NEWS FROM YES • **SPRING 2020**

YES YOUTH EASTSIDE SERVICES

lifeLINE

Meet Incoming YES CEO David W. Downing

As outgoing YES Chief Executive Officer Patti Skelton-McGougan bid us farewell on May 1 after 23 years advocating for the mental health of the East King County community, we are thrilled to welcome **David W. Downing** as YES' new CEO! David has served as YES' Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the past 14 years, and has exemplified excellent leadership not only for YES, but also within our community.

David is both a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Child Mental Health Specialist, with over 25 years of leadership in the non-profit sector. David holds a Certificate in Fundraising Management from the University of Washington, and a Master's degree in Psychology from Seattle Pacific University.

Over the past several years, David has led the shift in YES' behavioral health services from a traditional supportive listening model to one grounded in evidence-based practices such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). He has focused on removing barriers to behavioral health services through strong partnerships with local school districts, as well as launching YES' Open Access which provides same-day treatment. He also oversaw the integration of psychiatric services adding psychiatric evaluations, medication management and psychiatric guidance and collaboration on treatment. Most recently, due to the COVID-19 health crisis, David led the transition of YES services to a TeleHealth virtual platform, helping to ensure continued access and continuity of care.

David's 14 years as COO has given him a depth of knowledge about our organization, the mental health industry and the needs of our community's children, youth and families. Though David gives a lot of credit to his education and professional experience, he says he's learned far more from his personal journey of recovery, his role as a parent, and in his work as a therapist and community volunteer.

"The work we do at YES — our mission — is personal to me. Many of the things we help young people overcome, I had in my own history as a child and teen. I remember some adults rather than reaching out to help, making negative assumptions about my struggles. But I also distinctly remember the adults who challenged those negative stigmas.

I still vividly remember the specific conversations that inspired positive change in my life. It's not an accident that I am the CEO of YES, and I bring my story with me every day to this work," said David.

YES has been most impactful using evidence-based practices, and partnering closely with our community and school partners. David hopes to continue working within the East King County community to promote bigger system changes to improve mental wellness for our youth. His priority as the new CEO will be strengthening our support of parents and ensuring the future of our critical services and programs by leveraging tools such as an endowment.

"I come to this new role with a great deal of gratitude and humility and feel privileged to be trusted to lead YES into the next decade. While I don't expect to get this all perfect, I will work every day with our community and staff, focused on the mission and striving to always keep YES the most relevant and impactful resource for our children, youth and families."

If you would like to welcome David into his new role please feel free to email him at: **davidd@youtheastsideservices.org**

WHAT WE DO

Youth Eastside Services (YES) is the leading youth-serving behavioral health agency in East King County for children and youth from birth to age 22, and their families. We provide evidence-based mental health counseling, substance use and co-occurring disorders counseling and treatment, early childhood behavioral health services, psychiatric services, and education and prevention programs. No matter what your financial situation is, you can receive help at YES. We accept most insurance plans, Medicaid, and offer a sliding fee scale.

WELCOMING NEW YES BOARD TRUSTEES

YES' Board of Trustees is a talented and committed team that cares deeply about the well-being of children, youth, and families in our community.

This year, we welcome five new members to join the 21 other sitting Trustees: **Cortny Bourbonnais**, **Gary Cohn**, **Shellie Dow**, **Bill Gormley**, and **Dr. Megan Wills Kullnat**.

And with gratitude we say goodbye to our departing trustees: **Terry Bask**, **Jerome Hewlett**, and **Mimi Ramsey**.

TELEHEALTH TECHNOLOGY

YES Services in a Virtual World

During this overwhelming time we're seeing an increase in youth isolation, anxiety, depression, and toxic living situations.

We at YES understand that it's now more important than ever for children and youth to continue receiving critical mental health and substance use services, psychiatric care, and education and prevention programs. Which is why, within a week of having to shut down our physical YES locations, all YES executives and staff worked tirelessly to implemented virtual access to critical services and programs though TeleHealth technology.

TeleHealth technology has been an effective way for our organization to not only conduct one-to-one counseling sessions, but also continue to provide community-based services through virtual support groups and educational opportunities which help youth build the necessary coping skills to manage through this difficult time.

YES is also continuing to partner with local school districts to provide virtual ZOOM open office hours and virtual Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT groups available to all students at no cost. One 16-year-old student at a local high school has found these services to be particularly helpful and convenient.

"At school, I would only go to someone if I were having a breakdown. But now, it's more flexible, and I'm not just randomly leaving class, making people wonder where I'm going. It feels easier — the scheduling, the going to them and the leaving them are all easier."

During this crisis YES is determined to continue to provide critical programs and services in responsible, creative and flexible ways to serve children, youth and families, regardless of their ability to pay for services.

To learn more about the scope of YES available virtual services please visit us at: **youtheastsideservices.org/virtual-services**

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Kristie Neklason

Kristie Neklason, YES Director of School-Based Behavioral Health, began at YES as a professional counseling intern from Seattle University 33 years ago, and like some of her colleagues, never left.

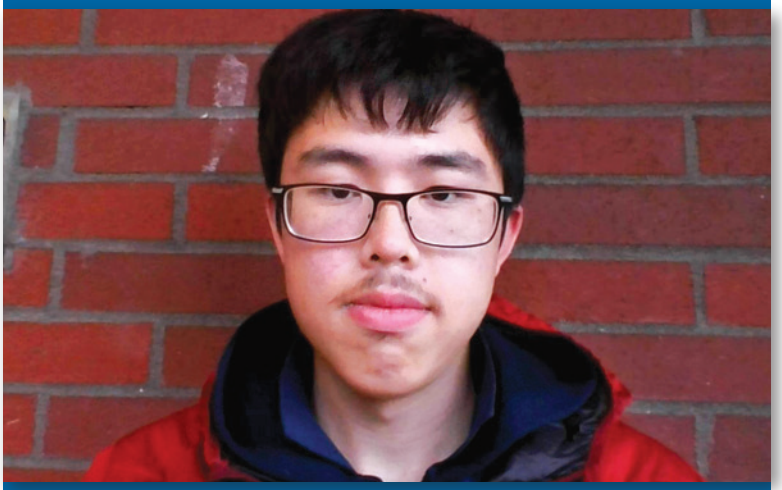
Kristie's work at YES has always focused on the intersection of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, and the unique struggles that suffering and recovery from co-occurring disorders present. Kristie's superpower is encouragement and what she most values in her work as therapist, mentor, manager, and community partner, is witnessing the positive transformation of youth and families, staff, and systems. Kristie helped create and facilitate the YES/Moyer Foundation Partnership Camp Mariposa program. Mariposa means Butterfly in Spanish; an apt symbol of transformation.

Kristie initially worked in the specialty counseling area of sexual abuse survivors. She then continued in the substance abuse treatment department working in the schools including BEST High School (now Emerson) and Northstar Middle, at the Northshore Public Health Teen Clinic and with King County Juvenile Drug Court. The combination of those experiences has informed her work as a therapist and clinical supervisor and equipped her to form and oversee both the Co-occurring Treatment Program and the School Based Behavioral Health Support Program operating in the Bellevue and Lake Washington School districts.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

YES Virtual Services Help Leo Manage His Anxiety During COVID-19

When schedules and routines have been thrown out the window, having consistency in mental health support has been a huge benefit for YES client Leo, 18. Living with only his mom and dad, Leo has felt very isolated during Washington's stay-at-home order.



"I don't have a lot of people to talk to, so being able to talk to someone twice a week has definitely helped. My mood would be in an absolutely terrible place otherwise. I would be in a very, very bad way if my therapy got cut off for however long this goes on. Being able to have the option to see a therapist has made all the difference," said Leo.

Talking through his thoughts, and having his counselor's support, has been a huge support during this isolating time for Leo.

YES INVEST IN YOUTH BREAKFAST

Together We're Virtually Unstoppable!

Due to COVID-19, the annual YES *Invest in Youth Breakfast* had to be cancelled. Instead, throughout the week of March 18-25, YES shared virtual stories of hope, healing, and recovery through videos, emails and social media.

Donations from the breakfast fund low/no-cost behavioral health care for children, youth and families, as well as education and prevention programs throughout our community.

Thanks to over 550 donors, the week-long, virtual *Invest in Youth Breakfast* raised a record breaking $945,915!

During this crisis, these generous donors came through and became a part of the solution to provide over 7,500 children, youth and families with immediate, evidence-based, and compassionate care through our new web-based TeleHealth technology.

A special thanks to the many people who helped make YES' first ever virtual breakfast possible, including Breakfast Co-chairs Sandy Torrey and Carmen Halstrom, Breakfast Committee members, Champion's Matching Pool donors, Sponsors, YES Board of Trustees, Table Captains and many more. Together we are virtually unstoppable!

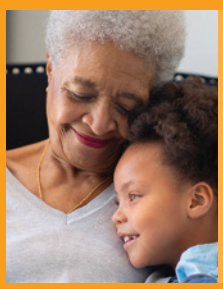
If you didn't have a chance to view the videos from the event, there's still time to watch! Visit: **youtheastsideservices.org/breakfast**

GIVEBIG

A Big Success!

A special thanks to donors who participated in GiveBIG 2020 and supported Leo and other clients like him. Together with a match from two generous donors, **over $22,000 was raised** to help children and youth access virtual mental health and substance use services and programs.

Provide for the Future and Help the Most Vulnerable



Making a gift to YES in your will, trust or beneficiary designation is an easy and meaningful way to invest in the future of our community. Your planned gift can help provide critically needed mental health and substance use services to children and youth regardless of their family's ability to pay, well into the future.

Choose the right gift for you:

- Gifts in your Will or Living Trust
- Gifts by Beneficiary through your IRA, Life Insurance Policy, Bank or Brokerage Accounts, or Savings Bonds
- Gifts through your annual IRA distributions

Be remembered as someone who made our community better by helping future generations of children grow up living their lives to the fullest.

To notify us of a gift and join YES' Legacy Society, or to discuss the best gift option for you, please contact Lisa Hay, Chief Advancement Officer at **425-586-2328** or **lisah@youtheastsideservices.org**.

PHONE
425-747-4937

EMAIL
info@youtheastsideservices.org

WEBSITE
www.youtheastsideservices.org

LOCATIONS

YES serves the Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond and Sammamish communities, and provides on-site services to 50+ elementary, middle and high schools, and teen/community centers in the Bellevue and Lake Washington School Districts.

YES Bellevue (main office)
999 164th Ave NE
Bellevue, WA 98008

YES Kirkland
11829 97th Ave NE
Kirkland, WA 98034

YES Redmond
15600 Redmond Way, #102
Redmond, WA 98052

YOUTH EASTSIDE SERVICES

999 164th Ave NE
Bellevue, WA 98008

MISSION

Youth Eastside Services (YES) is a lifeline for kids and families coping with challenges such as emotional distress, substance abuse and violence. Through intervention, outreach and prevention, YES builds confidence and personal responsibility, strengthens family relationships, and advocates for a safer community that cares for its youth.

YES LEGACY SOCIETY

Sandy and Jeffrey Torrey Leaving a Legacy

Sandy and Jeff Torrey became a part of the YES Legacy Society a few years ago when they decided it was time to update their trust. They were inspired to plan their legacy after Sandy served as executor of a family member's estate and saw firsthand how thoughtful planning now can make a powerful impact later.

Sandy said, "I wanted that experience for my son. Now that he's in his twenties, we felt he was ready to know about our planned giving decisions and the legacy we want to leave behind."

Both Sandy and Jeff have longtime relationships with their favorite organizations. Sandy continues to serve on the YES Board of Trustees and Jeff supports other nonprofit agencies. "We're trying to set a good example for our son and hope these conversations make him consider finding a charitable focus in an area that he's passionate about."

"For me, it was easy," she said. "There is nothing I love more than walking through the front doors of YES heading to a board meeting and seeing the lobby full of kids here to get the help they need. This place changes lives."

Want to join Sandy and Jeff in YES' Legacy Society? Contact Lisa Hay, Chief Advancement Officer at **425-586-2328** or **lisah@youtheastsideservices.org**