

Fall/Winter 2025 Issue

CONNECTIONS



Message from Board President of Orchard Place

JOHN DANOS

OPERATING BOARD PRESIDENT



It has been an inspiring year at Orchard Place. Looking back, I'm reminded of the incredible dedication of our staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners who make it possible for us to provide more than 5,500 services to children and families in Iowa.

From early intervention to intensive residential services, our team has worked around the clock to ensure every child receives the care and support they deserve. Together, we have stayed true to our mission of providing a safe environment for children and their families to heal, find hope, be empowered, and build resilience to overcome mental health adversity.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain deeply committed to helping children heal, grow, and thrive. Your belief in our mission fuels our work and makes a deep impact on the lives of Iowa's children and families.

Serving on the board gives me a front-row seat to the incredible progress youth make when given the right support. It's a privilege to be part of an organization that meets children and families where they are, helping guide and build resilience now and into the future.

The artwork on our cover was created by one of the youth we serve—a powerful reminder of the creativity and strength that define Orchard Place. Seeing their talent and resilience reinforces why this mission matters. I hope you'll join me in supporting Orchard Place as we continue Developing Strong Futures for these youth and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Danos', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

John Danos
President, Orchard Place Operating Board

40 YEARS OF SAVING LIVES

It is rare to have a person whose heart belongs to a service intertwined so deeply into an organization. Career changes nowadays happen so often. That's why celebrating 40 years of dedicated service is extraordinary. Gladys Noll-Alvarez's legacy and accomplishments are proof of her belief in the Orchard Place mission.

"I learned what I could from every situation and used that knowledge to help others," she exclaimed.



Serving thousands of children and families over the years, Gladys began her journey with Orchard Place at the Child Guidance Center splitting her time as a request-for-services intake administrator and seeing her own caseload of clients. Looking back at some of her proudest moments, Gladys remembers a few that stand out. "I built up the Trauma Informed Care Project (TIC) and established the Annual Psychological Trauma and Juvenile Justice Conference," she remembers. TIC is a structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of traumas. The conference provides education and training on current research and practice trends by bringing national speakers to Iowa. This annual event explores solutions for the impact of trauma on families and agencies.

In October, Gladys closed a remarkable chapter at Orchard Place and shared these words: "I hope my lasting impact will be that I have made a difference in the system that serves children and families."

Thank you, Gladys, for 40 wonderful years!



HONORING WES & KAREN RITCHIE'S LEGACY OF GIVING



On a crisp fall day, the Ritchie Family visited the Orchard Place Residential Campus to honor the memory of their parents, Wes and Karen Ritchie.

"Growing up, our parents always talked about Orchard Place," shared a member of the Ritchie Family. Wes, a longtime board member, and his wife Karen chose to leave a lasting legacy by including Orchard Place in their estate plans. Their children, Wyatt, Andrea, and B.J., during their visit presented a generous \$100,000 charitable gift — fulfilling their parents' wishes to help children and families access mental health care.

"This gift ensures children and families will continue to have access to vital resources and will help us Develop Strong Futures," said Katie Snell, Vice President, Orchard Place Foundation. "Thank you to the entire Ritchie Family for honoring Wes and Karen's legacy." Scan the QR Code to read the full story.



Scan the QR Code to read the full story.
To learn more about how you can leave a Legacy Gift,
contact Annabelle Denk at adenk@orchardplace.org

BRINGING HOPE TO THE CLASSROOM

Every dollar Orchard Place receives is critical to our mission, funding programs such as School-Based Therapy. Providing access to essential mental health care for nearly 1,000 Central Iowa students annually, this service relieves systemic barriers and helps children receive the support they need but would not otherwise get.

Annie, a middle schooler, began therapy after struggling with the transition back to in-person learning. "She no longer seemed to like to do the things she once did, thought the world might be better without her in it, and struggled to focus and pay attention at school and had a decrease in self-esteem," her therapist shared. Over time, Annie opened up and received the life-saving support she needed. "It took some time for her to build a relationship with her therapist," said Jenna Parker, School-Based Therapist Supervisor. "Annie seemed skeptical about therapy."

Today, Annie confidently asks for help and speaks up for her needs. "Annie has learned through self-care, coping skills, and a good self-care routine that she is able to best advocate for herself," Parker explained.

In 2025, Orchard Place had 41 providers in 38 public schools, supporting students with depression, anxiety, ADHD, Autism, grief, and trauma.

Our presence allows us to **Develop Strong Futures** across our community.

ACCESS FOR ALL, THANKS TO VARIETY

Thank you, Variety – the Children’s Charity of Iowa, for your latest gift of \$30,000 to provide vital upgrades to the Child Guidance Center elevator.

Their generous partnership with Orchard Place has spanned across three decades. “Variety’s generosity goes far beyond financial support. It helps remove real barriers to care,” said Katie Snell, Vice President, Orchard Place Foundation. “We’re deeply grateful for their partnership and their belief in our work.”

Variety recognizes how essential it is for children and families to have a welcoming and accessible space to succeed in treatment.

“This new elevator will ensure that children, families, staff, and volunteers have improved accessibility – removing mobility barriers so everyone can access the care and support they need,” shared Wendy Ingham, Executive Director of Variety – the Children’s Charity of Iowa.



MENTAL HEALTH LUNCHEON



Coming May 2026, Orchard Place is launching a new tradition: our first ever Mental Health Awareness Luncheon. This inaugural event will celebrate the life-changing work our team does every day to support the mental health of children and families in Iowa.

Throughout the luncheon, guests will hear real stories of resilience — powerful examples of how timely, compassionate care can transform and even save lives. These stories will reflect the heart of Orchard Place’s mission and will show how each of us can play a meaningful role in Developing Strong Futures.

Stay tuned for more details, we hope you’ll join us for this meaningful afternoon.

To learn more, scan the QR Code:



ORCHARD PLACE DAY OF CELEBRATION



This past October, Orchard Place celebrated our annual Day of Celebration. This event is more than just a “thank you” to all employees. It’s a way to recognize their commitment to Iowa’s children and families that rely on them for mental health care. Five staff members and one volunteer received awards for their embodiment of the Orchard Place mission and advocacy efforts. These award recipients exemplify the heart, excellence, and commitment that define our work. Their stories reflect the kind of impact that inspires us all. The compassion, dedication, and talent they bring to their work each day is what makes Orchard Place such a powerful force for change.



Sean Hanlin
Voice for the Children



Terra Goldsberry
Distinguished Staff Award



Madison Parrott
John J. Hansell Award



Luz Hernandez
John J. Hansell Award



Zach Lauer
DEI Advocate Award



Bailey Goodwin & Rhaegar
Volunteer of the Year Award

MORE THAN A MENTOR

"They need someone to show up for them consistently."



A statement Matthew Lanasa lives by that has guided him since beginning his mentoring journey with youth at Orchard Place in May of 2024.

When we last checked in with him, he was on the basketball court located at the Residential Campus with the child he was mentoring. Showing his skills off on the court, often turned into meaningful conversations and life lessons. Sharing his own struggles with anxiety and depression helps him connect with the youth he mentors. "I checked myself into an in-patient facility," he shared. Beginning his own journey of mental health care, he's more than just a mentor – but a peer who understands.

"For those with mental health challenges, I've been there, and there is a pathway to feeling better about yourself and life," said Lanasa.

The advice he gives a child is simple but powerful –

Don't give up. Saying, "You don't have to do this on your own."

Making a difference in a child's life is what brought him back to Orchard Place. "During time spent with my mentee, it was palpable that the other residents were excited and maybe hoping to join in," he said. Seeing that spark in other children's eyes motivated him to expand his impact.

"Matt is someone who strives to help a child or adolescent feel seen and heard," said Amy Payne-Johnson, Volunteer and Special Events Director with Orchard Place. "I've seen his patience and understanding with his mentee, and especially his ability to build connections almost instantly. There is such a need for more mentors to provide that type of kindness and validation to our youth."

Matt hopes others will feel inspired to become mentors.

"Some of the things the Orchard Place residents have already been through is humbling," he said. "There is a need."

Join Matt in changing the life of a child by becoming a mentor at Orchard Place today!



Scan the QR Code to learn more about volunteering at Orchard Place.

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YOU CAN HELP DEVELOP STRONG FUTURES



To make a gift to Orchard Place or schedule a personal tour, please contact:



Katie Snell
Vice President
Orchard Place Foundation

925 SW Porter Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50315
ksnell@orchardplace.org
515-287-9610

MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

*Because of you, children and families find hope and stability when they need it most.
Become a monthly giver and keep that hope alive all year long.*

\$25/month or \$300/year – Summer School Supporter

Enjoy a youth-led campus tour and see your impact firsthand.

\$40/month or \$500 a year – Campus Partner

Get early access to event tickets and quarterly updates on the difference you’re making.

\$85/month or \$1,000 – Children’s Champion

Receive special recognition and exclusive perks throughout the year.

Scan the QR Code to learn more



ORCHARDPLACE.ORG