

# Stepping Up for Kids

2019

6th Annual  
Awards Luncheon

**Friday, October 11, 2019**

Norwood Hills Country Club



*In conjunction with*



Guided by a trauma-informed, developmentally sensitive approach, FamilyForward's *comprehensive services* support the child, family, and broader community.



[familyforwardmo.org](http://familyforwardmo.org)



congratulates  
the 2019  
Stepping Up for Kids  
Award Recipients

Together, we improve the lives of Missouri children and families who have been impacted by abuse or neglect.

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**Bethany**



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[Bethany.org/StLouis](http://Bethany.org/StLouis)

## Program:

**Prelude Music** .....Point of View Jazz Ensemble, HEAL Center for the Arts  
Harvey Lockhart, Director

**Call to Order and Welcome (11:45 a.m.)** .....Yolanda West  
Co-Chair, St. Louis Child Abuse & Neglect Network

## Lunch

**Welcome and Introduction of Emcee (12:15 p.m.)** .....Yolanda West

**Recognition of Sponsors & Special Guests** .....Cynthia Williams, MSW  
Washington University Brown School of Social Work

**Musical Interlude** .....Point of View Jazz Ensemble, HEAL Center for the Arts

**Guest Speaker** .....Tim Kutz, M.D.  
Co-Founder & Co-Director of Fostering Healthy Children

**Presentation of Stepping Up for Kids Awards** .....Cynthia Williams

**Closing Comments** .....Cynthia Williams

**Recessional Music** .....Point of View Jazz Ensemble, HEAL Center for the Arts

## Thank You to Sponsors:

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- Collaborates with members and stakeholders to develop and advance evidence-based policy solutions to issues impacting children and families in Missouri

LEARN MORE AT [KIDSWINMISSOURI.ORG](http://KIDSWINMISSOURI.ORG)



*Good Shepherd Children & Family Services congratulates the 2019 Honorees for Stepping Up for Kids in our region. Thank you for all that you do!*

• Foster Care • Infant Adoption • Pregnancy & Parenting Services • Residential Maternity Shelter

1340 Partridge Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
314-854-5700



# Congratulations Honorees!

Your hard work is  
noticed, and we  
appreciate you.



## Guest Speaker:

### **Dr. Tim Kutz**

Co-Founder & Co-Director of Fostering Healthy Children

Dr. Tim Kutz has a lifelong dedication to work with children who have been abused or neglected. He was raised in St. Louis, and attended medical school at the University of Missouri, and completed pediatric training in Chicago, IL. Dr. Kutz participated in a child abuse fellowship training in Denver, then accepted a first job in Salt Lake City, UT, working in the field of child maltreatment. When he returned to St. Louis, Dr. Kutz was appointed Director of the Child Protection Division at both St. Louis University School of Medicine and Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital since then. He co-developed and became the co-director of the Fostering Healthy Children program in 2015. This program's goal is to provide a health care home for children living in foster care that provides continuous care, a health care record and referral to needed services.



## Emcee:

### **Cynthia D. Williams, MSW, LCSW, ACSW**

Washington University Brown School

As the oldest of five children in a family that was among the first to racially integrate University City, Cynthia D. Williams has made it her personal mission to empower those who feel marginalized or powerless to find their voice.

Since graduating with her master's degree from Washington University in St. Louis, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Cynthia has served as an integral member of the school for over 40 years. Currently assistant dean for community partnerships, she is well known for her patience, intelligence, and ability to find solutions that unify people while respecting individual and community voices.

Cynthia also served for approximately 15 years as a foster parent to children whose behavioral issues impeded adoption. She has taken an active role in developing coursework and providing training to assist birth and foster families during the reunification and adoption process, and to support other foster families in navigating the challenges of caring for displaced and high-risk children.



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## INCARNATE WORD FOUNDATION

*Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word*

As a ministry of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, our mission is to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word. We believe in a community where the poor and marginalized, especially women, children, and seniors, are empowered to attain quality of life. We accomplish our mission by funding the following focus areas:



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## Honorees: Resource Families

### Gloria and Fred Jones

Resource Family

Nominated by: Makenzie Baker, MBCH

"The young people in the Jones home are reminded every day that they are precious and loved." The Jones have been working with kids from hard places since 2004. Home finding workers are always excited when there is an opening in the Jones' home because they are committed to working through challenges and difficult behaviors. When kids show behaviors that can be frightening to teachers and other adults, Gloria and Fred courageously welcome them into their home. "They

don't give up!" They are committed to assuring that kids get to needed therapy appointments, no matter where they are located, or how many are needed. Some of the youth in the Jones' home require extra appointments for weight monitoring and dietician consultations. Not a problem! Gloria also models and promotes healthy eating habits for the kids in her care. "The Jones family is truly a gift to our kids and our agency."



### Rene Murph

Resource Family

Nominated by: Ernest Gauss, Vision for Children at Risk

"When Masai warriors met, they would greet one another by saying, 'And how are the children?' This acknowledges the high value they placed on children's well-being. I don't know if Rene is a Masai descendent, but she is definitely a fierce warrior to ensure children's well-being." Rene Murph has been a foster parent for 28 years and has changed the lives of more than 30 children. With two children currently in her treatment family home, she specializes in working with kids who have complex needs. Youth most often come to Rene

after leaving residential treatment. Many continue to stay connected with Rene, long after leaving her home. She was clearly a rock of stability for them. Rene balances the challenges of caring and advocating for her kids with community leadership. She is a 2019 Neighborhood Leadership Fellows graduate, serves on the NAMI Advocacy Committee, the St. Louis Region System of Care Executive Committee and is the Regional Director for Missouri Families 4 Families.



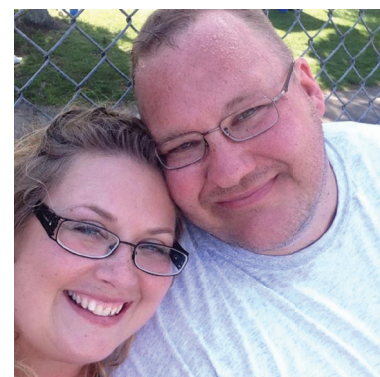
### Jennifer and Tom Rawe

Resource Family

Nominated by: Abigail Bell, Family Forward

Over the past 9 years, the Rawe family has fostered over 57 children. Count on them to open their home to a new child at any time of the day or night. Jen is part of the Jefferson County Children's Services Fund that hosts holiday celebrations for kids living in foster care. Jennifer also teaches STARS and Spaulding classes. The Rawes share a commitment to reunification of children. They diligently tend parent/child connections and work closely with birth parents to build positive parenting skills. Jennifer and Tom are passing on their knowledge

and commitment to their biological and adopted children, who participate in activities to help support children living in foster care in their community. Just as they teach and help children in foster care, they are also teaching and their own children acceptance, generosity, love and kindness to strangers. "Tom and Jennifer are amazing people: outstanding parents, advocates, friends, teachers and a confident to many. We are lucky to work with them side by side."





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**Congratulations to the  
2019 award winners!**

St. Louis Children's Hospital  
thanks you for stepping  
up for children in  
our community.

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**Congratulations**

Stepping Up for Kids Honorees!

We appreciate all that you do to  
serve children and families.



*"Because Every Child Deserves a Chance"*



## Honorees: Casework Staff

### Mecha Brown

Children's Division Case Worker

Nominated by: Cynthia Garner, Children's Division

Mecha Brown's professional life readily shows how she steps up for kids with elevated needs. Mecha knows that it takes a village to raise a child, and she creates villages of foster parents, respite providers and other community partners that she can call on when there is any child in need, not only those in her caseload. She rescued both a youth and her caseworker who were in the office way after regular hours. The youth, with severe mental health needs, had exhausted all options.

But Mecha found a place for her in one of the "village" homes. "9 to 5" means nothing to her. Shopping with kids (and using her own rewards and funds to stretch their clothing allowance). Providing emergency childcare in her office. Taking a child to school so the foster parent can get to work on time. Planning outings with "her" children after hours. These are not part of any job description. But they are part of Mecha Brown.



### Katie Corrigan

Director of Family Dev., Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition

Nominated by: Kimberly Johnson, Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition; and Resource Parents Shon Haynes; Alawnna McDaniel; Kathy Eckelkamp; Stephanie Linde; Libby Savage; and Shamicka Keys

"You can tell that her position is not just a position, it is her life." These words echoed in every nomination of Katie, whether from professional colleagues or the families she supports. As the Mom of 6 kids, 4 of whom are adopted, Katie is grounded in real life, and willingly shares her experiences with the families she supports. She is a champion in linking parents with needed hard-to access resource, and helping families navigate rocky ground. In

2017 Katie and her team launched the Jones Family Foundation Program that trains families and support resource families. She knows the importance of making connections, and with a tiny budget, created a Cookies and Cocoa holiday event that brought 200 family members and kids together to share and celebrate.

The event included a gift-wrap station where kids could wrap gifts for adults significant to them, cookie decorating and a trauma-informed photo opportunity with Santa. Katie is a gift to the families and children whose lives she touches.



### Amy Ehrhardt

Foster Care Case Manager at Family Forward

Nominated by: Lisa Volmert, Family Forward

Much of Amy's 22 year history in child protection work has focused on tackling the tough issues surrounding substance use. Initially, working for the Children's Division, Amy worked in the St. Louis County drug court program. She then used her experience to help build a drug court program in Jefferson County. Amy puts tremendous efforts into helping parents because she understand that their strength and recovery is so important to their children. She cares intensely about

the well-being of the children with whom she works. Creativity marks her efforts. Her co-worker states, "When attending home visits with Amy, I enjoy watching her use different approaches to connect with children, whether it be through art, music or their love of animals." Amy's large heart extends to a love of animals. Not surprisingly, in her personal life, she offers a horseback program that connects kids with horses in a variety of ways and gives back through charitable events.



### Kathy Tharp

Deputy Juvenile Office II, St. Louis City Family Court

Nominated by: Yvonne Rivers, St. Louis Family Court

"Able to overcome familial efforts to sabotage placement." "Able to sort out inaccurate information when a placement would have endangered a child." "The go-to person when a child has severe medical issues." "Enormous experience working with children and families that experience mental illness and drug addiction and abandonment." Kathy Tharp sounds a bit like Superwoman. She can also probably leap tall buildings in a single bound! For 32 years, Kathy has

honed her skills, always eager to learn about new treatment modalities. Her care for the kids on her caseload is evidenced as well by her commitment to assuring they have a voice in decisions made about their lives. Kathy generously speaks at schools about child protection. Her volunteer contributions were critical as the chair of the Courts's Children's Festival. Kathy provided the organizational skills and modeled the team work needed to make the festivals successful.



We extend our heartfelt thanks to the foster, kinship, guardian and relative families for their tireless supply of love and nurturing to vulnerable children.

CPP congratulates and is proud of the hard work of all Stepping Up for Kids award recipients. Thanks also for the diligent and extremely hard work being done by all of the CPP staff to ensure the health and safety of children and youth entrusted to their care.

Thank you all!!!



Epworth Children & Family Services  
FamilyForward  
Youth In Need  
Together we make a difference!

CPP is a consortium of social services agencies working together to provide foster care case management, adoption, guardianship, and resource development services in St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St. Charles County and Jefferson County.

Member Agencies:

Epworth Children and Family Services  
FamilyForward  
Youth In Need



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The Fostering Healthy Children program at SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital proudly supports those who Step Up for kids in our region.

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Places for People’s mission is to provide caring, effective services to help those with the greatest challenges recover from mental illness, substance use disorders, and associated chronic illnesses.



# Thank you

to all the amazing families,  
volunteers and staff who help  
children in foster and adoptive care.  
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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR’S RECIPIENTS



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Congratulations to this year's honorees:  
You are truly making a difference for kids!



(An Affiliate of Missouri Baptist Children's Home)



## Congratulations Stepping Up for Kids Honorees



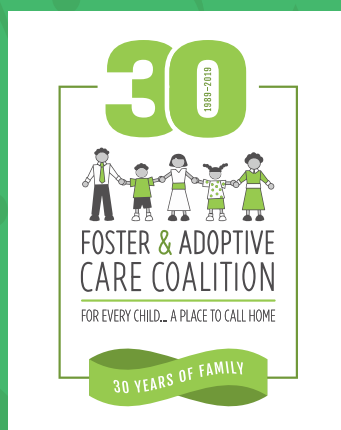
together for children

Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies

[www.e-mcca.org](http://www.e-mcca.org)

## Congratulations Katie Corrigan!

We deeply appreciate your tireless work on  
behalf of children in foster care.



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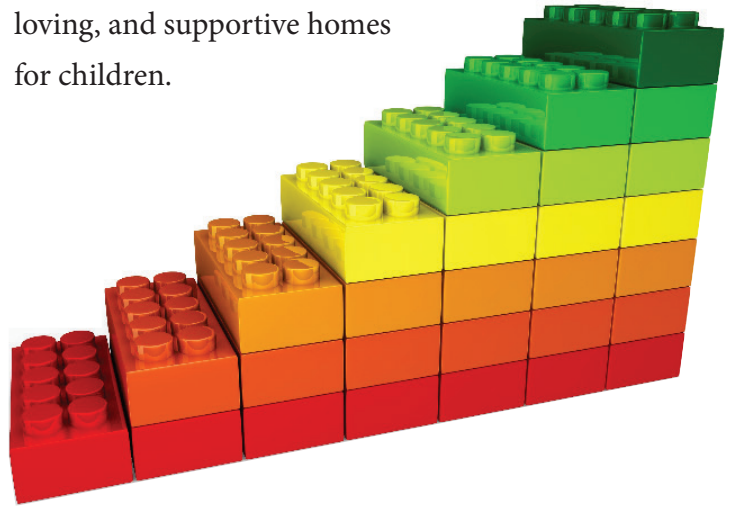
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As a community-based organization, we are  
delighted to be here to celebrate so many  
individuals who give of their time and talents  
for the well-being of the children of St. Louis.

## *Recognizing and Celebrating*

this year's honorees and all those in our community  
who work endlessly to provide safe,  
loving, and supportive homes  
for children.



St. Louis County  
Children's Service Fund  
*Keeping Kids First*



## **Point of View Jazz Ensemble HEAL Center for the Arts**

Music for Stepping Up for Kids is provided by the Point of View Jazz Ensemble from HEAL Center for the Arts. Founded by Harvey Lockhart, HEAL operates in partnership with local school districts to provide a safe and supportive space where students of urban communities have access to high quality mentoring, tutoring, and arts education. HEAL is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Grand Center.

# CONGRATULATIONS 2019 Honorees!



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

SAINT LOUIS



## Congratulations Stepping Up for Kids Honorees!

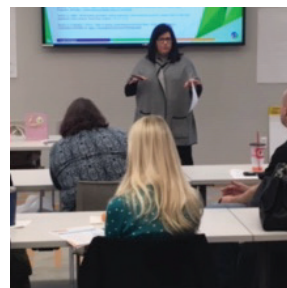
Thank you for being committed to children and families, your dedication and service does not go unnoticed.

From the Vision for Children at Risk  
Board of Directors

## About the St. Louis Child Abuse & Neglect Network (STLCANN)

The St. Louis Child Abuse & Neglect Network (STLCANN) promotes advocacy, education and networking to improve the lives of children and families who have been impacted by abuse or neglect and to strengthen families to prevent child abuse or neglect. Programs include:

- **Training Workshops and Events:** Quarterly CEU-credit seminars offer training to help improve your professional skills in working with children and families.
- The annual **Stepping Up for Kids Awards Luncheon** recognizes outstanding service to children in foster and adoptive care.
- Each April, **Child Abuse Prevention Month** activities include a family resource fair as well as a yard sign display and social media campaign.
- STLCANN participates in **coordinated statewide legislative advocacy** on behalf of children and families.





## 2019 Planning Committee:

Deva Blackman  
Dawn Couser  
Ruth Ehresman  
Shanté Lampley  
Brenda Maly  
Trina Orlet  
Colleen Polak  
Yolanda West



## Stepping Up for Kids Previous Honorees:

### 2018

#### Resource Families

Maria Holmes  
Wanda Noel  
Shirley and Jimmie Walker

#### Casework Staff

Valerie Njiiri  
Meaghan Westhus  
Mockia “Nikki” Shelton  
Jennifer Thomas

### 2017

#### Resource Families

Janice Smith  
Robyne Wilson-Cima

#### Casework Staff

Stepanie Littlejohn  
Kelly Sullivan  
Bridget Virdue  
Kenya Willis

### 2016

#### Resource Families

Adella Coleman  
Jennifer and Shane Tripp  
Jan and Paul Wilkin

#### Casework Staff

Karen Jones  
Denise Kelley  
Gail Knipshild

### 2015

#### Resource Families

Ramona Brooks  
Tiffany and Robert  
Slouffmann

#### Casework Staff

Abigail Bell  
Edna Green  
Jennifer LaVelle  
Edward Vazquez  
Lynn Zollicofer

### 2014

#### Resource Families

Barbara Bocklage  
Sara Glasscock  
Evelyn Holder  
Yvonne Peoples

#### Casework Staff

Hisako O'Rourke  
Bev Schaefer



Stepping Up for Kids 2019

*Thank you!*