December 1, 2021

The stress children and families are experiencing has increased steadily since the onset of the pandemic. The resulting crisis has reached every corner of society, but it has been especially significant for our most vulnerable children. This crisis prompted Children’s Hospital Colorado to declare a state of emergency for pediatric mental health earlier this year. Children have been traumatized because of the disruptions to their daily lives and they need us to step up for them more than ever.

In 2021, The Kempe Foundation led advocacy efforts that secured state funding for services designed to mitigate the negative impacts on youth mental health. One of these initiatives, the I Matter program, will provide three, free online mental health consultations for any youth in need. Additionally, the Kempe Foundation has taken a leadership role in reaching out to community partners to identify and support strategies that address youth mental health. This November, we hosted a Uniting Communities breakfast focused on the prevention of youth suicide. Death by suicide has increased at twice the national rate for all youth in Colorado and is a leading cause of death for those aged 10-24 years old. The breakfast attracted over 80 attendees, including individuals from state and local government, education, foundation supporters, mental health professionals, teenage peers of those who have died by suicide, and other concerned citizens.

The Foundation seeks to prevent childhood trauma and provide effective treatments for victims of abuse and neglect by supporting professionals and programs at the Kempe Center. One of those programs, Fostering Healthy Futures (FHF), provides individualized mentoring and skills training for youth with child welfare involvement. The curriculum is infused with positive youth development and has clearly shown improvements in children’s living stability and mental health, along with reduced delinquency and other adverse outcomes. FHF enables children to build a trusting relationship with a mentor, which empowers them to create brighter futures for themselves. By providing support mechanisms for children, our research shows they will increase their resilience to adversity and thrive despite the many challenges they face. The FHF program has expanded exponentially this year, operating in five sites across Colorado, and is poised for further growth next year. We will continue this growth if we secure additional funding for the program, which already has produced proven results.

We have a lot to do if we want to make Colorado a place where all children have the opportunity to thrive. WE NEED YOU TO STEP UP AND SUPPORT OUR WORK NOW.

Please make a donation towards our year-end fundraising goal of $50,000 to support programs that improve the lives of vulnerable children like those in Kempe’s Fostering Healthy Futures mentoring program. Your gift is essential to our efforts to enable children to grow in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment. Thank you for partnering with the Kempe Foundation and for your care, concern, and commitment to children.

With deep gratitude,

Jon Kruljac
CEO
The Kempe Foundation

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