

# Families As Allies

## Community Partnership Celebration

Greeting and welcome

Thanking our sponsors

Introduction of Board

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### Community Partnership Celebration Awards Presentations

Helen Reddy Johnson Memorial Award for  
Valuing Every Child and Family  
Mississippi Public Broadcasting's  
Southern Remedy TV Growing Pains Series  
Kathryn Rodenmeyer, Dr. Rick DeShazo, Producers

Rusty Turner Memorial Award for Excellence  
Dr. Wanjiku Njoroge, University of Pennsylvania

Partnership Award  
Nita Rudy, Parents for Public Schools, National Office

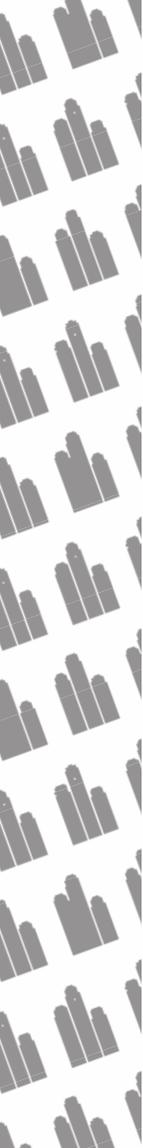
Accountability Award  
Representative Joel Bomgar  
Representative Jay Hughes

# Helen Reddy Johnson Memorial Award for Valuing Every Child and Family

**Mississippi Public Broadcasting Series  
*Growing Pains*, produced by  
Kathryn Rodenmeyer and  
Dr. Rick deShazo**

Mental illness has been a health condition since ancient times, affecting all ages and cultures. Modern day understanding for diagnosing and treating mental illness gives hope for those whose have it, but for children, a disjointed and uncoordinated system of care, stigma and lack of parental awareness prevent them from connecting to the care they need. Dr. Rick deShazo and co-host Melissa Faith Payne examined in this 5-episode series how the medical and other communities approach mental illness for children. Mental health care providers, advocates and parents shared how Mississippi treats its children, and the series explored the consequences of not treating mental health well. Families as Allies is honoring MPB for realizing this for the public health crisis it is, reaching out to families throughout the State, and including parents in all phases of the production.





## **Rusty Turner Memorial Award for Excellence**

**Dr. Wanjiku Njoroge,  
University of Pennsylvania**

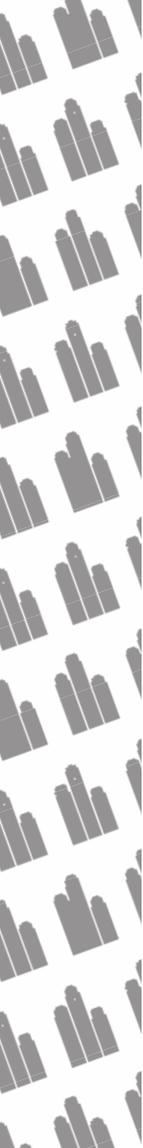
Dr. Njoroge is medical director of the Young Child Clinic, a psychiatrist in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and an Assistant Professor at the Perleman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Her areas of expertise include cultural research, media research, early child development, and ethnically diverse children. Families as Allies is honoring Dr. Njoroge for the outstanding clinical training she provided for the BuDS early childhood initiative, but even more for Dr. Njoroge's cultural responsiveness, for humbly and joyfully becoming a part of our community, and for consistently and positively partnering with families.

## Partnership Award

### Nita Rudy, Parents for Public Schools National Office

A diverse group of advocacy organizations and committed parents worked collaboratively this past year to ensure that the proposed restraint and seclusion policy offered by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) addressed the concerns of those groups. This policy was needed as Mississippi was one of only five states in the country without one. Children were sometimes being held in closets and makeshift boxed-in enclosures, teachers were not getting the proper training, and local policies were not representing the needs of all children. Throughout multiple public comments submissions, public hearings and written revisions, Ms. Rudy was a steadfast presence, making sure that everyone was included, proposed policies were well drafted and comprehensive, and that meetings with the MDE were open and collaborative in tone.





## Accountability Award

We are honoring two State Representatives who have modeled accountability by using social media to transparently share their votes and policy information, who have partnered with colleagues in their own party and across the aisle to improve state systems, and who have been courageous in their stances.

### Representative Joel Bomgar

Representative Joel Bomgar is extremely transparent, publishing all of his votes and the explanations for them on his blog and is available by cell, email and Facebook to answer questions about his votes and explain the legislative process. He has worked on criminal justice reform and been widely recognized for working with colleagues across the aisle to bring about meaningful change that allows more people to remain in the community. In addition to being a State Representative, he is the founder of the Bomgar Corporation, a worldwide technology company headquartered here in Madison County. Joel recently established the Out of Last Place Alliance to identify real solutions to lift Mississippi out of last place. Families as Allies is grateful for Representative Bomgar's commitment to help Mississippians, including those with

mental illness, be able to work and prosper. We also want to publicly thank him for taking the time to learn about approaches and ideas to make this more possible and for increasing our awareness of how a stronger economy supports opportunities for all people.

## Representative Jay Hughes

Representative Jay Hughes consistently shares information about legislative action and his votes on his Facebook page and also allows others to share wide ranging opinions on his page as well. These public discussions have led to increased awareness and diverse and deeper conversations about mental health, even among people with differing viewpoints. Representative Hughes is a passionate champion of public education and sponsored and organized a public education summit this summer, working across the aisle to do so. Families as Allies is particularly appreciative that he included parents of children with disabilities as participants and speakers at the summit. He is kind, responsive and available by email, phone and Facebook when families have challenging situations, including after hours.

Last year Families as Allies decided to name the following two awards for two extraordinary people. We honor their memories.

**The Helen Reddy Johnson Memorial Award for Valuing Every Child and Family**  
Helen Johnson spent her life caring for children and bringing communities together. She was instrumental in the establishment of Southern Echo and the Nollie Jenkins Family Center. She was a School board member and worked tirelessly on behalf of school children in Mississippi, especially those in the Delta. Helen was a board member of Families as Allies and never lost her focus on insuring that the organization was accountable to the families and children it served. Her life exemplified respect, compassion and dignity and serves as an inspiration for our work every day.

#### **The Rusty Turner Memorial Award for Excellence**

Rusty Turner was an outstanding labor attorney who received many awards and much recognition for his accomplishments. As part of his work at Balch and Bingham, Rusty patiently and carefully guided Families as Allies in updating all of our policies and procedures in keeping with best practices, allowing us to focus much more of our time on our mission. More importantly, just by the way he chose to live his life, Rusty exemplified Families as Allies' vision that all children have the opportunity to reach their potential and be successful. We are grateful for these memories and also honored that Rusty had committed to become a board member in 2016.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Our thanks to Amile Wilson of Hapax Creative for producing tonight's video.  
Our thanks to the Gallagher family for sharing their story with us.

# Past Award Recipients

Valuing Every Child and Family

2014 Linda West

2015 Helen Johnson

Excellence

2014 Grayson Norquist, MD, MSPH

2015 Rusty Turner, Esq

Partnership

2014 St James Episcopal Church

2015 Chane – Fondren First Thursday

Accountability

2014 Mandy Rogers

2015 Leonard VanSlyke, Esq

