

# Our 2026 Champions for Kids

**Published: Thursday, 29 October 2026 01:10**

**Written by: Laneta Fitisemanu**

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On October 16, 2026, we held our annual Breakfast of Children's Champions at the University of Utah's Ken Garff Scholarship Club. Each year, we recognize the partners, community members, and students who are making a difference in the lives of Utah's children.

We were honored to begin the morning with a land acknowledgment from James Toledo, Deputy Director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, recognizing the Native peoples who have cared for these lands for generations and who continue to strengthen Utah's communities today. Rhonda "Honey" DuVall of Voice of Honey followed with a performance alongside her dance group, featuring talented Native youth who shared their culture with our guests. Their performance was a powerful reminder that Utah's Native children and families are an essential part of the future we're working toward together.

This year's event photos are available to view now.

[View Event Photos](#)

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**Here's a look at this year's champions and the difference they're**

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making for Utah's kids.



Roz McGee Children's Champion

## Primary Children's Hospital

For more than a century, Primary Children's Hospital has put "The Child First and Always." Founded in 1922 in a converted Salt Lake City home, it grew with the help of Utah children who donated pennies to match their age, making it a hospital built

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for children, by children. Today, that small start has grown into three Utah campuses in Salt Lake City, Lehi, and Taylorsville, including a behavioral health campus for children and teens, and the hospitals now rank among the nation's best in every pediatric specialty U.S. News evaluates. Much like Roz McGee, Voices for Utah Children's first Executive Director, who built the organization from almost nothing into a powerful voice for Utah's kids, Primary Children's shows what determination and an unwavering focus on children can achieve, making it a fitting recipient of this year's Roz McGee Children's Champion Award.

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**Children's Health Champion**

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**Stephanie Burdick with Protect Medicaid Utah**

Drawing on her own experience waiting for health coverage, Stephanie Burdick has become a powerful advocate for Utah families. Through her work with Protect Medicaid Utah, she has rallied families, advocates, and organizations to defend a program that serves 18% of Utah's children. Her persistence and heart make her a true champion for Utah's kids.

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**Immigrant Families Champion**

**American Immigration Lawyers Association, Utah Chapter**

The Utah Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association brings together attorneys who help immigrant children and families navigate a complex and often frightening legal system. Whether in court, before immigration officials, or out in the community, its members provide guidance and advocacy when families need it most, knowing that keeping parents safe and secure is essential to their children's well-being. Their expertise and compassion make them true champions for Utah's immigrant families.

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Early Learning & Care Champion

**Laurel Miller-Jones with Envision Utah**

As Senior Early Learning Project Manager at Envision Utah, Laurel Miller-Jones shares the science of early brain development with parents and community partners across the state, highlighting the power of nurturing relationships between caregivers and children. Drawing on experience in juvenile court, health care, schools, and postpartum family support, she works to find solutions to the barriers families with young children face. Her belief that we all share responsibility for giving Utah's youngest a strong foundation makes her a true champion for young children and families.



Student Impact Champion

**Ogden School District**

Ogden School District believes strong schools are built on strong families and a strong community. From opening a family support center at Odyssey Elementary, the

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first of its kind in Utah, to transforming a former elementary school into its new Opportunity Center, the district works to connect students and families with the support they need while also expanding learning opportunities through innovative programs and community partnerships. Its commitment to meeting students and families where they are makes Ogden School District a true champion for Utah's students.

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## Student Advocates of the Year

Each year, our Student Advocate Scholarship Award recognizes an outstanding Utah high school student who is making a meaningful impact through advocacy and service in their community, along with a \$2,500 scholarship. This year, we were pleased to award two scholarships. Thank you to the Andrus Family Foundation for their generous support in making these scholarships possible.



Natalie Winn

### Grand County High School

Natalie Winn leads with heart, both in her school and in her community. As Student Body Vice President, National Honor Society President, and Science Olympiad Captain, she has stepped up to support and inspire her peers, and through her mentoring work at the Moab Valley Multicultural Center, she continues to support others and give back to her community. Natalie plans to study chemistry at the University of Utah, and we can't wait to see the positive impact she'll continue to make.



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Ahmed Jamal Ahmed

## Logan High School

Ahmed Jamal Ahmed, a senior at Logan High School, carries forward a value his father, a former teacher, instilled in him: education creates opportunity and strengthens communities. As an early member of Logan Refugee Services and a member of its first Youth Council, he helps with outreach, event planning, and projects such as the community garden, all to make Logan a welcoming place for refugees and asylum seekers. He also competes in wrestling and speech and debate, has shadowed a disease investigator at the Bear River Health Department, and has worked as a bioengineering research assistant at Utah State University on research related to aging and Alzheimer's disease. Ahmed plans to study molecular biology, and we can't wait to see the impact he'll continue to make.

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## THANK YOU!



Thank you to all of this year's champions for your continued support and effort in your local communities and across the state. Your work reminds us that when we come together for kids, every child in Utah has a better chance to grow up healthy, safe, and supported.

We're also grateful to everyone who joined us for this year's Breakfast of Children's Champions, and to the sponsors who made this celebration possible: Primary Children's Hospital, Intermountain Health, Select Health, the Andrus Family Foundation, Utah Community Action, and The Children's Center Utah.

Together, we'll keep working toward a Utah where every child can thrive.

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**Voices Staff (L to R):** Laneta Fitisemanu, Jennifer Stout, Sara Gunderson, Kriti Roy, Moe Hickey, Megan Neuf, Ari McGuire, Martín Muñoz, & Talia Hansen

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**Voices Board (L to R):** Kim McGuire, Dustin Lipson, Allison Nicholson, Mackenzie Heinrichs, Heather Volosin, Emmie Gardner, Ze Min Xiao, Eduardo Ortiz, Heidi Lynn Camacho, & Sebastian de Freitas. (Not pictured: Stephanie Benally, Neal Davis, Julie Jackson, Sayre Posey, Kristen Schulz)