

**24th Annual
Champion for Children Conference
1999-2023**



What's in your toolbox?

**March 23rd - 24th, 2023
Abilene Convention Center
Abilene, TX**

Conference Schedule

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Times	Events
8:00-9:00	Check-in and Registration
8:45-9:00	Welcome and Announcements
9:00-10:30	Opening Plenary – Session 1
10:45-12:15	Session 2
12:15-1:30	Lunch on own
1:30-3:00	Session 3
3:15-4:45	Session 4
6:00-9:00	Social at Oak Arbor

Friday, March 24, 2023

Times	Events
8:00-8:25	Check-in and Registration
8:30-10:00	Session 5
10:15-11:45	Session 6
12:00-1:30	Awards Luncheon provided by 2gingers
1:45-3:15	Session 8
3:30-4:45	Session 9

Please note: To obtain CEU Certificate attendees will need to complete the Presenter Survey for each session attended by **April 30, 2023**. QR Codes will be provided at the end of the session for attendees to complete the survey. If you are having trouble with the QR codes, please let staff know so we can email you the Survey Monkey link. It is the attendee's responsibility to ensure that Champions for Children staff have the appropriate email address to receive your certificate. Surveys will be sent out during or after the conference.

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HENDRICK HOME

FOR CHILDREN

Conference Speaker Schedule

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Date/Time	Name of Class	Presenter(s)	Room
Session 1 (1.5 CEU's)			
9:00-10:30	Chuckles & Guffaws: Looking at Humor as Self-Care	Tina Bevans, LCSW-S	Conference
Session 2 (1.5 CEU's)			
10:45-12:15	Intergenerational Cultural Dissonance in Hispanic Families	Hilda H. McClure, LPC-A, Elizabeth Jurado, MSW	Conference
10:45-12:15	The Butterfly Effect of Human Trafficking	Jay Strong	CC1
10:45-12:15	See Something, Say Something: Recognizing & Responding to Teen Trafficking Victims	Kaitlyn Eberhardt	CC3
10:45-12:15	Internal and External Regulation utilizing TBRI Empowering Principles	Lindsay Del Valle, LPC	CC4
12:15-1:30	Lunch on own		
Session 3 (1.5CEU's)			
1:30-3:00	Self-Regulation in a High- Stress Job	Crystal Leake, LPCS	Conference
1:30-3:00	Saving Our Children - One Adult at a Time	Brandon Gurganus	CC1
1:30-3:00	The Social Worker's Self-Care Toolbox (Ethics)	Lauren Cantrell, LMSW & Noreen White, LBSW	CC2
1:30-3:00	I've Heard It All Before, But What Does It Really Mean For My Practice?	Cassandra Mendoza	CC3
Session 4 (1.5 CEU's)			
3:15-4:45	Crossing Over: A Description of Dual-Status Youth in Taylor County, Texas (Ethics)	Kimberly Putnam	Conference
3:15-4:45	Building resilience in youth	Chris Daughtery	CC1
3:15-4:45	The Social Worker's Self-Care Toolbox (Ethics)	Lauren Cantrell, LMSW & Noreen White, LBSW	CC2

3:15-4:45	Theoretical Mental Health Model for Life Transitions	Jason Shaw, LPC	CC3
3:15-4:45	BHC Specialized Treatment for Early Psychosis and YES Waiver Services	Carl Leake & Dean Pye	CC4
6:00-9:00	Social at Oak St Arbor		

Friday, March 24, 2023

Date/Time	Name of Class	Presenter(s)	Room
Plenary - Session 5 (1.5 CEU's)			
8:30-10:00	Slippery Slopes: Common Ethical Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them Part 1 (Ethics)	Tina Bevans, LCSW-S	CC 2&3
Plenary - Session 6 (1.5 CEU's)			
10:15-11:45	Slippery Slopes: Common Ethical Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them Part 2 (Ethics)	Tina Bevans, LCSW-S	CC 2&3
Session 7 - Awards Luncheon			
12:00-1:30	Lunch provided by 2Ginges	Keynote: Kevin Tutt	Exhibit Hall
Session 8 (1.5 CEU's)			
1:45-3:15	Walking on that Bridge	Darrin Cox and Colleen Rud, LMSW	CC1
1:45-3:15	The Social Worker's Self-Care Toolbox (Ethics)	Lauren Cantrell, LMSW & Noreen White, LBSW	CC 2
1:45-3:15	Strength in Adversity: Motivational Interviewing	Hilda H. McClure, LPC-A, Elizabeth Jurado, MSW, Dr. Leticia Cavazos, LCSW	CC3
Session 9 (1.5 CEU's)			
3:30-4:45	Keeping Students Safe	Colleen Rud, MSW	CC1

3:30-4:45	The Social Worker's Self-Care Toolbox (Ethics)	Lauren Cantrell, LMSW & Noreen White, LBSW	CC2
3:30-4:45	Strength in Adversity: Motivational Interviewing	Hilda H. McClure, LPC-A, Elizabeth Jurado, MSW, Dr. Leticia Cavazos, LCSW	CC3

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HARDIN-SIMMONS

U N I V E R S I T Y

SOCIAL WORK

Class Descriptions

Chuckles & Guffaws: Looking at Humor as Self-Care by Tina Ryker-Bevans, LCSW-S.

This presentation will explore using humor and professional relationships as self-care. We will identify healthy versus toxic dynamics with our colleagues, discuss the physical and psychological benefits of laughter, and rediscover the humorous side of helping professions. Be prepared to laugh!

See Something, Say Something: Recognizing & Responding to Teen Trafficking Victim by Kaitlyn Eberhardt.

Teen victims of human trafficking have many unique needs when compared to victims of other forms of power-based abuse. This workshop will take a deep dive into the dynamics of sex and labor trafficking in teen populations, as well as social and legal remedies for survivors. Social media strategies will be covered.



Intergenerational Cultural Dissonance in Hispanic Families by Hilda H. McClure, LPC-A, Elizabeth Jurado, MSW.

Many are familiar with intergenerational dissonance that exists between parents and children. However, when it comes to the conflict over culture between generations, we are a little less familiar with this unique dynamic. Acculturation is a complex and unique

process, and it deeply impacts the family system especially when youth are involved and are going through that process simultaneously.

The Butterfly Effect of Human Trafficking by Jay Strong.

This session will discuss the theory of the butterfly effect where one action can change the course of one's whole life and how that applies to the "process" of human smuggling and ultimately, human trafficking from start to finish. Discussion will include real world experiences, dispelling myths and sharing the tell-tale signs of victims and perpetrators.

Internal and External Regulation utilizing TBRI Empowering Principles by Lindsay Del Valle, LPC.

This workshop will utilize TBRI Empowering Principles to present information on internal and external needs, as well as sensory input, in order to promote mental, emotional, and behavioral regulation.

The Social Worker's Self-Care Toolbox (Ethics) by Lauren Cantrell, LMSW & Noreen White, LBSW.

Self-Care is a fundamental tool in our service and continuity of practice. The need to engage in self-care is so great and this session will offer a hands-on approach to building your own self-care toolbox. This session will utilize interactive tools and resources, and group discussions following a presentation on self-care incorporation.

Saving Our Children - One Adult at a Time by Brandon Gurganus.

It is a common statement heard when parents are involved in child sexual abuse investigations; "I never thought this would happen to my child".

Through discussion and activities, participants will be made aware of facts about child sexual abuse. They will also learn tips to help parents, as well as professionals who work with parents/kids to help prevent child sexual abuse.

Self-Regulation in a High-Stress Job by Crystal Leake.

The goal of this workshop is to explore the deeper meaning of self-care, ways to care for oneself when working in a high stress environment.

I've Heard It All Before, But What Does It Really Mean For My Practice? by Cassandra Mendoza.

During this workshop participants will learn about the basics of trauma-informed care including the core values and principles that guide the implementation of a trauma-informed care practice. Participants will explore examples of how to implement trauma-informed care in a child welfare setting. Participants will be introduced to the concept of healing centered engagement. Participants will explore ways to implement healing centered engagement in a child welfare setting.



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters®**

LONE STAR
ABILENE

Crossing Over: A Description of Dual-Status Youth in Taylor County, Texas (Ethics) by Kimberly Putnam.

This lecture-style workshop will present a recent study on the

experiences of dual-status youth in Taylor County, Texas. After a brief introduction to the purpose and significance of the study, the results of the study will be presented. The presenter will apply these results by providing recommendations for future research, policy changes, and best practices for this population.

Building resilience in youth by Chris Daughtery.

This session focuses on developing the four pillars in our youth: Emotional Intelligence, Communication Skills, Conflict Resolution and Critical Thinking.

Theoretical Mental Health Model for Life Transitions by Jason Shaw, LPC.

This workshop is designed to help professionals walk those who they are working with through different life transitions. Whether they are working with children in foster care, families or have a personal life transition, this workshop is designed to help the attendee learn ways of identifying their current situation, identify and process feelings, create new norms for living, and find purpose.

BHC Specialized Treatment for Early Psychosis and YES Waiver Services by Carl Leake & Dean Pye.

This workshop is an introduction to BHC services including the developing Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis and YES waiver services. Both programs are aimed at serving children and/or young adults who are at risk and need intensive wrap around services.



Slippery Slopes: Common Ethical Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them (Ethics) by Tina Bevans, LCSW-S.

This workshop will examine the most common ethical complaints and violations facing state licensing boards. Codes of Ethics will be reviewed for national professional organizations.

Walking on that Bridge by Darrin Cox and Colleen Rud, MSW.

We will walk through McKinney -Vento and how it affects youth. We will also look at how homeless youth are the most vulnerable to be trafficked. The effects of homelessness and human Trafficking on our youth and what we can do in our community to help those youth.

Strength in Adversity: Motivational Interviewing by Hilda H. McClure, LPC-A & Elizabeth Jurado, MSW.

Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It strengthens personal motivation and commitment to a specific goal within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.

Keeping Students Safe by Colleen Rud, MSW.

Human trafficking happens in our community, and our students are at-risk. "Keeping Students Safe" is a

research and experience-based, prevention presentation that can be presented to school staff for school staff, caregivers, and students in 6th through 12th grades. "Keeping Students Safe" presentations include the latest statistics on human trafficking in Texas, expose the recruitment tactics of traffickers, explain how to recognize vulnerable and exploited youth, and provide ways to connect students to appropriate resources. These programs are flexible and suitable for a classroom or assembly setting.



Conference Presenters

Plenary Speaker:

**Tina Ryker-Bevans, LCSW-S;
Therapist/Behavioral Health Consultant;
Foundations of Change, LLC**

Tina Ryker-Bevans is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Board Approved Supervisor in Oklahoma. She graduated from the University of Oklahoma with her BA in Political Science in 1998 and with her Master of Social Work in 2001. She worked with adult and child domestic violence and sexual assault survivors for over 15 years, including a practicum in Washington, DC with the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Public Policy office. In 2009, Tina moved to the VA. At the VA, Tina worked as the Tulsa Suicide Prevention Coordinator with high-risk Veterans then at the Tulsa Vet Center where she worked with combat Veterans and military sexual trauma survivors. In November 2017, she started Foundations of Change, LLC, and she co-founded the Oklahoma Social Work Summit in 2018 and the Children's Mental Health Symposium in 2019. In addition, she has provided workshops for mental health professionals, healthcare providers, first responders, and community members on various topics. She served on the NASW-OK Board of Directors 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 as well as Chairperson of NASW-OK Conference Committee 2014-2018. She currently serves on the Knee-Wittman Award Committee with NASW, is an adjunct faculty member with Tulsa Community College, and provides groups for sex offenders and batterers on probation and parole. She is a certified mediator and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) administrator. She advocates for her special needs daughter and has become an advocate for services for special needs children. She also served 11 years in the US Navy Reserve. When not working, Tina enjoys spending time with her husband and daughters, playing with their dogs, serving in her church, and cheering on the OU Sooners.



Luncheon Keynote Speaker:

**Kevin Tutt
Author & Speaker; Tutt & Dagg**

Kevin Tutt is a master of generating enthusiasm and excitement. He is an amazing speaker and connects quickly with his audience. As co-founder of Tutt & Dagg, Corporate Speakers, he has chosen to inspire and challenge audiences of all types to reevaluate their personal commitment toward work and life. Kevin emphasizes leaders' contribution to the success of people around them. It is Kevin's vision to maximize individual potential and, with focusing on the details, begin the big journey of making a difference. Organizations, associations and families can be transformed but only after the individuals of those entities recognize that they possess the power to make an impact and give more than they ever thought possible. Since 2006, Kevin has inspired, entertained, and helped advance over 1,000 organizations in the area of commitment, positivity, attitude, change and engagement. His past experience in healthcare and serving as an adjunct instructor at Abilene Christian University has made the move to corporate America seamless. Kevin's desire to shake up corporate complacency was born out of his previous experience of working to improve client service for patients and understanding the necessity of uncompromising student engagement in education.



TEXAS

Health and Human Services

Early Childhood Intervention

Hilda McClure, LPC-A
Chief Operating Officer, Therapist; Cannenta Center for Healing and Empowerment

Hilda McClure holds a Master of Arts in Counseling from the Dallas Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from Dallas Baptist University. She is currently a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Associate, specializing in working with children, adolescents, and young adults. Hilda is also a trained EMDR therapist, Somatic Experiencing Practitioner in training, and a trauma-focused bilingual counselor.

Elizabeth Jurado, MSW
Life Coach; Cannenta Center for Healing and Empowerment

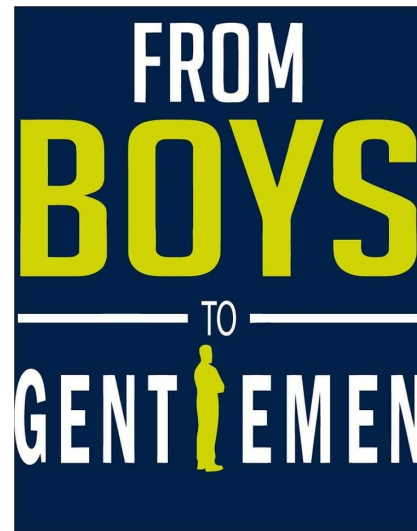
Elizabeth Jurado holds a Master of Social Work from the Texas A&M University in Commerce, Texas and currently is a Certified Financial Social Worker. She has experience working with children, families, and individuals as an agent of support and guidance. Her professional life includes a commitment to serving the needs of low-income families as a Bilingual Financial Coach and Advocate.



Dr. Leticia Cavazos, LCSW
Chief Executive Officer, Cannenta Center for Healing and Empowerment

Dr. Leti Cavazos holds a Doctor of Social Work degree from the University of Tennessee with an emphasis in Clinical Practice and Leadership. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Her research study was entitled, “Assessing the Characteristics of Male Victims of Domestic Violence Experiencing Homelessness.” Her work has led her to create several successful programs

including building the foundation for the first male domestic violence shelter in Texas.



Jay Strong
Officer; Merkel Police Department

Jay T. Strong serves as a Police Officer for the City of Merkel Texas. He has served as the Chief of Police for the City of Tye, Merkel ISD School Resource Officer, and Criminal Investigations Detective for the Nolan County Sheriff’s Office. Prior to his civilian law enforcement career, Jay served in the United States Air Force for 21 years. During his Air Force Career, Jay was recognized as Outstanding Young Man of America, AF First Sergeant of the Year, 8th Air Force Lance P. Sijan Senior Enlisted Leadership Award to name a few. Jay is recognized as a local expert in human trafficking and has been lauded for his efforts in the Big Country. Noteworthy achievements include establishing a 501c3 charity, Operation Brown Bag, serving disadvantaged children and senior citizens in the Big Country. This community program afforded his team the opportunity to engage with children where they live, providing for their personal needs resulting in a decrease in CPS cases over a five-year period. During his tenure in Tye, his department garnered National Recognition as the 2021 Axon RISE Agency of the Year for making great strides in building up their community. He was named the 2018 Kiwanis First Responder of the Year, Masons Community Builder Award and KTXS Hometown Hero. Jay has a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology/Criminal Justice from Arizona State University. He shares his passion for community service with his wife, Dr. Debra Notturmo-Strong. They have two adult children, four grandchildren and 12 dogs.

Kaitlyn Eberhardt

Prevention Strategist; Texas Advocacy Project

Kaitlyn Eberhardt is the Prevention Strategist at Texas Advocacy Project, a non-profit organization providing free legal and social services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and child abuse. Kaitlyn travels across the state to facilitate conversations on best practices and strategies in responding to the unique needs of power-based abuse victims. She provides training to a wide variety of professionals and organizations related to the criminal justice system, with a focus on dating violence prevention in teen populations. Kaitlyn has worked directly with survivors within the agency to provide crisis intervention, safety planning, and resource referrals. She serves on task forces, community planning groups, and committees that focus on ending domestic violence and sexual assault, and bringing survivors to safety.



Lindsay Del Valle, LPC

Case Manager and Parent Educator; Methodist Children's Home

Lindsay Del Valle is a Licensed Professional Counselor and holds a Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling from University of the Southwest. Lindsay's areas of expertise include working with parents and families. Lindsay currently serves as a Case Manager and Parent Educator for Methodist Children's Home Abilene Outreach Office. Lindsay is certified in Nurturing Parenting, and Circle Of Security Parenting. Lindsay is also a Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Practitioner. Lindsay provides private practice virtual therapy on a part-time basis. When Lindsay isn't

working, she enjoys spending time with her husband, two sons, friends, and extended family.



Crystal Leake, LPCS

Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor; New Horizons

Crystal Leake is Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor currently working at New Horizons as a counselor at the New Horizon's Family Center. She serves primarily foster children and families in healing process. For over 10 years she has served in a professional setting helping connect children and adults to healing. Her experience in the field has covered supporting children, adults and families in settings of psychiatric hospital, residential treatment centers, outpatient practice, and Military Family Life Counselor. Crystal has a Master's in Family Ministry, Master's in Family Psychology, is a Trust Based Relational Intervention practitioner, has specialized trainings in trauma, premarital/post marital counseling, and drug prevention. She is currently working toward obtaining her RPT (registered play therapist). Her experience as a foster and adoptive mother helps her relate to the unique challenges and successes of the foster care world. Crystal speaks at many different events covering both psychological and theological topics. She is a mother of two wonderful children, kinship mom/cousin to a wonderful baby, and wife to a supportive and loving husband.

Brandon Gurganus

Victim Services Specialist; Abilene / Taylor County Child Advocacy Center

Brandon Gurganus has been working as a Victim Services Specialist for the Child Advocacy Center

(CAC) in Abilene since 2016. Prior to that, he worked as an Investigator with CPS for 2 years, and a dispatcher with Abilene PD for 3 years. Brandon was born and raised in Abilene and graduated from Hardin-Simmons in 2010 with a Bachelors in Criminal Justice. Since his time at the CAC, Brandon has conducted over 1,100 forensic interviews of child abuse victims, and provided advocacy support services to approximately 700 families. He provides presentations regularly throughout the community. During his time at the CAC, Brandon has developed a passion for providing education to community members on child sexual abuse awareness and tips for prevention. He wants to bring awareness that sexual abuse happens in every type of family, and he would like to equip parents and professionals to help end child sexual abuse in Taylor county.



Lauren Cantrell, LMSW
Director of Field Education/ Assistant Professor of Social Work; Hardin-Simmons University
 Lauren Cantrell is the Director of Field Education and full-time Assistant Professor of Social Work at Hardin-Simmons University. Born and raised in Abilene, Texas, she is a Christian wife and mother to a seven-year-old son. Lauren is a licensed Master’s social worker (LMSW) and she is currently completing a doctoral program in Leadership in Higher Education and will graduate in May 2023. She has worked in administrative social work capacities in the medical field, as a case manager, and director of social services for the geriatric population for most of her career prior to higher education. She specializes in trauma and grief care, and dementia and behavioral health. Lauren is currently completing her dissertation on the Incorporation of Servant Leadership in the Field Pedagogy in Social Work Education.

Noreen White, LBSW
Program Director; Betty Hardwick, ECI
 Noreen White is the Program Director at Betty Hardwick ECI. A native of Evanston, Illinois, this

enthusiastic Christian wife, and mother of three sons moved to Texas in the late 1980’s. She began her professional career in the Abilene area as a social worker in 1990. She has worked with young children and families as a service coordinator, case manager, child development center director, Early Intervention Specialist, and an administrator. This year she celebrates 24 collective years of service with Early Childhood Intervention. Noreen is a licensed social worker (LBSW) and holds a bachelor's degree in Social Work from Abilene Christian University. Hobbies include collecting rabbit art, cooking soul food, gospel singing, and cuddling with her new baby granddaughter.



Cassandra Mendoza
Curriculum & Training Specialist; Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing
 Cassandra has multiple years of experience working with Black and Latinx families in urban settings, families with child welfare involvement, and children living in under-resourced communities. Cassandra has experience providing academic tutoring and socio-emotional counseling to public school students in Chicago, IL. Cassandra was a bilingual, mental health therapist to birth-to-five families that have experienced violence; and a crisis specialist providing services to youth and caregivers involved in the child welfare system in Chicago, IL and Los Angeles County. Cassandra’s professional interests include anti-racism work, supporting healthy communities, and improving social work practices. In her current position, Cassandra is developing the TXPOP Social Work Child Welfare Academy that offers trainings designed to help child welfare professionals improve permanency and wellbeing outcomes for children.

Kimberly Putnam
MSSW Candidate; Abilene Christian University
 Kimberly is an advanced-year Master of Science in Social Work student at Abilene Christian University. Currently, she is serving as the MSW Intern at Big Country CASA, assisting with volunteer recruitment,

data analysis, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. She is passionate about working with at-risk youth to help them internalize their worth and encourage them towards their greatest potentials. She became interested in the experiences of dual-status youth after interacting with youth that have been involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and noticing a trend in how youth with prior child welfare involvement disproportionately enter the justice system. Her presentation is based on a study of Taylor County system-involved youth that she conducted for her masters' thesis with the help of ACU School of Social Work and Big Country CASA faculty and staff. After graduating with her MSSW in May, Kimberly will continue her career and education by becoming a Licensed Master Social Worker and pursuing a Master of Arts from ACU's Graduate School of Theology.



Chris Daughtery **From Boys to Gentleman**

Chris Daughtery is the founder of From Boys to Gentlemen Mentoring Program with over ten years of experience in coaching and mentoring young men and ladies. He is the author of the book "From Boys to Gentlemen" which was published in 2014 and has since helped hundreds of people to understand the importance of having a strong family unit. The book is the tool he uses to help young men grow into being strong husbands and fathers and to help young ladies with their self-esteem. It also serves as a conversation starter for improving communication and relationships between parents and children in the home. As a father and military veteran himself, Chris understands the importance of being a role model for young people.

Jason Shaw, LPC **Theoretical Mental Health Model for Life Transition; McMurry University**

Shaw is currently the Director of Counseling and Disability Services at McMurry University. He has 10 years of working with youth in crisis and foster care. Jason is a TBRI Practitioner and is currently working on his Doctorate in Biblical Counseling through Bob Jones

University. Jason serves as a board member of the Child Advocacy Center.

Carl Leake **Program Administrator, Betty Hardwick Center**

Carl Leake is a Program Administrator for Betty Hardwick Center. He has a Master of Arts in Family Ministry, a Pastoral Counseling specialty. Carl has been in the mental health field for 12 years spanning several populations including adult mental health, IDD, geriatric and child and adolescent in both residential and outpatient treatment. Carl currently supervises the Assertive Community Treatment team, Care Coordination and is currently in development of the Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis program.

Dean Pye **Child & Adolescent Mental Health Program Administrator; Betty Hardwick Center**

Dean Pye is the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Program Administrator at Betty Hardwick Center. He has worked at Betty Hardwick for a little over 11 years in a variety of departments, including Adult Mental Health Services, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and Care Coordination Services. Dean is originally from the Houston area before moving to Arkansas for undergraduate studies and then finally Abilene for his graduate degree. He studied at Abilene Christian University for Marriage and Family Therapy and has since become a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. He provides training on AS+K Suicide Training as well as Trauma-Informed Care Training at Betty Hardwick and in the community. Dean is married to his wife of 13 years (Erica) and they have one son (Calvin), who enjoys watching his dad play video games.



Darrin Cox
Homeless Liaison; Abilene Independent School District

Darrin Cox graduated with a BSW in 1989 from Abilene Christian University. In 1988 he began his work career as a Juvenile Probation Officer at the Juvenile Probation Department of Taylor County. During his internship he was hired to begin the Intensive Supervision Probation Program and worked for Taylor County until 1993 where he first became employed by Abilene Independent School District as a Truant Officer for over 20 years. He worked several years developing their attendance program to help bring up AISD'S attendance overall. He also coached softball at the varsity level at Abilene high for 14 years during his tenure at Abilene Independent School District. Feeling almost to the point of burn out he was able to take a new job as the Homeless /Foster Care Liaison for AISD where he is presently employed. In his second year as the homeless liaison Darrin has started helping students with all their needs from socks, underwear, shoes and clothes. One of his main goals this year was to bring awareness of the high number of homeless students identified in the Abilene Independent School District. Another goal is to make Abilene Independent School District a very welcoming school district to those in need. Darrin has been successful with putting together a clothing closet, school supplies closet and meeting his goal of getting the word out across the community of Abilene. He has helped to buy a washer and dryer for all schools to help our students. He has also helped to bring Care 4 Kids, a weekend food program for the food insecure in AISD.

Colleen Rud
Senior Human Trafficking Specialist/CSEY Advocate; Regional Victims Crisis Center

Colleen was raised in a small town in West Central Wisconsin and graduated from Eleva-Strum High

School. She went on to obtain a bachelor's degree in Social Science from Ashford University and she currently has a Master of Social Work degree from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. Colleen is a nationally certified victim advocate, who has spent the last roughly 20 plus years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector. Colleen currently works as a Human Trafficking Case Management Advocate with Regional Victim Crisis Center. She is also the co-coordinator for the Big Country Human Trafficking Coalition. Colleen has a passion for serving those who often don't feel they have a voice and has spent many years serving the homeless and victims of crimes. If you ask Colleen about her philosophy in working with those who seek victim services, Colleen shared a quote from Mother Teresa "We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop." Colleen and her husband, Richard have been married for 31 years and currently reside in Hawley. They have 6 children and 7 grandchildren. Colleen enjoys spending time with her family in her free time. I have a ton of presentations that I have done over the course of the past two years. It would be a lot to list for all the schools, churches, Region 14, 2Ingage, Lions Club, Kiwana's Club. She has also co-presented with Darrin Cox in San Marcos on August 30, 2022, for TEHCY Program Summit.



Awards Luncheon Schedule

Events	Times
Serve lunch – One entrance to buffet only	12:00-12:20pm
Welcome – Councilman Lynn Beard	12:20-12:25pm
Presentation of Colors (Dyess Honor Guard) Pledge of Allegiance (Lynn Beard leads audience) National Anthem (sung by Crystal Leake) Honor Guard exits	12:25-12:30pm
Invocation: John Graham (pause to allow HG to exit prior to beginning prayer)	12:30-12:35pm
Proclamation – Weldon Hurt	12:35-12:40pm
Intro of Keynote – Lynn Beard	12:40-12:45pm
Keynote – Kevin Tutt, Tutt and Daggs	12:45-1:15pm
Awards Presentations- Lynn Beard	1:15-1:25pm
Closing Remarks – Lynn Beard	1:25-1:30pm

Our keynote speaker this year is Kevin Tutt, a master of generating enthusiasm and excitement. He is an amazing speaker and connects quickly with his audience. As co-founder of Tutt & Daggs, Corporate Speakers, he has chosen to inspire and challenge audiences of all types to reevaluate their personal commitment toward work and life. Kevin emphasizes leaders' contribution to the success of people around them. It is Kevin's vision to maximize individual potential and, with focusing on the details, begin the big journey of making a difference. Organizations, associations and families can be transformed but only after the individuals of those entities recognize that they possess the power to make an impact and give more than they ever thought possible. Since 2006, Kevin has inspired, entertained and helped advance over 1,000 organizations in the area of commitment, positivity, attitude, change and engagement. His past experiences in healthcare and serving as an adjunct instructor at Abilene Christian University has made the move to corporate America seamless. Kevin's desire to shake up corporate complacency was born out of his previous experience of working to improve client service for patients and understanding the necessity of uncompromising student engagement in education.

Award Winners

The *Annual Champion for Children Conference* recognizes individuals who are making positive differences for children in our area. Join us as we honor the often-unsung heroes who dedicate their professional and personal lives to help our community.

2023 Frontline Champion – Marti Woodard

Det. Woodard has a genuine compassion for serving children and it shows in her investigations. Det. Woodard volunteers her energy into investigations that are not assigned to her and provides much needed help and guidance to assure that children are taken care of by those of us in Law Enforcement. I've seen firsthand how children respond in a positive manner to her, they can see that she genuinely cares. Det. Woodard should be recognized for the work she does for the children of Abilene.

2023 Child Welfare Champion – Rachel Lopez De Castilla

Rachel advocates tirelessly for the foster children she serves as a CPA case manager. She consistently has the child's best interest at heart and will work hard to ensure they get their needs met. Rachel is compassionate, trauma informed, caring and is amazing when it comes to connecting with children and helping build felt safety. She is skilled at her job and is often contacted by other colleagues in the community when they have questions or need assistance. Rachel never hesitates to help others regardless of how much she has going on.

2023 Community Champion – Jeannette McQueen

Jeannette has a lengthy history in serving children. Her passion has been lived out in many ways. She lives her faith. She and her husband have adopted a foster child and when others may have returned the child, as encouraged to do by professionals, her determination and endurance to depict Christ's servanthood, she did not. The "child" is an adult, and Jeannette serves as her Guardian. Jeannette is the reason Big Country CASA exists in Taylor County. Several others met with a former judge who refused to endorse CASA; this did not deter Jeannette after several unsuccessful meetings with the judge. A very unfortunate event and child death changed the course and Jeannette immediately visited the judge and CASA became a program where she served as CASA Board President. She now serves on the CASA Advisory Council though she plans to return after her one year required sabbatical. Jeannette helped create Foster 325 which was birthed out of the vision of Beltway to ensure loving, stable homes for children by partnering with local churches to meet children's needs in our 325-area code. She is a leader and critical agent in the foster parent "Wrap-Around" services through Beltway. She personally recruits others to team up for "wrap-around" support of foster parents, including providing meals, babysitting, birthday party supplies etc. to better care for foster children. She spearheads training in churches on becoming approved baby-sitters. She oversees Foster Parent Night Out quarterly affording foster parents the ability to have trained and vetted volunteers babysit their biological and foster children while they have a night out. She was a key leader in developing the first ever Foster Care Simulation. She is a visionary, with a heart and passion for children and families. Jeannette is a perfect example of what a Community Champion is.

2023 Heart of the Champion – Mike and Nina Westfall

Mike and Nina Westfall were house parents at Hendrick Home for Children for 29 years. Every day, for 10,585 days, they chose to dedicate both their professional and personal lives to vulnerable children with the hope that through their love, consistency, and support these children would one day not feel as vulnerable. The Westfalls began working at Hendrick Home on July 1st, 1993. They retired in the fall of 2022, though it is

noteworthy that retirement to people as caring as the Westfalls sounds like “how can we still help?” and “what can we do?” The extraordinary job the Westfalls did and continue to do with the children that came into their home is that it never ended with just what was asked of them. Mike and Nina worked several of their days off; they attended a child’s school event, showed up to celebrate a child on their birthday, drove to Dallas to change a graduated child’s tire, or met a child’s biological father across town to help him buy groceries when he was going through a difficult time. Nina and Mike have become “grandparents” to several children over the years. They care for these “grandchildren” as they do their own; babysitting the children to allow respite for their exhausted parents and inviting their now grown Hendrick Home children and their children on vacations in an effort to make memories and provide quality time as family. The children consider home to be wherever Mike and Nina are. They desire Nina’s love, nurturing, and the security she provides. They look forward to Mike’s mentorship, soft redirection, and unwavering support. The mark of a good parent, of a good system, and of a healthy environment is that children know they are safe and loved; they no longer have to wonder. For 29 years Nina and Mike ensured children woke up and went to bed knowing they were safe and loved. Countless children’s lives have been changed because they never had to wonder; they knew they were safe and loved. Mike and Nina provided empathy, strength, and consistency; never complaining when it was not a convenient time, always accepting a child where he or she was, never worrying about how tired or worn out they were from fighting the good fight, but always selflessly caring for children well.

Champion for Children 2023 Committee

Champion for Children
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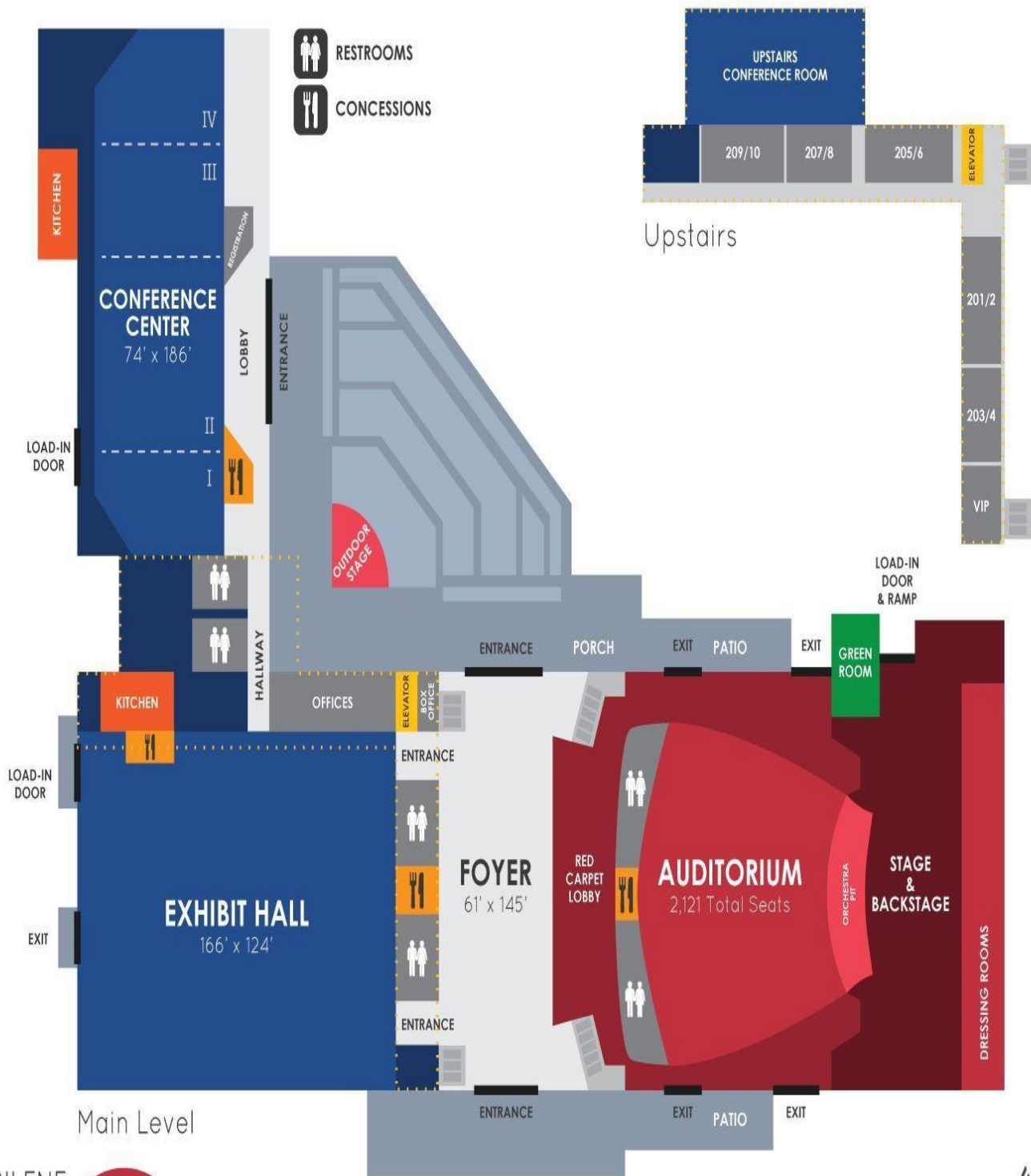
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