We thrive with the help of our amazing partners

By Maria Chavez Wilcox  
Childhaven President

When we’re going through difficult times, the Beatles put it well, “I get by with a little help from my friends.” The friends and partners we have at Childhaven certainly lift us up in good times and tough ones. They also ensure that we serve our children as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Partnering makes good sense. As skilled as Childhaven is in healing children and mending families, we know we can’t do it alone. Reversing the impact of abuse and neglect or the effects of prenatal substance abuse takes more than a village. It takes a whole world of caring people.

One of our most influential partners is the Washington State Department of Early Learning. This agency offers us guidance and advocacy when it comes to the state and federal funding that supports our work. And of course, our loyal donors and other supporters like United Way and the Children’s Alliance also are essential partners.

We rely on organizations like Art with Heart and Committee for Children to provide enriching programs and curriculum geared toward traumatized children. School districts and early learning nonprofits are critical allies in ensuring that kids succeed once they leave us. So are foundations, businesses and individuals who recognize and fund the important work we do to prepare children for school and for life.

Our partners and generous supporters make us — and our children — so much stronger. Thank you for helping us thrive!

One child’s journey

A Childhaven graduate makes huge strides with mom and siblings

Sometimes, children are so ready for kindergarten, they can hardly stand to wait. Months before graduating from Childhaven and heading off to elementary school, Chaun Williams would insist on finishing every page of her preschool homework the first day she received it.

It didn’t matter that she had a week to complete it. She loved showing her mom and teachers how well she could write her name, trace every letter of the alphabet and count all the way up to 40.

Three years ago, when Chaun first came to Childhaven, she’d scream “I can’t do it!” any time she’d get frustrated. Born addicted to methadone, Chaun had to work through cognitive delays that made it hard for her to process information or use fine-motor skills.

At Childhaven, her teachers would calmly encourage her when she lost her cool. They helped her build patience and taught her to see how much fun it can be to learn new things.

Chaun’s mom learned from Childhaven to take that same calm and encouraging approach with her daughter. After struggling with addiction for much of her adult life, Dana Dildine has been sober for three years.

Chaun and three of her older siblings are now adjusting to life as a family of five. Months of evidence-based family intervention at Childhaven tailored specifically to their situation helped diffuse the tension and communication issues that emerged after the family reunited.

“Childhaven has been a blessing to my son and me. We are very thankful for all the love and help from all the staff.” — A Childhaven Father
The many ways our corporate partners give and give... and give

We are fortunate that so many Seattle-area companies value the difference their employees can make in our community by volunteering and donating to organizations like Childhaven.

Corporate partners like Outerwall, the company behind Redbox and Coinstar, give in so many ways. They visit our branches and host fun events for children at their headquarters. They donate auction packages, sponsor events, fund programs through grants, volunteer on our board and so much more.

Outerwall has hosted a spring gardening party and painted old classrooms. They’ve even organized a family holiday movie night with their CEO decked out as Santa. Employees brought so many presents that evening, we were handing out the extras on children’s birthdays for months.

Outerwall employees rave about the experiences they’ve had volunteering at Childhaven.

“They make it so easy for us to feel connected and contribute,” said Lily Osborne, Outerwall’s Senior Community Relations Specialist. “They teach us about the kids and their families. That makes it a lot more meaningful.”

In addition to volunteering, many employees at Outerwall and other corporate partners make donations as well – which companies then match.

Outerwall’s relationship with Childhaven began four years ago, when then-Chief Financial Officer Scott Di Valerio joined our board. Now CEO, Scott remains a strong Childhaven champion. Today, the company’s involvement on our board continues with Chief Legal Counsel Don Rench serving as a trustee.

To find out how your company can become a Childhaven corporate partner, contact Julia Aman, at juliaa@childhaven.org or 206-957-4825.

“They are fantastic with our kids,” says Julia Aman, Childhaven’s Program Operations Manager. “They’re very gracious and genuine and have shown this natural talent and ability to work with our children.”
Before, my kids were scared around me all the time,” Dana says. “Now they all feel safe — safe and loved.” There are still problems to work through. But now, the kids say, “Mom, I’m upset,” explain exactly what’s bothering them then ask, “Can we talk about this?” Chaun used to yell almost any time she had something to say. Not long before she graduated in August, she told her Childhaven therapist: “Spending time with my family makes my day!” Dana is so grateful for her family’s turnaround, she’s asked to join Childhaven’s parent advisory committee so she can help other families like hers in the years to come. “I want to keep giving back,” she says.

Partnerships help kids succeed beyond Childhaven

A key to preparing kids for success in school is identifying developmental delays and mapping out a game plan to work through them as early as possible. Partnering with local school districts, which can start working with kids to address learning disabilities as early as age 3, is one of the many ways that Childhaven paves children’s path to academic success long before they leave our care.

Some kids need an hour or so each week with a special education teacher who visits Childhaven. Others attend afternoon special-education preschool programs run by their school districts.

“These additional layers of early intervention — combined with the therapeutic care we provide here at Childhaven — give children with special needs a two-year head start,” says Todd George, Program Director at our Broadway branch. “That helps them start school ready to thrive.”

A new partnership we’re launching this year is with First Place School. Once a private nonprofit school for children facing trauma or homelessness, First Place is now a publicly-funded charter school.

This summer, we worked closely with First Place to help several Childhaven graduates make a smooth transition to kindergarten.

“This is a great opportunity to work with an organization that offers many of the same support services that Childhaven provides to help both children and families succeed,” George says of the First Place partnership.

Brighten the holidays for Childhaven families

Give the gift of joy and hope this holiday season by donating to our Family Wishes program.

Your gifts of clothes or shoes, toys or books will delight a child. Many of our families struggle to pay the bills and appreciate everyday items like soap and toothbrushes, or household items such as bedding and dishes. We also welcome your financial support this time of year so we can help our families in many other ways.

Another great gift that gives families a chance to build lasting memories together: passes to local museums or gift cards to movies or restaurants.

To learn more about our Family Wishes program, visit us at childhaven.org, click on Get Involved, then Help a Child.

One child’s journey

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Raquel

Some children are wise beyond their years. They pick up on every little thing that happens around them, good or bad. They talk about life in stunningly matter-of-fact tones.

Raquel was one of those kids. Both of her parents grappled with drug abuse. She spoke openly about it with her Childhaven teachers.

“My mom and dad are in treatment,” the 5-year-old would say. “I hate them for using drugs.”

Raquel was used to turmoil. Bad things would happen, and then people would leave. It put her on edge. She would yell at her classmates and teachers and throw things. While other kids avoided her outbursts, her lead teacher stuck close by.

“When she realized that no matter what she did, her teacher wasn’t going away, Raquel started to shake that unsettled feeling and revel in her favorite classroom activity: dressing up in costume — any costume. A grandma at the grocery store. A superhero. A doctor. She’d invite her friends to play dress-up with her, and then assemble floor puzzles or create masterpieces with finger paints.

As her mom made strides in treatment, Raquel bragged about the trips they’d take to the library. She’d flip through National Geographic books about giraffes and gazelles and gorillas while her mom scoured the Internet for job listings.

“I’m proud of my mom,” Raquel boasted after Mom landed a job.
‘This was the best day of my life!’

**Florida youth group devotes service mission to Childhaven**

We are constantly touched by the time and talents our volunteers give to Childhaven so generously. Every now and then, we’re simply amazed.

This summer, a youth ministry group traveled all the way from Florida to spend three days of an annual service retreat volunteering in our Burien and Broadway branches.

About 70 teens from Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church read books to children and romped with them on our playgrounds. They also spent countless hours updating all the emergency kits of diapers, formula, food and other essentials that are stocked in our vans.

“A lot of kids in our youth group come from well-to-do families with two parents. Life hasn’t presented them big challenges like the kids at Childhaven have faced,” said David Bonnema, Palma Ceia’s Associate Pastor of Youth and Families and the son of longtime Childhaven volunteer Eva Bonnema, whose passion for our work spurred the youth group’s interest.

“We all walked away appreciating how important it is to get involved with organizations like Childhaven that work so hard to give vulnerable children a brighter future.”

One green-thumbed volunteer led a delighted group of preschoolers in planting gorgeous flowers outside the entrance to the Burien branch. The teens wanted to leave behind something beautiful that would remind the children of their visit.

One child who helped plant the flowers exclaimed, “This was the best day of my life!” She returned to the little garden the next week to make sure the flowers were OK.

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**Save the date**

*The Childhaven Celebration Luncheon is Wednesday, March 11*

Kick off spring with some inspiration from Childhaven. Join us at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle to learn first-hand how your support is making a remarkable difference for abused and neglected children.

You’ll also hear our keynote speaker, Ashley Rhodes-Courter, author of *Three Little Words: A Memoir,* which is now being made into a major motion picture starring Reese Witherspoon and Amanda Seyfried. [Watch the website for updates, www.Childhaven.org/luncheon.](http://www.Childhaven.org/luncheon)

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- ✓ Rake the leaves
- ✓ Cheer on the Seahawks
- ✓ Donate to Childhaven through payroll deduction

Fall is the time of year when many companies and government workplaces give employees the opportunity to invest in charitable organizations through easy, regular payroll deductions. When you have the chance to support a cause dear to your heart through United Way or other workplace giving programs, please consider Childhaven. On behalf of the children and families we serve, thank you!
How Boeing employees make a bigger difference – together

Thousands of Boeing workers in the Puget Sound region amplify the impact of their charitable giving by pooling their funds together and getting deeply involved in choosing projects that will make a difference.

More than 15,000 Boeing workers and retirees in the Puget Sound area give to the Employees Community Fund, which makes grants to local health and human service organizations.

The Fund has awarded Childhaven more than $380,000 over the last several decades for dozens of projects to keep our buildings and equipment up to date.

Dan Morris, a project manager on Boeing’s 787 line, started out giving $10 per paycheck. Today, he gives even more and is one of eight Fund trustees who review grant proposals.

Fund trustees enthusiastically approved Childhaven’s latest request: more than $12,000 to upgrade two rooms with audio-visual equipment to capture video of parents and caregivers interacting with their children.

All told, the Employees Community Fund has made more than half a billion dollars in grants since 1951.

“Being able to see that play-by-play and hear from a child and family therapist, ‘You did a great job here. Look at the joy in your child’s eyes!’ — that’s valuable and empowering,” Dan says.

You can secure the future of Childhaven

In Childhaven’s 105-year history, we have never been more certain that our healing care for children fills a critical need — for the children and families we serve and for our entire community.

Our Second Century Campaign ensures that will be here for another 100 years and beyond. The campaign will raise $12 million from new and loyal donors to protect and strengthen our core services and also create an $8 million endowment to further secure our mission.

Learn how you can play a significant role in the campaign today by contacting Dawn Griffey Petricciani at 206.957.4808 or dawng@childhaven.org.

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.