



# HELPING SERVICES for Youth & Families

*Spring & Summer 2024*

## Green Dot Trainings Promote Safer Communities

Prevention education and promoting safer communities is an essential part of our work at Helping Services. Dating Violence and Stalking Advocacy Coordinator, Brittany McIntyre, continues to partner with the Title IX office and the Office of Student Engagement at Luther College, to provide the evidence-based bystander curriculum, Green Dot. Communities that actively use the Green Dot program have seen reductions in sexual violence, relationship abuse, and stalking by 17-21%.

Green Dot relies on the premise that if everyone does their small part and commits to individual responsibility, the combined effect is a safer culture that is intolerant of violence. Our community has not been immune to the impact and feelings associated with these types of violence but we can work together to improve upon our knowledge, skills, and resources to further address and prevent this harm.

Helping Services staff have been fortunate enough to partner with Luther College to provide this training 15 times, reaching 611 students, staff, faculty, and community members.

► If you are interested in learning more or attending a Green Dot training reach out to us at: [info@helpingservices.org](mailto:info@helpingservices.org) or 563-387-1720

## Focus on Impact:

### **Domestic Abuse Resource Center**

The Domestic Abuse Resource Center (DARC) serves adults, teens and children who have experienced unhealthy relationships in Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek Counties. DARC Advocates are committed to helping survivors access the information and services they seek and provide options that fit their needs. Advocates offer crisis counseling, community resources and referrals to area providers.

Advocates and highly trained volunteers listen without judgment and provide options that are available.

Some of the services provided include:

- *Safety planning*
- *Individual and group advocacy*
- *Legal advocacy*
- *Housing resources*
- *Bi-lingual advocacy*
- *Child and teen advocacy*
- *Support Group facilitation*

Services are free, confidential, and client led.

### **How You Can Help**

**Volunteer** • Answer crisis line, organize awareness events, assist with supplies at the food pantry. Find the volunteer level that works for you!

**Advocate** • Share the Resource Line and promote the services provided by the DARC. Advocates continue to seek opportunities to train and present to new groups.

**Make a Donation** • Financial contributions and gifts to the DARC pantry and Holiday Giving Projects assist survivors.

#### **Community Impact**

Advocates and volunteers are in the community each day supporting survivors. These are a few highlights of their work last year:

- **Survivors Served: 212**
- **Resource Line Calls: 1,783**
- **Trainings & Presentations: 104**

*Thank you* to Luther College for partnering on this important education.



# Congratulations!

**Congratulations to Lori Barry, Family Educator, and Kathy Schwartzhoff, Youth Mentoring Coordinator,** for their upcoming retirements this summer! Lori and Kathy wanted to share a few words about their work over the years, including changes they have seen in the helping field. We will miss their steadfast commitment to serving families and youth at Helping Services. Please join us in wishing them well on their next chapter in life.

## Iowa Community Empowerment In the Words of Lori Barry

Community Empowerment was established by Legislation during the 1998 session in an effort to create a partnership between communities and state government with an emphasis to improve the well-being of families with young children. Community Empowerment areas enabled local citizens to lead collaborative efforts involving education, health, and human services programs on behalf of children, families and other citizens residing in the area.

As you can imagine there was lots of brainstorming and planning that took place as the foundation of the empowerment was started. I had the pleasure of being part of this and forming our program to what it is today.

I was working as an RN at our local Doctor's Office when I was approached by one of the physicians encouraging me to learn more about this and stating, "You would be good at this." My passion was working with parents with babies and young children and providing education and support to them. I remember this day as if it was yesterday when I was given this opportunity. I was working 4 days a week at the clinic and I had 1 day available for this—to me it was the best of both worlds! I pursued the journey of this newly developed home visiting for families.

*Lori • Continued on page 5*

Lori retires after 24 years of positively impacting children and families.



Kathy at the annual Youth Mentoring Family Picnic, circa 2022

## Kathy Schwartzhoff Reflects on Her Years at Helping Services

### *Kathy's Journey to Helping Services*

After college, Kathy's degree prepared her to be a preschool teacher and daycare center director. At the time, she didn't know there was a field of substance use prevention. She remembers learning about the field of social work while attending the University of Iowa. She had no inkling that people could be working in the field of substance use prevention or as a mentoring coordinator.

When Kathy worked part-time at the agency, she was also working full-time as the Executive Director of Sunflower Child Care Center in 1985. Previous to working at Sunflower, she was a home daycare provider in Missouri. While at Sunflower, she would get calls from parents who were seeking a home daycare provider, and at that time there was no organization for referral. The first position she held at Helping Services was Child Care Information and Referral which provided services to home daycare providers and a referral system for parents in Allamakee, Howard, and Winneshiek Counties. Her draw to do this work came from a background in early childhood and providing access to childcare services in the region. Helping Services for Northeast Iowa worked out of Luther College's Gjerset House when Kathy first came on staff. They had three rooms, one person had a private room, and another room had some desks, a typewriter, and an adding machine at the time. Dave Runyon was the Executive Director at that time. Kathy took a year off and came back to the agency as a Community Prevention Specialist & Consultant. Puppetry is what drew her to this work in prevention. Kathy delivered programs called BABES and Puppet PALS that taught basic substance use prevention concepts and skills to first and second graders.

*Kathy • Continued on page 6*



## Victim Services Need Your Support

Since joining the Helping Services' team in 2015, I have seen ebbs and flows in funding levels at the state and federal level that support many of our programs. The current situation with federal dollars available to support victim services through VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) dollars is one that is troubling and worrisome. It is estimated by the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence that federal cuts will result in around \$4.3 million less dollars to distribute in the upcoming year to Iowa victim services organizations such as ours and others around the state. Our Advocates continue to work tirelessly to assist victims, but they need financial support to ensure every victim is reached and supported.

What all this means is we continue to express the need for your donations to ensure services remain unaffected in northeast Iowa. I want to thank you for your ongoing support of Helping Services through your financial contributions. Whether it's mailing an annual donation to our office, making a monthly gift through an EFT, or driving through Holiday Lights, every gift matters. I would ask you consider giving another gift today to ensure victim services continue to be supported in the area we serve—Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties.

While funding can fluctuate over time, I wanted to take a moment to express gratitude for a constant at Helping Services—our dedicated volunteers. Volunteers truly drive the work at Helping Services. Whether it's through service on our Board of Directors, volunteering one's time as a Mentor, assisting with our 24/7 Resource Line, participating on a local county coalition, or helping with Holiday Lights, volunteers provide immeasurable support at Helping Services.

*Thank you* for being part of our team at Helping Services, and thank you for considering a gift to support victim services today.

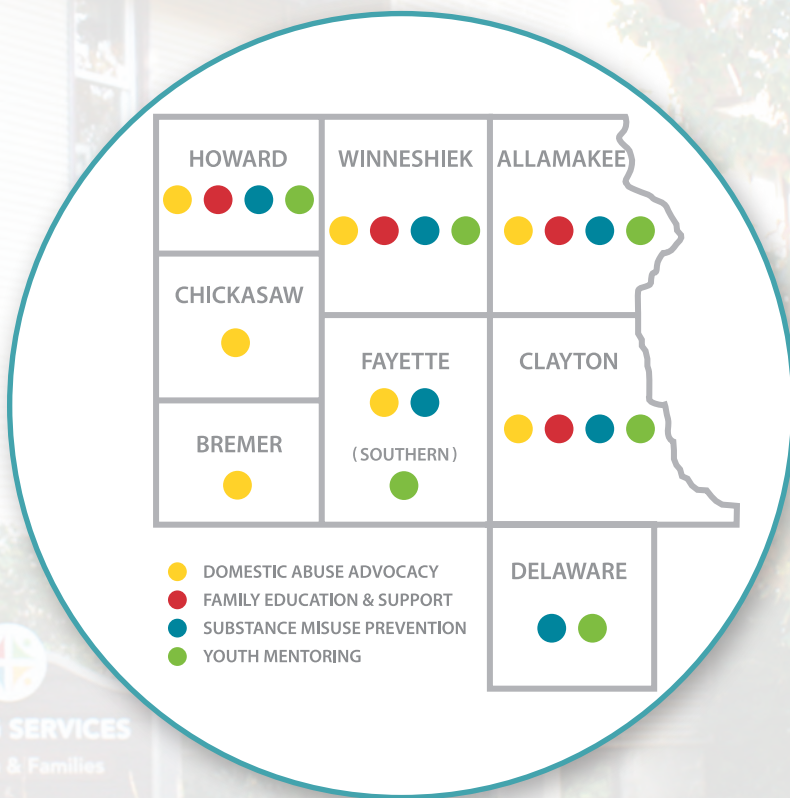
*Carson Eggel*

Executive Director

### Helping Services Board of Directors

- Andy Eastwood, *President*
- Stefanie Perkins, *Vice President*
- Kim Hennessy, *Secretary*
- Dr. Scott Bohner
- Dan Marx
- Stephanie Newsom
- Renaë Wedeking

*Board Members at Helping Services can serve up to three consecutive two year terms.*



Learn more at [helpingservices.org](http://helpingservices.org)

HELPING SERVICES  
for Youth & Families



# Good News!

The University of Iowa College of Public Health and its Business Leadership Network selected five award recipients of its annual Community Grant Program, including Helping Services!

Through this grant award of \$2,325.00, our team will work to break down barriers surrounding mental health crisis by supporting and connecting communities in Howard County to resources and education. Several mental health trainings and resources such as The Green Bandana Project, QPR Trainings, Mental Health First Aid, and the Active Aging Expo will be provided to residents across the lifespan, from students to seniors.

## Get TIPS Certified!

Training for Intervention ProcedureS (TIPS) is a responsible beverage server training that gives continuing education to alcohol retailers. Our staff offer this training to alcohol retailers in Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Clayton, and Fayette counties. Recently, Frisky Fox Winery and the 10th Hole Bar & Grill in Riceville along with Winneshiek Wildberry Winery located North of Decorah have gone above and beyond to advance their knowledge by becoming TIPS certified!

► To learn more about TIPS training please email Leah at [lhesath@helpingservices.org](mailto:lhesath@helpingservices.org) or Ellie at [eloesch@helpingservices.org](mailto:eloesch@helpingservices.org)

## Mentoring Match Spotlight

Say hello to Jessica and Madison. These ladies were matched in 2023 and genuinely enjoy spending time with each other. Whether it is talking about school, relationships or the daily struggles of teenage life, they get to share stories and share a lot of laughs and encouragement. One of their favorite things to do is spend time at events together or get ice cream. Working mentoring into their busy lives has been easy. They work together on doing tasks, planning events for Jessica's work, or just sharing quick updates on each other's day through text messages. Mentoring is a joy and gives so much to their lives.

► To have the joy of mentoring in your life contact : [mentoring@helpingservices.org](mailto:mentoring@helpingservices.org) or visit [www.helpingservices.org/mentoring](http://www.helpingservices.org/mentoring)

## Clayton County Mentoring Up and Running!

Youth Mentoring is excited to share that we are now in Clayton County! We will work on matching youth ages 6-17 with a trusted adult. Looking back who did you have to look up to in your younger years? If you want to be the change and make a difference in a child's life, then this is for you! Mentoring is simple. Mentors meet with their mentee a minimum of 4 hours a month doing things they both enjoy. Do you have a hobby or a skill you would like to share with a young person? Become a mentor! We want YOU to help build a program these children will benefit from. Reach out today!

Jenny Rose is the Clayton County Mentoring Coordinator and is excited to build the youth mentoring program with both school-based and community-based mentoring. Jenny started this position January 1st of this year and has been working on spreading the word that mentoring is now in Clayton County and that mentors are needed! Jenny has also been working on getting the school-based mentoring programs going in each of the schools in the county. You can find Jenny in the Clayton County Office Building in Elkader where the Board of Supervisors have graciously donated office space for the program.

► If you would like more information on mentoring in Clayton County you can stop in there, or reach out to *Jenny* at [jrose@helpingservices.org](mailto:jrose@helpingservices.org)



Scan QR Code for more information!



# Thanks Lori!



Family Educators Chris Anthony, Lori Barry and Lillian Quam share a fun moment together

## Lori • Continued from page 2

It started with a few trainings and purchasing some books for resources to guide meaningful and educational home visits. Purchasing a baby scale provided baby weights on home visits, as new Moms liked to see how much their little one has gained from one home visit to the next. There wasn't any protocols or curriculum to follow, we were using our knowledge and building on it from there. It was *"Do a good job at what you choose to do."* The documentation was minimal in the beginning. As time passed, more trainings were offered, like Health Families America which was a family support and evidence-based home visiting program in the US. We explored many programs/curriculums and we learned about Parent as Teachers.

As we looked at the curriculum, it was fitting to what we were already doing, and it was evidence-based educational information. During this time, as the program was growing and being successful the state wanted data. The data showed that we were meeting our outcomes. With that comes much more documentation. As a nurse, documentation was key. If it wasn't documented, it didn't happen! We progressed from paper documentation to a computer program record keeping. In 2021, it was required to take a National Family Support Certification Exam to provide home visits. After 21 plus years providing home visits I became a **Certified Family Support Professional**.

Being one of the first home visitors I have seen many changes in my 24 years of providing evidence based and meaningful home visits. Also, I have many fond memories of the families I served. I will share a couple. One of the children would always call me Lori Barry, which I was OK being called by both first and last name, but when the Mom shared that her child thought my first name was Lori Barry and my last name was Barry, so she would call me Lori Barry Barry. This child is now a mom herself and when she sees me she still calls me "Lori Barry Barry". Currently, I have been called "Grandma Lori". Well, they aren't wrong. I am a Grandma, and no matter what their parents tell them I am still "Grandma Lori". For me, when I see the families out in the community

and the children are excited to see me, it just warms my heart. I have a couple of families that I provided home visits to when they were a child and now that they are parents they said they wanted home visits for their child.

June 30th, 2024 will bring new beginnings for me, as I plan my retirement. It comes with mixed emotions as I dearly love my job. You will find me in the community volunteering or I will be in my sewing room making quilts.

**Fun Fact:** I became a Certified Child Passenger Technician in 2005 and an Instructor in 2009. I have educated and helped many families correctly install their child's car seat. One small error can make a big difference on the safety outcome in the event of a crash. I will continue being a certified technician/instructor.



Thank you to Lori for sharing her passions with the community for 24 years as a Family Educator



Two of Kathy's loves combined: Mentoring and gardening/flowers! This photo was taken from a community service event Youth Mentoring did in Cresco, circa 2008



# Thanks Kathy!

## Memories to Last a Lifetime

Through the years, Kathy remarked that it's hard to pick just one lasting memory! Just last month she met a woman who never forgot the way that Kathy taught Puppet PALS kids how to say her name. The woman is now 30 years old and was one of the kids Kathy impacted with her puppetry lessons. At North Fayette School District (now North Fayette Valley), Kathy taught a program called What's Up? where they taught substance use prevention concepts and skills. Selected eighth graders in their school were also taught by Kathy and other Helping Services staff to be good listeners to their peers. These students also helped lead the Puppet PALS and What's Up? Lessons. Kathy's family is quite used to people coming up to her with a weird look on their faces and asking her if she taught lessons somewhere.

*Kathy • Continued from page 2*

## Expanding the Impact of Youth Mentoring in Northeast Iowa

When Kathy first started with mentoring, there was no funding and no volunteers. Dedicated youth-serving agency's staff divided the duties to get the program on its feet. The program began after a two-year study period to develop the program and gain community support. At first, the program only served Decorah. Then after some time, they expanded to the entire Winneshiek County, and soon after that Allamakee and Howard Counties.

During this time the World Wide Web didn't exist so they reached out to friends in surrounding communities to learn more about what programs they were doing and to get more of a clearer idea/vision of what they wanted. They knew that funding would need to be an ongoing focus to sustain the program. In fact, the first grant application for funding was to a casket company to raise money to support youth mentoring. While that grant application was unsuccessful, that led to seeking other funding sources.

Something that has remained a constant is having an engaged steering committee for each county to focus on the success and growth of the program.

Funding sources have ebbed and flowed over the years. In 2009, Helping Services received two federal grants which totaled over a million dollars in funding. In 2005, Youth Mentoring hosted the first Bowl-A-Thon to raise private funding for the program. The Bowl-A-Thon has been a staple fundraiser ever since, with the exception of two years during COVID and when Kathy's stepdad passed away.

The program initially started working with youth ages 5-16, then 6-16, and finally what it is today which is 6-17 years of age. Helping Services received AmeriCorps funding in 2016, which led to Colinne McCann working as an AmeriCorps Member during that time under Kathy. In 2019, they received additional funding through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention which led to Colinne getting hired as a full-time Mentoring Coordinator.

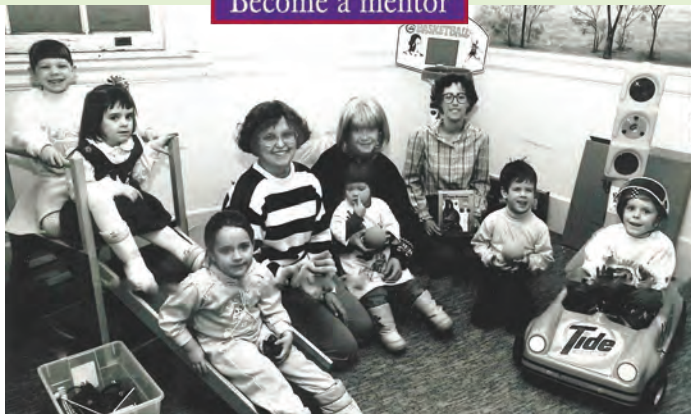
There have been a lot of changes! Throughout it all, the need to find positive role models for youth and support for those friendships has remained consistent.



Kathy teaching puppet PALS at St. Benedict School, circa 2014

An important part of Kathy's work experience was being a staff member for the Upward Bound Program at Luther College. The experience started during Kathy's first day of work and ran a ten-year span including summer lessons on campus and three years of being the staff person for students in three school systems. There is one student she sees regularly in the community that many people had given up on. He did his work for her consistently. Kathy now has the opportunity to see him as a husband, a father, holding a successful job, and being happy today. The people on staff over that 10-year span are friendships she holds very dear.

She also shares there's a dad who calls every once in a while about his son who had a family who mentored him. This kid was bullied before he entered the mentoring program. He used to have trouble expressing himself and he was also known for being very quiet. The dad thanks mentoring for stopping the intense bullying he faced in his life. He went from never expressing himself to growing in so many ways. He eventually got married and has a good stable job—all thanks to mentoring!



This photo is the beginning of Toys Go Round, founded through Helping Services. Adults pictured are Vanessa Courtney, the late Karen Bolson, and Kathy. Circa 1986

### Reflections of A Career Positively Impacting Youth

Kathy remarked that over the years, she appreciated being allowed to be a leader, continuously learn, and expand her skill set. Former Executive Director Dave Runyon told her to have a broader vision. She attributed that to expanding her vision of life, work, and how to do things. The experience of traveling with fellow staff has taught her about the broader vision.

Having multiple experiences of flying to prevention and mentoring conferences allowed her to grow and experience things she never imagined she would. Helping Services connected her with lifelong friendships and relationships.

Kathy will miss the people who helped with all facets of Youth Mentoring the most! But, she will truly not miss some of the reporting requirements, and some of the challenging parts of her work. But, it's all about the people. In the early years, seeing communities, kids, and parents create healthy and positive environments for youth to grow and thrive in. Starting new mentoring matches and watching them grow. Seeing the growth of both the mentee and mentor and just being along for the ride providing support when she could. Watching how people inspire each other within the mentoring program has always been one of the many pleasures of being part of mentoring. Kathy's best friends have worked with her and still do, which she remarked is such a blessing. The big thing is the people and the seed of hope that the mentoring program provides for so many.

### The Next Chapter

As Kathy says, "Grandkids need their grandma! I also need them, and they need me." She wants to spend time with them, be outside gardening, and simply take a break from work. She is looking forward to exploring the journey of what she is going to do next.

For now, Kathy wants to take a little break from mentoring because she wants to let her team find their own way. She will continue to be involved in some way, but that is yet to be determined...

### Thank You from Kathy

Kathy really wants to thank everyone whom she has interacted with over the years, whether that is mentors, mentees, coalition members, donors, co-workers, teachers in classrooms, parents and their kids in parenting classes, bowlers, and other supporters of her work. Everyone had the goal of making it better for youth in our communities. Seeing mentees let down their barriers was a process, but mentors' genuineness allowed mentees to open up. Kathy wore many hats in the agency over the years. The people around her really made the experience truly great. Hats off to them.



(Above Photo):  
Kathy and fellow Youth Mentoring Coordinator, Colinne McCann, share a moment together at the National Mentoring Month Potluck Dinner, January 2023

*Thank you to Cristian Chavez, Spring Mentoring Intern from Luther College, for interviewing Kathy for this article and helping to share her story!*

## Increasing Awareness for Child Abuse Prevention

April is designated Child Abuse Prevention Month, an annual observance in the United States dedicated to raising awareness and preventing child abuse. Helping Services for Youth & Families invited businesses and community organizations to help increase awareness around Child Abuse Prevention by "Wearing Blue" on April 5th. Here are a few photos of groups around the area showing their support.

Waukon State Bank employees help increase awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month by wearing blue





# HELPING SERVICES for Youth & Families

PO Box 372 • Decorah, IA 52101

Update your contact info at [info@helpingservices.org](mailto:info@helpingservices.org)

**Save the Date!** Holiday Lights will return for its 20th season with the opening Walk-through Night on **Wednesday, November 27, 2024.**



## Bowl-A-Thon a Success!

On March 23, 71 bowlers enjoyed bowling, pizza, and pop at King Pin Entertainment Center in Decorah. Through the generosity of event sponsors and bowlers, over \$9,000 was raised to support Youth Mentoring at Helping Services.

*Thanks to all who made this event so successful!*



Learn more at [helpingservices.org](http://helpingservices.org)