

Irving Harris Foundation Comments
Recipient of the 2018 Bernice Weissbourd Award for Family Support
Presented at the 2018 Family Focus Gala, May 15, 2018

Joan Harris
President

“This is a wonderful evening. I've heard a lot about great institutions, and what Family Focus has done over these many years. Bernice, not to honor us but to honor you once again, and for all of you in the room, I want to pay tribute because of the two people who are not here tonight. One is Irving Harris, the other is Barney Weissbourd. Thank you for this award.”



Phyllis Glink
Executive Director

“Thank you for this honor. While Joan and I have the opportunity to stand up and received this incredible honor, we have an amazing team at the foundation and a whole host of grantees and partners who deserve as much or more credit for their dedication, passion, and the leadership for the work they do every day to ensure that young children and their families get the support they need. I would also like to recognize our fellow honorees, Sidley Austin for their contribution in social services and the example they set for business and civic leaders across Chicagoland and Bryan Samuels, a long-time partner and colleague for this well-deserved award tonight. His tireless work on behalf of children and the child welfare system and his particular attention for addressing trauma has transformed the way that states - including Illinois - deliver services. It's truly amazing.

I have been blessed and privileged to work with the Irving Harris Foundation. When I accepted this position in 1996, I knew I'd have the opportunity to learn from and be mentored by Irving Harris. He was an incredible man, a visionary leader, a strategic philanthropist and a warm funny and caring human being. Driven by equity and social justice, he invested in leaders and he relied on relationships with others to guide him in philanthropy. It was no surprise when he partnered with Bernice Weissbourd and her husband on Family Focus. I learned so much from him and his core values of justice, collaboration, partnerships with persistence. Those values are infused in everything we do from grant making to coalition building to field leadership. The foundation's early childhood work is rooted in Irving's holistic approach where early childhood support offers equity and access to high quality care and opportunities for healthy development for all children in the nation, starting before birth.

What I didn't realize when we started this foundation is that I would get to work with great mentors. Joan is one, and you Bernice have been a mentor and role model for me for 23 years. You envisioned and then created the Family Support movement, driven by the vision that all families should have services rooted in their community and responsive to their needs. Family Focus has remained true to your original mission. Family Focus is committed to whole family support and engagement and diverse leadership development. It is more relevant today than it has even been and we have been proud to be partners with you for these years. Bernice, Thank you for your visionary leadership, and our friendship.”



For additional information about Family Focus, visit our website at www.family-focus.org or call 312-421-5200.