

It's a Bright
Sunny Day

Children's Home News

Children's Home Society of West Virginia

Waking up and seeing the sun affixed in the sky, a feeling of renewal takes flight. Everything looks more beautiful, brighter and new. A reminder to each of us that the cold of winter will soon be replaced with blue skies, and warmth on our skin that is almost a renewal of hope for the future. We reminisce of times passed, but look forward to the changes coming ahead. A time for growth, enhanced love for what endeavors lie before us and a chance to make a real difference. We continue to make strides for meaningful changes in the lives of our children and families.

Explosions of colors arise from the newly formed plants just as our newest of programs take flight. Hope and transformation is on the horizon. Growth and creativity will continue to shape our programming and from this, we evolve. With every beautiful day, there will be times where clouds cover the sky and rain pours. It is these times that we rely on each other. For our team is a tall tree with solid, strong roots. We bond together and work through the challenges we face. Then, as it has many times before, we shed our weathered selves and look toward the sun, for we know there are bright sunny days ahead.

*Michelle Vaughan,
Director of Development*

"Life begins anew, now, with the first warm ray of sunshine."

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Children's Home Society Announces Al Wade Storytelling Award Winners

On March 3, 2025, Children's Home Society of West Virginia (CHSWV) met to announce the 5th Annual Al Wade Storytelling Award winners. Beautiful stories surround us throughout our work, and it's important that we share these stories with others.

Each year, our staff at the Children's Home Society have the opportunity to submit their special story to the Al Wade Storytelling committee. The committee reviews each submission and carefully selects either the winner or winners for this annual award. To win this prestigious award is an honor and each of the 2025 award winners received a monetary award and a framed certificate. As each of the stories submitted were touching and a true example of an Al Wade story, multiple winners were chosen.

The 2025 winners encompass a passion for storytelling and displayed a love for the children and families they serve. Winners named were:



Kimberly Conrad,
Permanency Supervisor -
Parkersburg



Kelsey Cline,
Arthur N. Gustke Child Shelter,
Supervisor - Parkersburg



Randi Dantrassy,
Permanency Social Worker -
Wheeling

We would like to thank the following Children's Home Society staff for their wonderful entries: Alexis Weekly, David Humphreys, Diana Lucas, Jenna Orsini, Lily Stone, Richard Meade, and Tabatha Conn. We look forward to many more years of great stories.

About our Honoree

Al Wade has given 31 years to serving children and families. Al came to the Society in September 1989. In his early days as a social worker, Al was known for being one of few that always saw his children and youth in placement and always put them and their needs first. Al supervised a variety of programs, some of which included: Paul Miller Home, Southern West Virginia Exceptional Youth Emergency Shelter and is credited for opening the Forever Families Center in Northfork. There is no way to capture the children and families that Al had the opportunity to impact over his many years of service to Children's Home Society of WV, but Al had a way of sharing stories of his experiences and the youth he served. Al has a flare for telling a story with love, passion and an infectious laugh. His stories would evoke strong emotions from within as they focused on our children and their lives - their wins, challenges, you can't make this up stories, and most importantly how someone helped change the trajectory of a child's life. His stories fueled our inner fire with an even greater desire to help children and families.



Al Wade

Children's Home Society Announces Nancy Stuart-Tonkin Advocacy Award Winner

The Children's Home Society of West Virginia hosted its Annual Board Meeting/Dinner on November 14, 2024 at the Holiday Inn & Suites in Charleston, WV. During the meeting, Sarah M. Whittaker was named the winner of the 7th Annual Nancy Stuart-Tonkin Advocacy Award.

Sarah began her career at our Princeton location in 1989 as an adoption worker. As she continued to grow the Princeton location, she became site manager. Sarah was a tireless advocate and believed in the importance of developing strong relationships with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services and other social services agencies. Besides building a reputation for adoption services and support, Sarah led the way for more comprehensive preventive support for families. She established a Right From the Start program for several under served counties, bringing early intervention services to the doorstep of rural WV homes. Soon to follow was an in-home service initiative to prevent at risk families from becoming open Child Protective Services cases, and the removal of children.



Sarah Whittaker

Sarah was on the front-lines in influencing policy and practice for these early in-home prevention services. She was involved in the up-grading and universal PRIDE training for all foster parents as she was an integral part of a panel of other foster care providers, state officials, and educators to churn out and oversee this critical pilot project to improve the quality of WV foster care. She helped CHSWV find its way as a private foster care agency, building on her knowledge and experience in adoption work, and promoting the best interest of the child above all else. This was a time of tremendous growth and program expansion for CHSWV and because Sarah was a strong multi-dimensional advocate, Children's Home Society became a leader in child welfare for Southern WV.

Sarah left CHSWV in 1999 to accept a full-time teaching position in the Social Work Department at Concord College. While her job changed, her zeal for advocacy continued and shifted to her students and the community at large. She also became the number one WECAN Mentoring recruiter, as she encouraged her students in the Intro to Social Work class to become volunteer mentors, invited the WECAN staff to speak in her classes about the program, and urged her fellow professors to do the same. Sarah's legacy for advocacy followed her through her career at Concord, which elevated to University status (2004) during her tenure and added the most successful and innovative on-line MSW program (2015) to their already well-respected and growing Social Work Department. Sarah retired from Concord University this summer (2024) but her influence will be felt for many years and generations in so many ways through the students that she nurtured through policy, practice, theory, statistics, and untold classes as well as social work placements.

During Sarah's tenure on the CHSWV Board of Directors, there were ample opportunities for her to tap into her wealth of child welfare knowledge along with her lengthy list of service providers, contacts, agencies and associations to further a variety of CHSWV ventures and initiatives. One example is the opening of Jan's House in Huntington which houses the Nancy Stuart-Tonkin Resource Center. Turns out that one of Sarah's childhood friends was the Mayor of Huntington and she did not miss a beat in getting him and the city on board with the expansion project for CHSWV and the children and families in his city.

Sarah is steady, reasonable, practical, along with persistent, visionary and positive in her advocacy for herself, her family, her staff and colleagues, her students, her clients, and her community. Sarah has consistently supported high standards, training and support for foster parents both at CHSWV and CU. She shared her insights with the PRIDE Training Team to improve how foster parents and kinship parents are prepared for their roles in caring for traumatized children. She has witnessed many ups and downs as the foster care program slowly emerged from very few standards toward federal and best practice standards. She has impacted this program through her preparation of social workers, through her participation on boards and committees, and oversight panels and always with advocacy in the forefront.

Her lifetime of social work advocacy as evidence by her nearly 50-year career with DHHR, Children's Home Society and Concord University is more than proof of her extra-ordinary commitment to children, families and communities. (Joanne Boileau - September 2024)

Previous winners of the Nancy Stuart-Tonkin Award are: Carna Metheney-White (2018), Beth Cook (2019), Julia Kesler and Marilyn Pearce-Hall (2020), Janet Richmond (2021), Becky Brown and Yolanda Smith (2022) and Maxin Bauer (2023).

About our Honoree

The Children's Home Society of West Virginia Board of Directors established the Nancy Stuart-Tonkin Advocacy Award beginning in 2018 to annually honor an outstanding advocate who has successfully promoted the well-being of children and families in West Virginia.

In the 1970's Nancy Tonkin helped organize the first Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) effort in West Virginia and after that successfully worked to make the MDT's part of the child welfare law. She also helped make the role of guardian ad litem part of public policy. Later she was a leader in getting per diem rates for private agency foster care increased from \$35 to \$55.



Nancy Tonkin

Other child welfare initiatives that Nancy championed included; family resource networks, infant screenings, home visitation and efforts around child abuse prevention. For 40 years Nancy worked to ensure that child welfare laws were designed to protect children and preserve families.

Nancy was a trusted advisor to the Children's Home Society in all public policy matters. She was one of our strongest advocates for our permanency and child well-being efforts.

Ruth Eden Bailey Scholarship Award Announced

On August 2, 2024, the Children's Home Society of West Virginia announced the winners of the 3rd Annual Ruth Eden Bailey Scholarship Award at our Davis Child Shelter in Charleston, West Virginia. Seven young adults received the award this year, each receiving \$1,000. This wonderful event was even more special because our dear Ruth's family was in attendance along with Ruth's lifelong friend, Sarah Whittaker, who is also our Director Emeritus.



About the Ruth Eden Bailey Scholarship Fund:

The Ruth Eden Bailey Scholarship Award was initiated through a gift from Robert (Bob) Noone and his wife Beth Hughes-Noone. One or more award winners will be selected annually and presented with an award of up to \$1,000. The annual awards will be given prior to the Fall semester enrollment.

Youth attending the following institutions are eligible to apply for the scholarship funds:

- Trade School or Technical School
- Community Colleges or University

The funds awarded are to supplement or provide for:

- Tuition Assistance
- Equipment – Lap Top/Computer



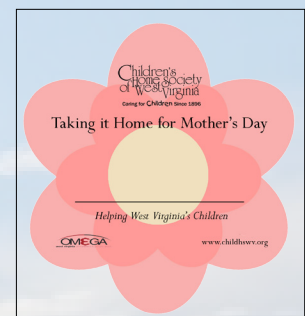
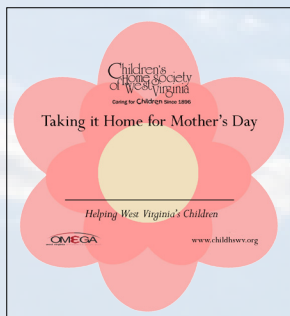
Left to Right: Cheri Sharp, Christa Skaff, Jaiden Skaff, Erin Skaff, Cierra Hall, Gregory Rickard, Robert Arnold-Hale, Justin Bailey, and Steve Bailey. Not pictured; Olyvia Ash.

About the Honoree:

Ruth Eden Bailey dedicated her life to helping children find lifetime families. She was a determined advocate and worked tirelessly to find foster and adoptive homes. Ruth loved working with her families and the children that came into care, she was mission driven and her passion inspired many. Bob Noone said it best, "Ruth was the standard by which we measured all other adoption specialists in WV. She not only understood the legal requirements, she understood her foster parents and their children." (Bob Noone - 2024)



Ruth began her journey with Children's Home Society in 1993 and spent the following three decades changing the lives of hundreds of West Virginia's children. Ruth was always looking for ways to help support foster and adoptive families and thus she initiated the first CHSWV Foster Family Support Group. The Foster Family Support Group became significant in that it brought families together to share experiences, to be supportive during struggles and are organized and most importantly to celebrate each other. Today CHSWV foster family support groups are organized across the state thanks to a special woman that was creative, passionate and enthusiastic. Ruth left a legacy of encouragement, love and kindness.



2025 Mother's Day Campaign

Banded together to help West Virginia's most vulnerable children, the WV Oil Marketers and Grocers Association (OMEGA) members are excited for the Mother's Day Campaign and ready to help West Virginia's children and families.

The Children's Home Society has partnered with OMEGA for 15 years to promote Children's Home Society statewide Mother's Day Campaign. Flowers can be purchased in honor of Mother's Day at participating OMEGA stores throughout West Virginia. We would like to thank the following OMEGA members who participated in the 2025 campaign: DeFazio Oil, Little General, Go-Mart, Par Mar, BFS, ROCS, and City Ice & Fuel.

Children's Home Society Announces Ruth Eden Bailey Adoption Advocacy Award Winner



Ruth Bailey

The Children's Home Society of West Virginia held its Annual Conference on November 14, 2024 at the Holiday Inn & Suites in Charleston, WV. At each conference, CHSWV honors a staff member who exemplifies passion, advocacy and dedication towards children in foster care.

Katie Jalazo was named the winner of the 4th Annual Ruth Eden Bailey Adoption Advocacy Award. To know Katie is to love her. Working with children and families through CHSWV for the past eight years, Katie has built a name for herself that encompasses passion, empathy and advocacy. She is extremely passionate about children in the foster care system and goes above and beyond every day.



Katie Jalazo

As soon as you meet Katie, you can see her dedication to children and families as Katie's commitment extends beyond our children in care, but also includes supporting biological and foster families. Katie promotes connections and relationships between all parties involved in each case. She works diligently with the Multidisciplinary Team to make sure that all information is communicated effectively to each member.

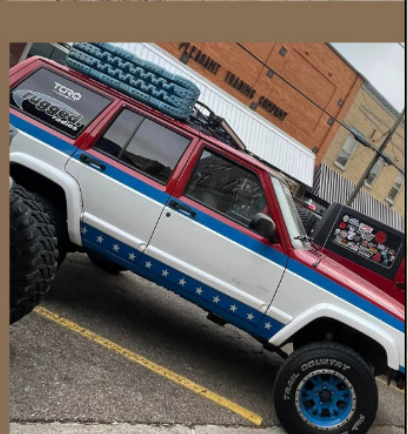
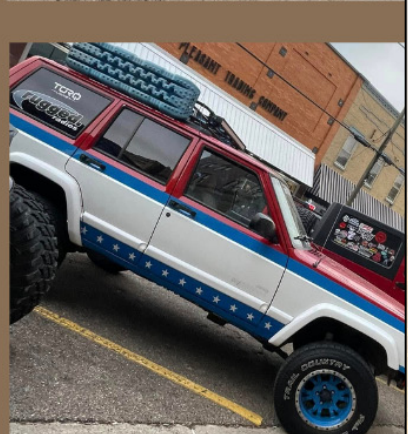
Katie always ensures that the children on her caseload, and the caseloads of others, have the most care and resources that they can possibly have. But this does not stop with just the children. Katie ensures that the foster family has no need left unmet, and the biological family feels that they have a chance to fight for their children. She ensures that everyone is kept informed of everything, both good and bad, and makes sure all parties feel heard. (Latoya VanFosson - November 2024)

"Ruth was the standard by which we measured all other adoption specialists in WV. She not only understood the legal requirements, she understood her foster parents and their children."

- Bob Noone

Mothman's Revenge

Backroads of Appalachia hosted their Mothman's Revenge, 24 Hours of Appalachia, event on March 7th - 9th, beginning in Point Pleasant and ending at Seneca Rocks. This wonderful event grew in size as they had 300 individuals and 142 vehicles participate. A light was shined on CHSWV programming and we were able to bring awareness to our children in foster care. This year, the event raised \$27,591 benefiting Children's Home Society and Backroads of Appalachia. We are incredibly grateful to Jedediah Smith, the event leader for choosing Children's Home Society of West Virginia to partner with for this exciting event. Ami Ray, Director of Programming, presented Jed with a Champion for Children medal for his great works, stating "Many people have a fierce appreciation of the beauty of our home state like Jed, but this appreciation coupled with his passion to make a difference for children is profound".



Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Victoria Wilson, Chair
Michele Blatt, First Vice Chair
Kim Williams, Second Vice Chair
Stephanie Hayhurst-Hall, Secretary
Melissa Grimes, Assistant Secretary
Kim Williams, *Treasurer*
Whitney Merrell, *Assistant Treasurer*
Jeff Sikorovsky, *Past Chair*

DIRECTORS

Chuck Barton
Amy Bush
Beth Cook
Craig Glover
Kristie Hadley
Dawn Hawkins
Betty Hendrick
Misti Sims
Lori Ray
Sarah Stephenson



Board of Director, Chuck Barton

Director Emeritus

Gregory W. Bailey*
Margaret Bishop*
John Bowyer
Letitia Chafin
Amelia Courts
Janet Craig
Stephen P. Dexter
Katherine L. Dooley
Stephen W. Drake
William M. Ellis Jr.*
George M. Ferrell
Dr. Robert "Bob" Foster
Dale Geiger*
Carole "Cookie" Glasser
Arthur N. Gustke*

W.I. "Bill" Hairston
Sheila Hamilton
Thomas A. Heywood
Russell P. Hill
Clarence "Bud" Lawson, Jr.*
Marie Long; John Lukens
Thomas E. McHugh*
Jack McVey
Paul Mancuso
Sandra J. Morgan*
Helen S. Huddy*
Susan Mollohan*
Patricia P. O'Reilly
David S. Pitchford
Helaine Rotgin*

Joseph E. Raymond
Sally Richardson*
Ruth Rowan
Jane C. Smith
Matthew D. Smith*
H. Keith Spears
Reed Spangler
Pat Sutherland
Nancy S. Tonkin*
Janet Vineyard*
Gov. Cecil Underwood*
Brian Wadsworth
Stephen D. Wehrle
Sarah Whittaker

* Deceased

Chief Executive Officer

Mary A. White

Children's
Home Society
of West Virginia

*"Kindness is spreading sunshine into other people's lives
regardless of the weather."*

- R.A. Ktivist

CHSWV LOCATIONS

Berkeley County

- Family Strengthening Services
Monarch Family Support Center
100 South Queen St.
Martinsburg, WV 25401
Megan Livingston,
Site Manager
304.264.4658
- Victoria's House, Child Advocacy Center
653 Winchester Ave.,
Martinsburg, WV 25401
Ami Ray
CAC Supervisor
304.264.4658

Cabell County

- Janet Smith Vineyard Forever Center for Permanency
Nancy Stuart Tonkin Family Support Center
203 6th Ave.
Huntington, WV 25701
Diana Lucas,
Regional Director
681.378.2530
- Hovah Hall Underwood Children's Home
2586 Grant Gardens Rd.
Ona, WV 25545
Aaron Benedict,
Shelter Supervisor
304.743.2345

Greenbrier County

- Family Strengthening Services
9579 Seneca Trail South
Lewisburg, WV 24901
Mary Carr,
Site Manager
304.647.3430
- Greenbrier Valley Children's Home
331 7th Street
Rupert, WV 25984
Jennifer Sams
Shelter Supervisor
304.645.1302

Hampshire County

- Family Strengthening Services
301 East Main St.
Romney, WV 26757
Sally Johnson,
Regional Director
304.680.2088
- Romney Child Shelter
550 West Sioux Lane
Romney, WV 26757
Ami Ray,
Director of Programming
304.822.4652

Jefferson County

- The Honey Bee Family Support Center
114 East 3rd Ave.,
Ranson, WV 25438
Antoinette Gue,
Program Director
304.707.3141

Kanawha County

- Family Strengthening Services
1145 Greenbrier St.,
Charleston, WV 25311
Amanda Williams
Site Manager
304.345.3894
- Davis Child Shelter
1145 Greenbrier St.,
Charleston, WV 25311
Jamie Holmes,
Shelter Supervisor
304.345.3891

Logan County

- June Montgomery Harless Child Shelter
1 June Harless Dr.
P.O. Box N
Holden, WV 25625
Amanda Runyon,
Shelter Supervisor
304.239.2470
- WECAN Services
P.O. Box 308
Logan, WV 25601
Ellen Browning,
WECAN Coordinator
304.792.6261

McDowell County

- Forever Families Resource Center
34149 Coal Heritage Road
Northfork, WV 24868
Becky Brown,
Coordinator
304-862-4951

Mercer County

- Family Strengthening Services
205 Center St.
Princeton, WV 24740
Kristin Nelson,
Supervisor
304.431.2424

Monongalia County

- Family Strengthening Services
11 Commerce Drive, Suite 102
Morgantown, WV 26501
Abby Miller,
Site Manager
304.284.0992

Nicholas County

- Family Strengthening Services
402 Church St., Suite 1
Summersville, WV 26651
Stormy Murphy,
Site Manager
304.900.3620
- Kathleen & John Faltis Child Shelter
477 Scenic Highway
Summersville, WV 26651
Desarae Murphy,
Shelter Supervisor
304.872.8190

Ohio County

- Family Strengthening Services
1329 National Rd.
Wheeling, WV 26003
Kara Clevenger,
Site Manager
304.810.2460

Putnam County

- Safe at Home Services
3705 Teays Valley Rd.
Suite 202
Hurricane, WV 25526
681.233.0710
Josh Phipps,
Supervisor

Raleigh County

- Southern WV Exceptional Youth Emergency Child Shelter
142 Cherry St.
Daniels, WV 25832
Tabatha Conn
Shelter Supervisor
304.255.0408

Wood County

- Family Strengthening Services
Cardinal Family Support Center
2500 36th St.
Parkersburg, WV 26104
Jodi Null,
Site Manager
304.485.0650
- Arthur N. Gustke Child Shelter
1640 St. Mary's Ave
Parkersburg, WV 26102
Kelsey Cline,
Shelter Supervisor
304.424.5244



Children's
Home Society
of West Virginia

Children's Home Society of WV
1422 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25330
304.346.0795



Children's Home Society
of WV



CHSofWV



Children's Home Society
of WV

