



Fall & Winter 2020

Youth Mentoring Remains Strong in 2020

The year 2020 has brought us a vast array of obstacles and challenges. Despite it all, communities have come together to love, support and encourage one another through these difficult times. This remains steadfast: Iowans care.

Youth Mentoring at Helping Services has taken on new form, but the substance remains the same. One of our Mentoring Coordinators, Meg Gelner, was encouraged after speaking with one of our Mentors who has remained active with her mentee through most of the COVID season. Patty VanMeter, of Manchester, has been a mentor with our program since February of 2019. Before the corona virus was sweeping the nation, her and her mentee, Kassie, would meet regularly as a community-based match. They loved to shop, do crafts, get their nails done and just spend quality time together. During the time when Helping Services brought all of our mentoring matches to a mandatory halt, Patty stayed in touch with Kassie by texting and making phone calls.

These times have been challenging for adults, but we cannot overlook the needs of our Iowa youth. When asked what she felt kids needed the most during this time, Patty stated, "I think kids need to be encouraged to talk about how they feel."

Patty and Kassie have resumed their mentoring relationship and have made changes to their activities to accommodate safety suggestions. "We have to find new ways of doing old

things," Patty said. "Instead of going to a nail salon, we can set up at a table and maintain a safe distance."

Helping Services understands that not everyone is comfortable with meeting face to face at this time. We would like to encourage all mentors to continue to reach out to their mentee whether that be through text, phone call, email, or hand written letters. We will get through this together and we will come out stronger on the other end...**Iowa Strong!**

In June, some mentors and mentees began meeting in-person with precautions in place including face coverings, social distancing, and recommendations to meet outside when possible. Other matches are staying connected by writing letters, phone calling, texting and/or video chatting. Youth Mentoring is supportive of how each individual match chooses to meet. During this unusual time, recruitment efforts for new mentors have continued. *Mentors are needed for our waiting youth.*



Evie and Maryann enjoyed the October "Exploring Lansing" event.

Contact mentoring@helpingservices.org or visit www.helpingservices.org/services/youth-mentoring and get involved.



Additional Good News from Youth Mentoring!

Youth Mentoring is excited to announce that they are one of 11 recipients in the state of Iowa to receive an Improving Tomorrow: Prevention Focused Mentoring grant from the Iowa Department of Public Health. The grant has four exciting goals. *They are:*

- Support 91 mentoring matches in our four counties.
- Substance abuse prevention and problem gambling trainings will be offered as well as distributing materials on these topics.
- Our Steering Committees will support the behind the scenes work.
- A sustainability plan will help us financially.

This funding source will support some salaries, events, trainings, mileage, recruitment materials, phone, and computer needs.

A Success Story! A mentoring team member received a call recently from a parent of a former mentee from Winneshiek County saying that the mentee is fulfilling his dream of being a stock car driver. The parent went on to share that his experience in mentoring gave his son confidence to overcome shyness, to stand up to bullies, and to be himself! The father thanked us for our work!

Thank You Kwik Trip!

We were grateful for Kwik Trip's support at the ribbon cutting for their newest Kwik Star in Decorah this summer!



Kailyn and Alison found a park as they did their scavenger hunt during the "Exploring Lansing" event.

“*I love knowing I have an impact on the next generation. I'm sure that I'm a valuable listening board for my mentee. My mentee is very enthusiastic about trying new things and I look forward to our get-togethers.”*

—Howard County mentor

Leaving a Legacy

As you think of ways to support Helping Services for Youth & Families, please consider making a gift through your will and/or trust. You are able to make gifts to support programs throughout northeast Iowa during your lifetime and beyond. Three common way to make donations are:

- **IRA Charitable Rollover**—If you are 70 1/2 years old or older, you can make tax-free IRA contributions directly to Helping Services for Youth & Families & receive tax benefits.
- **Beneficiary Designation**—This provides support using an IRA, life insurance policy, annuity, and retirement plan. This allows you to support causes' important to you after your lifetime.
- **Wills and Living Trusts**—Designate a percentage or dollar amount through your will or revocable trust.

If you would like more details on options visit HelpingServices.org/Donate and please contact Ben at 563-387-1720 or benkg@helpingservices.org.

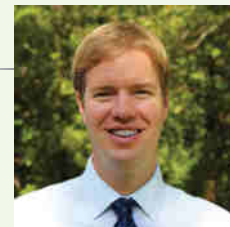
Each donation to Helping Services allows services throughout northeast Iowa to thrive and assist more clients in your community.

Legal 501c3 information:

*Helping Services for Youth & Families,
805 E Main St. Decorah, IA 52101 Tax ID: 42-0989563*

Director's Update

This year has been challenging for all of us, but through it all our team is persevering and continuing to provide important services throughout northeast Iowa. As we continue to adapt to the ever changing environment, I wanted to take a few minutes to remind you of ways that you can connect with us virtually at www.helpingservices.org.

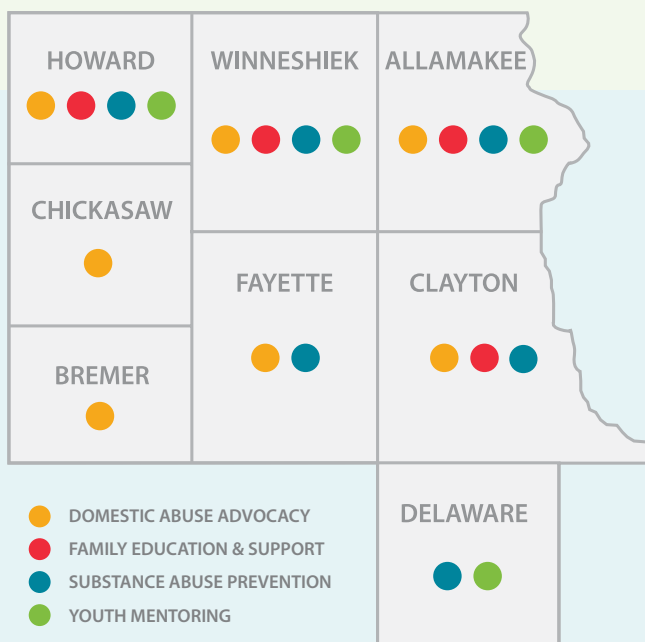


Our Blog is a great way to keep up with news, updates, and other happenings throughout the year. Head over to the Videos section to discover a number of educational and fun videos that our team has developed. The Events Calendar highlights events that occur throughout the year. The Chat function is available to those seeking to connect with an advocate with our Domestic Abuse Resource Center team. Finally, the Donate button is a very easy way to give a gift to Helping Services.

Our mission has remained the same during such an unexpected year, and helps guide our daily work: Helping support healthier and safer families and communities. I invite you to explore the website, and consider ways that you can join us in our mission at Helping Services. Thank you for continuing to trust in our team, and I wish you well as we head into the holiday season.



—Carson Eggland, Executive Director



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Board Members at Helping Services can serve up to three consecutive two year terms. All Board Members serve in a voluntary role.

2019–20 PROGRAM IMPACT

DOMESTIC ABUSE RESOURCE CENTER

Serving residents of Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties.

- New Victims Served—**223**
- Total Resource Line Calls and Chat—**1,728**
- Transportation Trips—**88**

FAMILY EDUCATION & SUPPORT PROGRAM

Serving residents of Allamakee, Clayton, Howard, and Winneshiek counties.

- Families Served—**39**
- Children served—**51**
- Visits: In Home—**380**
Video—**18**
Phone—**105**
- Playgroups (pre-COVID)—**11**
- Informational/ Developmental Videos—**5**
- Virtual Storytime—**14**

SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Serving residents of Allamakee, Clayton, Delaware, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties.

- TLC Students—**90**
- Youth Mentoring / Mentees—**113**
- Youth Mentoring / Mentors—**116**
- Youth Mentoring / Mentors For a Day—**8**
- Youth Mentoring Steering Team Members—**37**
- Other Volunteers—**18**
- Youth Group Members—**235**
- Community Coalition Members—**158**
- Community Members who took Assessment Surveys—**151**
- Presentations / Youth Attendees—**1,190**
Adult Attendees—**540**
- Tips Training Attendees—**66**
- Business / Adpted Tobacco Policies—**31**
- Parks and Trails become Nicotine Free—**24**

► *Your support of Helping Services provides impact for youth across northeast Iowa!*



Jeff and Lauro enjoy some time together at the Tasty Thursdays Youth Mentoring event.

Did You Know?

Based on recent audited financials, Helping Services allocated 85% of total expenses directly to Program costs. That means only 15% of expenses were utilized for Management and Fundraising costs.

COVID-19 Impact

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions many of our program numbers were down in 2019–20. Our team is still providing important services throughout northeast Iowa, although we have needed to adjust how those services look. Please contact us at 563–387–1720 if you have questions regarding services in your community.

Thank you to Sugar Bowl in Decorah for partnering with Youth Mentoring for Tasty Thursdays events!





Helping Services Welcomes a New Grant to Support Victims

Helping Services was notified in September that we will be receiving a grant from the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) for funding under the OVW FY 2020 Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Program. Under the guidelines of this grant, the program is designed to enhance victim safety in cases of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in rural areas by encouraging collaborative partnerships among criminal justice agencies, victim service providers, and community organizations to respond to these crimes. This is a 3-year grant starting on October 1 that will allow Helping Services' Domestic Abuse Resource Center to expand its team by two advocates.

**This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-WR-AX-0025 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

2020 Giving Project

The Giving Project matches area donors with children of clients that have been helped by the Resource Center advocates. Donors purchase gifts for the families by buying items off of wish lists that clients have filled out. Donors are provided with the children's ages, sizes and items they have requested. Last year we were fortunate to have generous donors who donated presents and needed supplies to 28 adults and 76 children with gifts for the holidays. If you know someone who is interested in sponsoring a family this year please let us know by calling the **Resource Line at 1-800-383-2988** or emailing info@helpingservices.org.

New Way to Connect!

The Domestic Abuse Resource Center has implemented a Domestic Abuse survivor chat line, which can be reached at [HelpingServices.org/chat](https://www.helpingservices.org/chat). There is still the option to call our 24/7 resource phone line at 800-383-2988, but the chat line is another way survivors can reach an advocate at Helping Services. Whether you chat or call, a trained advocate will respond to you 24 hours a day.

Thank You to Luna Valley Farm!

Thank you to Maren and Tom Beard with Luna Valley Farm for donating 20% of proceeds of pizza sales on October 17 to support the Domestic Abuse Resource Center. We were very grateful for their donation of \$603.00 in recognition of October being Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Students at TCLC enjoyed countless memories and fun activities over the last five years. We will miss working with them!



TigerHawk Connections Learning Center Update

For five years, Helping Services supported a before-school, after-school, and summer program at the West Union Elementary called TigerHawk Connections Learning Center (TCLC). Unfortunately, the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant from the Department of Education officially ended on June 30, 2020. While we are disappointed for the program to end at this time, we are happy to report that 495 students were supported over the five years of the grant. The students made countless memories, gained knowledge, and built friendships over the course of the five years. Thank you to the team at TCLC for providing a wonderful program for the community, and to the North Fayette Valley Community School District for a great partnership.



HELPING SERVICES for Youth & Families

PO Box 372 • Decorah, IA 52101

Update your contact info at info@helpingservices.org

Holiday Lights Continues for its 16th Season

We are excited for the Holiday Lights drive-thru experience for the 16th season starting on **Wednesday, November 25**. This year has impacted all of us, and Holiday Lights has had its challenges as public safety is our number one concern. We have been working with the City of Decorah, Winneshiek County Public Health, volunteers, and sponsors for a plan. *"This is a great community event that has become a tradition for so many and we want to make sure that everyone gets to enjoy this wonderful event,"* said Ben Krouse-Gagne, Director of Community Engagement.

As public safety is of utmost importance, this year's event will be drive-thru only. The day before Thanksgiving night will now be the first opportunity to drive-thru the event. We are encouraging everyone to drive through Holiday Lights this night with an appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus. Ben said, *"Due to the safety of guests we have decided to switch the Walk-thru night to drive-thru. We look forward to this event each year and this night will continue to be special."*

HOLIDAY *Lights*

For those unable to attend, you can always support Holiday Lights online at HelpingServices.org/HolidayLights.

The 2020 Holiday Lights event has been extended this year to run until Sunday, December 27. We know that this holiday season may look different for many reasons, but we hope you can visit Holiday Lights to help get into the holiday spirit.

**Wednesday, November 25 thru
Sunday, December 27**