

KURN HATTIN FALL CONFERENCE

THE BEHAVIOR CODE:

Reducing Anxiety and Challenging Behavior Practical Trauma-Informed Strategies for

Guest speaker: Jessica Minahan, Ph.D., BCBA, LABA

October 24, 2025 | 8:45 AM-3:30 PM

708 Kurn Hattin Rd., Westminster, VT

For more information, contact Terry Andrews at tandrews@kurnhattin.org or 802-721-6913 Early pricing until October 10, 2025. Scan the QR code to register.

Charity Navigator, the largest independent Kurn Hattin holds the top-level rating from

charity evaluator in the U.S.

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CE CREDITS

for educators, social workers, therapists, and counselors.



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Honorary gifts received received January 11 - July 7, 2025:

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IN HONOR OF STEVE AND LAUREL HARRISON

Linda and Jerry '73 Bardwell

IN HONOR OF JEAN HULTS, ON THE OCCASION OF OUR 63RD WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Reverend Pete Hults

IN HONOR OF THE KURN HATTIN CLASS OF 1949

Mr. '49 and Mrs. Gregory Smith

IN HONOR OF CARMEN MENENDEZ ON HER RETIREMENT AS A MATH TEACHER AT KURN HATTIN

Carolyn and Joe Cravero

IN HONOR OF CLINT PLANTE

Dr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Bianconi

**Honorary alumna



ON THE COVER:

Lukas cooling off in the campus pool

Sue Kessler

Executive Director skessler@kurnhattin.org 802-721-6932

Melissa A. Marston

Assistant Executive Director mmarston@kurnhattin.org 802-721-6904

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Kurn Hattin Bulletin 2025 Volume 2

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Help us ensure bright futures.

With your support, Kurn Hattin provides children with a safe, nurturing place to live and learn—regardless of a family's ability to pay. Our fundraising fiscal year runs from July 1, 2025 until June 30, 2026, with a goal of \$700,000.

Use the QR code to make a donation today. Together, we can change lives.



A MESSAGE FROM SUE KESSLER

Dear Friends of Kurn Hattin.

As I write to you in my new role as Executive Director, I feel honored and incredibly hopeful.

Kurn Hattin has been a part of my life for more than 30 years. I've had the privilege of serving in a number of capacities during that time. What has always inspired me most is the way this community—staff, donors, families, and alumni—rallies around children who need support, stability, and a place to grow. Together, we make that possible every day.

This summer season marks a time of exciting transition for Kurn Hattin. We have introduced a refreshed name, Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children; an updated logo; and a clear tagline: New beginnings. Bright futures. It reflects who we are and where we're going.

The renewed energy across campus also comes from new leadership in key roles. Alongside me, two remarkable leaders have joined the team, each bringing a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective.



Melissa A. Marston, our new Assistant Executive Director, brings deep expertise in youth development and a powerful commitment to uplifting children and families. In her role, she'll oversee the departments most directly connected to our students' daily lives and help ensure their experience here is one of growth, connection, and possibility.



Beth Ross, our new Director of Development, joins us with a strong background in education, human services, and nonprofit leadership. She's eager to build relationships with our donor community and think strategically about how to strengthen our development efforts in the months and years ahead.

Together, we are entering a new chapter, rooted in our long-standing mission and animated by fresh energy, new ideas, and a shared commitment to the children and families we serve.

Thank you for being part of the Kurn Hattin story. I can't wait to see all that we will accomplish together in the bright future ahead.

Warmly,

Sue Kessler, Executive Director Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children



CELEBRATING THE JOURNEY:

Kurn Hattin Honors the Class of 2025

Kurn Hattin marked the end of the 2024–2025 academic year with a joyful graduation celebration honoring five outstanding 8th-grade graduates. The ceremony, filled with music, heartfelt speeches, and well wishes, brought together friends, family, staff, alumni, and supporters. Following the Invocation, Flag Salute, and Star-Spangled Banner, class Salutatorian Phoenix Schell delivered a thoughtful address, likening his Kurn Hattin journey to a basketball game. He reflected on the teamwork and support that helped him score this victory, acknowledging those who guided him along the way. Former Executive Director Steve Harrison encouraged the graduates to see commencement not as an end, but as a beginning full of possibility. "Choose the good," he advised, "and always be able to look in the mirror and say you did

your best." Valedictorian Rezig Akot also expressed deep gratitude to the many who helped him succeed—especially his mother. In a touching moment, he invited her to the stage and presented her with a box of awards he had been quietly saving for years. After the presentation of diplomas and special awards, guests gathered for a celebratory luncheon to honor the achievements of the Kurn Hattin Class of 2025.



Kurn Hattin Student's Artwork Chosen for GLASSTASTIC 2025

For the seventh time in 14 years, the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center in Vermont invited artists in grades K-6 to let their imaginations soar for GLASSTASTIC—an exhibition where drawings of imaginary creatures are transformed into one-of-a-kind glass sculptures by professional artists.

This year, from a field of more than 1,000 submissions, Kurn Hattin 5th grader Desiree Lake was one of just 20 students selected. Her colorful cactus character, named "Catcus," captured the attention of artist Josh Bernbaum, who brought her feline to life in glass form. Bernbaum, who has used cacti in his art before, said something about Desiree's art spoke to him. When asked how it felt to see "Catcus" transformed into a work of glass art, Desiree humbly replied, "It felt good." Congratulations, Desiree, on this incredible achievement!





FROM CONCEPT TO CREATION: KH Students Bring Art to Life

As part of Kurn Hattin's Career Awareness Program (CAP), 8th-grade students visited Len-Tex Corporation, a global manufacturer of vinyl wallcoverings in North Walpole, NH. Guided by CAD Designer Dan Valerio, students designed their own wallcoverings, experiencing the full creative process—from concept, through digital design, to finished product. Their original designs were later featured in Keene's annual ArtWalk, the city's longest-running community art event.

ArtWalk participation didn't end there—students also contributed to the **Community Mural Project** by painting cheerful paper pooches, which will be added to the mural that currently brightens up the corner of Main Street and Eagle Court in downtown Keene. Participating in both projects gave students the rewarding experience of seeing ideas brought to life through collaboration—an inspiring reminder to look for art in everything, everywhere, every day.



Vermont State Representative Michelle Bos-Lun visited Kurn Hattin to speak with the middle school civics class. Her engaging presentation, *Making Laws*, *Making Change*, showed students how a bill becomes a law and how public policy is shaped. Civics Teacher and Student Council Advisor Deborah Velto stressed the value of real-world



connections: "I want students to understand their civic duty, to know their ideas matter, their voices can be heard, and they can make a difference."





KURN HATTIN TRACK & FIELD:

A Record-Breaking Season

2025 KURN HATTIN RECORDS SET

Gunnar A. 800 Meter **Lucas D.** Shot Put

Rezig A. Discus, Long Jump,

Triple Jump

Rezig qualified for the first-ever Vermont Middle School Statewide Meet at UVM and now holds the state discus record of 112'8".

Phoenix S. High Jump Phoenix cleared an impressive 5'– a personal goal.

Danasiah C.100 Meter,

Aria N.

4x100 Meter Relay

Jazmine B. 400 Meter, 800 Meter,

100 Meter Hurdles,

Long Jump,

4x100 Meter Relay

Alana V. Shot Put, Triple Jump,

Discus.

4x100 Meter Relay

4x100 Meter Relay

Kurn Hattin's 2025 Track & Field team made an unforgettable impact this season—shattering many school records and placing 3rd overall at the first meet of the year! Track & Field Coach Caleb Steever summed it up best with a prediction: "This is just the beginning of the season, and we plan to continue to break records and compete at a high level." He was right! Momentum carried through to the second meet, especially for the girls' team, who continued setting records and pushing themselves to greater heights, distances, and speeds. By the end of the season, more than a dozen records had been broken. "This was an amazing season with lots of great talent on the team," said Coach Steever. "Not only am I very proud of them—they're proud of each other for all the hard work they invested in themselves and the team."



Kicking Up Fun at Kurn Hattin Day!

It's "fair" to say that a good time was had by all at Kurn Hattin Day! The country fair-themed celebration welcomed alumni, families, friends, and supporters for a festive day filled with music, great food, games, and fun. The grand finale of the kids' concert featured plaid-clad hoofers taking the stage to lead a bootstomping line dance. Teachers, staff, and guests joined in to kick up their heels. Later in the day, following the annual Kurn Hattin alumni meeting, five mixed teams of alumni, 8th graders, family, and staffers faced off in a trivia battle of wits and wisdom, adding a friendly dose of competition to the event.



Coloring Outside the Lines

The Kurn Hattin Color Run is becoming a favorite end-of-year tradition—and for good reason! This high-energy event brings students and staff together for a colorful celebration of fitness, fun, and friendship. As students move through the course—walking, running, or jogging—teachers and staff, equipped with soft cloth pouches filled with brightly colored cornstarch, take up positions at designated checkpoints. Their mission? To toss bursts of color at passing students. Some kids try to dodge the flying colors, others embrace becoming walking works of art, while a few others gather errant pouches and strike back. It's a lighthearted way to mark the end of the school year and mark each other! When it's over, everyone is a little more colorful and a lot more connected.





FROM CHAOS TO COMPASSION

Tayla McAlpine's Journey from Kurn Hattin to Nursing

"This place has my heart."

That's what Tayla McAlpine says about her workplace, Cedarcrest in Keene, NH, a specialized pediatric medical facility and school providing comprehensive services to children with complex medical and developmental needs. But her road to Cedarcrest actually began in 2003, when she arrived at Kurn Hattin as a residential student.

"Kurn Hattin formed the base of my success," Tayla says. "I didn't do well in public school. When I got to Kurn Hattin, I was about two years behind academically. But with smaller classes, clear rules, dedicated teachers and houseparents, and a lot of individual support, everything changed. My life went from chaos to structure. They saw potential in me when I didn't see it in myself."

After Tayla graduated from Kurn Hattin in 2006, she went on to prep school in Hoosick, NY, which was funded through a Kurn Hattin scholarship. She then went on to pursue a nursing career, ultimately landing at Cedarcrest. Working her way up from LNA to Nurse Manager, Tayla has proven that the guidance she received early in her educational journey led her to the right destination.

"Tayla has an exceptional gift. The children at Cedarcrest have challenging needs and some are non-verbal, but she knows them all well and has a way of bringing out the best in each child," said Dr. Scott Schroeder, former Cedarcrest Interim Medical Director.

Not only does Tayla have a gift when relating to the children, she also has an especially compassionate way of relating to their families. "I see a different side of families in crisis. I can give them the support they need, just like Kurn Hattin gave me."

When Tayla isn't hard at work loving her job, she's home loving her own family. Tayla and her husband, Ryan, have been together for more than 12 years. They have three children—Arya age 7, Aiden age 4, and Noah age 18 months—and a happy work/life balance. She says, "Ryan is so supportive. I couldn't do this without him."

Looking back on her life experiences so far, Tayla says, "I wouldn't change a thing."



TAYLA'S MESSAGE TO OTHER KURN HATTIN KIDS:

"You can create the life you want based on the decisions you make. It's okay to try and fail, but keep trying. Your life is up to you."



Thank You for a Rewarding Career

About 24 years ago, while working for a different organization, I visited Kurn Hattin's Development Office because it had a reputation for outstanding fundraising. What stood out to me was simple but powerful: the team here got out of the office to meet and thank donors in person. At the time, that was rare.



Not long after that, Kurn Hattin was looking for a development officer—a "road warrior." I applied, was hired, and began traveling the country to connect with the people who make this place possible. That was always my favorite part of the job.

When people ask what I'm most proud of, I say this: I'm proud to have been part of a community that believes in every child's potential—a place where second chances are real, and where children learn to take pride in who they are. I'm proud to have played a role in transforming lives by helping deliver our mission. And along the way, I've had the privilege of meeting the most generous, thoughtful, and committed people. Thank you to everyone who welcomed me into your homes and events. Your kindness and belief in this work have meant the world to me.

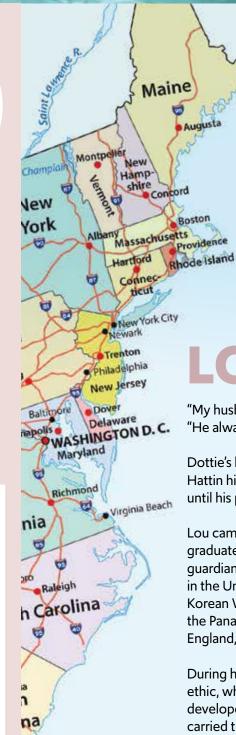
I'll miss you all. But I leave knowing that Kurn Hattin is in very good hands. Thank you so much!

With gratitude,

Kim Fine Director of Annual Fund and Special Projects (Retired)







THE BRIDGE BUILDERS

BUILDING BRIDGES TO BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN SINCE 1894



LOU GILBERT

"My husband absolutely loved Kurn Hattin," recalls Dottie Gilbert. "He always considered it his home."

Dottie's late husband, Louis Edward "Lou" Gilbert, made Kurn Hattin his home as a child and continued to hold it in his heart until his passing in March of 2025.

Lou came to Kurn Hattin when he was just five years old and graduated with the Class of 1950. At age 17, while under the guardianship of Kurn Hattin Director Pete Mayo, Lou enlisted in the United States Army. He served for three years during the Korean War era, stationed in Panama, where he helped guard the Panama Canal. Though his service took him far from New England, Vermont was always home in Lou's heart.

During his time at Kurn Hattin, Lou developed a strong work ethic, which he passed along to their seven children. Lou also developed a deep love for anything with a motor, which he carried throughout his lifetime. Tractors, trucks, big trucks, bigger trucks, his Jeep CJ, his BSA motorcycle—if it roared to life, Lou was drawn to it. Some say he might've had diesel fuel running through his veins!



After his military service,
Lou found work in Connecticut,
where he met Dottie. Their
brief and romantic courtship
led to a long, loving marriage.
Lou built his career as a truck
driver, running routes up and
down the East Coast. Eventually,
he drove logging trucks for a
local Vermont company, which
allowed him to stay closer to
home. In retirement, he happily
drove a dump truck in the
summers—just for the love of it.

Dottie remembers that Lou wasn't particularly lucky with money, but he was incredibly rich in love, family, and friendship. "We had a lot of love, but we really didn't have much money while the kids were growing up," she says. "Things got better later. Still, every week, Lou would buy two lottery tickets. It was always his dream to hit the jackpot and give the winnings to Kurn Hattin."

Lou never won the lottery, but he hit the jackpot in so many other ways. Dottie says, "He was a good man—a generous man—who gave freely to others. Every year he donated to Bennington's food pantries, bought Christmas gifts for families in need, and even spent his COVID-19 stimulus check at the local soup kitchen."

Kurn Hattin changed Lou's life—gave him structure, purpose, and a foundation that shaped his future.

When their children were grown and out of the nest, Lou and Dottie became snowbirds, spending winters at their trailer in Fort Pierce, FL. As their 65th wedding anniversary approached, Lou's health was in decline, but the couple was grateful to celebrate the milestone surrounded by friends and family. The party was a joyful tribute to love, laughter, and a life well lived. Lou and Dottie received \$2,000 in anniversary gifts from loved ones—and true to Lou's spirit, they donated the entire sum to Kurn Hattin.

"He wanted to do that," Dottie says. "He loved Kurn Hattin. Couldn't stop talking about it. Every time we drove by, he'd say, 'There's my home.' And he told me more than once, 'Dottie, if I had my life to live over again, I'd go to Kurn Hattin."

Lou was a good man, a devoted husband, a loving father and grandfather, a loyal friend, and a neighbor who believed in giving back.

As one final gesture of kindness, in Lou's obituary, the Gilbert family asked people to make contributions to Kurn Hattin.

Though Lou is gone, he will never be forgotten by those who had the privilege of knowing him. His legacy of love, kindness, and generosity will live on.

From Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children, thank you to Bridge Builders Lou, Dottie, the entire Gilbert family, and everyone who has made a contribution in Lou's memory.



Society Gifts:

For generations, Kurn Hattin has been blessed with friends whose gifts have secured and endowed its work. In January 1993, the **Bridge Builder Society** was founded to recognize donors whose visionary support of \$10,000 or more helps perpetuate Kurn Hattin's mission. The Bridge Builder Society also recognizes trusts established by donors to provide ongoing financial support to Kurn Hattin.

These donors made gifts between July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025:

Diana G. Bacon Frederick H. Blake Trust In Memory of Frederick Henry Blake and Helen Avery Blake Andrew Fugua Gillian Fugua William and Paulette Gray **Doris Harwitz Trust** Marya Holcombe In Memory of Terry Holcombe who loved Kurn Hattin Mr. William B. Hurd, Jr. Iiminez/Givens Donor Family Fund/ Javier Jiminez and Julia Graves Ms. Cynthia M. Latta Mrs. Joyce H. Miller Mr. Richard T. Nash '42 New Hampshire Charitable Foundation/Ira S. & Gertrude S. **Hubbard Memorial Fund** Robert W. Owens, Jr. Memorial Fund The Pabis Foundation John McKee Pratt Revocable Trust Rite Aid Healthy Futures Savings Bank of Walpole Chris and Donna Thomas

In Honor of Kim Fine

Estate of Gundela Weindl

Linda Thomas

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Philanthropy is about promoting the welfare of others, and by supporting Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children, you're helping us fulfill our mission—to transform the lives of children and their families forever. We're grateful for your choice to make a difference!

Ways to Give

Cash Donations:

Simplify your giving by setting up monthly contributions.

Appreciated Assets:

Gifts of stocks, IRA distributions, and grants from Donor-Advised Funds can provide larger tax benefits.

Planned Giving:

Consider beguests, trusts, beneficiary designations, or charitable gift annuities.

Your contributions make it possible to provide necessities and a nurturing environment for the children in our care. We're also grateful to those who organize holiday, birthday, and Giving Tuesday fundraisers—your kindness makes everything we do possible.

Corporate gifts received January 11 - July 7, 2025:

Amaru Gourmet, Brattleboro, VT Ben & Jerry's Foundation

Bulldog Design, Keene, NH

Chroma Technology Corporation, Bellows Falls, VT

Douglas Toy Company, Keene, NH

Farnum Insulators, Inc., East Dummerston, VT

Fenton Family Dealerships, Swanzey, NH

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To discuss your gift options, please contact:

Beth Ross.

Director of Development 802-721-6963

Scan the QR code to make a gift today.



MEMORIAL GIFTS

IN MEMORY OF MARGOT ABBOTT

Therese Sanborn and Family

IN MEMORY OF **ROBIN JEANNE AVERY**

Ms. Carolyn L. Avery

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER AND MOTHER, LEON AND **CATHERINE BARDWELL**

Linda and Jerry '73 Bardwell

IN MEMORY OF **IAMES BARSCHDORF, CLASS OF 1944**

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IN MEMORY OF GAIL AND **SETH CHRISTMAS**

William Christmas

Memorial gifts received January 11 - July 7, 2025:

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER, WILLIAM COOK, **CLASS OF 1929**

Helen Elizabeth Cook

IN MEMORY OF **CAROLYN CORBO**

Mr. Peter Corbo

IN MEMORY OF JAMES "JIM" F. CROSS

Mrs. Colleen A. Cross Michelle Gorry

IN MEMORY OF MY HUSBAND, **ED DOYLE**

Shirley Doyle '49

IN LOVING MEMORY OF **JIM AND MARGARET DUNCAN** William and Paulette Gray

Correction from

2025 Volume 1 Bulletin:

IN MEMORY OF MY AUNT, BARBARA ROSCOE EATON, AND HER TWO SONS, DAVID PARSONS, CLASS OF 1938 AND ALBERT PARSONS, **CLASS OF 1938**

Mr. Byron M. Roscoe

IN MEMORY OF **THOMAS FAHNER**

Linda and Jerry '73 Bardwell

IN MEMORY OF **BILL FENNESSEY**

Kim Fine**

IN MEMORY OF MR. FISCHER, FORMER KURN HATTIN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Mr. David A. Wentworth

IN MEMORY OF DONALD FRISBIE, **CLASS OF 1950**

Mr. '49 and Mrs. Gregory Smith

IN MEMORY LOUIS E. GILBERT, **CLASS OF 1950**

Ronald and Melissa Barnard Battenkill Valley Health Center, Arlington, VT

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Amy Dorman Mrs. Louis E. Gilbert

Kurn Hattin Homes Alumni Association

Shari Owens

Loretta and Amy Squires Eugene and Debra Stone IN LOVING MEMORY OF HAROLD AND DOROTHY GRAY

William and Paulette Gray

IN MEMORY OF DIANE GRIFFIN Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Geist

IN MEMORY OF EVAN HALL, **CLASS OF 2016**

Kurn Hattin Alumni Association

IN MEMORY OF SARA "SALLY" DAVIDSON HANEY

Hollie Bowen and Paul Love, Jr. Matthew Cathlina Centered Riding, Bloomfield, CT Betty C. Tyler

IN MEMORY OF PAT AND HUC HAUSER

Their Family

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IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, **DAVID HUGHES**

Linda and Jerry '73 Bardwell

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IN MEMORY OF RETIRED U.S. ARMY COLONEL BRUCE MARTIN Kim Fine**

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IN MEMORY OF **DONALD MUSGROVE** Linda and Jerry '73 Bardwell

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER, **JOHN L. NEWILL, CLASS OF 1920**

Mrs. Mary Ann Sears

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Arthur and Karen Omartian

IN MEMORY OF **ELLEN PARRISH James Parrish**

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IN MEMORY OF **FATHER FRANCIS RIELLY**

Lenny Targonski

IN MEMORY OF **AMY SAUNDERS**

Mrs. Patricia Kenyon

IN MEMORY OF MY SISTER,

FRANCES GOFF SWAN Mr. William C. Goff

IN MEMORY OF VIC TOMYL Hawes Florist, Maynard, MA

IN MEMORY OF MY DAD, **KEITH WALLACE**

Rosina M. Wallace



SCHEDULE

9:00am Registration/Breakfast

10:00am Announcements/Tournament

COST

\$175 per person, Includes two meals, golf, and cart

HOLE-IN-ONE PRIZES

A NEW 2025 Jetta!

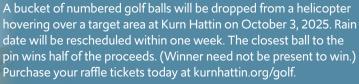


\$5,000 Gift Card MJ HARRINGTON

Pete Johnson Memorial Golf Ball Drop Raffle

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Melissa A. Marston **Assistant Executive Director**

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Jerry L. Bardwell* Middleboro, MA

Diane Bazin, Secretary Westminster, VT

Toni Ciampaglione Brattleboro, VT

Susan Johnson Walpole, NH

Rhonda L. Nolan* Danbury, CT

Stephen L. Peterson, *Treasurer* Wallingford, CT

Leslie Rennie-Hill Harwich, MA

Cliff L. Wood Putney, VT

Greg Worden Brattleboro, VT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jerry L. Bardwell*, Chair; Toni Ciampaglione, Christopher Hackett, Stephen L. Peterson, Eric Velto

*Alumnus/alumna

Kurn Hattin believes that professional milestones are to be recognized and celebrated. This year, eight staff members received awards honoring their length of service to the organization.

Sue Kessler, Executive Director, 30 years Heather Longe, Executive Assistant, 20 years Terry Andrews, Admissions Coordinator, 10 years Wendy Burke, Houseparent, 10 years

Meranda Chandler, Houseparent, 10 years Robert Siegel, Houseparent, 10 years Kayla Williams, Kindergarten Teacher, 5 years Ellen Wood, Weekend Residential Director, 5 years