



A Message from the Director

By Shelly Willis

I wish you a warm and happy holiday season and a new year filled with RESILIENCE! As I am busy working on this newsletter and try to consider the many ways our agency is supporting our community I took a moment to take inventory. I took a stroll through the office and looked at what each employee, volunteer, contractor, and visitor was busy doing. I am in awe of the company we keep. Those who walk through the doors of FESS are truly the most generous, caring, compassionate dedicated, individuals of our community. These amazing individuals expertly manage demands of some very challenging life circumstances in a trauma-informed, compassionate, and caring way. I am filled with gratitude to work alongside those who do the unmentionable, for the most vulnerable, often unnoticed but with remarkable impact.

These amazing stewards of our community make the well-being of our community a priority. Choosing what is best for the whole as opposed to what is best for the individual. They share responsibility and accountability and they get the job done. They put aside their need to be right and instead strive to "Get It Right." I am going to strive to be as amazing as they have been this year and I challenge you to do the same.

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It has been said that societies grow great when elders plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in. Let's plant some trees. Let's build resilience and strengthen our community. Let's have a peaceful, healthy, happy 2018!

Warm regards,
Shelly Willis, Executive Director



Liz Murray speaks on Resilience



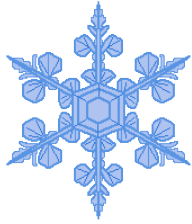
Recently, Family Education & Support Services was honored to welcome nationally acclaimed Ted Talks speaker, and bestselling author, Liz Murray. She spoke about forgiveness, survival, and resilience. In her book *Breaking Night*, which was later made into a Lifetime movie, Liz chronicles her journey “From Homeless to Harvard.” Liz shared her experiences of growing up

with drug-addicted parents, their struggles with poverty, and where she found hope, and the resilience to turn her life around and follow her dreams to graduate high school and then receive a full scholarship to one of the most elite Ivy League Colleges. Liz Murray was resilient through tough and troubled times and loved the idea of “possibility.” Murray explained that through the death of her mother, she learned an important life lesson: life is malleable and people have the internal power to change their lives through sheer grit and determination.

Speaking of Resilience ... Center for Resilience Capital Campaign Begins

In the next year our organization will be undergoing a change as we strive to build a new facility we will call “The Center for Resilience.” We are planning a facility that will welcome families, support, train, and assist with weaving resilience and hope into our community. If you would like to learn more about how you can support our efforts please contact Executive Director, Shelly Willis at Shelly@FamilyESS.org.





Thank you to our donors

Many, many thanks to all of our donors and volunteers. In **May through November 2017**, the following individuals and groups contributed money or supplies to FESS. We apologize in advance if we inadvertently left anyone out:

ABC Pediatrics
 Altrusa International
 Sandi Anderson
 Anonymous
 Angela Autry
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Peggy Jo Zimmerman
Zonta Club

More Ways to Donate to FESS!

Are you looking to give back or volunteer as an individual or a family during this holiday season? Are you thinking of new ways you want to volunteer in the next year? There are many great organizations in our area that could always use an extra hand. Here at FESS our "Community Closet" receives many visitors who are seeking kitchen supplies, baby clothes, diapers, boots, coats, gloves, even toys and books. Look and see what you have stashed away in the closet. Perhaps we can help you purge some of your unwanted items and help a family who may be struggling this year.

Every little bit helps! We are also seeking volunteers to help us keep the "Closet" organized! If you would like to learn more about the many ways to volunteer at FESS please call Heather at 360-754-7629 or email Heather@FamilyESS.org



My how we've grown!

***Happy Holidays from the
entire FESS staff !***

FESS Partners with Thurston-Mason Coalitions for Early Childhood Development

FESS is a proud member of the Thurston and Mason Coalitions for Early Childhood Development. These coalitions are comprised of caring individuals representing diverse organizations who are deeply committed to building and supporting a comprehensive system of high quality early care and educational opportunities. We do this in a variety of ways which include collaborating to present **Parent Education Opportunities**, **Early Learning Activities**, and providing **Training** on evidence-based early learning approaches. Examples of these opportunities include the following:

- ❖ On November 30th Mary Sheedy Kurcinka spoke to our community about "Raising a Spirited Child."
- ❖ At that event we also gave out the annual "Angel Awards" Staci Suneson, Jean Hill-Miller and Deborah Starr Wyatt
- ❖ We offered two rounds of six-week parenting classes for Spanish Speaking parents in area schools.
- ❖ We hosted an Early Learning at our Mason County Office on December 16th.



Mary Sheedy Kurcinka

Angel Awards Winners



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