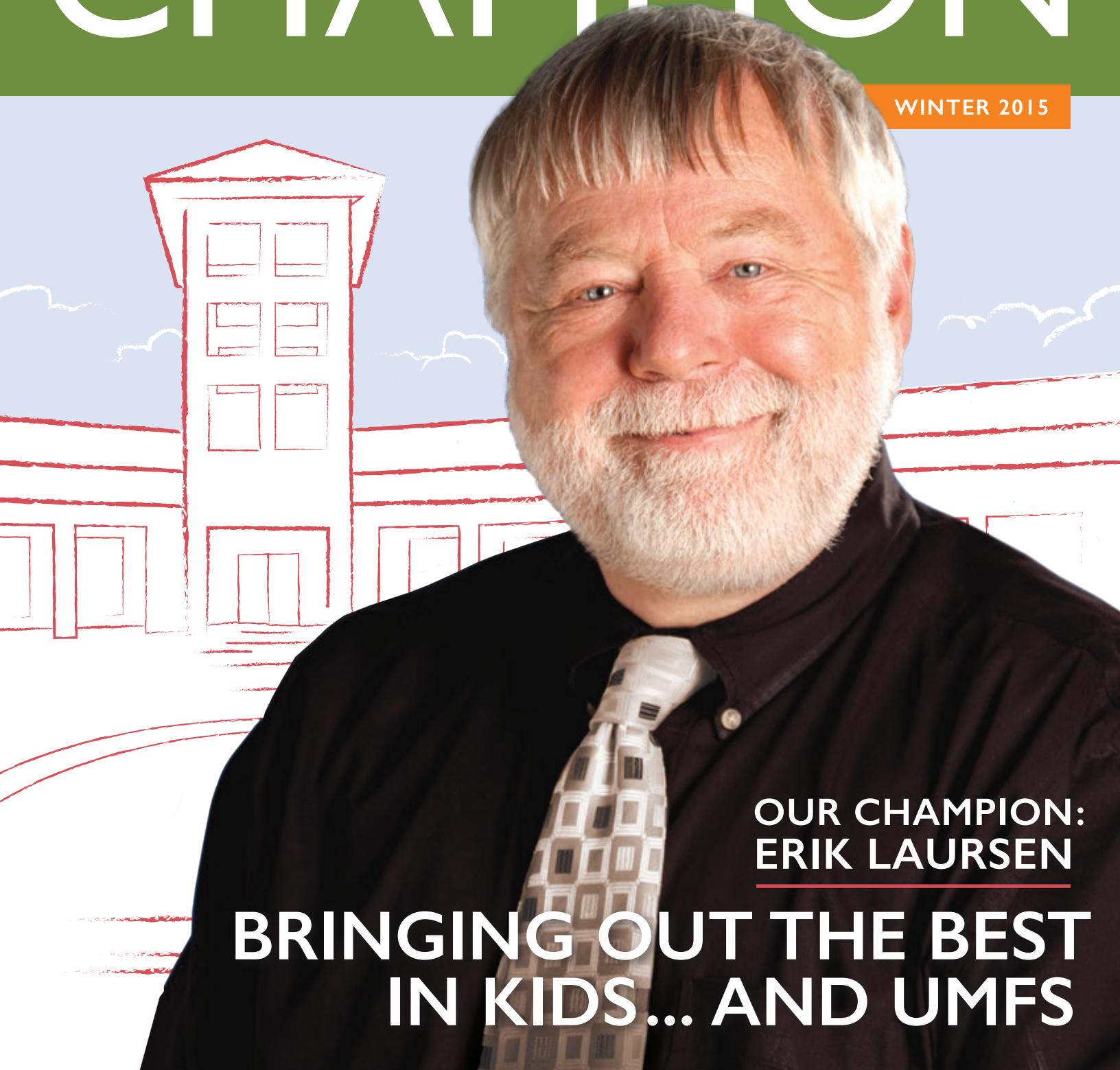


THE CHAMPION

WINTER 2015



OUR CHAMPION: ERIK LAURSEN

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ERIK LAURSEN

Bringing Out the Best in Kids... and UMFS

JOINING THE RANKS OF MUHAMMAD ALI, Janet Reno and George McGovern as a winner of the Spirit of Crazy Horse Award for outstanding contributions to youth may best exemplify why we chose Erik Laursen, Ph.D., former director of Charterhouse School and UMFS vice president of learning and program development, as our first Champion of 2015.

While Erik's demeanor is humble and unassuming, his impact is immeasurable. During his 28 years at UMFS, Erik introduced many innovations that have improved

the organization's practices and dedication to supporting children and families.

One of his most important contributions was introducing the Circle of Courage™ methodology, which has become a guiding principle throughout the agency in helping youth develop their sense of self. The Circle of Courage is inspired by the cultural wisdom of Native American tribal peoples, so it's easy to see why the philosophy appealed to Erik, a free spirit from Denmark with a global vision and a distaste for restraints.

On the eve of his retirement, UMFS honors the man who leaves a long legacy of introducing new concepts to the agency, inspired by his free-spirited personality and passion for helping kids be the best they can be.

But perhaps it's exactly this mentality that made him so successful. "Our organizational culture would have been different without Erik, without his broad visionary perspective and willingness to take risks," said Larry Powell, director of community relations.

"Erik supported and was the catalyst for the principles which made our programs successful," says Larry. "He is the rudder who gets us going in the right direction and keeps us on course."

Erik was the go-to guy for new ideas. "Very often, I have heard ideas that I want to bring back to the agency. I'd present Erik with the rough idea and he would make it happen," says UMFS President and CEO Greg Peters.

As a result of Erik's focus and skill with program design, UMFS developed an unprecedented open-setting program for sexually traumatized children. He also led the expansion of programs for autism and was instrumental in expanding Charterhouse School to Edinburg. In its first year, Charterhouse School-Edinburg enrolled 36 students. Since the Richmond day program opened 11 years ago, it has expanded from 17 students to 110 today.

To all who have worked with him, Erik embodies the UMFS mission of being unwavering champions for children and families. He helped establish the very spirit of championing. "Kids are labeled and lost in the bureaucracy," Larry says. "But Erik believes in empowering kids to be great. He looks at their strengths, rather than at their problems. He is one of the purest child advocates I have ever met."

In addition to advocating for youth, Erik also took great interest in championing his staff. He challenged them to envision where they wanted to be in the future and to do what it took to get there, all while encouraging them to be their best

I'd present Erik with the rough idea and he would make it happen.

**— Greg Peters,
President and CEO**

selves. "In the '90s, Erik pushed me hard to pass my teaching exam so I could better myself and support my family," says Brendan Folmar, who did as Erik encouraged. Brendan got his teaching certificate, left UMFS for a time, and is now principal of Charterhouse School.

Brendan is not alone in regarding Erik as a personal champion. Tonya Salley-Goodwin, principal of Charterhouse School-Edinburg, credits Erik with giving her "the opportunity to grow within the organization." "He gave me the latitude to use my own judgment, creativity and ingenuity," says Tonya.

The critical element of Erik's visionary work, however, is team building. While he sees the need and envisions the solution, he does not charge ahead on his own. Whether at management retreats or team building at his own house, he brings people together around his ideas, maybe ruffles a few feathers but, ultimately, ensures success and sustainability by passing on his passion and his knowledge to staff and colleagues.

Once he retires from UMFS, Erik will enjoy having more free time to spend with his wife, Jannie, and family. He will continue along his same visionary path, using his own judgment, creativity and ingenuity as an adjunct professor, teaching future special education teachers at the University of Richmond. You might say that, through Erik, the spirit of Crazy Horse lives on to inspire a new generation of leaders, teachers and young people. We wish Erik well in his new endeavors and look forward to carrying on his award-winning legacy of outstanding contributions to UMFS and Charterhouse School.

Mission

UMFS is an unwavering champion for high-risk children and families, collaborating with communities to help them reach their full potential.

Vision

Creating a world where caring, opportunity and generosity are passed on from generation to generation — empowering all children to contribute to society as engaged citizens.

www.umfs.org

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Repeat, Then FAST FORWARD

A Letter From an Adoptive Parent

OUR DAUGHTER, RYLEIGH FLYNN-TANNER, was a resident at UMFS in Richmond from December 2010 through August 2011, when she transferred to a program at Jackson-Feild Homes (JFH). So much has happened in Ryleigh's life since.

In August of 2013, we moved to Castle Rock, Colorado, to take advantage of the Bridges program, which provides job and social skills training, and development and psychological support. Since Ryleigh had not completed all the courses to graduate in Virginia, we enrolled her in a second "senior year." She wasn't happy about being in the same grade as her younger brother, Zach, but her second senior year was amazing!

She flourished in reading, math and personal finance classes. She was "mainstreamed" in personal fitness, art and home economics. She joined a school club for the first time for kids interested in the culinary arts. During a regional competition in table-setting, Ryleigh received the Silver Medal Award! Her award-winning table design was showcased in the school's entryway. We brought our whole family to see the display and took tons of pictures!

Ryleigh is also involved in sports. She played soccer and basketball with her school, then Special Olympics soccer with a young adult team, and even went to the State Championship. This winter, she plans to start swimming and we expect Ryleigh to totally rock the water when she competes!

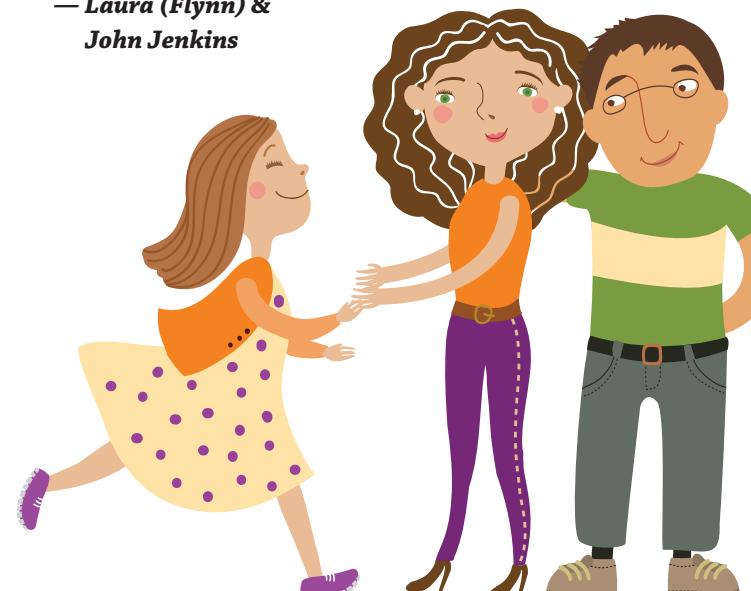
Ryleigh is working at our local Chick-fil-A. She delivers food to tables but is being trained to take on more responsibilities. Ryleigh also participates in the local Rotary Community Corps chapter. She's made several friends through the Club and now has a small group of girls she socializes with on weekends. They're a nice group, many with challenges similar to Ryleigh's. We're really happy she has friends who can support her and whom she can support, as well.

Now Ryleigh is in the Bridges Program. She spends mornings working with staff and peers on life skills. She also works with a school psychologist to improve her social skills in the classroom and workplace. In the afternoons, she visits job sites. Activities include cleaning a church, working in the kitchen of a pizza place and doing office work at the Castle Rock Fire Department. She enjoys working at the Fire Department most, as she's always had a desire to work in emergency services.

We hope you've enjoyed hearing how well Ryleigh is doing and also hope you know how appreciative our family is of the support and services we received from you and your team. I have absolutely no doubt that without the intensive support our family received from you, Ryleigh's story would be very different today. Working with seriously troubled kids must take its toll on each of you, but I hope hearing about Ryleigh's amazing successes will give your spirits a lift—what you do really does make a difference.

Ryleigh is looking at the Eastern New Mexico University - Roswell, which has a special associates program for people with intellectual disabilities. So, don't be surprised when you hear she's graduating from college and going on to even bigger and better accomplishments!

— *Laura (Flynn) & John Jenkins*



Supporting Students' Next Steps



Paul Switzer, with his parents, Jean and Kenneth.

UMFS Recognizes Pop Smith Scholarship Recipients

CHRIS LABRADOR AND PAUL SWITZER, two recent recipients of UMFS' Pop Smith Scholarship, are learning, growing and overcoming the obstacles that face students with autism spectrum disorder in pursuit of higher education. UMFS honored them on January 21 at a reception celebrating the students' successes and thanking the many donors and supporters who have helped to make the Pop Smith Scholarship possible.

Chris' expectations are clear: "Courage to Succeed will teach me ways to handle the stress and workload that comes with college."

Of his time as a student in Courage to Succeed, he says he is, "learning how to communicate

with professors and staff, how to manage time and decide what work to do first. These things are not just ways to be successful in college, but to be successful in life by

learning how to write resumes and cover letters, professional conduct and many more things."

Chris and Paul both participate in UMFS' Courage to Succeed college program, designed to assist students as they progress through college, prepare for employment and, ultimately, become contributing members of their communities. Chris and Paul are doing just that—in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, they worked together alongside members of the Pop Smith

"I really need [Courage to Succeed] to manage the day-to-day tasks required of me to succeed in college and in life," adds Paul. "My sister is now enrolled in college as a full-time student, too, so having two of us in college at the same time has put an

extra financial strain on my parents. I feel that I am just beginning to grow as a person both in knowledge and in self-esteem, but I still have a long way to go. I don't want to be one of those people that fall through the cracks... I have some real friends for the first time in my life."

The Pop Smith Scholarship fund provides financial assistance to students who have been served by UMFS and can benefit from post-secondary education including college or vocational training.

The Scholarship Fund is named for Reverend E. Leon "Pop" Smith who was the executive director of the Virginia Methodist Children's Home, now UMFS, from 1949 to 1974. Chris and Paul both attend J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Richmond three days per week and spend the other two days at UMFS' Charterhouse School in Richmond where, in group and individual settings, they strengthen communication skills, develop social skills and learn to stay organized

We're proud of Chris and Paul, and the strides they've made, and we're honored to walk alongside them as they take steps toward a bright future.



COLLABORATION CORNER

UMFS and Snagajob Give Partnership a Spin

UMFS RECEIVED 12 BRAND NEW BIKES from Snagajob, ready to be ridden and enjoyed by kids at the Child & Family Healing Center. Snagajob is the largest hourly employment job-listing network, and has its headquarters in Virginia. UMFS staff members attended Snagajob's annual kick-off ceremony in January in Glen Allen and worked alongside Snagajob employees in a team-building exercise: assembling bikes which Snagajob had designated as donations.

UMFS Development Manager Katie Moore spoke to Snagajob employees, sharing UMFS' mission and expressing appreciation for this collaboration. "We're grateful for the bikes and for this opportunity to realize our vision of working alongside generous and reliable private companies to help kids. We're looking forward to continuing this partnership with Snagajob in the future."



UMFS Staff collaborates with Snagajob employees to assemble bikes for kids.

FAITHFUL SUPPORT Asbury United Methodist Church & UMFS



PASTOR STEVE HAY
Asbury United Methodist Church

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH has been a long-time supporter of UMFS and a valuable partner in empowering kids to learn and grow. When Charterhouse School-Edinburg opened in 2013, Asbury equipped the art room; then helped fund the culinary arts department. This Christmas, church members raised nearly \$2,500 in the December offering, a donation used to equip the school's library. Also, Ann Baker, a congregation member, is the chair of UMFS' Edinburg Child Advocacy Council.

"Specific 'asks' to serve others, especially the educational needs of 'the least of these' gets a positive response from the congregation. This is part of our intent—our acceptance of our responsibility, to transform the world," says Pastor Steve Hay. "Charterhouse School-Edinburg reaches some of the educational 'least of these.' These young people study and grow in a safe and supportive atmosphere when they might be on the streets or home alone if the school didn't welcome them. That's worth supporting."

A SLAM DUNK at Charterhouse School

MELVIN ADAMS, former Harlem Globetrotter, knows what it's like to face adversity. Decades ago, he faced significant challenges growing up in a dysfunctional, abusive family. On February 3, he brought those insights and experiences with him when he visited the Richmond UMFS campus, giving a powerful presentation to our

Charterhouse School students and staff. While giving anecdotes from his early years, Adams used a healthy dose of humor, sharing the ways he learned to turn failures into successes in his own life.

Many of the students could easily identify with aspects of Adams' stories and the audience was mesmerized by his artful imitations of diverse characters he had encountered in his

personal and professional life. He also reminded UMFS staff members of their critical importance as agents of positive change in the lives of children.

The event was, of course, a slam dunk for both kids and staff.

UMFS thanks Angela Maidment, Vice President of Corporate Real Estate for Estes Express Lines and Michael Stock, Coordinator of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (Richmond) for making this visit by Mr. Adams possible. Hats off as well to Charterhouse School Principal Brendan Folmar for facilitating the event, and to UMFS board member Betty Forbes for her collaboration with Estes Express Lines.



Charterhouse School Principal Brendan Folmar (left) and UMFS CEO Greg Peters (right) team up with speaker and athlete Melvin Adams.

Why Support UMFS?

“Blessed are the children to have UMFS meeting their needs on unique levels by providing foster care, crisis care in the cottages and education. Reaching young hearts, minds and emotions early can redirect their stepping up from possible homelessness to lives that provide them comfort during restless stages. With guidance of skilled professionals, old wounds can be healed, relationships restored, misconceptions conquered, lessons learned, joys felt, successes celebrated and life renewed with new energy, direction and purpose. Children will grow-up, with hope, with belief, with love and with faith.”

– Donor PAT KLOKE, on why she gives to UMFS

Join Pat in supporting UMFS today at www.umfs.org/donate

HAPPENINGS AT UMFS



MARCH
28

UKROP'S MONUMENT AVENUE 10K

Come cheer for Team UMFS as our Child & Family Healing Center kids, staff and volunteer coaches run and walk in this annual event. The team trains hard for eight weeks leading up to the race. Come out and support them as they cross the finish line!

WHEN: Saturday, March 28, 8:00 am to 1:00 pm

WHERE: Broad Street and Hamilton Street, Richmond, VA

REGISTER: www.sportsbackers.org/events/monument-ave-10k



FUND
DRIVE

SUPPORT OUR BACKPACK PROGRAM

10 to 20 of Charterhouse School's day students, who come from impoverished families, come to school hungry because there is little or no food in their home. You can help us raise funds to provide nutritional support for them. Each Friday, with donor support, we can continue to send food home to these families in need. You can support these children in need by sponsoring one Friday Backpack Program with a gift of \$200.

WHEN: Every Friday

WHERE: Charterhouse School, 3900 West Broad Street, Richmond

MORE INFO: Melissa Schick: mschick@umfs.org