An investment that lasts a lifetime

By Maria Chavez Wilcox
Childhaven President

Childhaven didn’t single-handedly turn Norris Frederick into the caring and inspiring young man he is today. But we did give four-year-old Norris his first glimpse into the kind of stable, peaceful, trusting life he could aspire to.

Children like Norris come to Childhaven from chaos. Substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness or poverty makes every day a struggle for their families and can often lead to harmful decisions and tragic choices. Norris tells us that each day at Childhaven was a day he knew he wouldn’t go hungry, where he could act up and not get beaten with a belt and where he knew he was safe and loved.

Consistency, love and calm discipline lay the groundwork for Childhaven children to begin to trust and to understand that life doesn’t have to be chaotic. At such an early age, when children’s brains are still developing, time spent at Childhaven makes an impact that literally lasts a lifetime.

When Childhaven alumni come back to us as adults, we have living proof of the incredible return on the investment that you, our loyal donors, make in the lives of the young children in our care. Your support of our work pays off in human dividends.

I hope you’ll join us when Norris shares his life story at our fundraising luncheon in March — one shining example among thousands of a return on investment like no other.

Two decades after Childhaven, a young man bounds to success

Most kids who grew up like Norris Frederick find themselves behind bars, not leaping over them.

From a family wracked by child abuse, alcoholism, domestic violence and even murder, Norris persevered to become a world class track and field star and motivational speaker. Fueled by the love he found at Childhaven as a preschooler — a connection that endures today — he overcame more hurdles before he turned 25 than most people face in a lifetime.

Norris remembers being combative and disrespectful at Childhaven, “but they treated me to my potential instead of treating me just in the moment,” he says. “I’d never been any place where people cared so much about what I could be, what I was destined to be.”

One of the most decorated athletes in University of Washington history and a five-time NCAA All-American (four times in the long jump and once in the high jump), Norris is now training for the 2016 Olympics. He will share his remarkable story with guests at Childhaven’s annual Celebration luncheon in March.

Mark your calendars!
Thursday, March 7
WASHINGTON STATE CONVENTION & TRADE CENTER

Don’t miss hearing Norris Frederick’s inspiring story at Childhaven’s annual Celebration Luncheon. To learn more or register to attend, visit events.childhaven.org.

There’s still time for your company to sponsor the event or to sign up as a table captain. Contact Danielle Thompson at 206.957.4806 or daniellet@childhaven.org to learn more.

Norris’ inspiring story continues on page 3.

“Give a little love to a child, and you get a great deal back.” — John Ruskin
Living your values

Bareq Peshtaz
Childhaven Board member
Vice-President, Bernstein Global Wealth Management

Bareq Peshtaz knows what it means to be a good father. He had a remarkable role model.

Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, Bareq was four years old when his family fled the brutal Communist regime after his father had narrowly escaped a heartless, random execution. The family left virtually everything behind and settled in Puyallup, where an uncle already lived.

“My dad always told us that when you believe in something, you own it and live it. I see that in the way Childhaven approaches its mission,” says Bareq, who joined Childhaven’s Board of Directors in 2012.

The values instilled in him as a child — putting family first and fighting for what you believe in — gave him strength and determination in a 14-month effort to win sole custody of his son, Kai, now five. Bareq brings to Childhaven the same kind of commitment and passion that he brings to fatherhood.

“The experiences that I have with Kai have deepened my appreciation for the unconditional love and attention that Childhaven children receive from a staff that is so committed to them. It’s not just a job. People here really believe in the mission,” he says.

“Childhaven is giving children a phenomenal chance at a good life. And the more we can influence the development of better people, the better community we can all live in.”

Youth Board adds to teacher training and car seat coffers

Youth and enthusiasm go hand in hand — and when that power gets behind our Youth Board, great things happen. By April, these committed young people plan to raise $5,000 to finance teacher training and new car seats.

“I’m really excited for us to raise this money,” says Madeleine van Zuylen, Youth Board vice president and a student at Holy Names Academy. “Childhaven has such innovative and effective ways to combat child abuse and neglect, and it deserves our support.”

The Youth Board gives teenagers the opportunity to learn about philanthropy and create meaningful change in their communities, all while gaining leadership experience.

Board members plan to sell items during the holidays and collect individual pledges to fund several efforts. These include purchasing 11 new car seats and teacher training for two programs: Nurturing Pathways, a creative dance program that helps combat physical and emotional delays in children, and Teaching Strategies, which helps instructors understand how children learn and interact through social play.
Childhaven’s Celebration luncheon on Thursday, March 7.

Alicia Roper was one of Norris’ teachers when the little boy came to Childhaven in 1989. She remembers the fear, anger and confusion that came from living in a disruptive household.

“He was a contradiction, swearing a blue streak and acting out on the playground one second, charming and gregarious the next,” Alicia recalls.

When both Norris and Alicia left Childhaven, she remained close to the family. Today, Norris calls her his godmother.

“she was the first person not of my race who i learned to trust,” Norris says.

Racial discrimination, gang tensions and school disruptions marked much of Norris’ life outside the home in the following years. But the trust he learned at Childhaven laid the foundation for other important relationships with caring adults who helped him believe in himself and rise above hardship and tragedy.

“Childhaven was a safe place for me,” he recalls. “i want people who hear my story to know that kids who grew up like me can change and rise above difficult upbringings.”

Children’s art therapy gets an in-house boost

Art with Heart sets up shop at Childhaven

They’ve been around the Seattle area for 16 years, but at 316 Broadway — Childhaven administrative headquarters — Art with Heart staffers are the new neighbors on the block. The group moved into the building in mid-November, with plans to work directly with Childhaven staff and children in the classroom.

Art with Heart helps struggling children overcome emotional hardship through therapeutic books and programs that heal wounds of the heart. The group uses creativity as a tool to enrich, encourage and heal children, supporting their mental health and well-being.

And while Art with Heart has focused mainly on older kids in the past, both its own staff and those on board at Childhaven have been pleased to see how easily Art with Heart’s mission falls into step with the work already being done every day at Childhaven.

“The young children we serve here often have been through traumatic experiences, and because of their age, they usually cannot communicate their thoughts, feelings and needs like older children and adults. This makes the self-expression allowed by art therapy — and championed by Art with Heart — all the more valuable,” says Beth Larsen, Childhaven’s Associate Vice President for Program Operations.

“We are very excited to be at Childhaven, not only to provide direct services to younger kids, but also because the move gives us a built-in way to engage more volunteers,” adds Art with Heart Program Manager Nancy Stillger. “And we are happy our proven methods of healing will reach so many more vulnerable kids.”

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Norris Frederick

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One success story inspires the desire to create another

Success stories often domino around Childhaven, where happy, well-prepared children are launched into kindergarten and where observant donors reach into their hearts and their wallets to enable the process to continue.

Michelle Thompson and her son, Donovan, are just one of those stories. Donovan recently graduated from Childhaven and is now thriving as a lively kindergartener. Michelle believes her son wouldn’t be in such a good place without Childhaven’s help and intervention.

“I can’t praise Childhaven enough,” says Michelle. “They have a lot of great programs for parents and kids.”

Donovan, who had been at Childhaven since he was 8 months old, has sensory integration issues, which means he can easily be over-stimulated, making it difficult to concentrate, learn and follow directions.

“My caseworker helped me with all the big and little things, even simple stuff like suggesting I not schedule family activities back-to-back so that Donovan can have some decompression time,” Michelle adds.

“I’ve even been able to call her for advice since Donovan graduated.”

That’s all an acquaintance of Michelle (who wishes to remain anonymous) needed to inspire her to send a letter — and a check — to Childhaven. She said she and her husband “kept hearing about the wonderful work Childhaven does,” and wanted to donate the enclosed money in Michelle and Donovan’s names.

“She told me, ‘I can see how happy and stable Childhaven has made you and Donovan,’ and just because of that, she wrote a check. It’s amazing to me — now more people like us can be helped,” Michelle says.

Have lunch with us

This spring marks 25 years that Childhaven has sold box lunches to raise money to fuel our mission of breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect. Proceeds from sales of Gretchen’s Shoebox Express lunches help fund our Therapeutic Child Care Program.

So make plans now to gather your office mates, neighbors, book clubs or other groups of six or more, and order up to fight child abuse. Watch childhaven.org for more information on menus and prices for the May 9 event.
Jamal

First impressions are powerful, and one of Jamal’s earliest memories was seeing his mother stab his father. Jamal and his little brother witnessed a lot of severe domestic violence before they went to live with a cousin.

Under weekly psychiatric care, Jamal’s destructive outbursts were off the charts. More than one day care expelled him for uncontrolable behavior. He once destroyed a computer and would throw objects at people with the intent to harm.

“When Jamal came to us, literally anything would set him off, and he would go from 0 to 60 in violence at the drop of a hat,” his teacher says.

Childhaven staff took to containing him in a portion of the hallway where he could safely yell and scream until his anger would subside, be it 30 seconds or two hours later.

Childhaven staff also taught Jamal — a Star Wars fan — to use words to express his feelings. He developed a kind of code: if he said he was Darth Vader, a meltdown was on the way; if he felt like Luke Skywalker, staff knew that more centered, positive times were in order.

Gradually, the little boy who once said he “wanted the world to blow up” began having better days at Childhaven and at home. Luke Skywalker was finally prevailing over the Dark Side in Jamal’s life.

“The key seemed to be in giving him time to work through his anger and emotions, and allowing him just to be mad in a safe environment,” his teacher adds.
Your 401K is your future nest egg, but it can also benefit your heirs — and Childhaven

We all hope to “live long and prosper,” as they used to say on Star Trek. And 401K plans and Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) can help that wish come true. But when it comes to choosing the beneficiaries of your 401K plan or IRA, smart planning can ensure that others will benefit, too.

If you are considering a donation to Childhaven in your estate planning, designating the charity as a 401K or IRA beneficiary not only benefits Childhaven but can generate significant tax savings for the heirs you leave behind. Here’s how James C. Richards, a wealth advisor with The Smith/Richards Group, explains it:

Let’s say you leave your house to your daughter Susan and she sells it for $300,000 after you pass away. Even though you only paid $100,000 for it, under current tax law, Susan owes no taxes on the proceeds and receives the entire $300,000 tax free.

Now, let’s say you also have $300,000 in your 401K upon your death. If Susan is your beneficiary and is in a 30 percent tax bracket, she will owe $90,000 in taxes on those 401K funds. That’s because money that went into your 401K was deferred tax-free from your salary. Taxes must be paid when you — or your heirs — eventually access those funds.

However, as a 501(c)(3) charity, Childhaven pays no taxes. Designating Childhaven as your 401K beneficiary ensures it would receive the full $300,000, while willing your house to your daughter gives her the full value of that bequest.

“How you earmark assets in your estate makes a real difference. For someone already considering a gift to Childhaven, it makes sense for both the charity and your heirs to consider using all or part of an IRA or 401K for that gift,” notes James.

Using your head in estate planning strategies is important. But a gift to Childhaven also comes from the heart.

“Remembering Childhaven in your estate plans creates a lasting legacy for you, a way to make sure that the organization you care so much about during your lifetime continues to benefit even after you’re gone,” James says.

To talk to your financial planner, accountant or attorney to discuss what works best for you. And if you’ve chosen to remember Childhaven in your plans or have questions, please contact Dawn Griffey Petricciani at 206.957.4808.

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

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The Second Century Campaign is a forward-thinking, thorough and ambitious five-year initiative to diversify and stabilize Childhaven’s sources of revenue and further secure our mission for another century.

Our vision is a community where child abuse and neglect no longer exist.

Our mission is to forever end the cycle of child abuse and neglect by healing its youngest victims with scientifically proven therapeutic care, preparing them to be successful learners, supporting their families, and laying the foundation for lifelong loving relationships.

Childhaven is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

To respect the privacy of the children and families we serve, we may change their names in articles, hide or obscure their faces in photographs, or use stock photos.