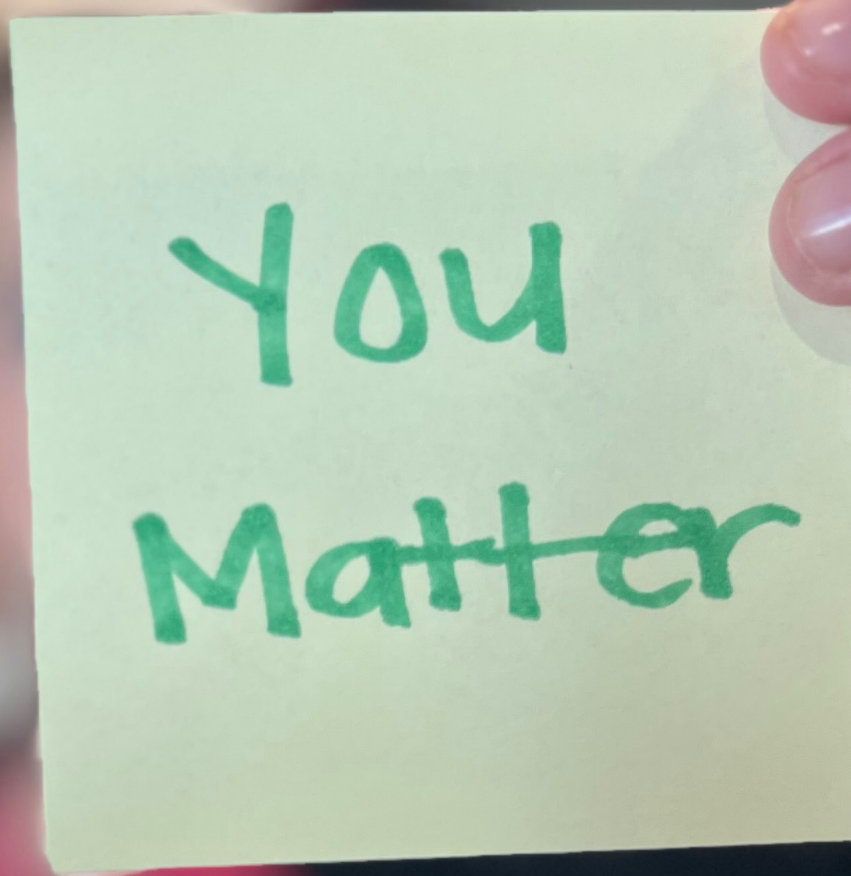


Spring/Summer 2025 Issue

CONNECTIONS



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



The Front Door to Children's Mental Health - Call for Change

Therapy is often the first step for children seeking help when they are struggling with mental health challenges. It is the front door to the mental health system—an essential entry point for children in crisis. However, this vital front door is in danger of remaining closed to many children, as the Medicaid reimbursement rates for therapy services have gone unaddressed for over a decade. The time to care for this door is now—because children cannot wait for the critical, life-changing healthcare they deserve.

One in five youth will experience a serious emotional disorder during their childhood and adolescence. Yet only one in three will receive timely access to the mental health intervention they need. On average, it takes seven years for a child or adolescent to receive help after symptoms begin. These delays can have devastating effects, impacting academic success, relationships, and long-term well-being.



Orchard Place is proud to serve as a safety net provider, ensuring that children who need mental health care can access it. We provide resources in six different school districts, working to bring care directly to the places where children spend most of their time. However, this work is heavily dependent on Medicaid funding, as 82% of Orchard Place youth are Medicaid-eligible. Without adequate reimbursement rates, it becomes increasingly difficult for us to provide essential services to these children. In recent years, Medicaid rate increases have fallen short, leaving safety net providers like Orchard Place struggling with funding gaps that make it harder to sustain the services children need.

THE SOLUTION: Speak Up

This issue is not impossible to solve, and the solution is clear. Iowa must address Medicaid reimbursement rates for therapy services to ensure that safety net providers like Orchard Place can continue offering critical mental health care to children. Raising these rates would allow us to retain qualified therapists, fill open positions, and provide care without the fear of having to turn children away due to insufficient resources.

Therapy is the front door to mental health care for children, and it is a door that must remain open. The well-being of Iowa's children depends on it. We must act now to ensure that every child who needs mental health care can access it—before it's too late. The future of Iowa's children depends on it.

How You Can Help: If you believe every child deserves access to timely mental health care, we urge you to speak up. Contact your state legislators, share this message with your community, and advocate for Medicaid reimbursement reform all year long. Together, we can ensure that no child is left waiting for the care they need.

Sanctuary on!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Anne Starr".

Anne Starr, M.S.W.
Orchard Place, CEO

ORCHARD PLACE HELPED SAVE MY LIFE 17 YEARS AGO.

During that time, Katie shares that she was hearing a voice in her head that was telling her to harm her family. "The voice was that of a man who also had a dog. I enjoyed my interactions with the dog, which the man used against me," said Katie. "When I refused to harm my family, per his request, he threatened to kill the dog. One day, he did just that."

From that point forward, Katie was not her normal, bubbly self. She became physically aggressive and struggled with depression, anxiety, developed a manipulative persona, and experienced extreme behavioral disturbances. At school she was bullied, which only fueled her behavior.



"To experience psychosis at such a young age was terrifying," she stated. "This prompted my first psychiatric assessment and inpatient stay."

Katie started her journey of healing and care at Orchard Place while in middle school after experiencing what she calls a 'break down.'

"Every emotion, every fear, every ounce of pain came flooding out of me without warning," she remembers. "I told my mom I needed help and agreed to go to Orchard Place."

Katie had a rough start at first. She described herself in the first few months being defiant, manipulative, and sneaky. "It took many months for me to understand that my current behavior wasn't helping me get back home," she realized.

After some time, Katie established a routine and developed a sense of self-awareness. After spending one year at Orchard Place, she learned about herself and gained a passion for helping others. "Without that year of treatment, I do believe that there is a high probability that I would have taken my own life," said Katie.

"Without Orchard Place, I would be another statistic."

Now a life-long supporter for mental health care, she encourages others to seek help if they need it.

"I am proud to be one of the many Orchard Place success stories and am even more proud to be a full supporter of the work that Orchard Place does!"

SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF IOWA'S YOUTH



We have been transforming lives for 139 years. When you choose to include Orchard Place in your estate plans, you can ensure Iowa youth are supported now and well into the future. Contact Katie Snell, Vice President, Orchard Place Foundation at ksnell@orchardplace.org or 515-287-9610 to learn how you can leave a legacy with Orchard Place. Already including Orchard Place in your plans? Let us know so we can include you in our Elizabeth Mann Society.

NEW FLOORING BRINGS FRESH START AND COMFORT TO CHILDREN AT THE ORCHARD PLACE RESIDENTIAL CAMPUS

Vairety - the Children's Charity, generously provided nearly \$60,000 to upgrade the long-worn flooring in Jacobson and Shiffler Houses on the Orchard Place Residential Campus. The new vinyl flooring has made the units safer, cleaner, and more welcoming for the children who live there. "I love the new floor," shouted one excited youth. Milieu Treatment Coordinator Gabe DeJong shared that the updates gave the space a much-needed facelift, replacing carpet worn down by years of daily use. For 34 years, Variety has partnered with Orchard Place to create healing spaces for children facing mental health challenges, and their continued support helps to make that mission possible.



OCHYLSKI FAMILY FOUNDATION FUELS ACCESS TO CARE

The Orchard Place Child Guidance Center (CGC) provides support to children who are experiencing barriers to access such as low-income, or those with high insurance deductibles. Through the support of the Ochylski Family Foundation's gift of \$75,000, CGC providers are able to use this towards The Sliding Fee Scale that adjusts payments according to a family's income level. Jocelyn Wilson, the Director of Clinical Services at CGC, said "The Sliding Fee Scale is just one of the practices we use to reduce barriers to access. This is one step toward our commitment 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."

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

TALK, HEAL, AND BREAK THE STIGMA

May is Mental Health Awareness Month—a time to check in with ourselves and others, spark conversations, and break the stigma around mental health challenges.



"Becoming aware of how it can impact you and your child's life is key to maintaining good mental health."

**Terra Goldsberry, MSPAS,
Physician Assistant**

Mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, or bipolar disorder are common—and no one should have to face them in silence. Early signs can range from a loss of interest in hobbies to changes in personality or overall health. For non-emergent concerns, reaching out to a primary care provider is a great first step toward support and treatment.

Lisa and Brian, parents of two sons adopted internationally, know the importance of the right mental health care. When both boys experienced mental health crises as teens, including substance use and self-harm, they felt isolated—until they found Orchard Place.

**"We are so grateful for the staff who worked with our boys," said Brian.
"This is a job that actually makes a difference," added Lisa.**



Mental health is a journey—not a destination.
Let's use this month to commit to our mental health, to learn, to support, and to grow stronger, together.

Read the full story by scanning the QR Code.





Katie Snell
Vice President,
Orchard Place Foundation

WELCOME TO THE TEAM, KATIE!

Katie's career has been dedicated to building strong relationships across the nonprofit, public, and private sectors with a focus on philanthropy, volunteerism, and workplace giving. Katie returns to Orchard Place after spending 15 years as the Manager of Corporate Citizenship at Nationwide. There she oversaw nonprofit partnerships, grantmaking, and community engagement initiatives in Des Moines and other cities across the country. Prior to Nationwide, Katie held roles at Orchard Place as Director of Volunteers and Director of Annual Giving, contributing to campaigns that raised over \$1 million annually. She holds a Master's in Philanthropy & Nonprofit Development from the University of Northern Iowa and is an active community volunteer and leader, most recently serving on the Board of Directors for Homeward and on the Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness in Polk County Leadership Team. We're thrilled to have her back on the team!

WHY I SERVE

"Our family understands firsthand the powerful and positive impact that Orchard Place can have on young people struggling with mental health challenges. I'm excited for the privilege and opportunity to serve on the Orchard Place Foundation Board and support Developing Strong Futures!"



Randall Wanke
Orchard Place Foundation
Board of Directors
Secretary/Treasurer

DAY OF CELEBRATION

Team members came together for the Orchard Place Day of Celebration. This is a joyful event dedicated to honoring the people who make it all possible - our amazing staff!



Isabella North
DEI Advocate Award



Denise Miller
Voice For Children



Kerby Hanson
Distinguished Staff



Sakshi Lawnde
Gonzalo Olaguez-Duarte
John J. Hansell Award

HOLIDAY MAGIC MADE POSSIBLE BY YOU

Thank you to our amazing donors, volunteers, and staff for making the Orchard Place Holiday Drive a success! Your generous contributions, time spent wrapping gifts, connecting with the youth, and delivering treats brought joy and warmth to the children and families we serve.

**Thanks to your efforts,
we were able to provide
gifts to more than
1,000 youth.**

We are so grateful for your kindness and unwavering support! Special thank you to Amy Payne-Johnson, Director of Volunteers and Special Events for leading the drive.



BRIGHT SMILES, BRIGHTER FUTURE

For many children, especially those focusing on their mental health, a trip to the dentist can be overwhelming - but a special partnership is changing that. Orchard Place and Dental Connections have teamed up to create a welcoming experience that prioritizes both dental and emotional well-being. With their mobile "Smile Squad" bringing essential care directly to the Orchard Place Residential Campus, children receive checkups, cleanings, and treatment without the added anxiety of going to the dentist's office. This collaboration is more than just about bright smiles - it's fostering support and removing barriers. So, how does this partnership work?

Read the full story by scanning the QR Code.



A BUZZ WORTHY SUCCESS AT THE SPELLING BEE

The 22nd Annual Orchard Place Spelling Bee, presented by Nationwide, was a buzzing success for children's mental health!



Nationwide Bumbledores

Thanks to your un-BEE-lievable support, we raised more than \$40,000 to support the youth of Orchard Place. Your backing supports the making of a strong and lasting positive impact on the 6,000+ families we serve. And congratulations to our Grand Bee Champions - the Residential Campus TeletuBEEs for spelling their way to victory!

We are incredibly grateful to every single sponsor, volunteer, and community member for their effort of making the Spelling Bee a success.



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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

GET INVOLVED!



JULY 12 | 7:30PM
IOWA TAPROOM



Donate to the School Supply Drive and help ensure every student feels prepared for the upcoming school year! For just \$30, you can provide a backpack, supplies, and essential needs to a student at Orchard Place.



ORCHARDPLACE.ORG