

## **Susan Henley**

Susan Henley is a native North Carolinian who, after growing up in Raleigh, took off for adventure and a degree in social work at the University of Montana. She came back to East Carolina University for a masters in social work and in 1993 she looked for a job in community mental health in either Asheville or Wilmington. Wilmington was lucky to get her and she has been here ever since.

Susan has been practicing Parent-Child Interaction Therapy for the past 15 years. PCIT uses an evidence-based approach to teach specific skills and shape behavior in children with histories of trauma. She coaches the parent of the parent/child pair from behind a mirror, using earpieces, and usually has the pairs coming to see her for about 4 months. There's a long waiting list composed of patients from all over the community. "Assuring a secure attachment with a reliable, loving caregiver for each child is the goal of my work," says Susan. She is proud that New Hanover County leads North Carolina in having the first, and only, public health department in the state to offer early childhood mental health services based on health outcomes.

Susan is Circle Lead for Health & Wellness, WIN's 2023 area of giving. Her work dovetails both with the subject matter and also with a focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which WIN explored in its last round of Health & Wellness giving. "ACEs are the primary determinant of the health and social well-being of our

community,” says Susan. (To learn more about ACES and to see the movie "Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope" at the Cameron Art Museum, click [here](#)).

The Circle this year is large (about 13 members), diverse (both experienced and new members), and enthusiastic (the second meeting was well-attended and well-organized). Susan says “Look for a fall kickoff that is informative and attempts to paint the very broad landscape of H&W in bold colors.” Each member plans to interview key players and “in the trenches” workers to create the NHC profile.

When Susan isn't working or devoting time to WIN, she is busy with family and friends. After her precious terrier Winnie died last year at 15, Susan found Murphy online. She said she wanted a fluffy, 20-pound rescue dog but got a young and energetic 65 pound goldendoodle instead. They are regulars at obedience school now. He's a handful but he, too, is a wonderful companion.

Susan has a passion to create and loves to build whimsical wooden birdhouses and “spirit houses” for departed pets. She sells them at Uptown Market but also works on commissioned pieces for friends. Her “she shed,” where her creativity happens, is her second happy place.

We are very lucky that Susan is a fervent fan of collective giving and has been an engaged and committed WIN

member since 2013, serving several years as Grants Chair and retiring because of family illness and caretaking requirements. She is now back with a whole new set of interests.

Thank you Susan for all you do for WIN!