

## Destiny Learns From Other Girls Her Age

After Destiny's parents separated, she felt angry and frustrated. She took her emotions out on her mother and withdrew from her friends. One day, her mom enrolled her in the **Ruth K. Solomon Girls Program** so she could spend time with other young women.

"I got involved in Solomon in fourth grade, but at first, I didn't want to come here," Destiny said.

Destiny remembers being shy and depressed for years, especially once her parents were no longer together. For a long time, she blamed her mother for the separation.

"I had to overcome not having my dad around," Destiny says. "I feel like it really messes up kids when they don't have two parents in a structured home."

Even though the **Ruth K. Solomon Girls Program** helped Destiny better interact with her peers overall, she faced daily struggles as she got older. Once she hit high school, other girls started bullying her.

"I got in so many fights," Destiny recalls. She didn't want to fight with anyone, but at a certain point she felt like she had to do it to defend herself.

But despite the constant bullying, Destiny kept her head held high.

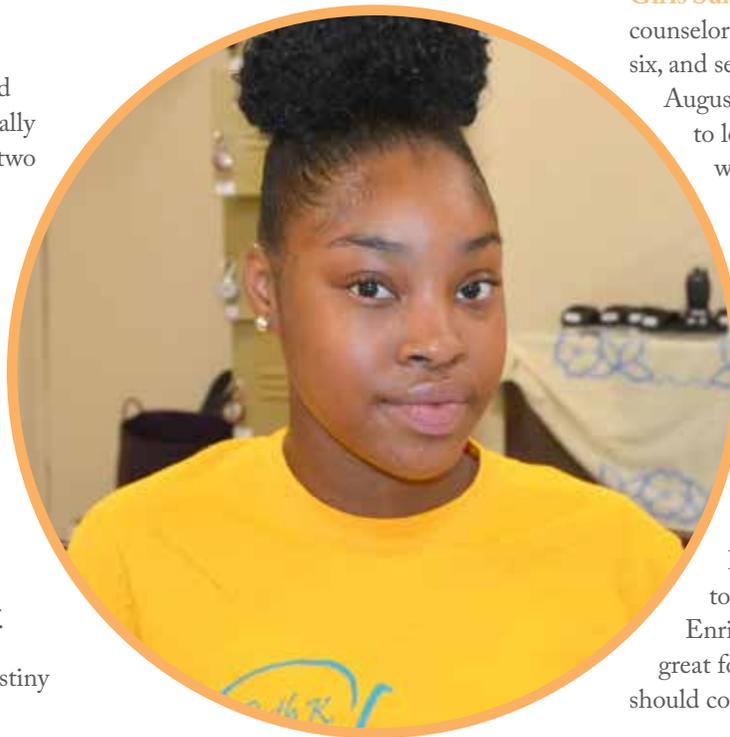
"When people bullied me, it only made me stronger," Destiny says. She realized that it did not matter what others said; it only mattered what she thought about herself.

Now, Destiny has grown into a well-rounded young woman with strong ambitions. She's currently taking Certified Nursing Assistant classes and wants to become a traveling nurse.

She also works for the **Ruth K. Solomon Girls Summer Enrichment Academy** as a counselor and spends time with their five, six, and seven-year-old girls. From June to August, girls now have an opportunity to learn and grow from each other while focusing on education, arts, and leadership. Destiny's favorite part of working with them is seeing the smiles on their faces.

"When they're happy, I'm happy," she says. "I know there are a lot of girls here who are not going home to happiness, so I do everything I can to make them happy."

Destiny encourages everyone to get involved in the Summer Enrichment Academy. "It's very, very great for all girls. I think more people should come here."



Learn more about the Ruth K. Solomon Girls Program Summer Enrichment Academy at:  
<http://heartlandfamilyservice.org/child-and-family/ruth-k-solomon-girls-program/>



Child & Family



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# Strike A Chord 13

More than 300 guests escaped to the tropics on June 16th at our annual **Strike a Chord** event, helping raise \$100,000 at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs. Guests packed their bags for a trip to paradise, which featured island-inspired cocktails and games like the limbo, as well the sound of steel drums and a tropical-themed menu. There was also a silent and a live auction, in which one of the hot-ticket items was an all-inclusive trip to the Dominican Republic.

Following dinner, Master of Ceremonies Matt Wilber announced the winner of this year's Salute to Achievement Award, Ali Heimbaugh. She successfully completed our **Assertive Community Treatment** program and now works for Heartland Family Service. Barry Cleaveland received the Salute to Leadership award for his impactful volunteer service to a variety of organizations in Council Bluffs. Guests also heard from Heartland Family Service President and CEO John Jeanetta and played a rowdy Heads or Tails game to set the mood for the live auction. The evening ended with Hope for Families, during which guests simply raised their bid cards to donate to help vulnerable children and families meet their needs.

- **Honorary Chairs:** Scott & Susan Hartman
- **Estimated amount raised:** \$100,000
- **Proceeds benefit:** HFS southwest Iowa programs and services



Honorary Chairs Scott and Susan Hartman in the entrance of the Mid-America Center before the event.



President and CEO John Jeanetta speaks during dinner.



Members of the Southwest Iowa Advisory Committee pose with fun props during the event at our photo booth.

 View additional "Strike a Chord" photos at [Facebook.com/HeartlandFamilyService](https://www.facebook.com/HeartlandFamilyService)



Joel and Sandy Dighans smile for the camera during dinner.



Michael Fitzsimmons and special guests play drums inside the Mid-America Center.



Salute to Leadership Award recipient Barry Cleaveland sits during ceremony.

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# Volunteer Spotlight: Robyn Christenson Epley

Heartland Family Service is powered by hundreds of volunteers. This quarter, our volunteer spotlight is shining on Robyn Christenson Epley.

Robyn moved to Council Bluffs four years ago with her husband Cole, where she currently has a career as an optometrist. She has also been an active member of our **Southwest Iowa Advisory Committee** and plays an active role in helping plan our Strike a Chord event each year. This year, Robyn donated a handmade rival corn hole game featuring Nebraska vs. Iowa as a raffle item.

She was initially introduced to Heartland Family Service through Leadership Council Bluffs three years ago and loves giving back to the community.

“I think what Heartland Family Service does as an organization is incredible,” Robyn said. “I’m really happy to be a part of it.”

As a volunteer with years of service, Robyn encourages everyone to get involved. She spreads the word about our Good Works to all of her patients.

“A lot of people aren’t aware of the wonderful things Heartland does, so I tell them the organization is huge and are involved with a lot of different areas. So, just talking about my experiences there is a really great way to get the word out,” Robyn said.

When she isn’t working or volunteering, you can find Robyn and Cole remodeling their house, riding their bikes, attending concerts, and spending time with their two cats, Stanley and Gus.

For more information on how to volunteer at Heartland Family Service, contact Melinda Eames at [MEames@HeartlandFamilyService.org](mailto:MEames@HeartlandFamilyService.org)



Robyn and her husband Cole Epley



Robyn and Cole at RAGBRAI 2016

## Agency Updates

- **OmahaGives!** Last month, Heartland Family Service (HFS) participated in Omaha-Pottawattamie County Gives! for another year. Thanks to the 144 unique donors and the hoard of social media champions who liked, shared, and commented on our posts all day long, HFS raised \$42,586. We are so grateful for your generous donations and all of your support!
- New technology has made it possible for our **Mental Health Crisis Response Team (MHCRT)** to expand its crises services into the rural areas of southwest Iowa. The program recently received new teleconferencing equipment, which it installed in police cruisers and at police stations. It allows **MHCRT** therapists to respond quickly to an officer’s calls for a safety risk assessment. The new equipment has now made it possible for a response time of 15 minutes or less. The **MHCRT** works law enforcement, community providers, and people in the community to decrease inpatient committals, psychiatric hospitalizations and unnecessary incarcerations.
- HFS received this year’s “**Can Do Future Award**,” from the Kids Can Community Center. This recognition fits their criteria for an organization that strives to create opportunities for a brighter future for the most underserved members of our community. Thank you, Wells Fargo, for nominating us!



Members of our Therapeutic School staff and school mascot Murphy the Dog stand on the school's playground for an OmahaGives! donation update.



*Dear Friends:*

Recently, we completed two major fundraising efforts: Omaha — Pottawattamie County Gives! and our annual **Strike a Chord**. I am incredibly appreciative to all of the volunteers, attendees, and donors who made it possible for us to generate these resources that we need to operate our programs. This comes at a time when the future of mental and behavioral health programs across the state is up in the air. Both Iowa and Nebraska are having budget shortfalls because of issues with our economy, and there are changes at the federal level regarding priorities on where we as a society should be investing our limited resources.

We know that many of the public sources of funding for our agency are either being cut, or are most likely going to be cut. In order to continue the good works that we do, it's going to become more and more important for us to be able to access private donations and private philanthropy to fill the gap created by the reductions elsewhere. We couldn't do it without you!

Sincerely,

**John H. Jeanetta, MBA, MSW**  
*President and CEO*



**Supporter Spotlight with Donna Dostal,**  
*Chief Development Officer*



It is hot, hot, hot! Summer is here, and the living is easy . . . for some. But for others, every day is a struggle. However, each day in our community, children and families are finding health, hope, and healing through the generosity of countless volunteers and community supporters committed to making a difference.

One of the most exciting projects happening this summer at Heartland Family Service is the new **Ruth K. Solomon Girls Program Summer**

**Enrichment Academy!** The program brings together a group of dynamic young

women enjoying the benefits of team-building, leadership, and academic support while they have fun and make new friends! You can learn more about one young lady's experiences on the front cover!

June is not only the official start of summer, it also means celebrating children and families in Southwest Iowa during our 13th annual **Strike a Chord** event. Many thanks to the numerous volunteers, attendees, and generous sponsors, as well as our Southwest Iowa Advisory Committee, who made this year's **Strike a Chord** a success. Your generosity and strong support make healing and hope possible!

There are so many Good Works happening across our community, and I hope you enjoy your summer!

Donna Dostal

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Simply text  
"HFS" to 72727



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Jefferson House Comedy Night**  
August 5, 2017  
Fremont Golf Club  
Fremont, NE

**Safe Haven Golf Tournament**  
Sept. 22, 2017  
Eagle Hills  
Papillion, NE

**Salute to Families**  
Nov. 16, 2017  
Happy Hollow Country Club  
Omaha, NE

**Good Works 101**  
Learn about HFS,  
enjoy lunch on us!  
(402) 552-7418



For more information about our upcoming events, check out our [Calendar page](#) at [HeartlandFamilyService.org](#) or contact us at [Events@HeartlandFamilyService.org](mailto:Events@HeartlandFamilyService.org)