

Voices



children & families of iowa

Stories and voices of hope.

Volume 118, Issue No. 2, 2014-2015

Overcoming the Odds

When you first meet Tanner,* it is easy to be inspired by the young teen's enthusiasm, motivation and drive to be successful. But for those who know him well, the reasons behind his drive make him even more of an inspiration.

Growing up, Tanner faced overwhelming odds to having a successful life. He and his mother lived in a low income neighborhood filled with crime and violence, and had little money to support themselves. At a young age Tanner began developing dangerous behaviors, and was placed in foster care at the age of nine.

Challenges continued for Tanner as he grew older. He chose to remain in foster care rather than return to his mother's home where he would once again be surrounded by negative influences in his home and neighborhood. As a result, he had to frequently adjust to new schools and surroundings as a child being raised in foster care.

At 18 years old, Tanner graduated from high school and aged-out of the foster care system, a difficult transition to make with little financial or emotional support. Even with all odds against him, he became determined to make a better life for himself. After graduating high school he joined the military, a decision that changed his life. Tanner found great pride in serving his country because it added a sense of purpose and meaning to his life, and even made him grateful for all he had experienced. It also made him realize the sky was the limit on what he was capable of achieving.

Tanner knew that in order to reach his goals, he needed to find guidance and support. He was connected to a program that offers resources to teens who have

recently aged-out of the foster care system, and was referred to Children & Families of Iowa's (CFI) Youth Work Readiness Program (YWRP) so he could continue building the skills he needed to be successful.

CFI helped Tanner realize his talents and drive right away. From the very first meeting, staff could tell he wanted more for himself. While in the program, Tanner learned skills he needed to live a healthy, independent life, such as how to cook nutritious meals and manage his finances. Tanner also started making plans for how he could achieve his professional goals. He had dreams of going to college and pursuing a career in law enforcement, as he felt he was an example to youth growing up in adverse situations.

When Tanner inquired about certain law enforcement careers, CFI coordinated one-on-one interviews with law enforcement representatives. Tanner also enrolled in CFI's Youth Work Readiness and Pre-Employment trainings to gain skills needed for a successful career and future.

Tanner is now well on his way to achieving his dreams, working part-time as a security guard while attending college classes to become a certified Emergency Medical Technician. He continues to attend monthly military training.

When you ask Tanner how he stays so motivated, he says it is often thinking about what life would've been like if he had chosen to stay in his childhood neighborhood, where dreams of a better life could be lost and left behind for a life filled with crime and violence. There is no doubt Tanner has overcome the odds and with hard work and dedication, turned his dreams of success into a reality.



*Name has been changed to protect client confidentiality.



Why We Give: Stories of Hope from People who Give Back

Telligen partners with CFI to help Iowa teens

Telligen, a company that focuses on improving healthcare for providers and consumers all across the country, believes in the power of giving back.



The company created its own non-profit organization known as the Telligen Community Initiative (TCI) to support organizations that work to improve communities Telligen calls home, such as at its headquarters located in West Des Moines.

Children & Families of Iowa (CFI) is proud to be a Telligen partner. Telligen's generous contribution of \$15,000 helps support CFI's Cornerstone Recovery program, a program dedicated to helping teens overcome substance abuse and mental health disorders. CFI focuses on motivating teens in the program to make positive changes in their lives and overcome obstacles that cause their negative behaviors.

"The Telligen Community Initiative is pleased to partner with CFI," says Matt McGarvey, Executive Director of the Telligen Community Initiative. "This partnership allows our organizations to work together to accomplish a shared goal of improving the lives of individuals and communities across Iowa."

Personal connection drives couple to give

For over 15 years, Tom and Julie Slater have been significant supporters of Children & Families of Iowa (CFI). The couple has become an essential part of Tango, a gala benefiting CFI programs, through their years of dedication and commitment to ensuring the event is successful. Their generosity includes providing unique, one-of-a-kind auction items; recruiting hardworking volunteers; and bringing guests to enjoy the evening.

Julie also served as a member of Tango's planning committee for over six years, while Slater & Norris, the law firm where Tom serves as partner, has been a key corporate sponsor for the event for the last seven years.

"Our involvement with CFI began because having personally known someone affected by domestic violence, it has always been a cause very dear to our hearts," Tom said. "I personally believe that women and children are oftentimes placed in disadvantaged situations when there is domestic violence at hand, and many times the victims have nowhere to go. We support CFI because we know the money we give is going directly to the organization and helping those victims in need."

CFI would like to thank Tom and Julie for continued support of CFI programs.

Thank you to the following individuals and groups who recently shared their time and talents as volunteers of Children & Families of Iowa.

Simpson College
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Hope Lutheran Church's
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Princess Party Volunteers (visit www.cfiowa.org for a complete list)



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Honor and Memorial Gifts

The following gifts were given to Children & Families of Iowa between November 1, 2013 and October 31, 2014. To make a gift in honor or in memory of a loved one, friend or organization, please complete and mail the enclosed donation envelope or visit www.givetocfi.org. If you have any questions, please call us at 515.697.7972.

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Princess Party

Thank you to the **775** attendees of this year's Princess Party who helped raise more than **\$23,500** for CFI programs on Saturday, October 4, 2014 at Jordan Creek Town Center!

Little princesses, accompanied by their chaperones, enjoyed:

- Delicious breakfast provided by Panera
- Fun princess crafts and activities
- Posing for photos with their favorite princess characters
- Hair and nail spa provided by Iowa School of Beauty
- Participating in a silent auction and raffle for fun princess prizes

Check our website for up-to-date information on next year's Princess Party!



Emma Jo Brotherson, Hayley Crowdos and Lidia Jones are ready to take on the morning's activities.



Gwen Carl shares a moment with the Scottish Princess.



The Arabian Princess poses with Baylin Schoelerman.



Montera Robinson takes a seat on the royal throne.



Kailee Prall gets to work on craft activities.

Couple gives back as part of anniversary celebration

When it came time to make plans for their 30th wedding anniversary last June, Kevin and Diane Howe decided to do things a little differently. "When we got married we didn't spend a lot of time or money on the wedding, so we knew we wanted to do something big," Diane says. "But we are also at a point where we've realized it's not about getting gifts, it's about getting people together. It was also important to us to use it as an opportunity to give back, because we have been so blessed and fortunate in our marriage."

The couple decided to host an anniversary party and asked partygoers to make a donation to Children & Families of Iowa (CFI) in lieu of gifts. The party raised nearly \$450 for CFI's most emergent needs! Kevin and Diane have been valuable advocates of CFI for years, and Diane has served on CFI's Foundation Board of Trustees. "I've become a big fan of CFI over the years," she says. "It is such a well-run organization and does so much for children and families, which is a cause I've always been passionate about helping."



Kevin and Diane Howe's anniversary party raised nearly \$450 for CFI programs.

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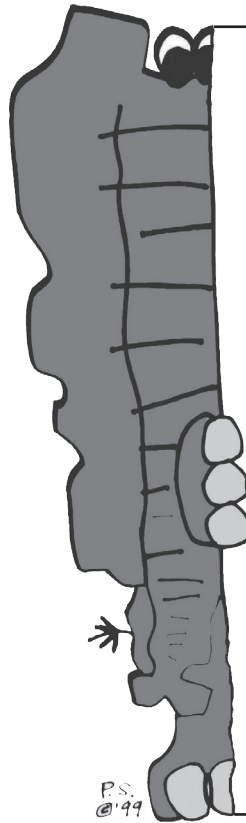
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Come out and enjoy the fun at Iowa's largest children's festival!

- Stage performances
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- Over 125 vendors offering games and activities
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and so much more!

A benefit for Children & Families of Iowa. Visit www.cfiowa.org or like **CFI's Kidsfest page on Facebook** for up-to-date information.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE *this holiday season.*



Children & Families of Iowa will once again partner with Applebee's and Carlos O'Kelly's for the Annual Coaches Toy Drive.

Drop off new, unwrapped toys at Applebee's or Carlos O'Kelly's and we will make sure they go to children who might not otherwise receive gifts this holiday season. **The Coaches Toy Drive begins November 24 and ends December 31.**

Last year, we collected thousands of toys for children across Iowa. Please join us in helping make a child's holiday a little brighter this year! Visit www.cfiowa.org for a list of most-needed toys and participating locations.



Be sure to visit www.cfiowa.org for more information on how you can help others in need have a brighter holiday season.

Does Your Employer Match Gifts?

Many employers will match a gift(s) made by employees, up to a certain dollar amount. Make your gift to Children & Families of Iowa go even further with an employer matching gift!

Inquire with your human resources department for information on your employer's matching gift policy. If you qualify for a matching gift, submit the required paperwork along with your personal gift and we will take care of the rest.

Please join Children & Families of Iowa in extending a warm welcome to incoming Board of Trustees members.

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