winner of the 2024 Ed Van Dusen Legacy Award:

## ***Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children***

***And all Idahoans working to strengthen families  
to prevent child abuse and neglect.***

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# Strong Families Need Strong Communities

One of my favorite books to read to my kids started with a cat in a box, on a chair, in a room...all the way to on the earth, in space and then back again. Each of us is also nested like that in a family, in a neighborhood, in a community and so on. Our family, friends and neighbors, along with our schools, houses of worship, a multitude of non-profit organizations and governments provide the supports we need when we need help. Sometimes we're the helper; sometimes we need help. Isn't that community?

Strong families need strong communities, the theme of this year's conference, is grounded in this reality: "We are all in this together." Our keynote speaker, Dr. Charlyn Harper Browne, has been at the forefront of prevention work through her research and promotion of protective factors and the Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences or HOPE framework. Dr. Harper Browne's latest research on protective factors recognizes the importance of community and societal factors in building and supporting family protective factors.

Our closing session is highlighting the community of American Falls which through initiatives like Read Talk Play (RTP) and the American Falls Early Learning Collaborative, community leaders from education, healthcare, social services, the judiciary and nonprofit organizations unite to create supportive environments for children and families. Their work illustrates how early learning, family engagement, and cross-sector collaboration can positively impact a community's well-being and resilience. We see similar work going on in the West Central Mountain communities of McCall, Cascade, Donnelly and Cambridge where attention to youth substance abuse has grown into multiple community efforts. A workshop highlighting that group's work is also on the agenda.

We also want to hear from you so we are providing a forum tonight facilitated by Beth Norton, a former foster youth who has practiced standup comedy and storytelling for over a decade. She is both a lived expert and an entertaining host so don't miss it!

For the next couple of days, and hopefully going forward, we are an intentional community learning together about how we can create the conditions where all families and communities can thrive. So. Make some new connections, share your stories and strategies. Take home some new ideas that will make the lives of families and kids in your community better. Have fun, too!



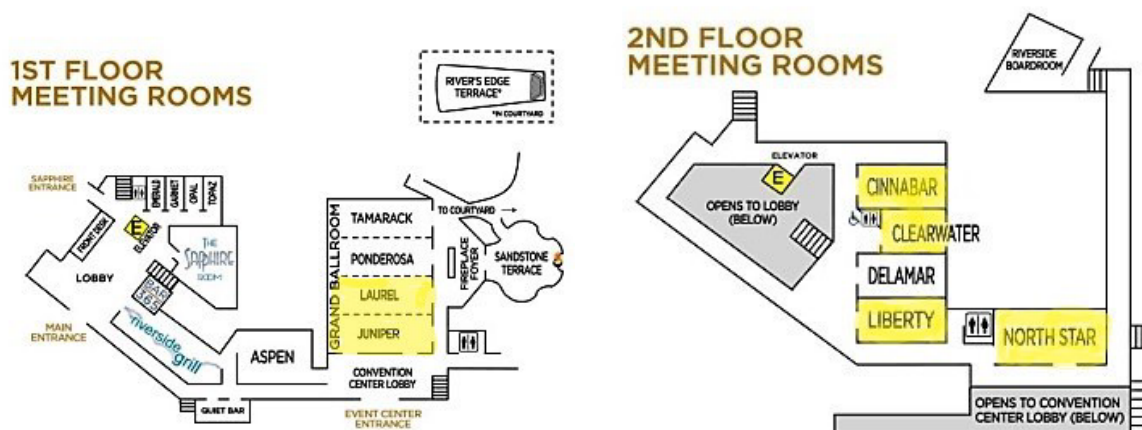
Roger Sherman  
Executive Director

## Conference at a glance

<b>Thursday March 13, 2025</b>
8:45-9:00 MST Welcome, Introductions and Housekeeping
9:00-10:30 Keynote Address: Expanding Our Understanding of Protective Factors Dr. Charlyn Harper Browne
10:30-10:45 MST Break
10:45-12:15 MST Plenary Workshop: Dr. Charlyn Harper Browne and Jane Zink
12:15-1:15 MST Lunch and Networking
1:15-2:30 MST Workshops Session 1
2:30-2:45 MST Break
2:45-4:15 MST Workshops Session 2
6:30 MST Evening Event: Community Town Hall
<b>Friday, March 14, 2025</b>
8:45-9:00 MST Welcome Back and Reflections
9:00-10:30 MST Workshops Session 3
10:30-10:45 MST Break
10:45-12:15 MST Workshops Session 4
12:15-2:30 MST Awards Luncheon and Closing Panel

## The Riverside Hotel Floorplan

(Rooms we using are highlighted in yellow)



## Plenaries

### DAY ONE KEYNOTE

#### ***Expanding Our Understanding of Protective Factors***

**Charlyn Harper Browne, PhD,**

Protective factors are often viewed as conditions that reduce the impact of risk factors and are primarily the responsibility of the individual. This view places the locus of solutions to problems mainly on the individual and exonerates communities and the larger society from their responsibility to deal with adverse social conditions. An expanded understanding of the Strengthening Families protective factors emphasizes the need to consider conditions and circumstances across all levels of the social ecology—societal, community, relational, and individual—that impact the lives of children, youth, parents, and families and help to build or undermine well-being.

Charlyn Harper Browne, PhD, is a former Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of Social Policy where she contributed to the research, theoretical, and training components of various projects related to children and families. Prior to joining CSSP, Dr. Browne served as a college and university administrator and professor in departments of psychology and counseling. Her educational background includes extensive post-doctoral coursework in clinical child and family psychology after earning a doctoral degree in early childhood education. Her publications focus on promoting healthy development and well-being in children, youth, and families.



**THURSDAY EVENING PREVENTION TOWN HALL 6:30 PM (See description on p.9) Northstar Room**

## Capnote Luncheon

### ***“The American Falls Experience”***

**Tennille Call, Jamie Garza, Randy Jensen and panel**

Our closing session is highlighting the community of American Falls. This panel brings together leaders and advocates from various sectors in American Falls to explore collaborative strategies that strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect. Each panelist represents an authentic voice in areas such as education, healthcare, social services, law enforcement, and nonprofit support. Together, they’ll share insights on the progress, challenges, and impact of their community-driven initiatives. By weaving together their unique perspectives and resources, these community members work toward building a safer, more supportive environment for children and families.



# The Ed! & Pinwheel Awards

In 2016, the **Idaho Children's Trust Fund** Board began a tradition to recognize people and groups who have made significant contributions in the past year.

## The Pinwheel Awardees for 2024 are

**Casey Family Programs**—Casey Family Programs have been instrumental with the Thriving Families, Safer Children coalition in Idaho. These efforts are working towards creating a more just and equitable child and family well-being system in Idaho. Through the support of Casey Family Programs, Thriving Families endeavors are working to build trusting relationships at the community, state, and national levels to enhance child and family well-being.

**Susan Bradford, MD**—Susan retired last year after an amazing career as a pediatrician in Idaho. Child abuse prevention has been a passion for Susan, and she served on the states Child Mortality review team. Dr. Bradford was in the first cohort learning to practice parental ACE screening. Children in the state of Idaho have been safer under Susan's eye.

**The Communities of Idaho's West Central Mountains**—The communities of Idaho's West Central Mountains are recognized for their foresight and perseverance in creating ongoing support for the youth of the region. The Planet Youth Movement, Ignite Idaho Family Resource Center and Assessment Center, the Youth Advocacy Coalition, the area's Early Learning Collaborative, St. Luke's community health, the Community School in Cascade and more have created an aligned system of supports for youth and their families.

**The Community of American Falls**—The community of American Falls is being recognized for its comprehensive focus on strengthening families and children in the community through aligning local government, education, the juvenile justice system, business and other community organizations with a shared mission: Read Talk Play Everyday—that has turned into a movement. Although the initiative began through a community collaborative focused on developing early childhood education, it has extended across the childhood spectrum through its community school and other community institutions.

**Lutheran Community Services Northwest**—LCSNW plays a unique role in the Treasure Valley by providing support for families facing short term crises to keep families together and avoid unnecessary involvement with the child welfare system. Through creating a network

of safe families and connections with other community resources, they can provide day and evening childcare combined with wraparound extended family-like support for parents who might otherwise be facing involvement with the child welfare system.

**IdahoSTARS**—IdahoSTARS has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to child abuse and neglect prevention through various impactful initiatives. By housing the Professional Development System IdahoSTARS equips early childhood educators with the tools and training necessary to create safe, nurturing environments. Their development and delivery of training and coaching support under the **Strengthening Families Framework** exemplifies their dedication to fostering family resilience and reducing risk factors for abuse and neglect.

# Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children

Winner of the 2024 Ed Van Dusen Legacy Award

The Ed Van Dusen Award for Exemplary Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, or The Ed! for short, is presented each year to a program selected by the Idaho Children's Trust Fund's Board of Directors, which exemplifies deep commitment to and successful practice in preventing child abuse and neglect. This year we celebrate the work of the **Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children**.



Idaho AEYC helps communities build quality programs and provide early learning opportunities to Idaho's children through various initiatives and collaboratives. Our work allows us to continue expanding vital resources to communities across Idaho to provide quality early learning resources and education opportunities to our children.

Idaho AEYC has been and will continue to be the champion of early education in Idaho. For 25 extraordinary years, they have challenged assumptions about early learning and care, standing as unwavering supporters of educators and families seeking childcare and early education services. Idaho AEYC dedicates itself to providing resources to families, early educators and communities, ensuring that every child can embrace high-quality early learning opportunities that are not just accessible but also affordable for every family. Their journey is an inspiration, and their commitment is boundless as they shape the future of Idaho's youngest minds with love, care, and boundless possibilities. Together, they are creating a legacy of impact and empowerment that will echo for generations to come.

## Day 1

Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>

### Thursday March 13, 2025

8:45-9:00 MST Welcome, Introductions and Housekeeping

9:00-10:30 Keynote Address: Expanding Our Understanding of Protective Factors  
Charlyn Harper Browne

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1:15-2:30 MST Workshops Session 1

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2:45-4:15 MST Workshops Session 2

6:30 MST Evening Event: Community Town Hall

# The Workshops

## Session 1: Thursday March 13, 1:15 – 2:30

### 1A: The Power of Storytelling in Healing for People with Lived Experience

**Beth Norton MPA / Room: Liberty**

This workshop will teach participants what makes an impactful and engaging story and how to deliver it effectively. This is a highly interactive workshop in which participants will practice the craft and delivery of their own 5-minute story around a theme. Participants will practice deep listening and experience a sense of connection with fellow participants. This process may help participants to process and integrate a certain life experience and feel comfortable guiding others in creating a safe space for storytelling.

### 1B: Where you Live Matters- Zip Codes Over Genetic Codes

**Rebecca Lemmons, MHS / Room: Cinnabar**

In this workshop, participants will learn more about the social determinants, also known as influencers or drivers, of health in the Treasure Valley communities around us. We will discuss how social determinants impact children and adults' ability to achieve better physical and behavioral health outcomes over the lifespan. But our local communities are rapidly growing and changing. Participants will learn what the most pressing social determinants are impacting our clients, colleagues, and neighbors from regional Community Health Needs Assessments, as well as how this data is being collected, where to find it, and what resources may be available to address some of these needs.

### 1C: United in Purpose, Diverse in Pathways: Exploring the Varied Journeys of Family Resource Centers

**Jill Trumble, Chris Wiersema, Traci Jamieson LPC / Room: Clearwater**

In this interactive workshop, we will explore how three diverse family resource centers, united by a single mission, navigate the many paths of serving families in need. While the destination is the same—strengthening and supporting families through the promotion of the 5 Protective Factors—the journey varies greatly. We'll delve into how each center adapts its strategies to meet the unique needs of the families it serves, encountering detours, roadblocks, and pivots along the way. As we examine these constantly changing paths, we will focus on how each center effectively promotes the 5 Protective Factors—parental resilience, social connections, concrete supports in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence of children. By learning from their experiences, you will gain insights into the dynamic and flexible approaches family resource centers use to build stronger, healthier communities. Join us to discover how, despite the many routes, the shared commitment to empowering families remains at the core of every center's work.

### 1D: IDHW's New Division of Family & Community Partnerships and You

**Jen Haddad, Monty Prow MPA, Laura Denner MPA, Sage Dixon / Room: Laurel**

Laura, Jen, and Monty will describe the goal of one of the newest Divisions at IDHW the Division of Family & Community Partnerships. This will include how services and systems can partner together to support kids and families. The team will provide examples of leveraging resources to provide support services to youth and families, as well as limiting the duplication of services by coordinating with community partners and key stakeholders. This session will cover upstream efforts at preventing child welfare involvement and new partnerships to support child welfare-involved families.

### 1E: Intro to HOPE (101) Creating Moments of HOPE

**Royale Lockhart MBA / Room: Northstar**

This session begins with a brief introduction to HOPE 101. Participants will explore how children's stories and games can effectively introduce the building blocks of HOPE. They will also learn strategies to strengthen families through relationships, environment, engagement, and opportunities for development. Each participant will leave with a curated list of children's books that illustrate these concepts, along with a self-created game to use with the children and families they support.



## Session 2: Thursday, March 13th 2:45 -4:15

### 2A: Babies Cry, Have a Plan

Nicole Hansen, Melquisha Dresser / Room: Clearwater

Learn how to use structured, small group conversations to facilitate transformation and healing within families, build community, develop peer-to-peer relationships, and engage parents as partners in the programs that serve them. Everyone will have the opportunity to learn and participate in the magic of intentional connection. If you have ever wanted to be part of a book club, women's circle, teen talk, or dad's group, this is the workshop for you. Participants will feel inspired, energized and excited to put into practice what they've learned.

### 2B: Consider Yourself a Mandated Supporter

Amanda Mills / Room: Liberty

As professionals working with children and families, our job is to help ensure that families are supported and thrive in their communities. We are also responsible for reporting when we suspect abuse or neglect is occurring. How can we ask more questions about a situation, offer more caring support, and bolster a family's Protective Factors before abuse or neglect ever occurs?

### 2C: Parenting and Childhood in the United States: Cultural Perspective Stories of People from Immigrant and Refugee Backgrounds

Joel Ntando / Room: Northstar

The Refugee Speakers Bureau/IOR will facilitate two hours talk of some parents and youth from immigrant and refugee backgrounds on their parenting and youthhood experiences in the United States, using cultural references.

### 2D: Stewards of Children

Cathy Carmen LMSW, Taryn Molitor / Room: Cinnabar

In this workshop, Taryn and Cathy will overview the new Darkness to Light Stewards of Children Sexual Abuse Prevention Training with a focus on the Additional Trainings now available for trained facilitators to offer. These are short, focused 45 min.-1 hr. trainings using topics introduced by the 2.5 hr. Stewards training that are adaptable to many groups. Come join them to explore 5-6 topics that are trauma informed, expanding the reach of the 5-steps to preventing child sexual abuse.

### 2E: Communities for Youth

Andrea Hill MPH, RDN, LD and Heather Allan / Room: Laurel

The workshop will describe an evidence based Upstream Prevention approach that focuses on data driven community engaged work that brings school and city leaders, parents, teens, and other folks together around the shared goal of making their community the best possible place for kids. Current data directly from Idaho youth will be shared that reveal the actual prevalence of the issue in Idaho, the key risk and protective factors in our communities, and some examples of the effective strategies and initiatives occurring throughout Idaho, with a specific focus on families.

**Community Town Hall: 6:30 pm to 8pm** We want to hear from you, so we are providing a forum tonight facilitated by Beth Norton, a former foster youth who has practiced standup comedy and storytelling for over a decade. She is a lived expert, and an entertaining host so don't miss it! Beth promises to engage our imaginations with what could be possible. A fully discussion-based session where no idea is off the table, this will be a time to dream wildly, to speak your ideas and get energized about how a system built around child and family wellbeing could look. Bring an open mind, solution-oriented approach and a willingness to fully participate in the discussion.

## Day 2

### Friday, March 14, 2025

8:45-9:00 MST Welcome Back and Reflections

9:00-10:30 MST Workshops Session 3

10:30-10:45 MST Break

10:45-12:15 MST Workshops Session 4

12:15-2:30 MST Awards Luncheon and Closing Panel

### Session 3: Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 9 - 10:30

#### 3A: Planet Youth in Action!

**Patty Giardina MSW** / *Room: Clearwater*

Patty will present on our community prevention in action: The ins and outs of our coalitions, how we make it sustainable, staffing, community partners, regional reach and successful programs/projects across the region.

#### 3B: Parent Café's: Engaging in Transformative Conversations that Nurture the Spirit of Family, promote well-being, and Prevent Violence

**Jessica Ruehrwein MA, Michelle Batten MA** / *Room: Northstar*

Learn how to use structured, small group conversations to facilitate transformation and healing within families, build community, develop peer-to-peer relationships, and engage parents as partners in the programs that serve them. Everyone will have the opportunity to learn and participate in the magic of intentional connection. If you have ever wanted to be part of a book club, women's circle, teen talk, or dad's group, this is the workshop for you. Participants will feel inspired, energized and excited to put into practice what they've learned.

#### 3C: A Panel Discussion on Mentorship Programs in Idaho

**Kim Hemmert LMSW, Valerie McCauley BPP, Gina Judd LPC, Sharlene Johnson BSW, Benton Smith** /

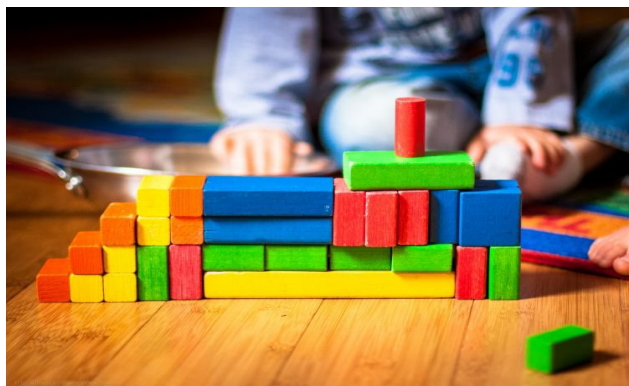
*Room: Cinnabar*

Humans are social creatures, and we need each other. Social connections are the fabric of our society. It is a Protective Factor and a building block of HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences). Mentoring comes in all shapes and sizes depending on the strengths and needs of the individual. Come learn from four leading experts on what mentorship programs look like, the science behind how mentoring strengthens families and communities and builds resilience, and ideas for how you can incorporate mentoring into your work.

#### 3D: Advocating for Idaho's Children and Families

**Jonny Carkin and the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children** / *Room: Laurel*

The workshop will provide an overview of Idaho's political and policy landscape and advocacy tactics to effectively engage decision-makers on issues related to supporting the needs of children and families. The session will also cover messaging and communication strategies, rules on grassroots and direct lobbying, and community engagement strategies.



### **3E: Breaking Chains Academy: Eliminating Obstacles, Creating Opportunities- A Transformative Journey**

**Luis Granados, Jasmine Flores, and students** / **Room: Liberty**

Join us for a glimpse into Breaking Chains Academy, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming lives. Discover our education services, work skills training, and mentoring activities that empower individuals to thrive. Learn how our tailored programs break barriers and foster personal growth, equipping participants for success in education, the workforce, and relationships. Explore the impact of mentorship in shaping brighter futures and creating lasting community change.

## **Session 4: Friday, March 14th, 10:45 to 12:15**

### **4A: The Real Deal: Mental Health by Teens, for Teens**

**Katie Francis Ed.S, Hailey Clements** / **Room: Northstar**

This session will introduce an innovative initiative by the Idaho Resilience Project (IRP) in partnership with Wilder School District's student-run animation studio and Wonder Media. Together, they have created a series of animated educational videos that focus on critical mental health topics, including **Relationships, Stress Response, social media and Digital Health, Self-Worth and Self-Esteem**. The collaboration merges the creative skills of students, the guidance of educators, and insights from mental health professionals. Additionally, an **interactive curriculum** has been developed to accompany these videos, making them accessible and relevant to young adults in various educational or community settings.

### **4B: From Collaboration to Change: Engaging with Community Schools**

**Katie Marshall** / **Room: Cinnabar**

Discover how community organizations can transform lives by partnering with community schools. Participants will learn practical strategies for forming meaningful partnerships and see firsthand the impact these collaborations have through the lens of a community school coordinator. Gain insight into how organizations like yours can contribute to creating thriving schools and stronger communities across Idaho.

### **4C: Helping Professionals are not do-it-for- them Professionals- Maintaining Ethical Boundaries**

**Alejandro Zamora LCSW, PhD, Jessica Lecetura LPC** / **Room: Laurel**

Helping professionals - such as social workers, counselors, and other family advocates - want to help families and youth find success. That said, our goal should be to help individuals make decisions, choices, and guide outcomes for themselves. We cannot usurp these decisions in our professional quest to do good. This session will review our ethical obligation of creating and maintaining ethical boundaries in the complicated gray of helping those in a time/place who may need uplifting.

### **4D: Fathers at Work: Building Healthy Masculinity for Stronger Families and Brighter Futures**

**Jeff Matsushita** / **Room: Clearwater**

Join us for an overview of the *Fathers at Work* program. Fatherhood provides an opportunity for men to move away from some of the unwritten rules of manhood, like always being tough or hiding emotions, moving towards practices of being present and emotionally aware. Fathers set a strong example for their children, boosting their confidence and self-esteem. Involved dads also support their children's learning, helping them do better in school. Through fatherhood, men become more open and balanced while helping their kids thrive both emotionally and academically.

### **4E: HOPE Lab: Turning Knowledge into Action**

**KJ Brant MS** / **Room: Liberty**

This 1.5-hour workshop is a dynamic practicum designed to help participants build on the foundational principles of Healthy Outcomes and Positive Experiences (HOPE) explored in HOPE 101. In this hands-on workshop, students will learn to apply the tools, strategies, and frameworks from the first course to real-world scenarios. Through interactive exercises and guided reflection, participants will deepen their understanding of how to practice H.O.P.E. in their communities, workplaces, and personal lives.



## Workshop Presenter Biographies

### **Heather Allan, MPH**

Heather is the Boise Community Lead for Communities for Youth, a collaborative initiative aimed at enhancing youth well-being, and a certified HOPE 101 trainer. She is passionate about creating healthy, safe environments for young people and driving meaningful community change. Heather is also Project Coordinator for the Youth Alcohol and Substance Use Prevention Program at Central District Health, where she focuses on education and promoting protective factors to reduce substance misuse among youth. Heather empowers families and communities by implementing upstream prevention strategies that foster connectedness, resilience, and positive youth development. In her free time, Heather enjoys competitive archery, hiking, camping, and other outdoor activities with her family.

### **Michelle Batten, MFS**

Michelle Batten is the Safe Families Program Manager at Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW), where she leads the intake process for families, manages referrals, and oversees the placement and monitoring of children in Host Homes. With a strong focus on clinical and safety oversight in the field, Michelle assesses family risk factors and child safety while evaluating immediate needs through her expertise in the Protective Factor Framework, a tool for strengthening families. Michelle holds a master's degree in human development and family studies and is currently pursuing a master's in clinical mental health. Her passion is to help parents navigate the complicated behaviors of children who have experienced adversity in their early years utilizing her training as a TBRI® Educator and as a ACPI Certified Parent Coach with a specialized focus in trauma. Additionally, Michelle is certified to lead Making Sense of Your Worth and Parent Cafes. Before joining LCSNW, Michelle worked with the Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, accumulating over 15 years of experience in programming related to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and providing support for foster and adoptive families.

### **KJ Brant, MS**

For 20 years, KJ has worked in victim rights, victim advocacy, child welfare, and child abuse and neglect prevention. For 14 years, she specialized as a victim advocate, supporting individuals and families navigating the complexities of domestic and legal challenges, particularly those involved in the child welfare system or facing other significant adversities. KJ currently contributes to child abuse and neglect prevention efforts through her work with the Idaho Children's Trust Fund. She is also a long-standing member and chair of the Region 1 Idaho Citizens Review Panel, where she oversees the review of child abuse cases in North Idaho and provides feedback to the Idaho legislature on child welfare matters. Her expertise extends to training trauma-informed and strength-based topics, including Adverse Childhood Experiences, Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences, Biology of Resilience, the Science of Positivity/Thriving, and Trauma Stewardship. KJ holds degrees and certifications from Stanford University, Harvard University, and Loyola University, including a master's degree in biology (emphasis on Human Development).



**Anson Call, JD**

On July 5, 2022, Judge Call was appointed as a Magistrate Judge in Idaho's Sixth Judicial District for Bannock County, with responsibility for the child protection and juvenile justice case load. Judge Call currently serves on the Idaho Supreme Court's Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Advisory Committees.

**Tennille Call**

Tennille Call, Director of Education for United Way of Southeastern Idaho, is passionate about improving educational opportunities for children and families in her community. A Southeast Idaho native and BYU graduate in Elementary Education, she brings years of experience in teaching, curriculum development, and early learning advocacy. Tennille works to expand access to quality childcare and preschool programs and empower families and communities to invest in our greatest natural resource: our children. At home, she and her husband are dedicated to raising their own children to be compassionate and community-focused individuals.

**Jonny Carkin**

Jonny Carkin serves as the Director of Operation for the Early Learning Collaborative (ELC) Project at Idaho AEYC where he provides strategic technical assistance, advocacy resources, professional development opportunities, and project management support to ELC communities. Jonny has worked in public affairs in Idaho for nearly 15 years. His background includes community organizing, running field operations, and managing both electoral and issue campaigns. He has worked both in the non-profit sector and as a consultant for a national public affairs firm working on issues including conservation, education, and healthcare.

**Cathy Carmen MSW, LCSW**

Cathy Carmen is the Darkness to Light Stewards of Children Coordinator at Idaho Children's Trust Fund. She has been a facilitator and instructor in this field since 2015. Her background and experience are with children and adults with lived experience with sexual abuse, educational program development and outdoor education. When not doing prevention work, Cathy can be found exploring Idaho's beautiful rivers and mountains with her family.

**Hailey Clements**

Hailey Clements is a seasoned community engagement professional based in Boise, Idaho, with over a decade of experience in digital communications and community building. With a strong background in advocacy campaign development and nonprofit work, Hailey excels in bridging relationships and facilitating communication between organizations and communities. Raised in Idaho and driven by a deep-rooted connection to her community, Hailey returned to the state 3 years ago to focus on impactful community work. Currently serving as the Community Outreach & Marketing Director for the Idaho Resilience Project, Hailey successfully manages statewide marketing and promotion, community outreach, and strategic planning for regional collaboratives. With a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from the University of Utah, Hailey brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her mission-driven work.

**Laura Denner, MPA**

Laura was born and raised in Eugene, Oregon, but considers herself almost native, having relocated to Idaho in 2002. She is a graduate of Boise State University with a B.A. in Sociology, Graduate Certificate in State, Local, and Regional Governance, and a Master of Public Administration. Laura previously worked for the Idaho Supreme Court, holding roles as a Project Manager for the Idaho Behavioral Health Council, and Deputy Trial Court Administrator. She continues to act as a trained facilitator for statewide Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Workshops for IBHC. She held prior roles in program administration for Ada County and worked with behavioral health clients at the Idaho Department of Correction. Laura is a mom to a wild five-year-old boy, Teddy, and an equally rambunctious one-year-old sheepadoodle puppy, Penny.



**Sage Dixon**

Sage Dixon is the Regional Director of Faith-Based Initiatives at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The primary focus of his role is to engage the faith community to assist in promoting the well-being of children, families, and individuals throughout Idaho. Prior to this role, he represented Dist. 1 in the Idaho House of Representatives where he was chairman multiple committees, and served as Assistant Majority Leader. Sage lives in Sandpoint with his wife, Veronica.

**Melquisha Dresser**

Mel is an MSW student at Boise State University, currently interning at the Idaho Children's Trust Fund. She has a strong commitment to child welfare and abuse prevention, focusing on strategies to prevent issues like abusive head trauma and advocating for the safety and well-being of children.

**Jasmine Flores**

Jasmine Flores is the Communication and Business Development Coordinator at Breaking Chains Academy of Development. Jasmine worked as a Community Resource Coordinator for the Nampa School District in 2022. It was through this experience where her passion for nonprofit work began. Jasmine faced many hardships throughout her childhood, which caused her to go without the resources and support that she needed to maintain a healthy life. She is witness to the impact of when one steps up to offer support, love, and guidance and is determined to help transform the Nampa community through collaboration to build holistic support for all to access.

**Katie Francis, M.Ed., Ed.S.**

Katie Francis, Ed.S.- My journey has always included working with children, and I love working with the toughest crowd. The work I feel most passionate about is providing opportunity and education for all that can help create true change. I have worked in education for the last 14 years and have made the shift to non-profit leadership to "follow my dreams". Using my educational background as a certified teacher, principal and superintendent has allowed my work with The Resilient Schools Project to grow to all corners of the state. I am truly looking forward to the coming year and the release of our social-emotional curriculum for "tweens".

**Jamie Garza**

Jamie Garza is the Programs Director for American Falls School District #381, bringing over two decades of experience in education, including 18 years as an elementary teacher and six years as a Federal Programs Coordinator in the Mini-Cassia area. A granddaughter of immigrants, Jamie holds two master's degrees and is deeply committed to making a difference, living by the mantra, "See a need, fill a need."

**Patty Giardina, MSW**

Patty Giardina is the Executive Director for the West Central Mountains Youth Advocacy Coalition in Idaho. She holds a master's in social work from Walden University and a BA in Psychology from Boise State University. She has spent many years in the school setting as a school counselor and brings over a decade of program development and community social work to her role in implementing Planet Youth across the rural West Central Mountains region.

**Luis Granados**

Luis Granados was raised in a challenging environment marked by gangs and violence and faced a tumultuous upbringing. However, with the guidance of mentors during this period, he managed to break free from the self-destructive path he was on. Inspired by those who have supported him in this journey, Luis developed a profound and sincere passion for helping others. Luis utilizes both his firsthand experience and acquired knowledge to guide and support young individuals trapped in destructive lifestyles. Luis Granados is the Executive Director of Breaking Chains Academy of Development and stands as a beacon of hope and inspiration illuminating paths toward brighter futures in his community.

**Jen Haddad**

Jen currently works at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare as the Program Manager in the division of Family and Community Partnerships. Her responsibilities include overseeing the 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine, Resource and Service Navigation program, and enhancing services and supports for kinship families. Prior to joining IDHW in 2015, Jen spent 11 years working at the Friends of Children and Families, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start program, where she served as the Family Services Manager. Jen is on the Board of Directors for the Idaho Children's Trust Fund, and she graduated with Honors from Albertson College of Idaho. Throughout her career, she has been dedicated to improving services and outcomes for children, youth, and families involved in child and family-serving systems. During her free time, Jen enjoys traveling, exploring new places with her husband, and immersing herself in the great outdoors.

**Nicole Hansen**

Nicole Hansen is currently completing her master's degree in social work. She has years of experience in child abuse prevention, and advocacy work. Nicole loves being a part of the team at the Idaho Children's Trust Fund, where she contributes to efforts to strengthen families and prevent abusive head trauma in infants and young children.

**Kim Hemmert, LMSW**

Kim Hemmert, LMSW, is the Grants Manager and Strategic Planner for the Idaho Children's Trust Fund and leads the statewide HOPE Conquers ACEs Community of Practice. She helps organize Child Abuse Prevention Month in April and provides training, technical assistance, and building community capacity. Her previous experience with Head Start and Early Head Start elevated her understanding of why healthy brain development and attachment is so critical in the early years of life. She is an advocate for children and was a foster parent for the state of Idaho for six years. She enjoys swimming, dancing, being outdoors, and the arts, especially theatre and writing poetry.

**Andrea Hill, MPH**

Andrea Hill, MPH, RDN, LD, is passionate about prevention! With professional experience in community nutrition education, community engagement, and community assessments she believes that meaningful connections play a vital role in reducing barriers that impact living happy and healthy lives. It's her professional mission to engage, educate, and empower individuals, families, and communities so that life can be well lived. In addition to her professional experience, Andrea draws upon her role as a parent of four in her efforts to help Idaho communities realize their strengths and capacity to make a difference for Idaho's young people.

**Arial Howell**

Arial Howell is the Community Impact Manager, for the United Way of Eastern Idaho and is responsible for driving initiatives that promote the organization's mission and improve the lives of individuals in the community. Prior to this, Arial held the position of Business Manager/Grant Manager for a decade, she oversaw financial and operational aspects, using her grant writing and management expertise to secure funding from government agencies, foundations, and corporate sponsors while ensuring compliance and promoting transparency.

**Traci Jamieson, LCPC**

Traci Jamieson is the Executive Director and a Licensed Professional Counselor at Ignite Idaho Family Resource Center. With over 20 years of experience working alongside children and families, Traci is dedicated to providing support and advocacy to those in need. Throughout her career, she has worked endlessly to create positive change in the lives of the individuals and families she serves. Traci has been happily married for 30 years and is the proud mother of three biological children, seven adopted children, and has opened her heart and home to over 109 foster children. Her unique blend of professional expertise and personal experience has given her a profound understanding of family dynamics, resilience, and the power of unconditional support.

**Randy Jensen**

Randy Jensen serves as the Superintendent of the American Falls School District in Idaho, bringing decades of educational leadership and a commitment to student success. With a focus on fostering innovation and community collaboration, he has dedicated his career to creating inclusive, high-quality learning environments that prepare students for future opportunities.

**Sharlene Johnson, BSW**

Sharlene Johnson holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree, is a Certified Prevention Specialist, and a Certified Public Manager. She worked at the Idaho Office of Drug Policy for ten years as the Strategic Prevention Framework Grant Director, helping to promote positive change in other communities across Idaho. Her dedication to youth empowerment and community well-being has made a significant impact in Kamiah and beyond.

**Gina Judd, LCPC**

Gina Judd, LCPC, has been serving children personally and professionally since adulthood. She and her husband of 34 years raised five children and served for nine years as therapeutic foster parents, eventually adopting one of their foster children, and subsequently fostering a grandchild for a short time. During Gina's early college years, she studied to become a teacher and used her knowledge in a volunteer capacity to as a founder of the Pocatello Community Charter School (PCCS), one of Idaho's first charter schools, now in its 24th year of operation. After establishing PCCS, Gina changed her educational direction. As a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, she worked for many years helping children heal from the trauma of sexual abuse at Bright Tomorrows, a Child Advocacy Center. From there, she and her husband established a private counseling service where they pioneered neurofeedback services for mental wellness in Idaho, and then she became a Clinician for Children's Mental Health within the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Division of Behavioral Health. In this role, she served as a YES Program Specialist and then a Wraparound Program Supervisor. Gina's current role as Executive Director of Friends of the Children - Eastern Idaho allows her to put into practice her passion for improving the lives of children and their families and magnifies her belief that the best way to change the world is one person and one interaction at a time.

**Whitney Lankford**

Whitney Lankford has been dedicated to family engagement work in the American Falls area for the past six years. As a founding member of the Read Talk Play Initiative and a five-year member of the American Falls Early Learning Collaborative, Whitney supports families by promoting the importance of reading, talking, and playing together every day. Whitney is passionate about empowering children and families to thrive through meaningful connections and early learning opportunities.

**Jessica Lecertua, MA**

Jessica Lecertua, MA in Counseling, LPC is the school counseling administrator for Idaho Virtual Academy. Jessica is a long time Board member and former Chair for the Idaho School Counseling Association.

**Rebecca Lemmons, MHS**

Rebecca Lemmons serves as the Regional Director of Community Health and Well-Being across Idaho and Oregon for Saint Alphonsus Health System. She worked for more than ten years for the State of Idaho in both the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Division of Public Health, and Central District Health Department's Division of Community and Environmental Health as a Policy Analyst. She also served as the Director of Community Impact at the United Way of Treasure Valley. Rebecca has a strong background leading community assessments, strategic planning, public health policy, and tactics for addressing the social influencers of health with an emphasis on housing as healthcare. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and English from the College of Idaho, and a Masters in Health Sciences from Boise State University. She serves on the boards of the Boise Public Library, the Good Samaritan Home, and the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children.



### **Royale Lockhart, MBA, M.Ed**

Royale Lockhart is the Region 1 Lead Quality Child Care consultant on the IdahoSTARS project for the University of Idaho's Center on Disabilities and Human Development. In this role, she uses her 30 years of experience as a childcare director to support childcare providers in building quality programs that support the needs of the children and families in their community. Throughout the years, she has noticed the key role early learning plays in helping families identify and celebrate their positive childhood experiences and at the same time, connect them to vital community resources when they are faced with adverse childhood experiences. As a hope facilitator and champion, she is looking forward to supporting childcare programs as they utilize the tools of HOPE along with other strengths-based approaches to support their children and families. Royale has a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and a master's in business administration. In her free time, she enjoys being creative, spending time with her husband, and watching her young adult children explore adulthood and expand their horizons.

### **Katie Marshall**

Katie Marshall (she/her) is the Community Schools Engagement and Sustainability Manager at United Way of Treasure Valley and serves on the Board of Directors for the Meridian Library Foundation. A former teacher with a degree in Education from Boise State University, she is committed to supporting Idaho schools.

### **Jeff Matsushita**

Jeff Matsushita is a believer in change and is committed to ending violence against women, girls, and gender-nonconforming community members. Through storytelling and facilitated conversations, he creates spaces for men to reflect, share, and explore ways to contribute positively and healthily to their communities. Since 2004, Jeff has worked with diverse groups, including collegiate and professional athletes, military personnel, law enforcement officers, and men from various communities. With a deep respect for personal stories and connections, Jeff brings authenticity and purpose to his work—while always appreciating a great pick-up game of basketball.

### **Valerie McCauley**

Valerie McCauley holds a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Brigham Young University and has over 22 years of experience as a homeschooling mom. She has dedicated her life to nurturing and educating children, both at home and through community service. Valerie served for two years as director and chairperson of the Distinguished Young Women of Boise Valley Scholarship Program. A passionate advocate for children, Valerie and her husband volunteered as foster parents for six years and co-founded Idaho Foster Care Reform, working with legislators to pass laws protecting vulnerable children. In 2019, Valerie founded Hand in Hand Family Mentorship, a nonprofit focused on connecting struggling families with healthy community support.



### **Amanda Mills**

Amanda Mills is the Strengthening Families Specialist at IdahoAEYC and has worked in the field of Early Childhood for over 20 years. She works with early childhood professionals, families and family-serving organizations to integrate the Strengthening Families Framework and the Building Blocks of HOPE into practice. Strengths-based supports decrease stress in families, leading to better outcomes for children.

**Taryn Molitor**

Taryn Molitor, BS Community Health Education from Idaho State University, 2007. Taryn began her career in child abuse prevention in 2009 with the ICARE Program of St. Vincent de Paul North Idaho. First serving as a home visitor and Nurturing Parenting Program Facilitator, she soon gained certification as an Authorized Facilitator and Certified Instructor for the Stewards of Children sexual abuse prevention program. Taryn is a facilitator for the Ready 4 Kindergarten! school readiness program as well as a HOPE Facilitator for the HOPE Community of Practice across Idaho. In her personal life, she is a wife and mother to four children and serves as a small group leader for Real Life Post Falls' High School Ministry. She is always up for a coffee date/meeting and loves exploring our beautiful area.

**Beth Norton, MPA**

Beth Norton is a former foster youth who has practiced standup comedy and storytelling for over a decade. Best known locally as the host and director of Story Story Late Night, Beth crafts and delivers personal stories, curates creative show themes and coaches' other storytellers for six unique shows throughout the year. Her vulnerable and humorous accounts often leave audiences in laughter and tears. The acceptance she has experienced and community she has developed through this practice has been instrumental in her personal healing journey. Beth is a first-generation college graduate with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in public administration; she leverages her education, lived experience and unnatural love of public speaking to help our society heal and our systems change.

**Joel Ntando**

Joel Ntando holds graduate qualifications in Cultural and Media Studies, French from the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), and coordinates the Refugee Speakers Bureau (RSB), a program of the Idaho Office for Refugees (IOR).

**Patty Porath**

Patty Porath dedicated 18 years to early childhood education, teaching at St. Johns Preschool in American Falls. She played a key role in establishing the first agriculture program in the local school system, now recognized as one of the top programs in the nation. For over two decades, Patty has also served as a CASA volunteer, advocating for the safety and well-being of children in abusive or neglectful situations.

**Monty Prow, MPA**

Monty has worked to support youth and families in Idaho since 2002. Currently working as the Deputy Director for Child, Youth & Family Services at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and previously at the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections (IDJC) Monty has worked in research, project management, quality improvement and as the Director for IDJC for over five years previous to his current role. Monty holds a Master's in Public Administration from Boise State University. While not at work, he enjoys spending time with his wife riding bikes and playing with their mini labradoodle.

**Jessica Ruehrwein**

Jessica Ruehrwein is the District Director for Lutheran Community Services Northwest in Boise, Idaho, where she opened a regional office and leads the Safe Families for Children program. With over 25 years of experience in nonprofit and for-profit sectors, Jessica specializes in organizational leadership, process facilitation, and program development. Jessica is passionate about fostering connections, building cross-sector collaborations, and driving systemic change. Outside of work, she enjoys outdoor activities like rafting and backpacking with her husband and two grown sons.

**Benton Smith**

Benton Alexander Smith is a nonprofit professional with more than a decade of experience overseeing youth programs. He has led after school programs for elementary students, summer camps and support groups for teens diagnosed with cancer and is currently the program director at Boise Bicycle Project where he manages education programs for teenagers and incarcerated women. He also helped BBP launch new apprenticeship opportunities for teens and young adults in 2024.



**Jill Trumble**

Jill Trumble is the Director of Family Strengthening at Family Advocates, where she has dedicated her career to empowering families and promoting resilience. With over 30 years of experience in education, Jill is passionate about creating positive, inspiring, and motivating environments for those she serves. She deeply values relationships and believes in the power of service to uplift and strengthen individuals and communities. As a wife and mother of three adult children, a bonus son, and soon-to-be bonus son, Jill understands the importance of family dynamics and the unique paths each family takes. She is also eagerly anticipating the arrival of her first grandchild. Jill's personal and professional experiences fuel her commitment to supporting families and helping them navigate the challenges they face.

**Chris Wiersema**

Chris Wiersema is the President & CEO of United Way of Idaho Falls & Bonneville County. Chris was first introduced to the nonprofit world as a volunteer board member and drastically shifted her career from Analytical Chemist to nonprofit professional. Chris has been involved in the nonprofit arena for over 30 years. Her experience spans over many types of nonprofits including San Diego Food Bank, Idaho Food Bank, Domestic Violence & Community Resource Center to the Idaho Humane Society and Idaho Botanical Garden. These experiences gave her a deep appreciation for how nonprofits seek to improve the quality of life for their region; one program at a time.

**Alejandro Zamora, LCSW, PhD**

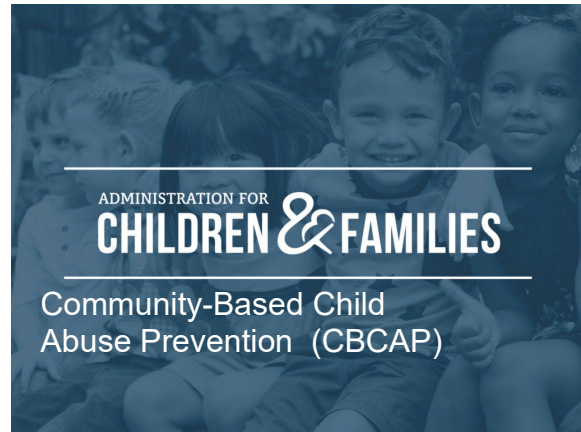
Alex Zamora, Ph.D., LCSW is Principal of Wilder Elementary and Idaho Future-Ready Academy. Alex was a former Board member of the Idaho Children's Trust Fund and taught as part-time faculty for an MSW program.



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