

CIRCLE OF COURAGE 2019

Belonging

Brooke DiBello understands **Belonging**...the human desire to build trusting relationships so that a child can say, "I am loved."

For two years, Brooke, a special therapist at HopeSprings Counseling Services, has worked with a young boy who had experienced psychiatric hospitalizations and struggled immensely at home and in school. At the time that she became involved, the boy was living with a guardian, a family friend, because his biological family was unable to care him due to their own struggles. When Brooke began seeing the child, caregivers were considering residential placement for him.

But Brooke believed that this young boy could thrive. Brooke's focused on helping the people in the boy's life begin to understand how his past trauma impacted all aspects of his life. This was challenging because these individuals tended to focus on behavior rather than the underlying causes. Brooke used creativity to engage the child in therapy. And she held multiple therapy sessions with the guardian and family members to help them understand family dynamics.

Brooke quickly became an advocate for her client and the entire family. She attended meetings at the young boy's school and went to appointments with his mental health providers. She stayed in regular contact with his Primary Care Physician (PCP). In addition, Brooke used her expertise in the Neurosequential Models of Therapeutics (NMT) to complete a brain map. She shared the results and recommendations with the boy's school and PCP and developed recommendations that she were implemented with the family.

Brooke was able to give this family hope through her clinical work and unconditional support and advocacy. And in the process, this young man received a sense of belonging. Today, the client lives with his biological family and his mom has guardianship. The client is doing well in school and he and his family consistently meet with Brooke for therapy.

This is one of many examples of Brooke's work with clients that show how she lives out the value of belonging. She also demonstrates her desire to build healthy relationships with colleagues at HopeSprings as she is quick to introduce herself to new staff and help them feel welcome and part of the team. She shows a genuine interest in them and encourages them by sharing her interests, knowledge, resources, and expertise.

Brooke embodies our Circle of Courage value as she works with families and youth to feel a sense of belonging so they can heal and grow.

Congratulations Brooke DiBello, you are a 2019 Circle of Courage Award Recipient.

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Mastery

Barb Miller is dedicated to improving academics at CIRCLE Academy-Vermilion, or CAV, in order to positively impact the lives of her students. She works with the leadership team and teaching staff to enhance Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), progress reports, and curriculum. And over the last three years has used data collection and presentations to area school districts to show the importance of an Extended School Year for students. As a result, the number of CAV students who are able to attend summer classes has increased from six the first year to an expected sixteen this summer.

As CAV's Academic Coordinator, Barb has also implemented a new academic assessment program that gives more data on student's ability in the common core and Illinois state standards. When the state wanted the physical fitness assessed, Barb worked with the PE instructor to get an assessment tool that is now used by both CIRCLE programs.

The Circle of Courage value of **Mastery** says, "The inborn thirst for learning is cultivated; by learning to cope with the world, the child can say, "I can succeed." Barb strives for excellence in all of her responsibilities which has guided CAV to provide the highest quality academics to its students.

But her dedication goes beyond the school to her own learning. While she is currently the Academic Coordinator, her work at Cunningham began as a TA in the Gerber education program. She then joined CIRCLE Urbana as a Special Education Teacher on an emergency certificate. During that time, Barb commuted to Eastern Illinois University in Charleston to become a fully certified Special Education Teacher (LBSI). Today, Barb is taking classes to receive a supervisory endorsement so she can assist with supervising and evaluating staff.

Thank you Barb Miller for your commitment to Mastery and for all you continue to do for the youth at Cunningham.

**Congratulations Barb Miller,
you are a 2019 Circle of Courage Award Recipient.**

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Independence

In the summer of 2018, Vocational Options was asked to work with the youth in Cunningham's Residential Treatment program. Since **Carlos Villanueva** had a good relationship with many of these students through Gerber's program, he was given the assignment. Carlos took an idea, came up with a game plan, and put it into action. He went above and beyond the task by researching resources, putting together the programming, handling all of the communication with residential staff, and contacting businesses to setup field trips for the kids.

Why did Carlos take that initiative? Because he loves our kids and wants to see them grow. Carlos understands the Circle of Courage value of **Independence**... a child's free will is cultivated by responsibility so the child can say, "I have the power to make decisions."

Carlos wants to see others thrive. You will see him using the Nurtured Heart approach with our kids because he sees the positive way it helps them grow and succeed. As a job coach, Carlos is consistent with our kids and his expectations are clear. He remains open-minded and patiently helps each young person learn new tasks. For that reason, our youth benefit greatly from the vocational program and as a result, they are better prepared for the workforce.

Whenever he connects with a new staff or student, he takes time to get to know them. The fact that pretty much everyone who works with Carlos—both staff and clients—enjoys his company is a testament to his abilities. He is extremely willing and eager to help others when they need it. Carlos strives to embody Independence...and to be excellent and reliable in his job.

**Congratulations Carlos Villanueva,
you are a 2019 Circle of Courage Award Recipient.**

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Generosity

Corinne Bend has a contagious smile even in the hardest of situations – imagine teenage girls testing the limits. Corinne stands her ground. She remains calm and in the end, she has a smile on her face. Her generous spirit is felt by all the girls and staff at the Girls Group Home or GGH.

We all know that it's the little things that matter in the lives of our kids. In February, Corinne bought roses for the girls on Valentine's Day. She wanted them to feel loved. On a regular basis, she thinks of ways to nurture the girls and she gives generously while never asking for anything in return. She displays the Circle of Courage value of **Generosity** simply because of the meaning which says that character is cultivated by concern for others. Corinne always puts our clients before herself. She is selfless and admired for this trait.

During times of transition, many of our girls will ask Corinne to help them move. She says “yes” without hesitation. The young women want her to be with them as they start a new journey which speaks volumes about the great work that she does. In addition, numerous alumni call back and ask to speak to Corinne to tell her about the difference she made in their lives.

Corinne is also generous with staff; she often agrees to remain in the milieu so her coworkers have time to get their office work done.

During a time when GGH was without an additional shift leader, Corinne agreed to work 5 days a week on both rotations in order to provide consistency among the rotations. Although this was a difficult task to manage, Corinne continued to do her best and provided full support to staff and the girls. Her supervisor said, “She was a super hero swooping in to save the day.”

**Congratulations super hero, Corinne Bend,
you are a 2019 Circle of Courage Award Recipient.**