Riverbend team is a strong symbol of commitment and dedication for children. Riverbend Elementary School has committed to working towards being a trauma-informed school. Each day, they encounter students who are angry, hurt physical or mentally, hungry, tired, hopeless and not ready to learn. What they were doing was not working. Staff was becoming burnt out and hopeless themselves. One of their first steps towards becoming trauma-informed was to train the school team on brain development, how trauma impacts that development and the role resilience plays in curbing this impact. The team became aware how environment at the school could be a trigger causing the children to go into the fight, flight or freeze mode. The team took action and have started to transform their school into a truly “safe place”. Teachers would teach ‘mindfulness’ and how to self-calm, breathe and self-regulate. One of the key components to resilience is having at least one trusting adult, other than your primary care giver, a child can go to for help. To build this type of relationship with the students, staff participated in afterschool activities when parents can’t or won’t go. The school uses empirical validated trauma informed interventions. Staff continually go above and beyond to create the environment that students can learn to bounce back from their trauma (i.e. resilience). They develop realistic goals for all students and believe in all of them to achieve their dreams. The school partners with organizations outside so vital services can be connected to both the child and family.
Out-of-school time programs play an important role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. These types of programs create environments that endorse key protective factors for both the child and the parents. Early on, Julie recognized how important out-of-school programs were to help children grow-up to be successful. She has dedicated over 25 years, personally and professionally, to ensuring all families have access to these programs. She began her career building healthy, resilient kids and communities in Haines, AK through the community schools program. A few years later, she moved to Fairbanks, with her family and began working for the Fairbanks North Star Borough. In 1999, Julie established one of the country’s first federal funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) at Hunter Elementary in Fairbanks. 21st CCLC are federally funded afterschool programs that support low-income, underachieving students. As the Director of eleven 21st Century Community Learning Center programs for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Julie and her team serve over 800 low-income students and families. In addition, she has served on committees and boards supporting the efforts to grow and strengthen afterschool programs.
2016 Champion for Kids: Amanda Metivier
April 27th, 2016 (Anchorage Event)

Amanda has dedicated her entire life to improving the lives of youth in foster care. She became a leader and spokesperson for foster youth when she was just a youth herself. She has now built the state’s largest and strongest network for foster youth and alumni. As the founder and Executive Director of Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), a statewide nonprofit that supports foster a youth and alumni, Amanda has created an incredible resource for some of the most vulnerable youth in Alaska. FFCA gives foster youth an opportunity to share their experiences, to promote improvements to our child welfare system, gain access to much needed resources, and heal from past traumas. FFCA members live across the state. Amanda simply leads by example. She’s compassionate, intelligent, passionate, and reliable, and it only takes spending a few minutes with her to see all of those traits shine. Despite the tremendous pressure she faces running FFCA, working full-time, being a foster parent, and serving as an unofficial parent to scores of youth, Amanda is always ready to help whenever she is needed.