



# Newsletter December 2020

## Our Mission Statement:

To Support young adults impacted by the foster care system and at risk youth by providing safe, stable, and affordable housing, as well as education and support services, as they transition to independent living.

## House Updates

THE TWIN FALLS OPTIMIST YOUTH HOUSE would like to sincerely thank you for your continued support during these unprecedented times. During this challenging time of COVID-19 we hope this finds you safe and well. We look forward to serving with you as we continue to support the youth of the Magic Valley.

All of our participants are now returning to employment; however, continued financial and emotional support is still critical to our participants success during this trying time. A special thank you to Golds Gym, CSI, Koto, Norms Cafe, Boot Barn, and Dairy Queen for employing our participants and staff.



Idaho Gives successfully raised \$4,200 for the Twin Falls Optimist Youth House!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**



We are pleased to report the house currently has

- 7 participants
- 2 Resident Advisors
- 2 Participants in High School
- 1 Enrolled in dual credit at CSI
- 3 Enrolled at CSI
- 1 Enrolled in GED
- 5 Employed



### Our Graduates

#### Dakota Conners

Graduated from Canyon Ridge High School and plans to attend CSI. WAY TO GO DAKOTA! You have worked so hard to accomplish this!

#### Austin Lobes (2000-2020)

Graduated from Magic Valley High School. WE MISS YOU AUSTIN!



## Wall of Gratitude

- Santa's Cause: For help with dental work for one of our participants.
- First Federal: Grant that supplied the house with freezers to help us with food storage.
- St. Lukes: Grant that helped us provide important health procedures for participants.
- Lin Gowin/PSI Waste Management/Rotary: Organized the community to restock the house with laundry soap.
- Mustard Seed/ County West/ Amazing Grace Fellowship: Providing food boxes.
- Jack and Mary Zarybnisky: Providing food and linens.
- Peacemaker Quilt Guild Heyburn: Providing beautiful quilts.



-Freezers bought with money provided by the First Federal Foundation.

Barry, Charles, Mary, and Jack. -



# WHO WE ARE

## OUR BOARD

President: Brent Reinke  
Vice President: Tom Payne  
Treasurer: Michelle Carpenter  
Anna Scholes  
Nicole Gabiola  
Kevin Sandau  
Gary Palmer  
Jaci Urie

## OUR STAFF

Executive Director:  
Charles Kelly  
Resident Advisors:  
Ellie Leppert  
Justin Cook

We are currently looking for a third female Resident Advisor. Applications and job description can be found on our website at [www.optimistyouthhouse.com](http://www.optimistyouthhouse.com).



Recognizing Amanda and Kayla for their outstanding work on our board and their commitment to serving this population.

Kayla served as President of the board.

Thank you Amanda and Kayla for all your hard work!

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO LIZ HAUGEE!

“Thank you so much for all you have done for this project and group of youth. This would not have happened without you. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to work with you again. You are not only a dear friend but one of the most capable people I have ever known. I cannot express my gratitude enough for all you have done to serve others. You are a difficult person to follow because you do everything so well. I wish you the very best in all the great things you will do in the future.” - Barry Knoblich





# Meet the Staff



**Charles Kelly**  
**Executive Director**

I grew up in Kimberly Idaho where I was raised by a loving aunt who I consider to be my mom. She also exposed me to the world of Foster Care as she also had several foster care kids come through her home. I am an alumni of CSI, where I obtained an Associates in Communication, BYU-Idaho, where I obtained a Bachelors in Communication, and WGU, where I obtained a Masters in Business Administration. I have work experience in banking, marketing, and nonprofit administration. I am married to a dedicated school teacher and have two very active children.



I am a full time student at CSI. My plans are to graduate in the spring of 2021 with a major in theater. I joined the Twin Falls Optimist Youth House because I thought it would be a great way to give back to the community and help others. I am passionate about always being the best I can and I am grateful for the opportunity to help out in away that speaks to me.



**Ellie Leppert**  
**Female Floor**  
**Resident Advisor**



**Justin Cook**  
**Male Floor**  
**Resident Advisor**

Hello my name is Justin and I am very excited to be a part of the Twin Falls Optimist Youth House. I grew up near Tacoma Washington and now my family live in Twin Falls. I spend a lot of my time either working or playing video games. This is a great opportunity for me to give back to my community and also learn new management skills.

## How Can You Help the Twin Falls Optimist Youth House?

### Avenues for Hope Fundraiser

Dec. 10th - 31st  
Look for links and more information coming on our website and facebook page



The Twin Falls Optimist Youth House exists solely on the generosity of money contributions from the community which can be donated through mail or via our website at [optimistyouthhouse.com](http://optimistyouthhouse.com).

Other ways of contributing can come in donations of household cleaning supplies, food, and office supplies. We also encourage anyone who wants to donate their time as a mentor, teacher, or in any other capacity to go to our website and fill out a volunteer form.

House Needs Include  
Toilet Paper  
Multi Purpose Cleaner  
Mop Cleaner  
Printer Paper  
Hand Sanitizer  
Dish Washer Soap

## Message from the Executive Director

As I reflect on the past year I have learned several life lessons that you can only learn in the furnace of experience. I like many of you have dealt with the loss of family, employment, and security. As if a new global pandemic that the world was completely unprepared for was not enough we have also faced many other issues that have given us all the opportunity to unite or divide. At times this year, as I looked at racial, economic, and political divides not just in the country but in our community I have felt the echo of the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his loved Christmas song and poem I Heard The Bells on Christmas Day. The words I am referring to go “And in despair I bowed my head. There is no peace on earth I said. For hate is strong and mocks the song. Of peace on earth, goodwill to men”.

However night turns to day. In the past three months I have experienced great acts of love. It is an amazing experience to be surrounded by young adults who have in some cases experienced the very worst life has to offer from an early age. Experienced great trauma and abandonment in a way that would bring most of us to our knees and turn us bitter to the idea of any kind of future worth working for. Yet I see them everyday square their shoulders and face adulthood with hope. I see what can only be described as miraculous as these individuals break the chain of years of violence, drug addiction, and neglect that has been their family legacy. What the community has been able to provide through its donations and support of this program is a safe environment, a connection to community resources, and love. That in connection with the grit of our participants has changed lives and generations in a way that make me sing the rest of the song “Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: “God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; The Wrong shall fail, The Right prevail, With peace on earth, goodwill to men.”



Charles Kelly

Contact US

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