



# O'Connell

CHILDREN'S SHELTER

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**"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."**

**— Audrey Hepburn (often attributed)**



Meet one of our House Managers - Jesse Hernández



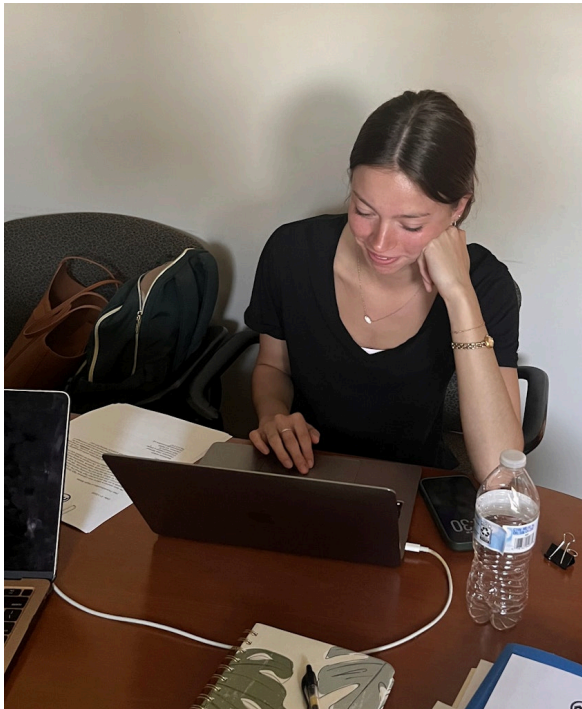
### **Experience and Heart Drive Jesse's Approach to Being a House Manager**

Meet Jesse Hernandez, a house manager at O'Connell. Jesse has dedicated nearly 16 years to working with youth, specializing in PRTF and QRTP programs. His passion for helping at-risk teens—especially those with histories in the juvenile justice system—has made his current group home position his most rewarding yet. Jesse thrives on connecting with kids who others might shy away from, always striving to peel back the layers and understand the "why" behind their actions rather than just the "what." He believes that supporting growth means giving space, setting examples, and patiently talking youth through their struggles.

Outside of work, Jesse is devoted to family. He cherishes time spent with his siblings and their kids—whether he's sharing meals, catching up over TV, or relaxing on the patio with a glass of Stella Rose Black or a margarita.

Jesse became a parent overnight at 28! As an uncle, he stepped up to foster his four nieces, guiding them to become accomplished adults—one is now attending UMKC and working at KU Hospital, another was accepted to KU for social welfare, and another is soon to be married. And Jesse fostered to adopt his own son, who graduated from sole permanency, and is currently a senior at Lawrence High School.

Jesse draws on his rich, real-life experiences. Known for his collaborative approach, he values input from his teammates in decision-making, always keeping the big picture and the well-being of the kids at the center of his work. And if you spot him with his boxer and his signature fantastic hair, you'll know you've found Jesse.



**"O'Connell really made me feel welcomed and valued." -- Spring 2026 Intern**

OCS interns not only get real-world experience working with clients, developing rapport and trust with each one -- but might also learn how to successfully balance work, school, and an internship too!

## Congratulations Jamie!



Our Community Engagement Specialist, Jamie Engnehl, was part of the 2026 Queen's Court for the 39th Annual Lawrence St. Patrick's Day Parade! Jamie helped fundraise for this year's two charity recipients, Lawrence Youth Football and the Lawrence Farmer's Market, along with her fellow queen candidates and the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee. O'Connell has been the proud recipient of parade funds on several

OCS greatly values the opportunity to provide internships. At any one time, O'Connell has a handful or more of interns from local schools working side-by-side with staff as "a part of the team."

A current intern notes: "My book knowledge transferred into real-world experience when I met with my youth clients." And another says: "I was constantly using skills and theories I learned in the classroom in my internship."

If you know someone who would be interested in OCS internship opportunities, please contact Diane Owen ([diane@oconnellcs.org](mailto:diane@oconnellcs.org)).

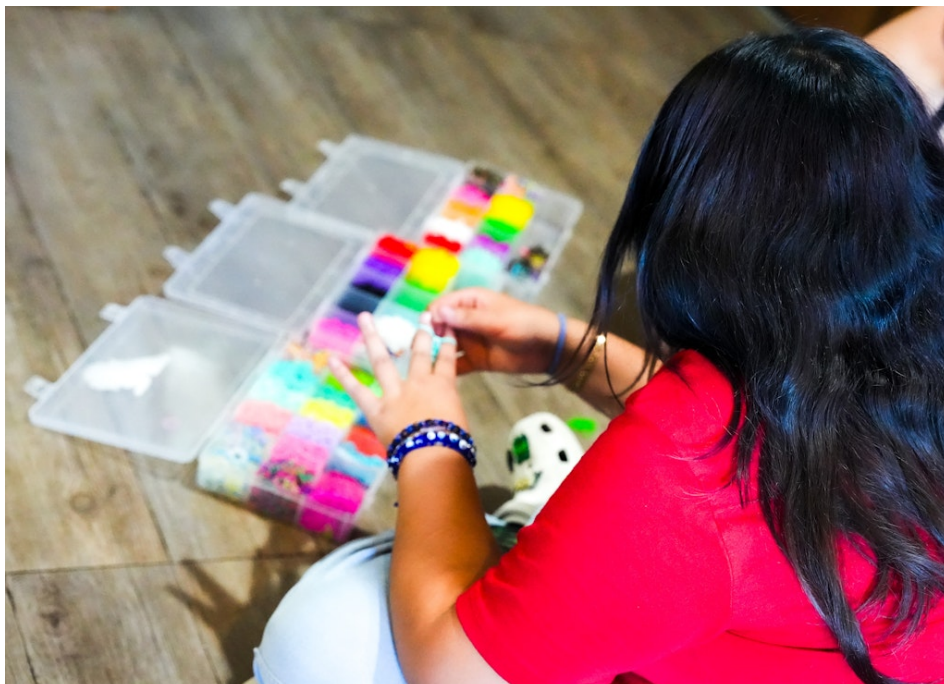
occasions throughout the years and we are so proud of Jamie for getting involved this year as a queen candidate!

## COMING SOON: SUMMER BREAK!

Help O'Connell Youth enjoy their summer by donating to support Summer programming, outings and extracurricular activities.

DONATE TODAY

## POSITION HIGHLIGHT: Teaching Assistant



**Join our team today, OCS is hiring!**

Are you looking for a career where you can have an impact?

Somewhere you can be part of a vibrant, growing organization with a history of successfully changing lives for the better?

You should apply to be a teaching assistant!

O'Connell Children's Shelter is hiring for all shifts! Are you interested in a fulfilling role

working with youth to ensure their safety, growth, and development?

We'd love to have you consider working with the dedicated team members at OCS.

Learn more here about our Teaching Assistant role here:

<https://www.indeed.com/cmp/O'connell-Children's-Shelter/locations/KS/Lawrence>.

Positions are available for 6 AM-2 PM, 2 PM-10 PM, and 10 PM-6 AM shifts.

Let's find the right shift for you.



## Hope Grows Here

Almost 50 years ago, Elsie O'Connell had a vision. Today, that vision thrives at O'Connell Children's Shelter (OCS), where we continue to provide essential services to children, youth, and families. Join us in expanding this legacy by helping us reach even more families in need.



LEARN MORE

DONATE NOW

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