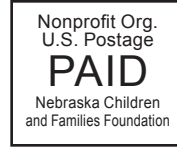




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Nebraska Children and Family Foundation's sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent Charity Evaluator. www.charitynavigator.org

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Cultivating the good life for all of our children
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation | October 2018



100-Day Challenge
Big results in a short time for Sarpy County families

Changemakers 2018
Child welfare advocate and author to present keynote

International Exchange
Youth from Nebraska and Argentina share lessons

We celebrate the
Changemakers
 who help our children bloom

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2018

Patron Reception honoring Jessie Rasmussen: 10:00–11:00 a.m. | Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
 Embassy Suites La Vista

TICKETS

\$75 each for luncheon only | \$100 each for luncheon and Patron Reception
 \$750/table (10 to table) for luncheon only | \$1000/table (10 to table) and Patron Reception



This year's keynote will be presented by **Ashley Rhodes-Courter**, *New York Times* and best-selling author of "Three Little Words," and child welfare advocate.

You're also invited to a pre-luncheon reception, where we'll honor Jessie Rasmussen with the 2018 Grace Abbott Award for her contributions to the children of Nebraska.

Purchase your tickets at
NCCHANGEMAKERS.ORG

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe, but another summer is coming to a close, the new school year is in full swing, and cooler weather is on its way.

We had a busy, productive summer here at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. As an organization, we've been focusing a lot of our internal efforts on learning how better to harness the power of collective impact and what that looks like for the communities we work with and the people they serve.



Mary Jo Pankoke

We've also had plenty of successes this summer: The 100-Day Challenge partnership with Lift Up Sarpy County came to an end with impressive results, which you can read about on page 6. Beyond School Bells organized its second year of Conservation Management Internships with youth from Girls Inc. and Native Futures—plus, their Think, Make, Create Labs have gained traction in several more communities. Check out page 8 to learn more. On page 12, you can read about the impact Rooted In Relationships is having in home- and center-based child care through the implementation of the Pyramid Model framework, and on page 14, you'll find a recap of the recent learning exchange the Connected Youth Initiative was honored to participate in with a group from Argentina, thanks to the International Youth Foundation's (Re) Connecting Youth initiative.

This fall, we're also gearing up for one of my favorite annual events, the Changemakers luncheon. This year's event is on October 23 at the Embassy Suites La Vista. We'll be welcoming keynote speaker Ashley Rhodes-Courter (get to know her on page 10) to the luncheon, and in a patron reception beforehand, it will be our pleasure to honor Jessie Rasmussen with this year's Grace Abbott Award for her contributions to helping Nebraska's children grow and bloom. I hope to see you there—tickets and more information can be found at NCCChangemakers.org.

Amid all the hustle and bustle of fall, I want to make sure to reiterate how important YOU are to our mission. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this work, and I know without a doubt that none of it would be possible without the ongoing support and encouragement of caring, compassionate people like you. Thank you for everything you do.

Best wishes for a bountiful fall,

Mary Jo

Mary Jo Pankoke
 President and CEO



Our mission is to create
positive change
 for Nebraska's children
 through *community*
 engagement.

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STAY CONNECTED

- facebook.com/nebraskachildren
- Twitter: @NE_children

Event highlights prevention efforts in Norfolk

On Wednesday, September 12, over 100 people turned out for a "Business After Hours" event hosted by the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and held at the downtown U.S. Bank location. The highlight of the event was a presentation about the great work being done by the Norfolk Family Coalition and how they fit into the statewide prevention work of Bring Up Nebraska. Mayor Matt Moening gave a great welcome and brief intro about the Norfolk Family Coalition. On hand to speak about the Coalition's work were Kathy Nordby, Mike Hunt, Leonor Fuhrer, and Candy Allen of the Coalition - highlighting the challenges faced in Norfolk, but also some of the recent successes including decreases in births to teens and juvenile arrests and an impressive increase in the number of third graders reading at a proficient level, which is an important indicator of future success. Rounding out the presentation was First Lady Susanne Shore who highlighted that communities are in the best position and mostly highly motivated to make changes for the benefit of the families and children in their community. 🍷



Leonor Fuhrer (left), Coordinator for the Norfolk Family Coalition with First Lady Susanne Shore

If you'd like to learn more about community-based prevention, visit BringUpNebraska.org

HUD awards Nebraska nearly \$3.3 million to address youth homelessness

Nebraska Children's Connected Youth Initiative and other partners were recently chosen to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. UNL's Center on Children, Families and the Law will partner with Nebraska Children and the Nebraska Balance of State Continuum of Care on the initiative.

"Young people who are victims of abuse, family conflict, or aging out of foster care are especially vulnerable to homelessness," said HUD Secretary Ben Carson. "We're working with our local partners to support innovative new approaches to help young people find stable housing, break the cycle of homelessness and lead them on a path to self-sufficiency." The 11 communities selected

have four months to develop and submit to HUD a coordinated community plan to prevent and end youth homelessness. They will also participate in a program evaluation to inform the federal effort to prevent and end youth homelessness going forward and will serve as leaders in the nation on the work to end homelessness among young people. 🍷

Young people encouraged to enter multi-media contest

Are you creative? Do you have a way with words, visuals, or even video? We are looking for young people that are currently or have been dealing with a mental health challenge explain how they are more than a label or more than their diagnosis.

Through Nebraska's System of Care (SOC), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and other system partners hope to reduce stigma, spread hope, and educate the public with this multi-media contest open to youth.

The contest theme is "I am Not My Label," and the competition is open to entrants aged 24 and

younger. Entries must be received by Tuesday, November 20, 2018, and all artwork must be the original work of the entrant. 🍷



NebraskaMentalHealth.com

One in four adults (approximately 61.5 million Americans) experience mental illness in a given year. Approximately 20 percent of youth ages 13-18 live with a mental health condition.



Project Harmony, The Kim Foundation, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation's Project Everlast, Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare, Nebraska DHHS, and PromiseShip have come together to improve access to mental health resources and treatment through one dedicated website, NebraskaMentalHealth.com. While initially launched to help citizens of the Omaha Metro, the organizations involved are looking to expand its reach across the state. When searching for a mental health practitioner, NebraskaMentalHealth.com can provide guidance. The website is a "one-stop shop" to help you

navigate through various medical definitions, common mental health evaluations, and treatment models. You can also search for providers through filters such as language spoken, ages served, payment options, etc.

This is not only a great tool to find the right provider, but also an opportunity for providers to share their expertise with the community. This site allows providers to create an account detailing their certifications and specialties. All Nebraska providers are encouraged to create an account on NebraskaMentalHealth.com. 🍷

100-Day Challenge was a success for 51 Sarpy County families



This spring, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation joined forces with Lift Up Sarpy County for the 100-Day Challenge, an ambitious collaborative initiative designed to accelerate community- and state-level efforts to improve the financial stability for a group of families and young adults to ensure they have the best opportunities to thrive.

Lift Up Sarpy County was selected by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative as one of two sites nationwide to embark on the intense, multi-stakeholder 100-Day Challenge to engage local partners to address the needs of young adults and vulnerable families. During the challenge, Lift Up Sarpy County partnered with Nebraska Children to develop innovative ways to align public and private resources in Sarpy County to create new economic avenues for 51 families and young adults who are already accessing assistance through Community Response and Project Everlast. "It started with a large group that traveled to Albuquerque from Nebraska and identified the goal for the 100 days, which was to serve 50 families and/or youth to improve their financial capability within a 100-day period of time," explained Jason Feldhaus, Vice President of the Connected Youth Initiative.

The Challenge involved combining state and federal resources with local banking partners to ensure youth and families have access to predator-free asset purchase supports, low-interest loans and microloans, and wealth development through the accumulation of valued assets. "An amazing amount of work was completed in 100 days," Feldhaus said. "Sarpy County gained new access points and partnerships through an increase in locally based opportunities for people in need in Bellevue, with plans to expand to other locations in the county, and an increase in human service workforce and capacity to serve families in need in Sarpy County." Specifically, the effort helped 51 families experience an increase in financial stability, positively affecting the lives of an estimated 84 children. Additionally, through new

partnerships with Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership (ENCAP), PromiseShip, and Heartland Family Service, Sarpy County will gain its first housing access point for the homeless.

The Challenge garnered the following results:

- 22 families obtained higher-paying jobs through the replication of the Douglas County Employment Access Point. ResCare Workforce Services and Heartland Workforce Solution partnered with 20 local employers, each offering positions paying an average wage of \$11.25 per hour at 34 hours per week. These agencies referred two families to Legal Aid for help asserting their rights under Nebraska's new criminal record lookback law, which will take effect in July. In addition, 10 families are currently in the hiring process pending official offers of employment.
- Family Housing Advisory Services enrolled six young adults in Opportunity Passport™ and expanded the program to families served by Community Response through financial education and credit counseling. Eight families obtained more

affordable housing, six families received loans to clear a debt or purchase an asset, and 12 more families are awaiting final approval for matches and loans.

- Pinnacle Bank established partnerships in eight Sarpy County ZIP codes and provided access to second-chance banking, low-interest debt consolidation loans, and other financial services in all 11 ZIP codes. Three families have opened accounts at one of Pinnacle's branch locations, and it is expected that more families will do so in the future.
- 26 new households were served by Legal Aid of Nebraska through walk-in clinics, one-on-one attorney consultations, and legal representation. Legal Aid was able to help families with wage

garnishments, judgments, and child support and custody orders, and they are currently in the process of helping three families file for bankruptcy.

"We heard from a lot of participating families that they had 'more space for hope,'" Feldhaus said. "For many of the participants in the program, the systemic barriers to financial stability and literacy can be crushing. Through these opportunities to learn more about financial management and to gain access to critical banking products and legal support, participants could better envision and prepare for a long-term future for their families."

In addition to the tremendous gains participants experienced,

another great success was that the initiative fostered momentum and communication among financial professionals and social service organizations. The 100-Day Challenge mobilized community action and was able to establish bold and creative ways to build a system response to problems.

The success does not end with these 51 families. Efforts will continue to help more families and young adults in Sarpy County. The 100-Day Challenge laid the foundation for what is vital in establishing true stability for these individuals. 🌱

51 families increased their financial stability (with another 13 families currently in progress)

84 children benefited from the efforts to support families

2 families secured safe, stable housing
8 families obtained more affordable housing

26 people received Legal Aid services
3 families are currently in the process of receiving assistance filing for bankruptcy

6 families received loans to clear a debt or purchase an asset
12 more families are awaiting final approval for matches and loans
3 families have opened accounts at one of Pinnacle's branch locations

6 people received financial assistance through match opportunities, new banking accounts, debt consolidation, and financial education with Opportunity Passport™

22 families obtained higher-paying jobs
20 employers joined the effort by committing a starting salary range of \$12-\$14 per hour at 34 hours per week
10 families are currently in the hiring process pending official offers of employment

JOIN OUR TEAM

Conservation Internship wraps up its second year

After a successful inaugural run last summer, Beyond School Bells again organized its Conservation Management Internship for young adults from Native Futures in Alliance and Girls Inc. in Omaha

Like last year's program, the internship had a number of goals for the young people:

- Exposing high school students to careers in the field of conservation management through hands-on work
- Introducing youth to the diverse natural beauty that makes up our great state
- Supporting the efforts of our partners to develop and field-test meaningful, hands-on learning experiences that Nebraska's young people need to become citizens prepared to support our state's future prosperity

The internship featured two groups of teens: three young men from Native Futures in the panhandle and three young ladies from Girls Inc. in Omaha. Each group was accompanied by an adult mentor who worked alongside the young people and made sure they made it from Point A to Point B safely.

Stops for this year's groups included Fontenelle Forest, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, the Abbott Ranch, the Audobon Center at Rowe Sanctuary, Ponca State Park, and more. The teens were tasked with a variety of duties,

including rounding up cattle for branding, clearing red cedar logs from prairie lands, caring for animals, and clearing trails.

The experience was meaningful for both the teens and their mentors, especially Dakota Staggs, who traveled with the boys' group.

"Our first stop was a quick introduction to the work ahead of us, but also an opportunity to learn about the environment, why conservation is necessary, and what that work can look like," Dakota says. "We each grew in our appreciation for the environment and took away some great 'memental images' (memorable mental images — one of many phrases I learned on this trip)."

The girls' mentor, Kyann LeViner, agreed. "The girls and I now have an appreciation for how much work really goes into maintaining the hiking trails we love so dearly," she says. "While we were lopping the trails, we learned the history of the people who lived there and got to see the earth lodges they called home."

Beyond School Bells is grateful for the active support of our partners and donors like you. This internship — and the life-changing experiences it provides — wouldn't be possible without the support of key partners like the Claire M. Hubbard Foundation, Girls Inc., and Native Futures, plus a long list of other important partners: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, The



Arbor Day Foundation, the Abbott Family Ranch, Audubon Society/Rowe Sanctuary, the Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, and the University of Nebraska. 🌱

To learn more about this year's experiences, just head over to blog.nebraskachildren.org! Our amazing mentors each kept field journals about everything their groups saw and did. Spoiler alert: Giraffes were involved.



Beyond School Bells' TMC Labs take STEM learning on the go

It's been a busy summer for Beyond School Bells' Think, Make, Create Labs mobile maker spaces! In a recent article from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the "tricked-out trailers" were praised as places for "hands-on experimentation, problem-solving, and skill-building." The number of TMC Labs trailers has reached the double digits, with plans constantly in the works to increase the size of the fleet in order to reach more and more rural areas of Nebraska. "It's a tool in step with the times," says Jeff Cole, Network Lead for Beyond School Bells. "In the afterschool field, we're always searching for cool spaces where kids can hang out, stay safe, and learn." And the TMC Labs hit that sweet spot, while also providing a platform for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning among young people who are truly the future of Nebraska's work force.

The TMC Labs trailers wouldn't be possible without support from people like you. If you'd like to learn more about how to get involved, reach out to the team at jcole@nebraskachildren.org. Plus, you can read the full Mott article at <https://bit.ly/2wuADg7>. 🌱





Get to Know Keynote Speaker Ashley Rhodes-Courter

Changemakers

We're looking forward to coming together on October 23 for Changemakers, our annual luncheon celebration of the hardworking people across Nebraska who are helping children bloom. And this year, we're pleased to welcome keynote speaker Ashley Rhodes-Courter — author, speaker, and child welfare advocate.

Ashley Rhodes-Courter is the quintessential American success story. Born in 1985 to a single teen mother, by the age of 3 she was in Florida's foster care system, where she spent almost 10 years being shuttled between 14 homes — some quite abusive — before being adopted from a Children's Home at the age of 12.

Despite her ordeal, she excelled in school because she believed that "education was the one thing nobody could take from me." Early in her life, she felt compelled to advocate for herself and the other children she lived with, particularly in the abusive foster homes.

Her efforts and academic achievements landed her Eckerd College's Trustee Scholarship — the school's most prestigious full-tuition award. She graduated with honors and ahead of schedule, earning a double major in Communications and Theater and a double minor in Political Science and Psychology. Ashley then went on to earn a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California.

During her undergraduate studies, she was one of 20 college students selected for the USA Today All-USA Academic Team and was named one of Glamour Magazine's Top Ten College Women. She was also selected as one of the four Golden BRICK Award winners for outstanding advocacy for community change by DoSomething!. As part of their campaign, she was featured on 25 million bags of Cool Ranch Doritos.

In anticipation of the Changemakers luncheon, we asked Ashley some questions about her life, her advocacy, and how we can all make a difference. Here's what she had to say.

Nebraska Children: What are some small steps we all can take to better advocate for foster youth?

Ashley Rhodes-Courter: It is never difficult to lend a hand to someone in need. There are a multitude of ways a community can better advocate for foster youth. One way is by supporting a local nonprofit that serves foster youth. Families can also choose to foster, adopt, or

mentor a youth in care. Programs like CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) are another great way to be a voice for a child. I'm finding that oftentimes the school system and educators also need ample support to provide care for foster and underserved children in their classrooms. Mostly, recognizing the needs in your community and asking questions about how you can help is a wonderful start!

Why do you think getting an education is so vital to unconnected youth?

Education and love of learning was a huge saving grace in my life. When I was at school, I was not in abusive foster homes, and I thrived in the academic environment. But kids don't have to be book-smart to succeed in school. It's imperative that kids find a positive outlet for their creativity, energy, and passions. My education was the one thing no one could control or take away from me, and it has been very empowering.

Who are some of the Changemakers in your life?

My story is filled with people who broke the law, did not protect me, or even substantially harmed me; however, I was also fortunate to have a few caring individuals who

continued on page 18

Rooted in Relationships sees incredible progress in Pyramid Model

Earlier this year, Rooted in Relationships released its annual report, which detailed a number of successes the initiative had seen as a result of helping childcare providers implement a framework called the Pyramid Model.

If you aren't familiar with Rooted in Relationships, it's a Nebraska Children and Families Foundation initiative that partners with communities to implement evidence-based practices that enhance the social-emotional development of children from birth through age 8.

One part of this initiative supports communities as they implement the Pyramid Model, a framework

of evidence-based practices that promote the social, emotional, and behavioral competence of young children in selected family childcare homes and childcare centers. In addition, communities develop and implement a long-range plan that influences the early childhood systems of care in the community and supports the healthy social-emotional development of children.

Put simply, Rooted in Relationships is committed to giving childcare providers and others in the community the tools and resources they need to help children learn how to express and regulate their emotions and build strong relationships in order to prevent behavioral issues down the road, as well as teach and promote healthy social skills. And if the initiative's recent report is any indication, their efforts seem to be working.

How it works

Key to the initiative's success is the implementation of the

Pyramid Model, which outlines a standardized, structured approach for childcare providers to follow as they promote healthy social-emotional development in children. Providers receive training and coaching for three years to assist in the ongoing implementation of the model. "We've all been to a training where it has great ideas, and they just close the book when you leave" said one teacher. "You don't have the time to



implement. [But] with a coach, you can make it happen."

The Pyramid is broken into color-coded tiers that represent escalating levels of intervention. The base tier represents fostering a high-quality early childhood workforce through professional development. The second tier focuses on building nurturing and responsive relationships between adults and children, and between children and their playmates. The third tier centers on systematic approaches to teaching social skills to all children, but especially to those with greater needs. The top tier focuses on supporting children with persistent, severe challenging behaviors through intensive, assessment-based interventions.

In addition to the Pyramid Model, Rooted in Relationships also supports other systems approaches selected by the community, such as parent engagement activities within communities to grow and support parent-child relationships, such as Parents Interacting With Infants (PIWI) and Circle of Security – Parenting (COS-P).

Seeing results

According to Rooted in Relationships' annual report, the initiative's efforts to spread the implementation of the Pyramid Model and other evidence-informed practices have been hugely successful in communities.

Specifically, in 2017, 27 coaches supported 147 center- and home-based providers in 77 programs affecting more than 1,200 children in nine Nebraska counties.

Furthermore, with each year of participation in Rooted in Relationships, childcare programs demonstrated increased fidelity – or adherence to implementing the framework as intended – to the Pyramid Model and more and more classrooms are meeting quality indicator goals. The greatest fidelity was in the areas of all classrooms adopting the Pyramid Model, having procedures to respond to challenging behaviors, and setting program-wide expectations.

So what does that mean in layman's terms? Essentially, it means that as more and more childcare providers

continued on page 18

In their own words

To really understand the impact of Rooted in Relationships and the Pyramid Model, all you need is to hear it from the providers themselves.

"A child was having behaviors that were leading [the center] to consider expulsion. I worked with the teacher, and she implemented her social-emotional skills with him, and he has totally stabilized. He was hitting kids often, every day, and now it is very rare. ... I believe it was a Pyramid classroom that offered structure, consistent expectations, and social-emotional teaching. There is no question that if mom had put him in a non-Pyramid classroom, he would have been expelled. Pyramid allows teachers to look at little guys like him through a more compassionate lens."

– A coach reflects on supporting a child

"I had a little boy who was emotional and defiant. The parents used the picture boards that the coach made for both of us. The parents are so grateful and could not be happier."

– A childcare provider

You can hear more stories like this on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/SctVTSY0NC0>.



SPECIAL EVENT

International learning exchange highlights the value of youth engagement

This year, Nebraska Children's Connected Youth Initiative (CYI) was selected to participate in an international learning exchange facilitated by the International Youth Foundation's (Re)Connecting Youth initiative.

As part of the learning exchange, a team of CYI staff, partners, and young people were able to travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to work alongside Argentinian nonprofit organization Doncel to learn about the ways they work with and support unconnected youth.

The trip to Buenos Aires was life-changing for the CYI group: Staffers who made the trip learned important lessons on how to

engage with young people they serve. Specifically, they learned a lot about Doncel's "E-Guide," a group of young adults who have left the state-managed system and now work to advise Doncel, train other young people, research young people's needs, and advocate for young people's rights.

For the young people from Nebraska, the trip showed that despite being thousands of miles away, the experiences youth go through as they exit care are universal – and so is the need to support them through the transition.

"Most of my time there was spent asking questions and listening, but what was apparent by the end

of our trip was that these people, who live on the opposite end of the world, shared many of the same struggles that I face despite their location, their culture, and their system," said young person Michayla about her experience. "Because of these many similarities between us, it was easier for me to connect with the youth from Buenos Aires. By the end of the trip, I had made memories I will not soon forget and new friendships that left a bittersweet ending to my time in Argentina."

A couple months later, it was Doncel's turn to travel to Omaha, Nebraska, to shadow the CYI team, meet more young people, and



Young people from Nebraska and Argentina learned about Nebraska's government with the help of State Senators Anna Wishart and Adam Morfield

learn about their processes and approach. Amid the meetings, sight-seeing, socializing, and idea-sharing, one big theme that emerged from the exchange was the need for more – and more authentic – youth engagement.

"The exchange taught me that the biggest impact comes from youth and young people working to raise awareness and make a difference," said Nebraska exchange participant Khalil Jordan in an interview with the International Youth Foundation. "Before, I used to participate but I didn't really want to. Now I want to go to events, to speak and communicate with other youth, and build a space for young people to become stronger and do bigger things."

Another exciting event during the trip to Nebraska was a panel discussion called "Fostering Connection: A Cross-Border Dialogue" featuring CYI and Doncel staff and young people, members of the Omaha community, and other partners working with unconnected youth. The luncheon event resulted in a rich conversation about the lessons organizations across the

globe can teach one another about interacting with young people, fostering engagement, and improving outcomes for youth aging out of foster care and starting adulthood on their own. (Note: You can watch the panel discussion on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/IP2bo5r1pU>.) Moving forward, the CYI team has a renewed passion for finding ways to improve engagement among the young people served and creating more opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring. "There's

real power in youth coming together to overcome barriers," said Lincoln Arneal, Director of Leadership and Engagement, in an interview with IYF. "It's a question of knowing when and how to create such opportunities. We're excited about working in partnership with our youth to explore what authentic youth engagement could look like here in Nebraska."

We're excited to see what the CYI team does with everything they've learned from this exchange, thanks to the International Youth Foundation. Even better, as part of the (Re)Connecting Youth program, CYI will receive a \$50,000 grant to pilot a program inspired by the learning exchange. 🌱

Visiting the Governors Residence



Meet our new Board Members



Anne Steinhoff

Anne Steinhoff has seen both sides of a nonprofit. In addition to serving on many nonprofit boards, she has also fulfilled stints as interim executive director for eight different agencies. Most recently, she was the interim executive director for the WCA in Omaha. She has consulted with more than 100 organizations, and her experience in strategic planning, cultural diversity, and resource and board development makes her a valuable member of the Nebraska Children board.

She considers lack of communication and coordination between state agencies the most pressing need for our children. As a marketing and communications consultant, she hopes to help streamline the messaging for Nebraska Children. She believes that the core beliefs of “prevention works” and ensuring resources are channeled for the common good need to be expressed throughout Nebraska Children’s network.

Anne has advocated for Nebraska’s children through her many volunteer endeavors, including serving on the boards of St. Augustine Indian Mission, WCA, Catholic Charities, and the Women’s Fund.

Anne and her husband, Dan, are the parents of an adult son named Andrew. Anne is an incredible artist, offering her talents to many organizations and individuals. To salute her Native American heritage, Anne has worked tirelessly to ensure that their stories and language are chronicled and shared. 🌱

Sarah Teten

As a gerontologist, Sarah Teten understands that our early years affect our entire life course. “The best way to ensure positive aging experiences for Nebraskans is to provide the right support and experiences in childhood,” Sarah says.

Sarah is, for the most part, a lifelong Lincolnite. She graduated with a degree in journalism and mass communication from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. After working in communications, she changed her focus to gerontology. She is currently a PhD candidate and is an instructor at UNL. She wants to help streamline the messaging for Nebraska Children, making it clearly understood across Nebraska. She feels strongly that Nebraska’s children of all races and religions deserve environments where they can play, learn, and grow together without fear. She hopes her contribution on the board will be to offer a new voice that can help strengthen the messaging, reputation, and financial future of Nebraska Children.

Sarah was both a mentee and a mentor for the Nebraska Human Resources Institute, she is on the Board of Directors at the Lincoln Children’s Zoo, and she serves with Dementia Friendly Nebraska. She and her husband, Troy, live in Lincoln with their son, Spencer, soon to start first grade. Stepsons Parker and Baxter are college students. 🌱



Katie Triplett

As chair of the Friends of Nebraska Children guild, Katie Triplett believes that the guild and its programs provide an excellent entryway to better understand and support the mission of Nebraska Children. “Friends of Nebraska Children is a vital part of the Nebraska Children organization because it provides both ‘friend’ and ‘fund’ raising support,” she says.

Outside of her role with the guild, Katie oversees risk management and regulatory compliance at Methodist Hospital in Omaha. She is impressed that Nebraska Children is data-driven and intentional as it identifies and administers its programs. She believes that the organization’s success is apparent as it customizes programs to fit the specific needs of a community.

As a nurse practitioner, Katie understands how crucial it is to provide interventions from early childhood to adulthood. She offers a unique skill set in compliance and data management that will be helpful as programs are analyzed. She believes disparity in education is one of the most pressing needs for children in Nebraska.

Katie was born in Dallas and moved to the Black Hills as an adolescent. She met her husband Adam while attending college at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, and they are now the proud parents of 2-year-old Tommy. She currently serves on the board of the Rose Theater Guild and is president-elect of the Junior League of Omaha. 🌱



Ben Watson

Being the father of three little girls has provided Ben Watson with plenty of insight into understanding children. Nebraska Children is familiar to Ben; his father, George Watson, was on the Board of Directors 20 years ago. Because of his dad, he learned the value of the programs offered, and especially of the critical need for the programs in Western Nebraska. For many years, he has attended special events and donated his time and resources to the organization.

Ben spent many years as a CIO, working with information technology in the financial services industry. He also volunteered for several nonprofit organizations. Today, he serves as CEO of the Chadron State College Foundation. His professional experiences and perspective will be helpful to Nebraska Children.

Ben is proud of the time he spent serving on the board and in service to Storybook Island in Rapid City. The Rotary-backed park is free and open to all children. He said it was important to make the park available to all children, regardless of their family’s income.

As a board member, he hopes to spread the message that childcare, programs, and opportunities for children and families are challenging in Western Nebraska. He is especially concerned about the growing technology gap. “We need to provide all Nebraska’s children, regardless of their socio-economic conditions, with access to technology,” he says.

Ben and his wife, Saphron, have three daughters, Sophie (9), Harper (7), and Audrey (3). 🌱





It was another exciting summer of Camp Catch-Up! In 2018, we hosted 3 camps for young people who have been separated from siblings due to involvement with the child welfare system. Camp sessions were held at the Timberlake Ranch Camp (Hordville), Nebraska State 4-H Camp (Halsey), and the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center (Gretna).

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are learning and implementing the practices supported by Rooted in Relationships, they're seeing improvements in behavior among the children in their care and finding it easier to foster healthy emotional responses. Providers also reported increased feelings of confidence and competence in their important role as an educator.

What's next?

Rooted in Relationships is gaining attention from communities across the state who want to get involved. Recently, Lynne Brehm, Associate Vice President of Early Childhood Mental Health, was given the opportunity to present to Resource Development workers from across the state about Rooted in Relationships because more and more people had been asking about the initiative.

The overarching goal is to continue to spread awareness about the Pyramid Model framework and

other social-emotional strategies to enhance child-adult interactions, which we know is the basis for ongoing positive social-emotional health.

When childcare providers are empowered to create positive social-emotional development among the children they care for, the benefits are staggering: less systems involvement, better and stronger relationships with parents, increased ability to process and regulate emotions, and more.

The impact of Rooted in Relationships is vast, and it wouldn't be possible without the ongoing support of communities, partners, and compassionate supporters like you. Thank you for making such a big difference in the lives of young children. You can learn more about the progress made by downloading Rooted in Relationships' annual report at <https://bit.ly/2NLwD6n>. 🍷

*Ashley Rhodes-Courter
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saw my potential and helped me shine. The smallest act of kindness really can make a tremendous difference in the life of a child. One teacher gave me my first book, another staff member at a children's home showed me consistency and kindness, and my CASA fought hard behind the scenes in court to be sure my day-to-day needs were being met.

What do you hope Changemakers attendees can take away from your talk?

I hope participants of this event will feel motivated and inspired to reach out into their communities to see how they might be able to change the life of another. There are so many ways to give back, and often people do not have to look far to see others who are struggling. Children in our own backyards are facing child abuse, neglect, poverty, malnourishment, and lack of access to schools or basic human rights. We all have the power to be — and raise — fellow Changemakers! 🍷

To hear Ashley speak in person and to learn more about statewide accomplishments from the last year, join us on October 23 at the Embassy Suites – La Vista! You can purchase your ticket today at [NCChangemakers.org](https://www.ncchangemakers.org).

Families Turn to You for Help



You Can Turn to Us for Resources

If you're a professional working with children and families, then you're the person they turn to when they need help. But sometimes you won't have all the answers or another professional may be better suited to help.

The Nebraska Family Helpline is here for you.

Whether you want to refer someone to the Helpline, find resources you can pass on, or include us in a discussion with someone in crisis, the Nebraska Family Helpline's trained crisis counselors are **available 24/7** to provide support and advice at no cost. You may call anonymously, and your call will be confidential.

Learn more and order free wallet cards, brochures and magnets at [NebraskaFamilyHelpline.ne.gov](https://www.NebraskaFamilyHelpline.ne.gov).



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