



# hope news

Fall 2025

## HOPE HOUSE FOUNDATION'S DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (DSP) OF THE YEAR FOR 2025 SANDRA DIGGS

**For the past 13 years**, Sandra has been a cornerstone of Hope House Foundation, leading with compassion, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to the people we support. She is known for recognizing each person's strengths, encouraging them to achieve their goals, and making sure they feel supported every step of the way.

Sandra's leadership shines not only with the people she serves but also with her coworkers. She keeps her team accountable, helps them learn from one another, and is always ready to share knowledge, guidance, and encouragement. With her background as a foster parent and years of experience in social services, Sandra brings wisdom and heart to every interaction.

Her impact on individuals has been extraordinary. She has walked alongside people through their most significant life changes, supporting them in building healthier, happier, and more connected lives. Her consistency and encouragement have inspired personal growth, community involvement, and a stronger sense of independence for those she supports.

Sandra's influence also extends to her colleagues. She excels at training both new and experienced staff, equipping them with the tools and confidence to deliver high-quality support. Whether it's covering extra shifts, coming up with creative ways to keep people engaged, or simply being available to answer questions, Sandra goes above and beyond every day.

Hope House Foundation is proud to celebrate Sandra as a true leader, mentor, and advocate. Her dedication continues to inspire her colleagues and uplift the people she so passionately serves.



# SHANNON SAYS: “WE ARE RESILIENT.”

## A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHANNON POCIASK



As Executive Director of Hope House Foundation, I lead with a clear and unwavering priority: to support the people who support the people we support. If we're not doing that, we must pause and evaluate what we're doing. Our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) deserve the tools, training, and resources they need to do their work well.

We are proud to have an extraordinary team of individuals who remain deeply committed to our mission, no matter the challenges we face. Every September, we honor our DSPs, the dedicated professionals who show up every day with compassion, strength, and purpose. Their resilience is the foundation of our work. In June, we celebrate our Ambassadors of Hope, a group of inspiring leaders who exemplify advocacy and dedication. These moments of recognition remind us of the incredible people who make our mission possible.

As we look ahead, many are asking how potential Medicaid cuts might impact our work and the people we support. Medicaid isn't the only challenge we're tracking. The ongoing shortage of affordable housing and limited financial assistance threatens one of the most basic human needs: the ability to find and afford a home. These issues are deeply interconnected, and we remain vigilant in advocating for solutions that protect and empower the people we support.

The impact also reaches our workforce. We've long advocated for fair, sustainable wages and comprehensive benefits for DSPs—recognizing the essential nature of their work. When I speak with people we support, they often advocate for those who support them. DSPs are trusted companions in independence and success. Many individuals and families worry more about the future of the workforce than their own needs.

While we don't yet have all the answers, one thing is certain: Hope House Foundation is resilient. We've faced challenges before and responded with determination, adaptability, and a steadfast focus on our mission. We aim to support people in living full, self-directed lives—and that begins with supporting the team who makes it possible.

We will keep pushing forward, celebrating our people, and working together to navigate whatever lies ahead. Resilience isn't just a response, it's who we are.

# 2025 AMBASSADORS OF HOPE

## AMBASSADOR OF LEADERSHIP



### MIKAYLA COCHRAN

Mikayla shines as a leader who inspires growth in her team while never losing sight of what matters most—outstanding support. With her steady hand and compassionate heart, she strengthens not only her staff, but also the lives of the individuals they serve.

## AMBASSADOR OF INNOVATION



### ELI REYES

Innovation is Eli's superpower. With fresh ideas and a creative spark, he inspires his colleagues to see things in new ways—raising the bar and enriching the support we provide every day.

## AMBASSADOR OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



### KENDRA PARKER

Kendra has a special talent for opening doors—creating opportunities that bring people closer to their communities. Through her work, she cultivates inclusion, belonging, and lasting connections that make a real difference.

## AMBASSADOR OF PERSON-CENTERED SUPPORT



### PETER ALBRINCOLES

Peter's Uncle Michael Dorè accepted his award.

With Peter, support was never just a role—it was a calling. He approached every individual with genuine care, ensuring they felt seen and valued. Though we lost him earlier this year, his extraordinary heart remains woven into the fabric of Hope House, inspiring us every day.

## AMBASSADOR OF COMMITMENT

### KELLY WOODRUFF

Dependable, dedicated, and deeply committed—Kelly brings her best every day. Her consistency and heart make her not only a valued teammate but also a true pillar of support within Hope House.



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## THE EAGLE RIDERS OF THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES #3204 RAISED AN INCREDIBLE \$7,200 DURING THEIR POKER RUN IN SUPPORT OF HOPE HOUSE FOUNDATION.

We are deeply grateful for their generosity and commitment to service, which truly makes a difference in the lives of those we support!

Special thanks to Eagle Riders Michelle Dawson, Bill Dawson, Chuck Dupree, Jose Cruz, Sandy Jones, Mac McDaniel, and Todd Patton for personally riding to our administrative office to deliver this amazing gift. What a powerful show of community spirit!



TOWNE BANK

PRESENTS

# stockley gardens

FALL ARTS FESTIVAL 2025



Join us for a weekend full of art, music and kids' activities!  
STOCKLEY GARDENS PARK IN HISTORIC GHENT

**OCT 18**  
10AM-5PM  
AND  
**OCT 19**  
NOON-5PM

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**JOIN US** for a weekend of art, music, and community at the **2025 Stockley Gardens Fall Arts Festival!** Presented by **TowneBank** and hosted by **Hope House Foundation**, this free two-day event features over **130 talented artists** from across the country. Stroll through beautiful Stockley Gardens Park in Norfolk, enjoy live performances by local musicians, indulge in delicious bites from food vendors, and fun activities for kids.

**Saturday, October 18th** | 10 AM - 5 PM

**Sunday, October 19th** | Noon - 5 PM

**Stockley Gardens Park** (Corner of Stockley Gardens & Olney Rd., Norfolk)

## DON'T MISS THE After-Hours Garden pARTy and Awards

Keep the celebration going! After the festival wraps on Saturday, join us for the **After-Hours Garden pARTy and Awards from 5 PM - 7 PM**. It's free and open to the public, featuring a special awards presentation and live music by Exploding Sun. Enjoy the sounds, sip on drinks from the cash bar, and cheer on the artists!

**Funding for this event honors the life of Germaine Clair, one of the Festival's most enthusiastic supporters.**



**Exploding Sun** is a dynamic, guitar driven Alternative Rock trio that employs a number of styles, from hard edged pop and blues rock to melodic indie and even folk. They have been active on the Hampton Roads music scene in southeastern Virginia since the mid 90's and have recorded eight full length studio albums. They were awarded "Best Rock" in Veer Magazine and their album Truesonic was featured as album of the week on WHRO's "Out of the Box".

**Come celebrate creativity and community — we can't wait to see you there!**

**For the full entertainment schedule scan here:**



**POSTER ARTIST**  
**Leif Johansen**

Leif Johansen's creative path began at age four with a pencil and grew to include music, writing, photography, and woodworking. Though undiagnosed ADHD and dyslexia made school difficult, art became both refuge and passion.

Forgoing a traditional degree, he pursued a self-directed education through books and travels to 17 countries, deepening his understanding of art's role in culture and humanity. In 2012, he committed fully to his artistic career. Today, his work—shaped by nature and environmental themes—reflects a lifelong belief that art is not just expression, but purpose.

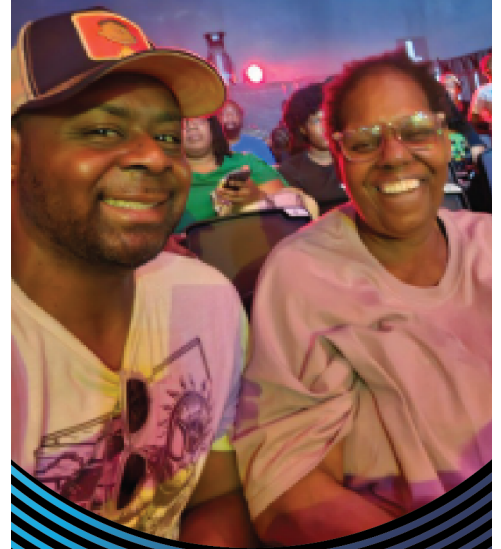


**FESTIVAL JUDGE**  
**Lenny Campello**

Florencio Lennox Campello, once described by The Washington City Paper as “one of the most interesting people of Washington, DC,” is an artist, curator, critic, author, and one of the internet's top art bloggers. A graduate of the University of Washington School of Art (1981), he has curated more than 200 exhibitions, including the groundbreaking Women Artists of the DMV show, featuring over 500 artists across 16 venues. His reviews have appeared in The Washington Post and numerous art publications, and his blog has drawn over seven million visitors. He is also the author of 100 Artists of Washington, DC.



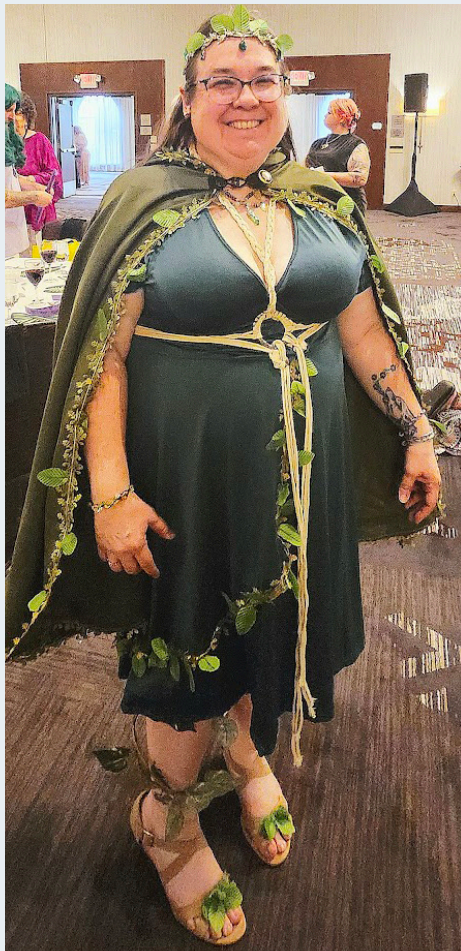
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**CONCERTS**



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**SCAN ME**



# HOPE HOUSE SHINES ON THE NATIONAL STAGE!

**The Engagement Department** made a big splash at the 2025 International Person-Centered Gathering in Minnesota!

We're proud to share that Engagement Coordinator Joy's submission, "Building Relationships Through Volunteering," was chosen from countless entries and presented to attendees from across the country. Adding to the excitement, Joy was honored with the 2025 Community Award for Volunteering—a recognition of her incredible dedication and impact.

A huge round of applause also goes to Engagement Coordinator Stephanie Crumb, who helped shape the entire event as part of the planning committee. From thoughtful décor to a breathtaking silent auction, Stephanie's creativity brought the "Rooted in Relationships" theme beautifully to life.

The gathering was an inspiring celebration of connection, advocacy, and person-centered practices—the very values that guide us every day at Hope House.



# WHAT MAKES HHF SO SPECIAL? OUR PEOPLE!

At the 2025 Annual Dinner, we celebrated staff longevity, applauded donors & our amazing board, and let loose with laughter, music, and dance.



Beach Ambassadors received the 2025 Community Award (l-r) Jennifer McDonald, Shawn Fischer, Jason Houser and Bryan Brough



Southern Bank received the 2025 Jeff Miller Award (l-r) W. Trent Dudley, Executive Vice President, Jody Kuehn Senior Vice President, Elena Montello, HHF Director of Development and Kelly Johnson, Vice President.



Presenting sponsors Brown & Brown Insurance



Hope House Foundation Board Members





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Hope House is a certified  
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# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Oct 18 & 19** Stockley Gardens Spring Arts Festival

**Dec 2** Giving Tuesday

**Mar 6** Shamrockin' in Ghent



For more information please contact Laura DeVore  
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Proud Member of the National Association of Direct Support Professionals

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