

A very special thank you to the NSPN board, selection committee, and to staff for this very special recognition. I have the fondest memories of working alongside the Safe Place staff for many years as a provider in Florida. We at CDS were proud to be a long-time member of Safe Place as our mission aligned perfectly with NSPN. During the 25 years I was CEO at CDS Family & Behavioral Health it was an honor to display the Safe Place signs, and to inform community partners about the value of NSPN. And what a pleasure to attend the yearly conference, to reacquaint with old friends, meet new friends and become aware of current issues and new approaches to assist youth and families. Lastly, I recall, as though it was yesterday, when I was asked to join the NSPN board and the honor I felt to be trusted with that responsibility. So again, I thank the staff and the board for this special honor and I greatly regret not being present to share this in person.

I want to share a message with the younger people at the conference with respect to working with non-profits and social service organizations. Yes, you make a sacrifice, less money and other benefits but I assure you it will be worth it as there is no greater calling than to serve those in need. I end with two of my favorite quotes:

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service to others" - Mahatma Gandhi

"The miracle is not that we do this work, but that we are happy to do it" - Mother Teresa

I feel blessed to have the opportunity to share these brief comments with all of you.

I wish you all the best." – Jim