

Spring 2021



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Hope Springs Eternal

The proverbial phrase “hope springs eternal” struck me as a fitting message for our spring newsletter. In our line of work, we recognize that people continue to choose hope, no matter the odds. The events that have taken place from last spring to this have certainly been proof of this behavior. Hope often presents itself during times of difficulty, and it delivers power to our circumstances. Here at Tanager Place, the following list of activities and programs have been imagined, impacted, or instigated by hope.

- Our new prevention programs, Saving Our Sisters and CDF Freedom Schools
- The re-opening of Camp Tanager, complete with a new driveway, grand lodge, and bunkhouse that will serve campers for another 95 years!
- Our re-imagined 30th annual Summer Fest, planned as a drive-thru event (June 5th)
- Our new June Jam outdoor celebration benefitting Tanager Place (June 26th)
- The 27th annual Tanager Place Golf Outing (August 5th)
- The launch of our new Meraki Institute of Learning
- An increase in the number of new supporters and donors of Tanager Place
- And, finally, a renewed interest and effort in our community to stop the stigma associated with mental illness

Thank you for bringing hope to this spring season and to the 4,000 children and families we serve.



Okpara Rice
CEO





S.O.S. participants meet three times a week.
Photo credit: The Gazette

Saving Our Sisters

Tanager Place and the African American Family Resource and Planning Committee partnered together to create a new program called S.O.S., Saving Our Sisters. Throughout the year, groups of 10 students will participate in an 8-10 week program, meeting three times per week. Once their program ends, a mentor will continue to check in with the girls periodically.

The first group of students began the program in January and participated in a variety of field trips to meet with local entrepreneurs and leaders, including a tour of the African American Museum of Iowa and the Newbo City Market. The students are grateful for the opportunity to safely participate in person and meet new friends. They have a safe place to discuss the things going on in their lives and how they can become future leaders in their community.

This program is funded through the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation's Creating Safe, Equitable and Thriving Communities (SET) Fund. Tanager Place was one of five nonprofits selected to receive funding.

“We want to let these kids know we’re going to make sure you have every opportunity you want. You have somebody to walk with you down that road you are about to embark on as an adult.”

– Lori Ampey, S.O.S. Director

Iowa's First CDF Freedom Schools Site

Since 2015, Okpara Rice, Tanager Place's CEO, dreamed of bringing the Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools to Tanager Place. The program is inspired by the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, which provided a reading and humanities curriculum of English, art, creative writing, math and science to diverse students. Since 1993, the program has grown to over 182 sites nationwide and has served more than 150,000 students. CDF Freedom Schools aims to give students, particularly those who are racial minorities or from low-income households, the opportunity to enhance their education through the lens of literary characters who look like them and have walked through experiences similar to their own.

In 2020, Tanager Place successfully completed the extensive application process to become an accredited Freedom Schools provider. Starting this June, thirty 6th-8th graders from the Cedar Rapids Community School District will attend the free six-week program Monday through Friday.

Participants will receive breakfast, lunch, and a snack each day and take home a new book each week for their personal library.

Throughout the six weeks, they will attend field trips and become energized for learning through hands-on activities. The program will be led by young adult teachers and mentors known as Servant Leader Interns, who come from diverse backgrounds and help the students envision themselves as future college students, advocates, and leaders. Program staff will also work with parents and plan weekly empowerment events.



This program was made possible in part by New Leader Manufacturing and The Maurice Paul & Glennys Brimmer Foundation.



Return to Camp

Camp Tanager will have a new look and feel as campers return this summer for day, overnight, and specialty camps. After Tanager Place received a \$1.8 million dollar gift from Jared and Carol Hills in 2019 to increase camper capacity, the expansion project broke ground this past fall. Phase 1 of the expansion project will be completed this summer thanks to the additional donors who helped fund outstanding costs for the new grand lodge, 24-bed sleeping cabin, and new driveway and parking lot. Future elements of the project will focus on introducing additional programming for campers and upgrading and improving the current infrastructure.

Although there will be a few changes this year to mitigate Covid-19, campers can still expect an incredible, fun-filled summer. The camp will operate at half capacity, while still providing everyone's favorite camp activities in a safe way. We also look forward to providing scholarships that will offer the camp experience to children who may not have otherwise been able to participate.

For a list of our expansion project donors and ways you can support all needs related to camp, please visit our camp website at www.camptanager.org.



Build a brighter future for children and teens in our community with a donation to Tanager Place. Visit tanagerplace.org/donate for a list of ways you can support our mission to inspire, empower, and heal.

Bridge to the Future Scholarships

In 2019, Tanager Place received a one million dollar gift from an anonymous donor to establish a scholarship fund. The gift was put into an endowment and \$24,000 in scholarships were awarded to six area students in 2020.

This year, over \$56,000 will be awarded to Iowa students pursuing post-secondary education who have benefitted from at least 6 months of Tanager Place services in the last two years.

“This is one of the ways I am paying it forward,” said the anonymous donor. “During my youth, when I needed support, people were there for me. So I’m proud to help the children of Tanager Place in this way. The program is a window of opportunity for a deserving young person, a chance to reach for and grasp long-term goals. And a program that will benefit students for years to come.”

Applications for 2021 are due May 14th
Learn more and apply at:

tanagerplace.org/outreach/scholarships



Mission Moments

Building Trust

When “Jessica,” 15, first came to Tanager Place, she needed support to move forward. She was raised in an abusive family and her mother was absent for most of her life. After engaging in unsafe activities and behaviors, she needed to heal from her past.

As she began treatment, she hoped to have a fresh start with her mother but needed to build trust. The Expressive Arts program played a huge role in Jessica’s treatment plan and she spent a lot of time in the Tanager Place Art House. The therapist noticed after each session, Jessica would always take her artwork with her, instead of leaving it in her cubby like the other clients. As she completed treatment, her trust began to grow.

One day, near the end of her time in care with us, Jessica asked the art therapist if she could leave her artwork at the art house. She revealed the project was a gift for her mother and she was ready to give her another chance. The therapist helped Jessica understand how her art was a reflection of the growing trust she was developing in her heart for her mother, how far she had come and how much hope there was for her future. Jessica, seeing this parallel, burst into happy tears, full of hope for the relationship between her mother and her.

Finding New Ways

“Ethan” was in preschool when he started having episodes of aggressive behavior that would lead to hurting himself and others. Not sure where to turn, his parents reached out to Tanager Place for help. He began play therapy and his therapist soon discovered his behavior was related to his struggles with using verbal communication.

Ethan began working with the therapist to find new ways to communicate his thoughts, and his parents learned nurturing interventions to help Ethan overcome his emotions when he was upset. As he finished his last sessions, his ability to express himself in positive ways increased greatly. He was able to pause, find calm before reacting to situations, and enjoy the time he shares with his family and classmates.

I love play therapy because it provides a space for kids to be who they are, find healing, and experience a new way of being that is healthier and more adaptive. I especially love getting to work with families through family play therapy and getting to see relationships blossom and families enjoy being together.

*-Joella Gerber, LISW, RPT
Coralville Clinic Supervisor & Therapist*



Support for Students, Educators, and Mentors

According to the CDC, approximately 1 in 5 children in the United States have a diagnosable mental health disorder that could benefit from treatment. That equates to over 12,000 children in the Cedar Rapids metro area alone. Since children and teens spend most of their time in school each week, it is common for mental health related symptoms and behaviors to arise during the school day. Our school-based therapy team is able to connect with local students by providing support in school buildings all across Eastern Iowa. Research has shown that students are more likely to seek help when services are available in school.

Our school-based therapy team has continued to grow to meet the demand of services needed, especially during these tough times. Our therapists assess each student's needs and offer an individualized approach and treatment plan as well as individual, group and family therapy services. By providing students with professional mental, emotional, and behavioral health treatment, classroom behavior and academic growth is improved, while students increase their resilience.

Along with serving students and families, our programming supports teachers and school officials with training, coaching, mentoring and consultation services. When school staff had to make unique adjustments to their classrooms and procedures during this past year of virtual, hybrid, and in-person learning, our therapists were available for support and guidance. To see a current list of the school buildings we serve, please visit our website: www.tanagerplace.org/treatment/school-based-services.

98%
of students
reported improved
functioning

99%
of teachers trained
felt they were better
able to connect with
students



Tanager Place Podcasts

Hear from Tanager Place experts and special guests as they discuss wellness and resiliency on our podcast. Follow us on your favorite streaming platform or visit tanagerplace.org/podcast to listen to previous episodes.

Lets Connect!

Whether in-person or virtual, we are happy to connect with you this spring at a variety of events. For more information and to register, please visit: www.tanagerplace.org/events.

Virtual Events

Estate Planning Seminars - April 28, May 17, June 8

Learn how to make important life decisions for your family at this FREE seminar, facilitated by an expert estate-planning attorney.

Resiliency and Trauma-Informed Care Symposium - May 12

Hear from Dana Winters, PhD, and Junlei Li, PhD, deliver a virtual keynote on The Power of Simple Interactions: Understanding and Promoting Everyday Human Interactions.

Coffee with the CEO - May 19

Join Tanager Place CEO, Okpara Rice, for updates on Tanager Place.

Community Trainings

Youth Mental Health First Aid - May 7

This training is designed to equip teachers, nurses, coaches, and parents on how to recognize signs and respond appropriately to a child experiencing a mental health crisis in a 5-step action plan. Topics include anxiety, depression, substance abuse, behavior disorders, and eating disorders.

Play Therapy Trainings - May 21, June 9, July 16

Earn continuing education hours and gain valuable skills by attending an interactive training taught by Tanager Place's experienced Play Therapists.

Summer Fun

Summer Fest - June 5

This year, we are offering a drive through experience! Please RSVP and join us at the Collins Aerospace Sports Complex to receive a free "ignition starter" event bag and fuel up for summer fun.

June Jam - June 26

Come together, connect and celebrate the mission of Tanager Place in a COVID conscientious way. Music can inspire, empower and heal, and so can you when you support this event. Enjoy great food, music, and fun at the first ever June Jam to benefit the children and families of Tanager Place.

YOU Make a Difference

It's April, and, in conjunction with National Volunteer Week, it is a great time to thank those who have been a part of our volunteer efforts. Many have contributed to the success of Tanager Place over the years. While recently we have not been able to connect, do great work, and make progress, we will again soon. We could not be more grateful to those of you who have been a part of our volunteer program, and we look forward to welcoming new volunteers in the near future. Volunteering is about getting involved and working with a purpose.



A volunteer helps with repairs after the derecho.

According to involvecommunity.com, other reasons to volunteer include:

1. It's good for your health.
2. You can learn new skills.
3. You gain new experiences.
4. It's a resume and career builder.
5. You give back to causes you believe in.
6. You get inspired.
7. You make connections.
8. You become part of a community.
9. You help change the world.
10. It's fun.

Think about getting involved in the mission of Tanager Place or any organization you believe in. It is good for your heart and soul and the community you live in! To learn more about our volunteer program, please visit: www.tanagerplace.org/outreach/volunteer or call us at 319-365-9164.

INTRODUCING



MERAKI
Institute of Learning

Empowering Growth, Inspiring Excellence

The Meraki Institute of Learning is brought to you by Tanager Place. The Institute provides learning experiences focused on increasing awareness, enhancing family and community connections, and cultivating excellence within individuals, organizations, and systems. Learnings are designed to empower growth and inspire excellence through enhancing the resiliency and wellbeing of children, families, communities and systems.

Resilient Parenting Series



Tanager Place and the Meraki Institute of Learning are offering a new and free resource for parents and caregivers to learn more about interacting and engaging with young people in ways that promote positive mental and behavioral health.

Rise™ Wellness and Resilience, The Resilient Parenting Series is an 11-part series featuring Tanager Place therapists and experts. Various episodes will air each Sunday on CBS 2 at 6:30AM for the remainder of 2021.



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Empowering children, teens, young adults & families to:

- adapt to change
- overcome challenges
- build self-confidence
- manage stressors
- create healthy relationships
- improve emotional health
- increase communication
- succeed in school