



Letter from the President



President, Deb Voth

The 2022 Legislative Session is nearing its end. Legislators will convene in Topeka on April 25 in what is called the "Veto Session". While they still have several major policy issues to address, Legislators did take action already on our two legislative initiatives: 1) Funding increase for Infant/Toddler services "tiny-k", and 2) Rate increase for the Home and Community Based Services Medicaid Waiver for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (HCBS – I/DD). That last one is a mouthful, I know. Let me explain more.

Legislators put an additional \$2 million into *tiny-k* services for children birth to age 3 with special

needs. Rainbows provides these services in Butler, Sedgwick, and Sumner Counties. The increase will help all of the 30 *tiny-k* networks who provide services across Kansas.

In addition, Legislators added a historical 25% increase for HCBS Medicaid Waiver rates for individuals with I/DD. This increase will help providers across the State who are struggling to hire staff to care for these vulnerable individuals. For Rainbows, this means a 25% rate increase for our Family Support Services. It is through this program that Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide In-Home care for school age children and youth who have developmental disabilities. This increase of over \$3/hour for these services will go directly to the wages of DSPs in our Family Support

Services.

Rainbows is thrilled to receive this additional support and to be able to pass the increase funding onto our staff who provide these critical services for children and their families.

This Budget was passed by Legislators and Governor Kelly on April 20.

Our sincere thanks go to the many Kansas Legislators in both the Senate and House who supported these increases. They stood strongly in support of children and other individuals with developmental disabilities who will be directly helped because of their work.


Deb

Volunteers honored for long-time service

Long standing Chi Epsilon members, Margaret Shook and Barb Orsi, were recognized as "Champions for Children" at this year's 47th Blarney Breakfast for their years of hard work and dedication to the event and to Rainbows. Both ladies have given countless hours to make the event what it is today and to making a difference in the lives of children with special needs and their families.

Thank you ladies!



Deb Voth, Barb Orsi, Margaret Shook

Rainbows helps family navigate Autism



The day before Thanksgiving 2018, 18-month-old Khamoi was diagnosed with Autism. Michael Tatro, Speech/Language Pathologist, was there to support the family in learning about the diagnosis. "Michael literally saved our family," said Rickeyia. "She helped us navigate the whole system and guide us through appointments, and then she helped explain the mind-blowing diagnosis."

"When Khamoi was diagnosed, I was so mad and embarrassed," said Rickeyia. "I cried on the Zoom call with Michael. She made me feel like a person with feelings, not just a Mom. Rainbows helped me recognize these raw feelings of fear, that I was mad at the diagnosis and embarrassed as a parent. These things aren't talked about enough. With Michael's help, I was able to re-think my picture of Khamoi's life."

Khamoi's father, Aikeem was relieved and grateful. "We have a diagnosis," he said. "We're so lucky we caught it so early because of Rainbows. The Autism is hers, but it's also ours as a family. We all hold that diagnosis."

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Emergency funds keep kids warm

When one of the rooftop furnace units went out at Kids' Point in January, it was emergency funding through Wichita Community Foundation to the rescue. The unit was replaced in February and continues to keep staff and the children in the Early Care and Education center warm. The Emergency Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation provides emergency relief assistance to nonprofit organizations in Wichita and Sedgwick County. Thank you Wichita Community Foundation.



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Champion for Children Legacy Fund



Deb Voth has spent her career serving as a champion for children with special needs and their families. More than 28 of those years have been leading Rainbows United, Inc. She has served as President the last 12 years.

The Champion for Children Legacy Fund has been established in honor of Deb's career and retirement in 2022. The purpose of this

endowment fund is to ensure services for children and youth with special needs and their families continue to thrive.

You can give to the **Champion for Children Legacy Fund** with your gift or online: RainbowsUnited.org/champion.