

Catherine Knowles has served as the Homeless Education Program Coordinator of Metro Nashville Public Schools in Nashville, Tennessee for twenty-two years. During that time The HERO Program for Families in Transition has grown from serving 200 students a year to more than 3,400. Catherine is recognized as a leader and advocate not only in Nashville, but also throughout the state of Tennessee.

She has recruited more than twenty-five community partners who support her McKinney-Vento Program and she currently serves on three state-wide councils under appointments from the Governor as a service provider representing the concerns of families who are experiencing homelessness. She is a member of the Metropolitan Nashville Homelessness Planning Council, the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Steering Committee and Vice President of Unicycle — a local non-profit that provides gently used school clothing to students throughout her district of 86,000 students.

After more than two decades, Catherine maintains her energy and commitment to her work by pursuing new ways to broaden the reach of her program. One of her most recent endeavors has centered around working with the Tennessee State Legislature to pass new laws designed to support youth and young adults. She has also partnered with Purposity — a non-profit organization with an app and text messaging platform that connects community donors with the direct needs of students and families.

While Catherine often jokes that working as a homeless liaison is really the only job that she is qualified to do, it is apparent to all who know her that her life's passion is in serving others... particularly the McKinney-Vento students in her community. As a native Nashvillian, Catherine involves the whole of her community into supporting her students and families. She is especially grateful to her husband, her two children and her amazing network of friends and colleagues for their support of her work.