Healing care for abused and neglected children
Early learning as a foundation for school success
Parenting skills to break the cycle of abuse and neglect
A generous community to support our mission

Together, we are transforming lives.

An achievement report to our community. May 2014.
When children are abused or neglected, everything that’s meant to be part of childhood — safety, consistency, delight — gives way to worry, chaos and pain. When children come to Childhaven, we give them back the childhood they deserve. We transform their fragility into resilience and their fear into joy. It isn’t easy. So many of our children come to us from unimaginable circumstances — poverty, substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence. Their parents want to love and care for them, but they are often ill-equipped to provide the guidance and nurturing their children need. At Childhaven, children and their parents and other caregivers find help and hope. And it’s all possible because of you — the generous investors in our mission. Together, we transform hundreds of young lives each and every day. It’s what Childhaven has done for more than 100 years. It’s what we will continue to do, with your support, for decades to come. And we will not rest until we are able to help each and every abused or neglected child in our community who needs the healing, hugs and hope that only Childhaven can provide.

Sadly, so many more children need us. Gratefully, we know you stand beside us in our mission and our vision. The achievements we share in this report are yours as much as ours. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Maria Chavez Wilcox
Childhaven President

Unlocking every child’s key to healing and thriving

As a baby at Childhaven, Noah would either shy away from his teachers and classmates or throw tantrums so severe they would only end after he stopped bashing his head on the floor. He had experienced tremendous upheaval at home. His mother grappled with substance abuse and mental health issues that made her prone to vicious outbursts. His father had problems with alcohol.

For a while, an aunt and grandmother took turns caring for him. Not long after Noah turned 1, his mom landed in jail. His paternal grandmother, Maribel Wilkin, took him in — determined to be the steady, nurturing presence he needed to feel safe and loved. It was hard at first. At Childhaven, Noah would bite and hit, or throw chairs when he got angry. He would call himself stupid or shout, “I’m a bad boy!”

His teachers and case manager coached Maribel to hug him and say, “You’re a good boy, Noah Bear. You’ve just made a bad choice.”

In the classroom, teachers gave Noah a teething ring he could gnaw any time he felt the urge. He quit biting altogether after Maribel started giving him an apple first thing every morning.

At school, he would wear weighted-down backpacks that helped keep him calm when he got into a bouncing-off-the-wall mood. He learned to talk about his feelings.

“If you ask Noah what he needs to do when he’s angry, he says, ‘I need to calm my body down,’” says Maribel, or “Ama,” as Noah calls her.

Today, Noah is a bright, curious and happy child. He loves to draw and read books with his Ama and dad, José Serna. José now lives with Noah and Maribel and has become his son’s favorite hide-and-seek buddy.

Little Noah Serna’s ear-to-ear smiles, warm hugs and giggles bear no hint of the anguish he endured in his early childhood.

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Three pillars support the development of thriving children

Informed by the most advanced science of early brain development, our childhood trauma treatment program reverses the damage caused by abuse and neglect. While healing children, we also prepare them for kindergarten. And we provide their caregivers with parenting skills, support and resources.

**1. Turning “learned helplessness” into confidence**

Researchers who study the impact of stress on young children talk about the ways abuse and neglect can erode children’s ability to thrive. They call it “learned helplessness.”

“The first two or three years of life are incredibly important to the development of the brain,” explains Dr. John Medina, an expert in human brain development at the University of Washington School of Medicine. “Abuse and neglect actually cause brain damage, and stressed brains don’t learn.”

Childhaven’s research-based child trauma treatment program heals that damage by giving children unconditional love, structured routine, attentive listening, control over their own choices, and clear limits and boundaries.

**2. A firm foundation of early learning**

In classrooms with two to three adults for every 10 children, the kids at Childhaven learn while they heal. We employ leading-edge approaches to early learning to ensure that children will be well prepared for kindergarten and lifelong learning.

“Every child needs and deserves high-quality early learning opportunities, and Childhaven has been providing this to some of our state’s most vulnerable children for decades,” says Dr. Bette Hyde, director of the Washington Department of Early Learning. “DEL is proud to partner with Childhaven to help build strong families and get children ready for school and life.”

**3. ‘Stabilize the home, stabilize the child’**

The majority of Childhaven children live with or will return to their parents. By strengthening families, we break the cycle of abuse and neglect for generations.

“We have studied the effects that the emotional stability of the environment has on the brain,” notes Dr. Medina. “Stabilize the home, stabilize the children — and change their brain development.”

Our efforts to help create more stable home environments include group and individual parenting skills programs, monthly gatherings of caregivers where they learn from and support each other, and group meetings for the families of kids who will soon be transitioning to kindergarten.

And with the decline in recent years of available community resources for housing, mental health counseling and other supportive services — along with the lack of family and friend support systems for so many of our families — Childhaven’s caring staff eagerly steps in to help however they’re needed.

That might mean filling out health or school forms, guiding caregivers through the complex child welfare system, helping them resolve conflicts, giving them access to computers and printers, connecting them to resources, or just being a sounding board for their concerns.

Just as Childhaven is a safe and healing place for children, it’s also a safe and healing place for parents and caregivers.

“Without Childhaven, I would have never known that some adults are safe. I would have never trusted that my relationships could be positive and full of love. I would have never been able to take control of my life and my future and my own happiness.”

Aleesha Lysen, Childhaven alumna

**Quote:**

“Childhaven has an ability to focus like a lens on some of the most intractable problems we have in this county.”

Dr. John Medina, Founding director of the Seattle-based Talaris Research Institute, originally focused on how infants encode and process information at the cognitive, cellular and molecular levels.
An investment in Childhaven reaps a return in happy lives – for generations

Breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect. It’s part of our mission, our vision, the very core of who Childhaven is. But what does that really mean, and how are we doing it?

The research is clear about the impact of abuse and neglect across generations. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one in three abused children who fail to get therapy will grow up to abuse their own children. They are also far more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol and to commit violent crimes than other kids. Substance abuse and violence in turn trigger more child abuse and neglect. And so the cycle continues.

Childhaven’s childhood trauma treatment program breaks that cycle on three fronts: by healing young victims; by supporting and educating parents, grandparents and other caregivers; and by providing children with high quality early learning so they can succeed in school.

“When Linda and I invest in Childhaven, we know that we are making it possible for children who are most at risk of failure to succeed in school and become lifelong learners,” explains long-time Childhaven supporter Scott Carson, who retired in 2009 as President and Chief Executive Officer of Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

“Without the early intervention that Childhaven provides to reverse the effects of abuse on children’s brains, they face a tremendous academic hardship. The combination of childhood trauma therapy, early learning and social skill development gives them enormous potential.

“That’s the kind of investment that pays off for generations.”

“There are many projects out there but few have the rate of return of early childhood investments, offering 10% annual rate of return. What comes out of it is a reduction in crime, the promotion of schooling, the fact that we’re going to get a more skilled workforce in the future. This is not just speculation. Early childhood programs are one of the highest returns that we have on the docket right now available to make it in American society, so it’s foolish not to use it.”

Professor James J. Heckman, University of Chicago, Nobel Prize in Economics

According to the national nonprofit Prevent Child Abuse America, for every $1 spent on preventing and breaking the cycle of abuse, more than $320 is spent to deal with the after-effects of child abuse and neglect — criminal justice, health care, social services, foster care and more.

RETURNS TO A UNIT DOLLAR INVESTED

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James J. Heckman shows that investing in children when they are very young pays the greatest dividends. The therapy and early learning that Childhaven provides to abused and neglected children under the age of 6 has been proven to reap huge dividends as children grow up to be more successful in school and far less likely to abuse drugs or commit serious juvenile crimes.
Volunteers play an essential role at Childhaven, from cuddling babies to comforting kids at nap time to loading vans and helping with events. In 2013, nearly 750 volunteers dedicated a total of 12,600 hours to Childhaven — the equivalent of six full-time staff members.

Kathy Hardy had no idea how she was going to make it, caring for four grandchildren when she was suddenly thrust back into the role of mom at age 60. It was painful to see her two daughters imprisoned on bank fraud charges, leaving her to tend to little Emiyjah, who had just turned 1; Zahyir, who was nearly 2; plus two older girls, a 17-year-old and also a 9-year-old who required round-the-clock medical care for kidney disease.

“I was overwhelmed,” Kathy says.

She was on disability because of a back injury and struggling to pay her rent when a mental health counselor who had helped one of her daughters referred the family to Childhaven. Kathy was relieved to find a therapy program for Emiyjah and Zahyir — who had been through so much in their young lives — and to get support for herself, too. Childhaven gave the family diapers, food and other supplies and connected them to rent and utility assistance. A home visitor offered ideas for staying calm and reassuring when her grandkids would melt down, and also was a caring shoulder to lean on for Kathy.

“She really helped me,” Kathy says. “It wasn’t her job to sit there and listen to everything I was going through, but she would.”

At Childhaven parent group meetings, Kathy takes comfort hearing about the ups and downs that other families experience. Now released from jail, Emiyjah’s mother is also attending parent meetings and working to re-establish her bond with her daughter.

Zahyir and Emiyjah both made tremendous strides at Childhaven. Zahyir did great in kindergarten this year, and Emiyjah is already writing her name, reading a few words, counting to 100 — and can’t wait to start kindergarten in the fall.
Thank you! Your gifts provide healing, hugs and hope

By investing in the healing work of Childhaven, you ensure that young victims of abuse and neglect can learn to feel safe, cherished and confident. As they grow into loving parents of their own children one day, your support will have an impact for generations.

We are grateful to every person who has invested in Childhaven over the past year and are proud to recognize our leading donors here. All donations support our Second Century Campaign. This list represents gifts made between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013.

ROOTS & WINGS SOCIETY

NAMED ENDOWED FUNDS

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“When I invest my time in Childhaven, I know I’m investing in more than just a single better day for each child, more than a better life for each of them. I’m investing in making my community a better place for all of us.”

Marta Lowe, ATTORNEY, COSTCO

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Together, we can transform young lives for the next 100 years

Thanks to the generous support of our community, Childhaven has been caring for vulnerable children since 1909. The Second Century Campaign is an ambitious, five-year community challenge to ensure that we will be transforming lives for decades more to come.

To learn more about how you can become involved, please contact:

Dawn Griffee Petrickiani
VP – Leadership Gifts
dawng@childhaven.org
206.957.4808

Aimed at diversifying and stabilizing our sources of revenue, the Second Century Campaign has already galvanized individuals, families, and businesses to put us at 60 percent of our goal of raising $12 million to protect and strengthen our core program and to create an $8 million endowment to further secure our second century.

Please, get involved today by:

• Making a one-time gift or multi-year pledge
• Donating stocks or other securities
• Leaving a legacy by remembering Childhaven in your will
• Attending our annual fundraising auction or luncheon
• Taking a tour
• Engaging your employees in our work
• Volunteering in the classroom or at an event

Childhaven is joyfully more than halfway toward our goal of raising $12 million to protect and strengthen core services and also to create an $8 million endowment to secure our mission for the next 100 years. Let’s keep it going!