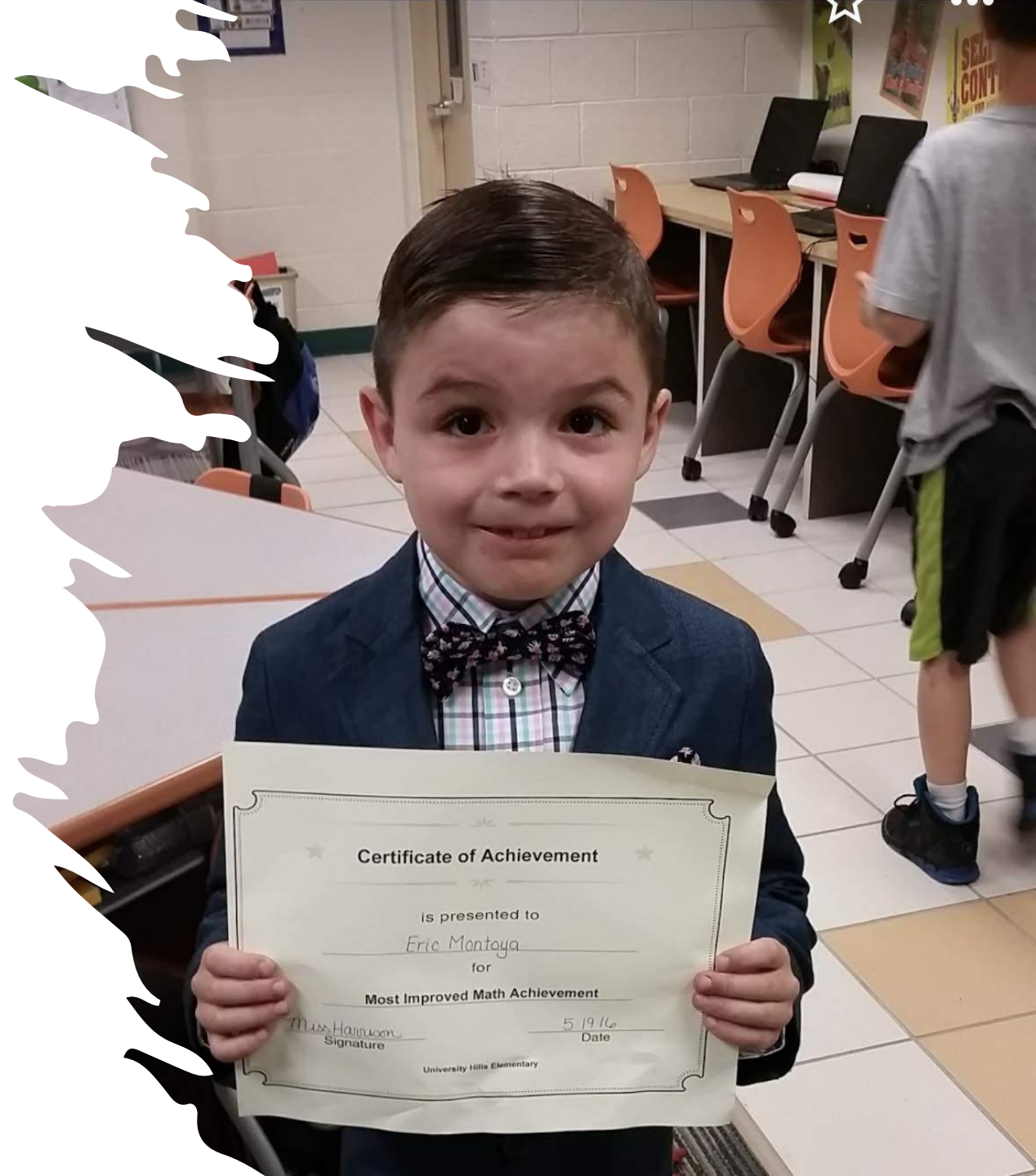


Improve the
Quality of
the Workforce
at CYFD

Jennifer Raess, LCSW

Eric's Social Worker

(Please see attached script)



I began
working with
Eric in the
Fall of
2019.

(Please see
attached
script.)






Fast forward a few months to a meeting with CYFD higher-ups and our Associate Superintendent for Special Education. (Please see attached script.)

**Remember, this
is 2020 and I
want you to
see the date
on this note:
It's September
8, 2016...**

(Please see attached
script.)

 **UNM** | SCHOOL of MEDICINE

Department of Neurology

September 8, 2016

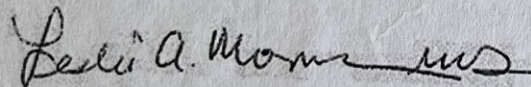
To Whom It May Concern:

Eric Montoya is being seen at the University of New Mexico Muscular Dystrophy Clinic to evaluate him for Becker Muscular Dystrophy. We are recommending him to have genetic testing to confirm this diagnosis.

It is important that Eric be seen at this clinic in Albuquerque as it is the only Muscular Dystrophy Association clinic in the region, and is closest to this family's location of Las Cruces, NM. This clinic is currently undergoing the process to be designated as a Muscular Dystrophy comprehensive care center.

If there are any questions or you require any other information about Eric's diagnosis or care, you can contact myself or my coordinator, Ashley at 505-272-0472 or awegele@salud.unm.edu.

Sincerely,



Leslie Morrison, MD
Pediatric MDA Clinic Director

Over the summer
of 2020, CYFD
allowed me the
honor of
providing
Counseling
services for Eric
via telehealth
and an IEP...
(Please see
attached script.)



Once he was adopted, in the summer of 2021, he was granted his Wish...

(Please see attached script.)



**This is Eric
now: He is
in a
wheelchair
full-time...**

(Please see attached
script.)



What's the Point?

1. I acknowledge a shortage of Mental Health providers nationally and in this state. However, I don't believe a shortage of providers is the primary issue.
2. Eric's first worker was a BSW. As we got to know each other, she cried to me on the phone about the level of responsibility and lack of training and support. I learned about a work culture where the agency seems to eat their young. I personally observed a culture of defensiveness and hostility towards outside providers and professionals who sincerely desire to partner with CYFD. I saw many times (remember the email) an apparent attempt to ignore problems and concerns hoping they would go away. I



The Point... Continued

3. Most social workers go into the profession hoping to “save the world” or at least the children. We want to work in child welfare, but not here, not with this agency.
4. Lowering the standard qualifications for these positions will not ever fix the real problem of culture and climate. It will, in fact, make it worse because these new hires will need even more support than degreed/licensed Social Workers
5. In the meantime, kids like Eric and his brother are paying an extraordinarily high price for unqualified workers



Suggestion #1



Take all clinical training of new hires and foster parents out of CYFD's purview. LC3 or private contractors can provide training by highly qualified clinicians to CYFD workers and foster parents on things such as:

- a. The impact of culture on behavior
- b. Behavior intervention
- c. Trauma informed intervention
- d. Autism interventions
- e. Effects of medical diagnoses on behavior
- f. Working with schools and medical providers

Suggestions #2 and #3

2. Offer support groups for CYFD workers and foster parents at least once per month, facilitated by a highly qualified clinician outside of the agency. Provide paid time off and/or respite to attend these groups for those who take advantage of it.
3. Work with the Center for Excellence in Social Work and the Social Work Workforce Consortium to increase the number of degreed/licensed Social Workers at CYFD. (Maybe modeled after Yazzie-Martinez.) During my time on the Kevn S. PILOT I asked to be able to send an anonymous/confidential survey to all CYFD workers in Dona Ana County to determine their real concerns without fear of reprisal. This request was repeatedly ignored or denied. This is part of the problem with climate and



Finally...#4

Change the culture and climate immediately. I promised Eric and his family that I would tell you his story with the same zeal I've had in working with them. So, my true suggestion (and how I talk to my Social Work friends) is to dismantle absolutely everything about CYFD and start all over again. Make everyone re-apply for their positions, make it known that things are going to be different. Implement the recommendations from the co-neutrals and the PILOT's immediately. Supposedly, we are all on the same team.



Contact Information

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