

Celebrating
2018
Children's
Mental
Health
Awareness
Week

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FAMILY RUN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION





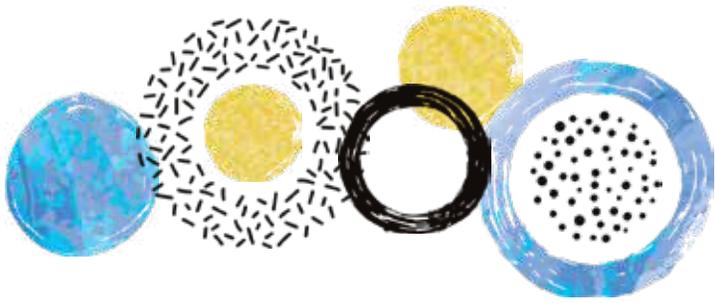
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Spotlights
Family Leaders
Throughout the Country



*"Leadership is not about titles, positions
or flowcharts. It is about one life
influencing another."*

— John C. Maxwell



Family Leaders

More than 30 years ago, family members stepped forward to start a movement that would change the course for families caring for a child, youth or young adult with behavioral health needs.



Barbara Huff

A Pioneer

“ I started my advocacy work in Kansas as the parent of a daughter with serious mental health challenges. I left my career with an interior design firm to work for the Kansas Parent Training and Information Center as their training coordinator and later started the statewide family organization in Kansas, Keys for Networking. I was able to apply my skills learned at Keys for Networking on the national scene when in 1988 I was one of 18 family members that came together to form the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. I was elected chairperson of the steering committee and when funding became available through the Annie E. Casey Foundation, I was hired as the first Executive Director of the Federation and served from 1992–2004. I continue to work for the Federation on the Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign Team.”



“When you put together deep knowledge about a subject that intensely matters to you, charisma happens. You gain courage to share your passion, and when you do that, folks follow.”

—Jerry Porras

Success Built to Last: Creating a Life That Matters

Gail Avent

Total Family Care Coalition Washington, DC

“

I am the mother of four children. I have a son that has a mental health diagnosis. I have two children deceased. My children were taken away from me by their father thus the beginning of family challenges after attempting to escape an abusive marriage. My former husband took the children to his mother in Boston and told them that I was dead. It began a three year journey of re-establishing relationships with my children and fighting in court to regain custody. Eventually, I was able to bring all of my children home.

I started Total Family Care Coalition in 2005. I imagine that if I was having these types of problems there were many more with the same concerns. A group of five parents sat around my kitchen table and came up with the name. Our name signifies that we work with the (total family), **Family** is identified by those we work with, **Care**—because we care about everyone we encounter and we tell them from the beginning "I work for you," **Coalition**—we believe families and youth do better when resources are identified in the community to meet their specific needs.”



“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

—John Quincy Adams

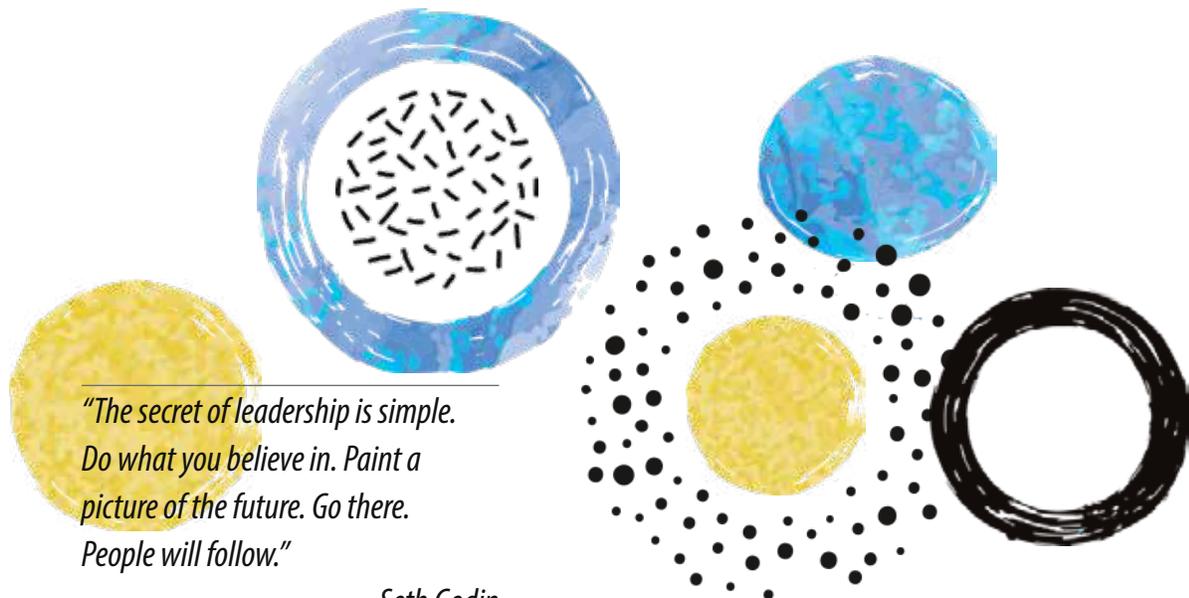
Charlene Frost

Nevada PEP

Changing Nevada's Bullying Laws

“

‘Nothing really prepares you to be a mother.’ I’ve heard this statement over and over again throughout my life. What is true for me is that nothing in my life prior to being a mother prepared me for the challenges that came with parenting two boys, now young men, both with mental and behavioral health needs. Our family story is not lacking in all of the earmarks of similar families; trauma, navigating systems, barriers to care, fatigue, feeling stretched beyond capacity, anger and acceptance. When my oldest son was assaulted by peers in middle school, I really started learning what advocacy was. My journey with my son was complicated, not only was I dealing with a child who had experienced a profound trauma, I was also navigating systems I had never expected to need while dealing with my own feelings of guilt at having not been able to protect him. For 28 days, I sat outside the sheriff’s office waiting for someone, anyone, to speak with me. When finally I was rewarded with the certainty that I had outlasted them, I realized that I was an advocate. But more importantly, I realized that no parent should have to go through similar circumstances.”

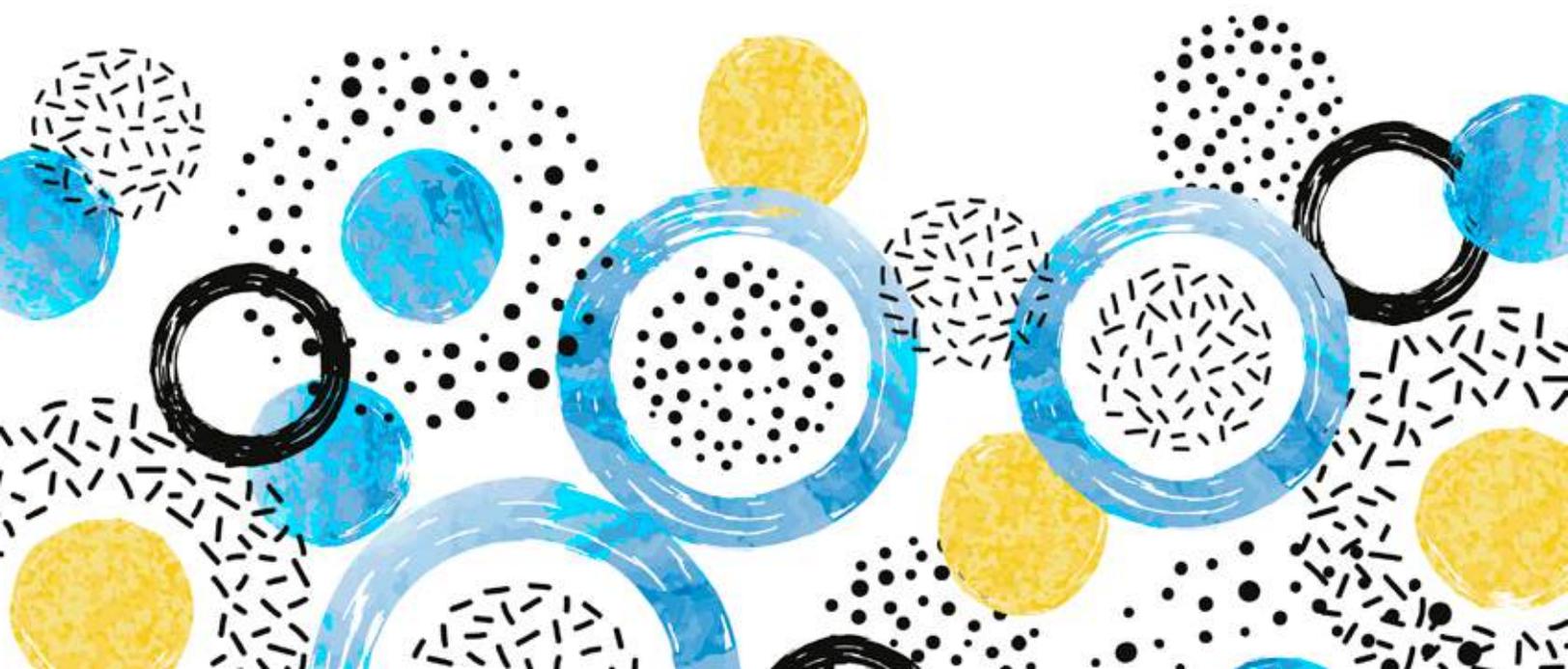


*“The secret of leadership is simple.
Do what you believe in. Paint a
picture of the future. Go there.
People will follow.”*

—Seth Godin



Family Leaders
use their experience and passion
to support other families.



George Fleming

Allegheny Family Network (AFN)

Fathers Involved Now



“

I'm the proud father of four adult children. I started working in the behavioral health system when I was just twenty three years of age. Shortly after working as a Residential Counselor, I realized that I had a real draw and compassion for the plight of people, especially people who were experiencing what I now call “The Social Ills” of our society.

I was hired as a Team Lead at Allegheny Family Network (AFN), in the Fathers Involved Now department to become a leader in the “trail blazers” of having male and fathers inclusion. Until that time, I had no knowledge of AFN and its mission. Nor did I realize that being a family member would turn out to be such a blessing. In these past four years, the department has grown from two full time staff to a total of seven staff. I'm very proud of AFN's commitment to the very important role that a DAD plays in their children's lives.

We will continue to strive for the inclusion of fathers so they can reunite with their children and be a key player in the bringing up of young men and women, that know where they come from and who they are.”

“You get in life what you have the courage to ask for.”

—Nancy D. Solomon

Carol Cecil

Kentucky Partnership for Children and Families



“

I began advocating for my children and their needs because their survival as individuals, and our survival as a family, depended on my ability to ensure their extremely challenging needs were met! When I heard “no,” I knew that only meant that I must find a way to go over, under, or around that barrier to find what my children and family needed. As I embarked on this early part of my parenting journey, I realized that many parents did not have the education or ability to know how to find a way around those barriers. As many of us have experienced, I recognized “to whom much is given, much will be required” and therefore, it was now my responsibility to share this information with other parents.”



*“Success is not how high you have climbed, but
how you make a positive difference in the world.”*

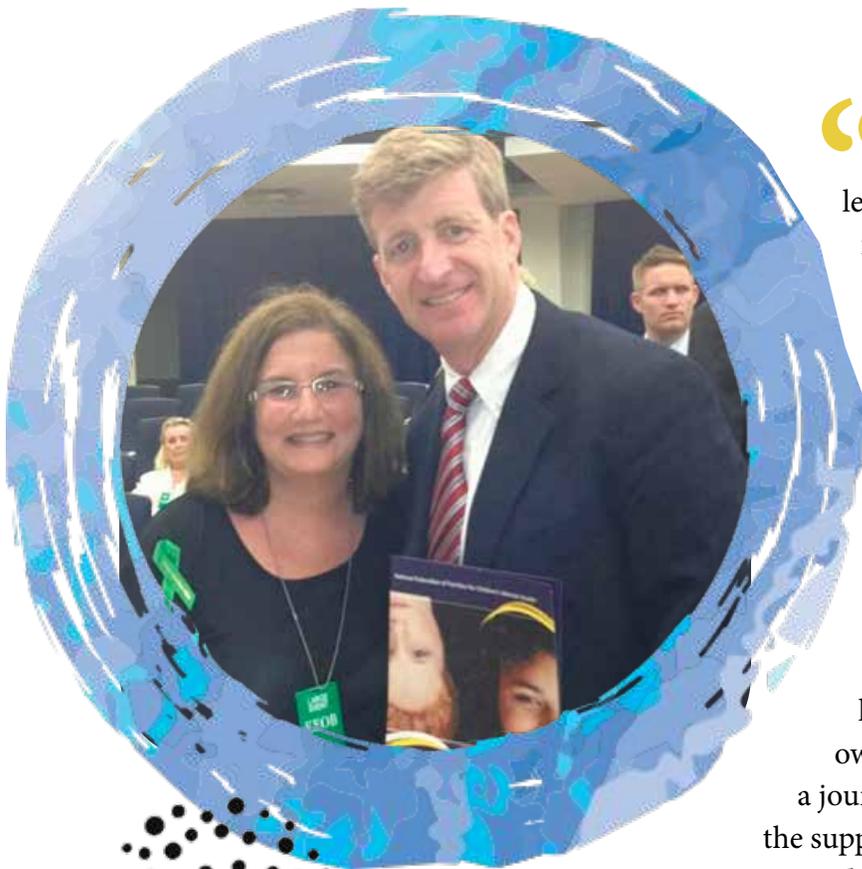
—Roy T. Bennett
The Light in the Heart

Gail Cormier

North Carolina Families United
President, FREDLA Board of Directors

"A leader is a dealer in hope."

—Napoleon Bonaparte



“

My story is much like most family leaders. I was shoved into the role by several forces converging at once, and poof, there I was, the Executive Director of North Carolina Families United, and a family leader.

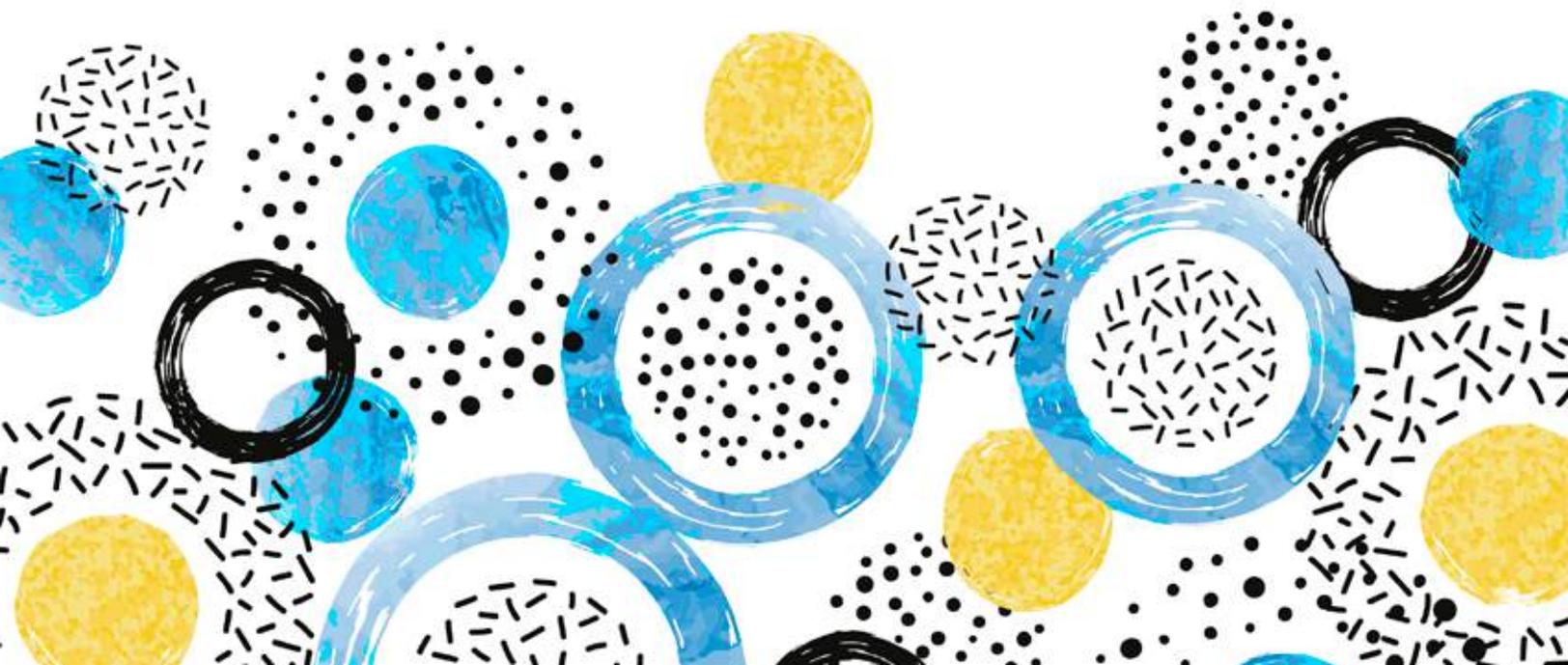
Force 1: As the Executive Director of a provider organization in New Hampshire, I collaborated with the family organization and the NH System of Care. I was able to witness the benefits of wrapping around the family and providing holistic supports. This was at a time when my own daughter was talking of dying. Thus began a journey where I found out not all families have the supports I was witnessing with the system of care grant and within my own agency.

Force 2: A few years later... Every day at about 2:00 in the afternoon, I would get a call from a teacher telling me that another daughter who has ADHD had a meltdown. My heart always skipped a beat when that call came.

Force 3: The big move. Our family moved to NC and the University was about to incubate a new family organization and they were looking for the first Executive Director. I wasn't too sure if I qualified. I was hired and here I sit as Executive Director since 2006 — a leader and hopefully a culture-shifter for change.”



*Family Leaders
are change agents
in their states and communities.*



Elizabeth Sweet Federal Health Advisor at SAMHSA

“ My road to leadership in the world of children’s mental health began 38 years ago before the birth of my son TJ. It didn’t take long to realize that this was a little boy who would take us to places we had never been and didn’t really want to explore. Searching for help for TJ and our family became one frustration after another and for us turned from desperation to despondency and helplessness. By finding other families who were experiencing struggles just like ours, I turned my hopelessness to advocacy and began to find ways to talk to people who had the position and power to change circumstances.

I became involved in North Dakota’s first System of Care award made by SAMHSA and then applied for a position in the Child, Adolescent, and Family Branch in the Center for Mental Health Services within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, as a Federal Health Advisor, a position I have held for 20 years.

Our son TJ died at the age of 23 as the result of suicide, and he has become my continued motivation to work to influence the change of policy, planning, implementation, expectation, placement, and law.”



“Leaders are people who believe so passionately that they can seduce other people into sharing their dream.”

—Warren G. Bennis
*Organizing Genius: The Secrets
of Creative Collaboration*



Jane Adams Kansas Keys for Networking



“ These pictures represent my proudest achievements. These pictures represent all the world to me. The top photo is from the day in Germany when I brought my son home from the hospital. We were about to return to the United States. I was alone and afraid. I did not realize Sarah and James were too.

The second picture, at the right, is of Sarah, my daughter, graduating with her Masters from Baker University with a Masters in Business Administration with my grandchildren, Reece and Riley. This is my family.

The third picture, top right, is from 2016 in Phoenix Arizona. The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health established an annual national award, **The Jane Adams Parent Peer Support Award**. The Federation invited me to present it to the first-ever premier parent support provider in the United States.”

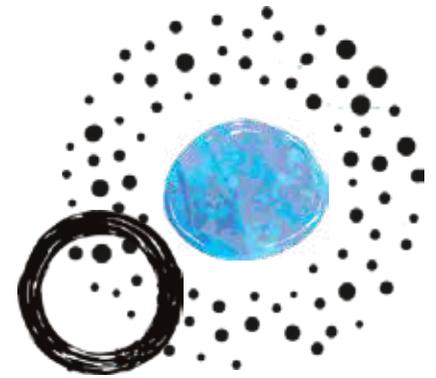
“You can't live an extraordinary life with an ordinary mindset.”

—Hermey L. McCabe



Lisa Conlan

Parent Support Network of Rhode Island



“

It has been a great journey and honor to be a family leader for children's mental health. When I think back to getting started as a family leader it started within my own family as I am the oldest of five children and my parents, siblings, and I had our own mental health and substance use challenges we all contended with. By the age of 22 years old, I had a child and was divorced based on domestic violence and substance use and then I married a Vietnam vet and went from being a mom of one to a mother of four children. One of my children, had repeated psychiatric hospitalizations and I was back forth with the school and treatment providers all the time. My child was also incredibly brilliant, smart, and creative.

I became the Executive Director of Parent Support Network of Rhode Island (PSNRI) at the age of 24 years and served in this role for about seven years. I then worked for the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health and had the opportunity to work with system of care grant communities all over the country.

During this time I found my voice to share my own recovery challenges and I identified with the consumer and recovery movement and found even more strength in myself. I remarried again and gained another son. Now 24 years later, I am now back to being the Executive Director at PSNRI and have learned a great deal. It is good to have another opportunity to do this role, with the knowledge that I have gained. I am now a grandparent and have the tools to support my daughter with my grandchild's mental health challenges in a very proactive strength-based manner. I am grateful for my own long term recovery and this journey as a family leader.”

“Nothing is Impossible; there are just some things we haven't achieved yet.”

—Allen Filson
Belief-in_self



Janet Pereyra

Miami Dade Federation of Families

“

I became a leader while navigating behavioral health services during my daughter's adolescence. Over a span of 2 years I did not know where to turn for help and was embarrassed to ask due to the stigma associated with substance abuse and mental health.

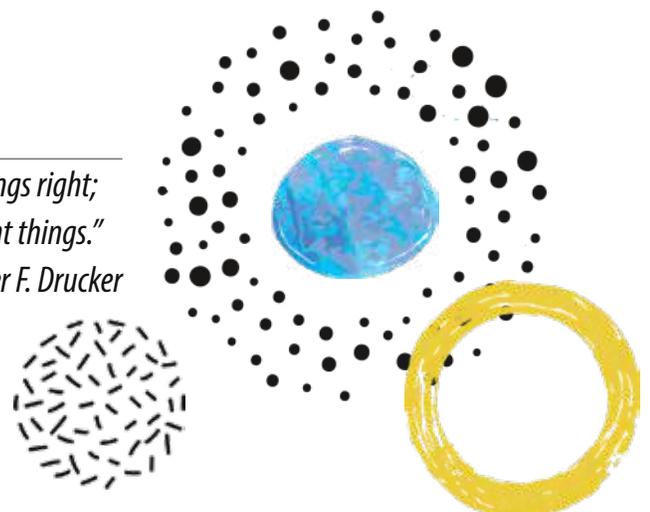
Coming from a Hispanic cultural background also played a big part in my delay in accessing services. It was not easy but I was finally able to access services for my daughter and I joined Federation of Families where I learned that I was not a bad parent and was provided with much support.

This experience afforded me the opportunity to become employed with the Miami Dade Chapter of the Federation of Families and eventually become the Executive Director. I am a leader because I chose to advocate for what my family needed, and I am able to provide support and advocate for other parents who do not yet know they are leaders too.”



*“Management is doing things right;
leadership is doing the right things.”*

—Peter F. Drucker



Karla Bennetts

Families CARE Nebraska



I became a Parent Leader, long before I knew what that term meant, or ever heard it used. I have been a parent leader while raising my seven children.

Having spent almost twenty years at home parenting and then foster parenting forty children, I suddenly found myself needing to seek

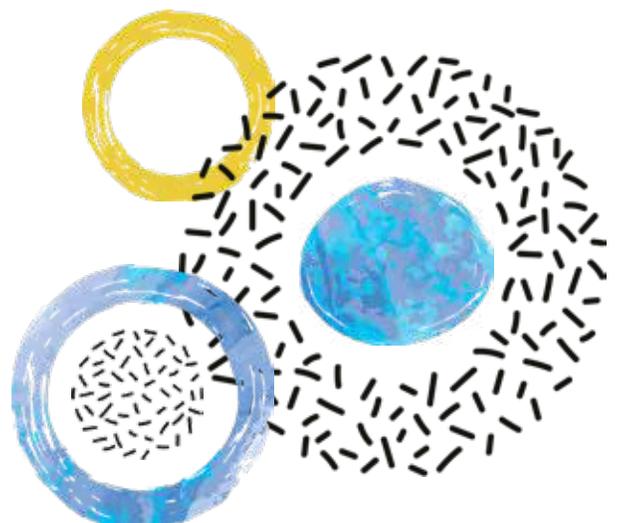
employment. I saw an ad seeking an advocate, a parent of children with emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges, I threw my hands up in the air and declared, "This is my job!" Who better to walk along side of parents struggling with these issues, than a parent who has been there!

As I moved forward in my parenting journey, I learned about depression, anxiety, substance abuse issues, bi-polar, and reactive attachment disorder. I loved working as a family peer support specialist, Program Manager and now Director of Families CARE. Families CARE has grown and continues to grow as our contracts change and develop to best serve the families and youth of Central and Western Nebraska."



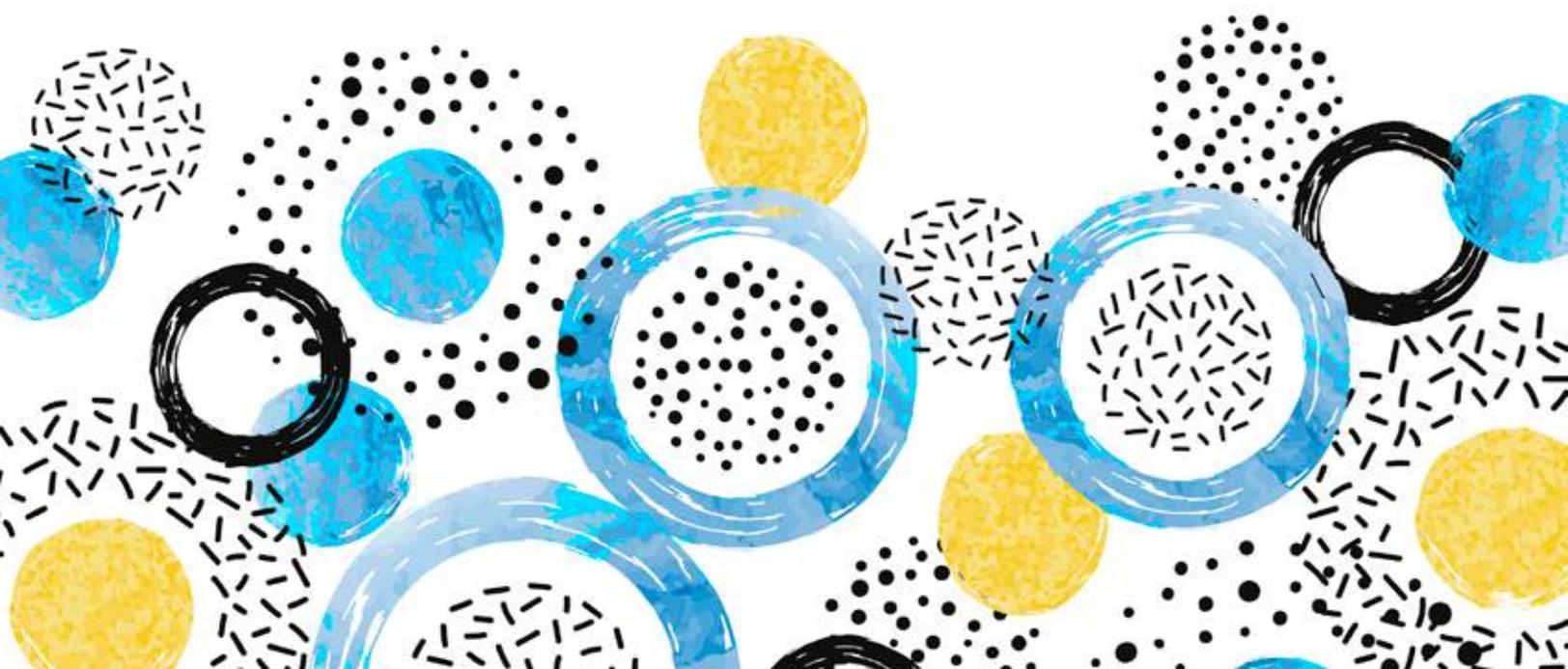
"Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it."

—Dwight D. Eisenhower





*Family Leaders
are entrepreneurs and
business leaders.*



Jane Kallal

Family Involvement Center, Arizona, 15th Anniversary Celebration



My journey began when my daughter was 2 years old — when I realized that almost every day my daughter was displaying behavioral and emotional challenges in more than one setting, and that we, her parents, pre-school teachers and pediatrician had



no answers as to the cause. Initially, I assumed the doctors, therapists and teachers had the knowledge and skills to help my daughter and our family. As time passed, I recognized that those working with my daughter in classrooms, pediatric offices, therapy sessions etc., were not understanding the stressors, anxiety, trauma, stomach aches, signs of depression that my daughter was experiencing related to her inability to manage her behaviors and reactions to transitions and expectations of others. It was obvious to me that the behaviors were not a planned choice. By the time she was 8 years old, I realized that as her parent, I couldn't wait for others involved in her life to find solutions to my daughter's behavioral/physical health challenges and related social and developmental skill deficits. I knew my child best, and needed to be her best advocate. It became my mission and vocation to engage and involve professionals, my daughter, family members, friends and other individuals and groups to partner with our family in thinking "out of the box" and trying new ways of supporting her needs.

In 1999 a new door opened for leadership and advocacy. I was selected to bring parent voice to Arizona's Children's Executive Committee, Division of Behavioral Health, and the Managed Care Organization in Maricopa County responsible for a three-year project to transform children's services. In this role I worked with committed professionals to bring together parent leaders to establish a foundation for our state where parent leaders are members of key planning, policy and program development workgroups, and to also establish a workforce of parent peer support staff to be employed statewide to support other parents funded through Medicaid reimbursement. These collaborative efforts led to a new understanding of the value that parent leaders bring — driving policy change, providing parent peer support, training workforce, quality monitoring, etc. In 2002, I and other parent leaders established the Family Involvement Center to carry on this work when the project ended, and I became the Executive Director. It is an honor and privilege to continue this work, inspiring hope for children, families and systems partners. Also important to our family is that my daughter is the loving mother of a 15-year-old son. She is also a valued volunteer for our center, and often introduces herself as the Inspiration for the Family Involvement Center."

Michelle Heinen

UPLIFT, Wyoming with Senator Enzi



“

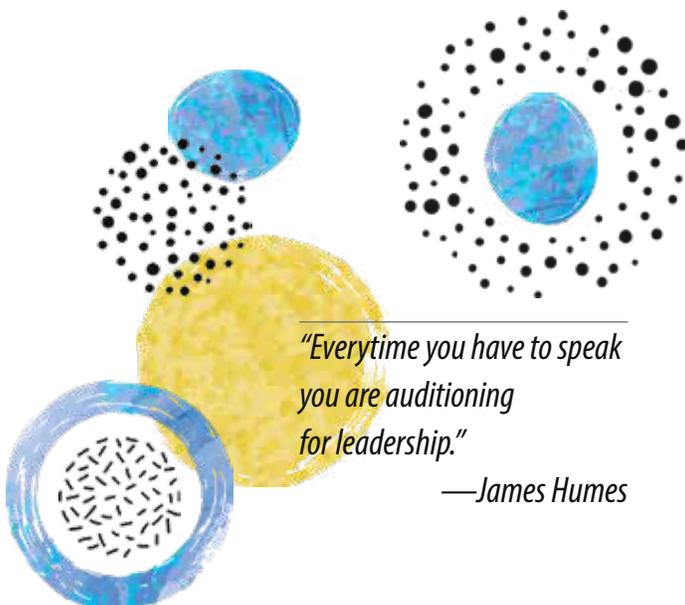
I have always had “leadership skills.” They were frequently referred to on the elementary report cards my parents received as “overly talkative” and “bossy.” As I grew, I was able to channel that pent-up passion into more desirable traits. While my zest for learning and my assertiveness served me well, I never dreamed it would land me in a leadership role in a well-established, statewide family-run organization, UPLIFT. I am tickled when I am able to introduce myself as an “accidental advocate.”

My “accidental” journey was really quite deliberate. I considered my own children — gifted with behavioral challenges and in need of mental health support — as different, not less.

The desk I work at each day is where I dream big for families and reflect on my own journey and the rigorous and rocky paths to success I have seen many other families navigate. The struggles we have all encountered give us common ground. They connect us by heartstrings of hope. Peer support is hard, sad, ugly work. It is also beautiful, empowering, and necessary. It is where I have found my true calling.”

*“Everytime you have to speak
you are auditioning
for leadership.”*

—James Humes



Regina Crider

Youth and Family Peer Support Alliance, Illinois

“ My journey to becoming a family leader began in an unusual way. I was working in a minimum security facility with adjudicated males returning from the Juvenile Department of Corrections. They were plagued with anxiety, mood disorders, and depression. So I began finding resources, services, and supports for them and their families.

Eight years after leaving that job, I received a call from my daughter's school. The Social Worker informed me that my daughter had attempted to hang herself in the school bathroom. She was ten. I was stunned. I felt overwhelmed by the situation and helpless because I wanted to take my daughter's pain away but I couldn't. I vowed on that day that I would do everything in my power to support her and not allow her to become a statistic.

As I advocated for my daughter, I became known as the “go-to” parent for advice on how to handle school, juvenile justice and mental health issues that families were facing. I fought just as hard for them as I did my own child. I hadn't planned on being a family leader, it just happened.

Once the fire was lit within me to make a difference, I never looked back. As a family and community leader, there is more work to be done in the family movement in my state and across the nation. I resolved early in my career that I wouldn't hang up my hat until I've done all I can to raise awareness about children's mental health and promote family voice.



“The task of the leader is to get their people from where they are to where they have not been.”

—Henry Kissinger



Sandy Bumpus Oregon Family Support Network 25th Anniversary



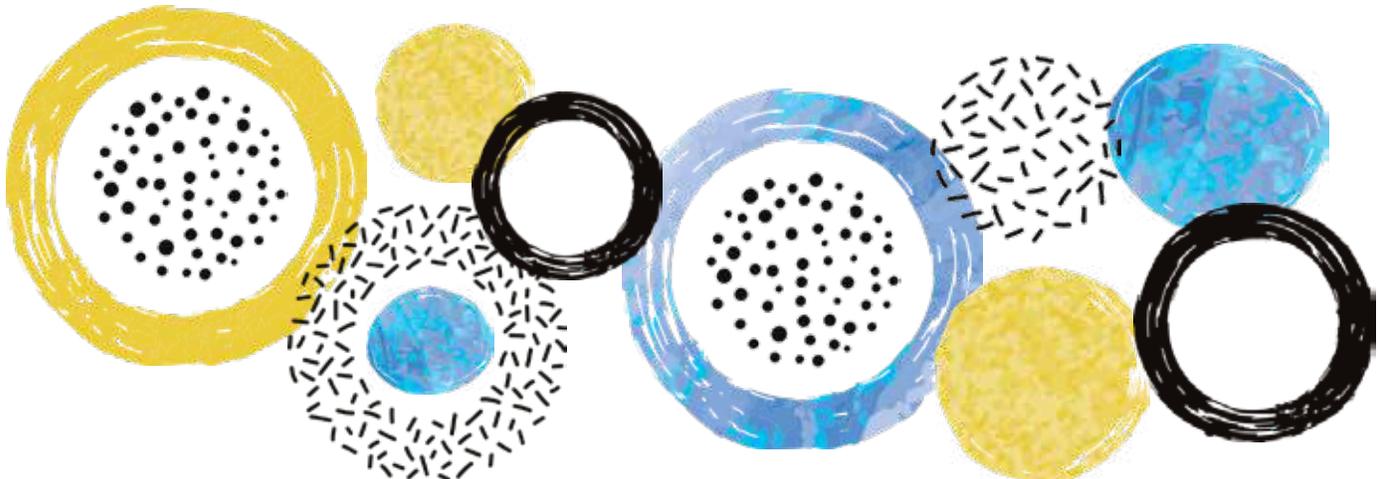
"As we look into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others."

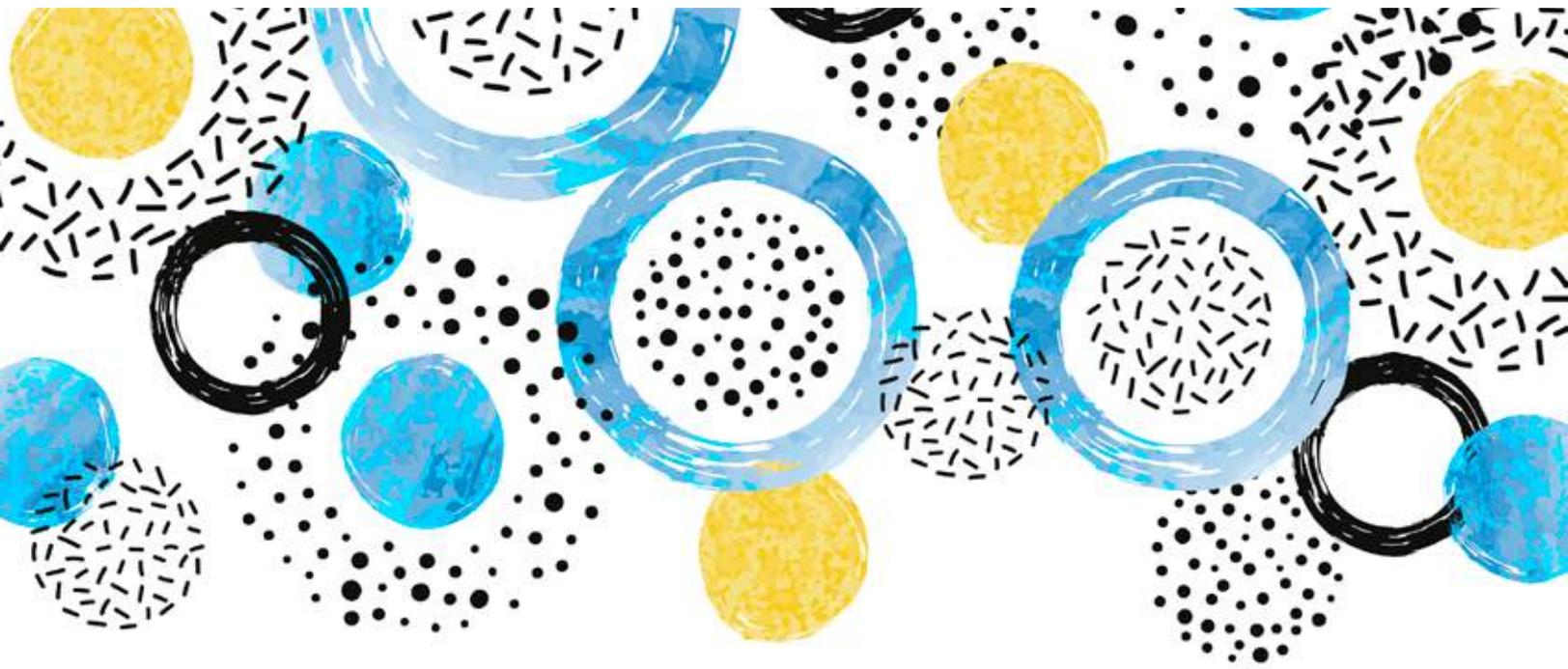
—Bill Gates



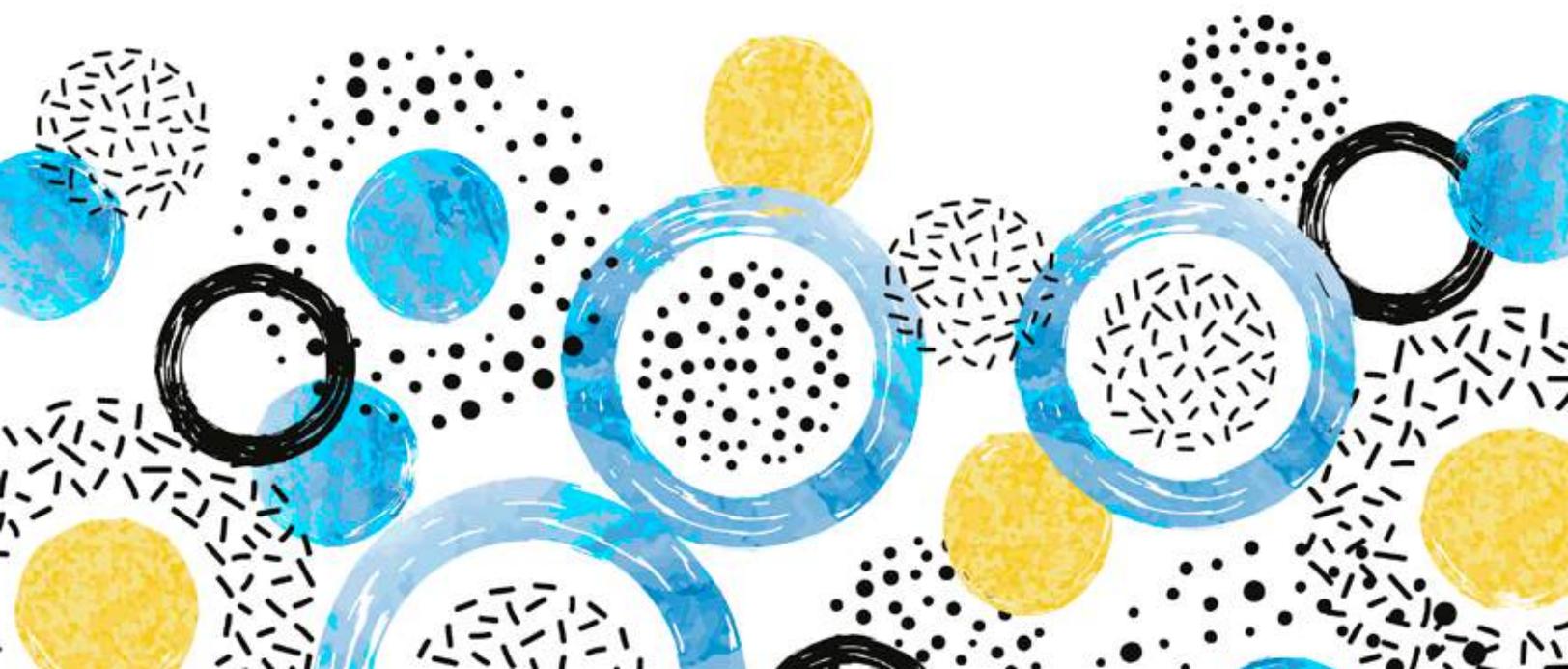
When my child began experiencing significant emotional and behavioral health challenges in pre-school, I felt bewildered. My child was brilliant! She memorized stories at age 2, and had an incredible vocabulary. By the time she began Kindergarten, I knew something was desperately wrong, but didn't know what to do about it. After searching for resources, and spending many years advocating for everything she needed in school, I began to realize the system was a broken system.

This experience propelled me into advocacy. I knew there had to be something better not only for her, and our family — but for many other families as well. I left a career in local government — and never looked back. The passion I have around my own experience, combined with the collective experiences of other families across Oregon are what keep me moving forward. Perhaps the greatest satisfaction I have is watching other parents and caregivers who have that 'aha' moment about how they can use their voice for change. It's very powerful, and why I continue to do this work today!"





*Family Leaders
are visionary and
always looking ahead.*



Sue and Norman Smith Georgia Parent Support Network

"Leaders think and talk about the solutions. Followers think and talk about the problems."

—Brian Tracy

“ In the early 1980's, our family “found” a homeless woman and her daughter at a local Waffle House restaurant in our neighborhood. After some conversation, we learned that her 3-year-old daughter, Danielle (Dani), lived with her in their car. We took Dani home with us that day, and our lives — every single one of us — was changed forever. We believed that we would love and care for Dani and she would be all right, however, that did not turn out to be the case. At that time, I knew nothing about children's mental illness. As we began to search for answers and resources we were turned away repeatedly. I hand wrote letters to 200 people in Georgia that I thought might be able to help. After we ran out of insurance and money, we were forced to give up custody of Dani to the state so she could continue to receive services.

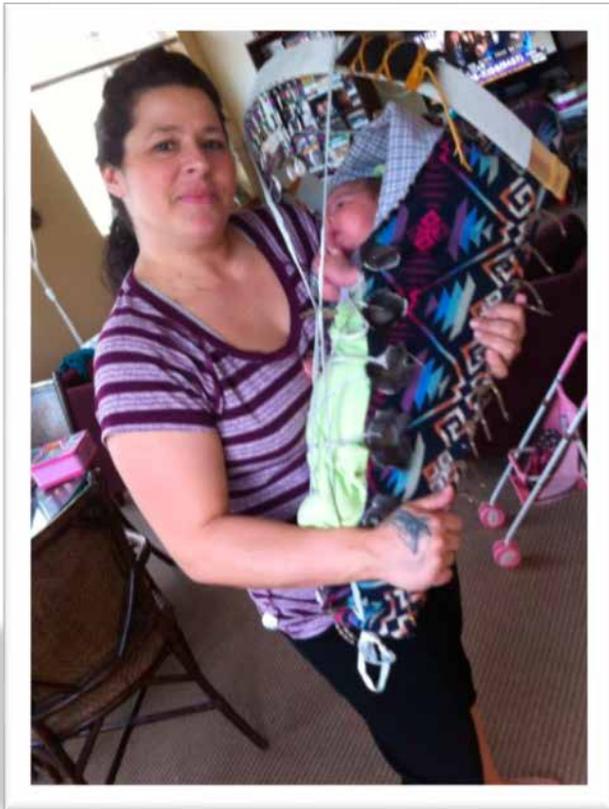


Around this time the federal government began developing a vision of “Families as Allies” in Children's Mental Health. Because of our advocacy for Dani, I was chosen to go to Washington to three gatherings of federal leaders along with four other parents from Georgia. At the last meeting a panel of mothers talked of providing family support to other parents. After this trip my husband, Norman, asked “what are YOU going to do?” So, on July 15, 1989, 30 concerned individuals including parents, legislators and state and local government officials met in Macon, GA. Together we formalized the Georgia Parent Support Network, Inc.

I have never looked at the leadership as “mine”. In truth, the leadership belongs to us all, my family, friends, mentors, peers and those who I will never know, on whose shoulders we all stand, those who for the last 35 years have traveled this path with “us”. I just happened to be in the right place, at the right time, with the right people and the most wonderful family and group of friends and the blessings of God.”

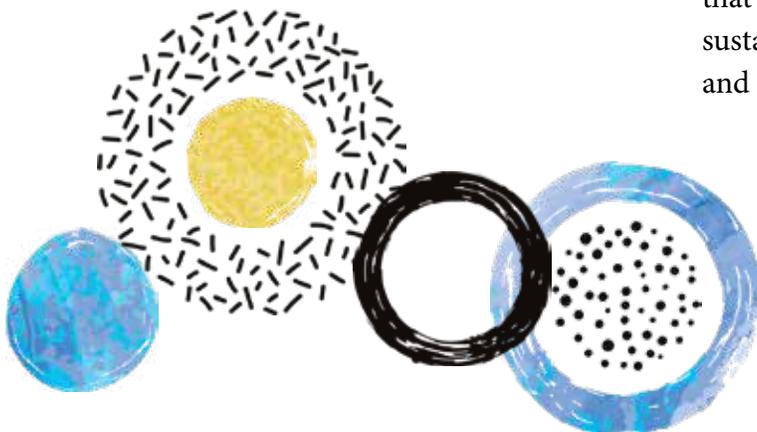


English name: *Barbara Ann Gladue*
 Anishinabek name: *Asasaweminikwa*
 National Indian Child Welfare Association



“ I became a family leader because I grew up with an alcoholic father who physically abused every woman he ever loved, and I never wanted my girls to grow up in a home where they weren't safe. I wanted them to grow up in a home that was nurturing, fun and light hearted. I became a leader because my mother raised me to be strong, and she prepared me to face my fears and to stand up for myself. She groomed me with love and wise words, and she showed me through action that anything is possible when you believe in yourself even in the face of doubt.

I am a leader because the fearless women warriors in my life paved the way, and now it is my turn to continue to pave the road for my girls and the future generations. I have been told by my elders that my ancestors prayed hard for me and sacrificed and gave of themselves so that the future generations of Indian people would have a place to call home, so that my culture, language and way of life would be sustained. I am just doing what the brave women and strong men in my life raised me to do.”



“Managers maintain an efficient status quo while leaders attack the status quo to create something new.”

—Orrin Woodward
LIFE

Valencia Gensollen

Family Lead

Family Connection of Tarrant County (TX)

“ I am the parent of a teen with mental health struggles. In 2015 I was invited to attend an event to bring providers and family members together to

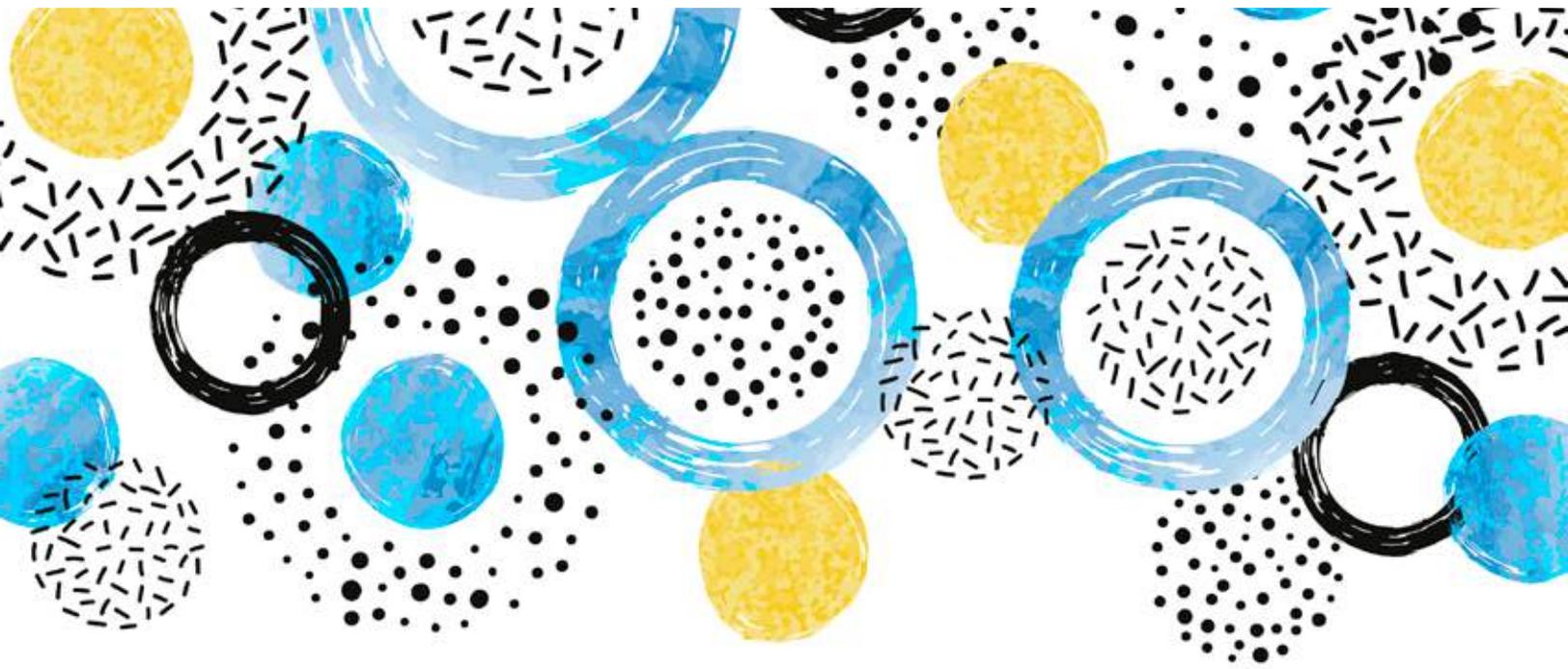


strengthen family voice in mental health services. As a result of that training, the families, including myself, decided to start a parent-run organization, Family Connection of Tarrant County. When I started, I was very quiet and shy but I had a burning desire to help parents that were going through struggles like my family has had to go through. This ambition has pushed me to break out of my shell. I was identified as our organization's family lead, and as a part of my role, I am the liaison between the core leadership team, Family Connection, to the Tarrant County System of Care, Mental Health Connection. I have grown as a family leader through this relationship. Through all of the opportunities and experiences, I have gained leadership skills and have been able to help other families grow in their leadership abilities, strengthen our family voice, and help families support each other.”

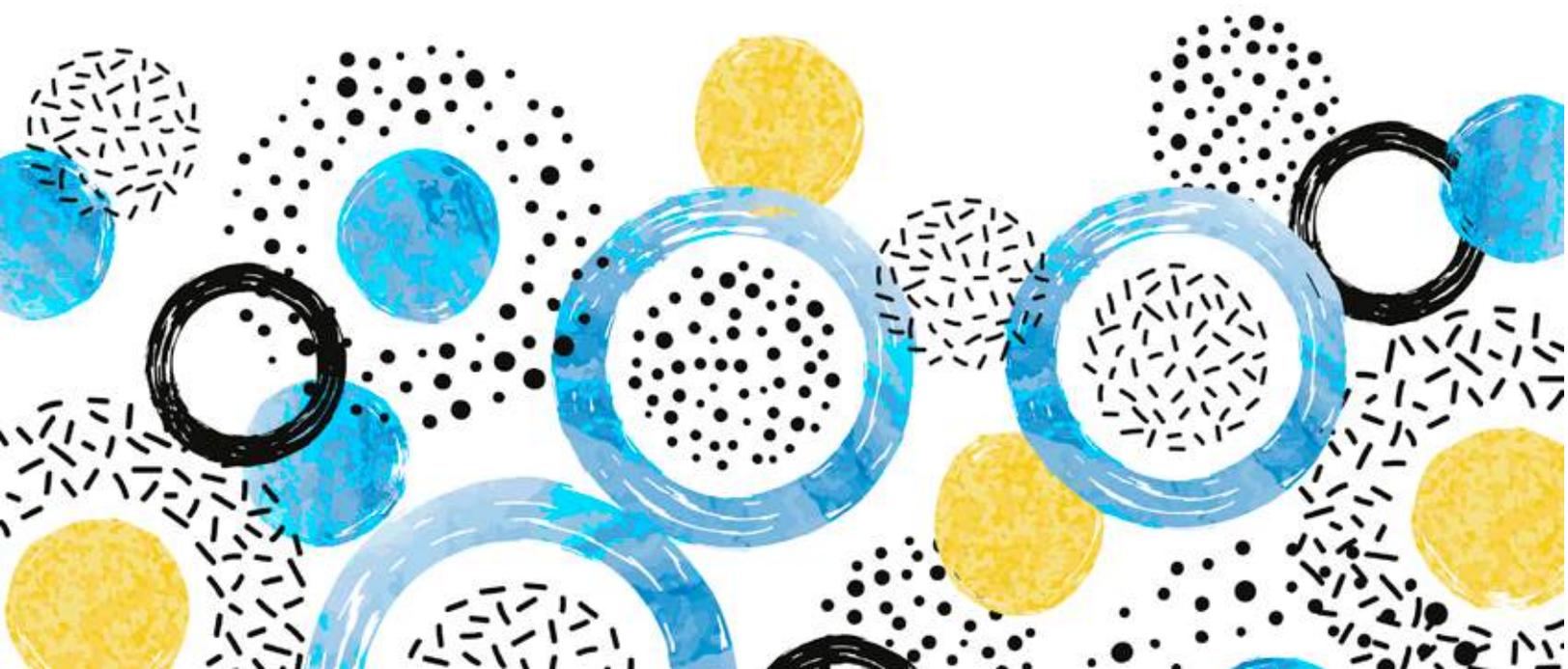
*“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself.
When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”*

—Jack Welch





*Family Leaders
are strong partners.*



Paul Cornils

Alaska Youth and Family Network



“

My wife and I were treatment foster parents, caring for children and youth diagnosed with "Serious Emotional Disorders." In my 14 years as a foster parent, I became an advocate for children in the mental health treatment system. I observed several trends in Alaska's child-serving system, including: a need to improve understanding of trauma and how it affects behavior; children's need for connection to their family of origin; a need for improved support for the whole family when any individual has a behavioral health concern. My pursuit for effective care for the children in our home led me to Alaska Youth and Family Network in 2007, and in 2011 I was hired as Executive Director of AYFN. In 2013, my wife and I adopted our two youngest children, who have diagnoses of PTSD, RAD, and depression due to early childhood trauma.

Alaska Youth and Family Network has evolved from a family-run organization that provides support to parents raising children with mental health challenges, to one that recognizes that parents also often have challenges of their own. AYFN wraps around the whole family, including siblings, adoptive parents, foster parents, and kinship caregivers, and currently serves over 400 Alaskan families. The AYFN team and I are passionate about actively ensuring that Alaska's families receive the support they need to lead their best lives.”

*“A good leader leads the people from above them.
A great leader leads the people from within them.”*

—M.D. Arnold





"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

—Margaret Mead

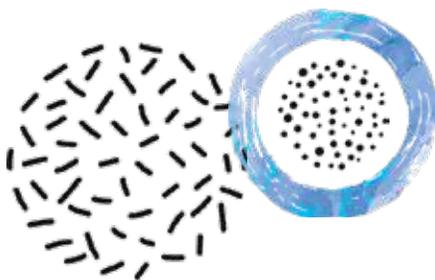
Jane Walker

Family-Run Executive Director
Leadership Association

“

No one knows the path life can lead you. My second oldest child of five brought me to the world of children's mental health over 30 years ago when she began experiencing behavioral challenges as a young child. By age 12 my daughter was sent to a residential program out of state for seven years because there were no appropriate services for her in our state. There was a piece of me that was devastated and thought I had failed completely as a mother, and there was another piece of me that held hope that this residential program might help her when I could not.

Over the course of those 30 years, I have been involved in starting three family-run organizations — as a founding member of the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, as a founder and Executive Director of the Maryland Coalition of Families and as the first Executive Director of the Family-Run Executive Director Leadership Association. It is a path I never imagined I would take. While there have been many challenges along the way, there have been many gifts as well. I have been inspired by the commitment of other family leaders and colleagues who dedicate themselves to helping our children. It is said that when we are of service to others — when we give, support, guide, mentor — we are really receiving what we need most. My life's work as a family leader has given me more than I could have ever asked for and I am truly humbled and grateful.”





These are just a few of the amazing family leaders.

There are thousands more throughout the country, working everyday on behalf of our children and youth with mental health and behavioral health needs and their families.

*Family leaders
are amazing!*

"Leaders are not, as we are often led to think, people who go along with huge crowds following them. Leaders are people who go their own way without caring, or even looking to see, whether anyone is following them. 'Leadership qualities' are not the qualities that enable people to attract followers, but those that enable them to do without them. They include, at the very least, courage, endurance, patience, humor, flexibility, resourcefulness, stubbornness, a keen sense of reality, and the ability to keep a cool and clear head, even when things are going badly. True leaders, in short, do not make people into followers, but into other leaders."

*—John Holt
Teach Your Own*

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FAMILY RUN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION

thanks all of the family leaders across the country for the work they do to support families and to improve systems of care for our children.

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FAMILY RUN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION

is pleased to support

Children's
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Health
Awareness
Day
2018

