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Heartland Counseling Services Celebrates 45th Anniversary with Inaugural Gala Event

Over 200 people came together to raise over \$100,000 in celebration of Heartland Counseling's 45th Anniversary on Friday, July 22, 2022 with a Gala event with Presenting Sponsor R Perry Construction. The event, held at Marriott South Sioux City Riverfront began with a silent auction, gift card wall and appetizers and then moved into a seated chicken and sirloin dinner with special awards and announcements MC'd by Heartland Counseling's Executive Director Jennifer Jackson and guest Dr. Thomas Padgett. The evening culminated with a live auction with the infamous Randy Stabe and Clint Voss auctioneer duo as well as live music and dancing with Locked N Loaded, a local Sioux City cover band featuring current and former law enforcement officers.

Four very special people and their families were honored for their dedication to serving others in Siouxland – the late Dr. Stanley Reiss, Kermit Dahlen, Rebecca Eckhardt, and Virginia Cochran. These individuals have and continue to make a lasting impression and amazing impact on individuals and the community as a whole.

The late Dr. Stanley Reiss was represented by his daughter Lisa Miller, his son-in-law, and one of his granddaughters. Dr. Reiss was the founder of Heartland Counseling and as a trained clinical psychologist, he dedicated his life to serving others throughout Nebraska. Lisa reflected on her life as a child and knew that Heartland Counseling was her dad's life's work and in thinking of the time he said "Lisa, it's not work to me," she now understands that it was his purpose, his mission, his passion, and his calling. It seemed only fitting that the first award was in the category of "Dedication to Mental Health Field" and was presented to the Reiss family by current Executive Director Jennifer Jackson.

The "Dedication to Substance Use Field" award was presented to Kermit Dahlen, retired Rosecrance Jackson Recovery Centers CEO. Kermit dedicated over 40 years to the field of substance use and getting individuals the services they needed in Siouxland. As Catholic Charities Executive Director, friend and former Jackson Recovery employee Amy Bloch stated, "Kermit was and is a champion for fighting for substance use treatment...his legacy is the addict on the street, changing their lives and their family members lives, getting them the treatment they needed."

South Sioux City School Administrator Becky Eckhardt received the "Friend & Advocate of Mental Health" award for fulfilling her vision to get 100% of school staff trained in mental health and services for 100% of the South Sioux City school students. South Sioux City Schools graduate Ethan Voss reflected back on the impact Becky has made in the school system by ensuring Heartland Counseling therapists are in the schools saying, "...by showing kids it's ok to ask for help and them knowing 'I'm not the only one that has these feelings and everyone else around me is probably dealing with this too'...because in high school you just want to fit in and not be the kid that stands out."

The final award of “Exemplary Clinician” went to Heartland’s very own Virginia Cochran. Virginia had the privilege to work with Dr. Reiss and has been a licensed therapist for over 34 years. Heartland Clinical Director Michelle Halladay stated, “Virginia has the ability to kindly and gently tell you what you need to hear in a way that challenges you to grow even if you may not know it at the moment or don’t want to hear it, she plants that seed.” Virginia’s mother’s words stick with her, “to be a kind person and always care,” and that is what she hopes that her legacy is.

“I am honored to have been able to present tonight’s award to these amazing individuals and am proud to be able to work in this field beside them,” expressed Heartland’s Executive Director Jennifer Jackson. “I also want to thank all who supported this event and I look forward to working with them on paving the way for the next 45 years.”

Sponsors included Presenting Title Sponsor: R Perry Construction; Giving Heart Sponsor: Family of Dr. Stanley Reiss; Dessert Sponsor: UnityPoint Health; Hopeful Heart Sponsors: Barcon, Inc. and Wells Fargo; Sharing Heart Sponsor: Kermit Dahlen; Table Sponsors: Aflac, Andersen Farms, Aventure Staffing, Catholic Charities, Olsson, Pella Windows, RBC Wealth Management, Rosecrance Jackson Recovery Centers, and Seaboard Triumph Foods; the many individual donors and ticket purchasers, and all those who donated auction items.

Heartland Counseling is a nonprofit organization providing quality mental health and substance abuse services and education for the tri-state Siouxland community and lives by their motto: “Changing lives. Healing hearts. One day at a time!” For more information on Heartland Counseling Services, how you can receive mental health or substance abuse services, or how you can donate to the capital campaign or to help others in their journey to positive mental health, visit www.heartlandcounselingservices.com or call 402-494-3337.

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