Moving and grooving toward healing

Your support of dance, music, and other art therapies lets children express themselves

It's dance time, and ten little toddlers gather in a circle, surrounding their instructor with eager smiles and wiggly bodies.

"Can you feel your bones, everyone?" asks Amelia Bolyard, beginning a whimsical warm-up with gentle arm and leg squeezes.

"Let’s do a one-finger clap … now two fingers.” Amelia continues until everyone’s applauding with all five fingers, grinning from ear to ear and bobbing their heads as a bongo drummer in the corner of the room keeps a steady beat.

Next they swirl their arms and sway their bodies, pretending to be trees blowing in the wind. They stand up tall, tickle the clouds, and make big windmill circles. They wave and toss and blow playful puffs of air into colorful scarves, then giggle as the red, blue, purple, and green wisps float all over the room.

This is more than just a dance class—it’s therapy.

It’s also one of many ways Childhaven incorporates art into the classroom, giving children who have experienced abuse or neglect a chance to express themselves.

Music and dance, with their patterns of repetitive sounds, beats, and movements, can have an especially calming effect on children healing from trauma.

"Art is a place where they can show every aspect of their emotional selves," says Amelia, who teaches dance therapy once a week in two classrooms at our Broadway branch through a partnership with Cornish College of the Arts.

"It’s amazing to see kids with mobility challenges, confidence challenges, focus..."
A donor’s loyalty makes a big difference

Suzy Dutton didn’t have much spare time when she started volunteering at Childhaven back in the early 1990s. The busy mother of three was working part-time at an insurance company. Once a week, she’d drop off her youngest boy at preschool then report for duty in one of our infant classrooms.

“She’d feed the babies, rock them to sleep, and leave feeling grateful for the chance to be a calming influence on children who had already endured so much trauma and heartache in their very young lives.

In the years to come, as Suzy’s kids got older and she ramped back up to a full-time work schedule, she shifted her support from volunteering to donating money each month. For more than a decade, Suzy has given a portion of every other paycheck to Childhaven through United Way’s workplace giving program, increasing her donations from time to time.

Suzy recently nominated Childhaven for a giving challenge sponsored by her company, Farmers New World Life Insurance on Mercer Island. And thanks to her, Childhaven was one of a handful of organizations to earn a $1,200 donation from Farmers.

Together, Suzy’s loyal contributions show there are many ways to make a meaningful impact when you make giving a way of life.

Child abuse is everybody’s business

By Maria Chavez Wilcox
Childhaven President

When the chroniclers of Seattle business recognized Childhaven for the impact we make on children and families, it sent a powerful message: Child abuse is everybody’s business.

Seattle Business magazine, in designating Childhaven as the Silver Community Impact Award recipient in the Nonprofit of the Year category, didn’t just honor us. It honored you, our donors and supporters, who are strengthening our community by helping us transform the lives of our most vulnerable residents.

This award means a lot to Childhaven. Raising awareness is key to breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect that threatens our children today and puts generations of families at risk tomorrow. When the movers and shakers of business learn about the healing work of Childhaven, they can leverage their resources to help us save more children’s lives.

We’re grateful for the award and even more grateful for your passion.
We couldn’t make an impact without you!
Moving and grooving

Continued from page 1

“It’s amazing to see kids with mobility challenges, confidence challenges, focus challenges all finding something within their own experience that expands their abilities.” —Amelia Bolyard

challenges all finding something within their own experience that expands their abilities,” Amelia adds.

Through two other partnerships, children also participate in visual arts and music therapy. Instructors from the nonprofit organization Art with Heart lead therapeutic art projects that encourage healthy emotional expression. And children in each of our branches get music therapy every week, singing along with Brian Vogel, a.k.a. Brian the Music Man, who’s been teaching at Childhaven for almost 10 years.

In the future, the Childhaven program staff hopes to continue to expand arts offerings.

“Children respond so naturally to the creative process, and it can be so helpful to their emotional and physical well-being,” says Kelly Emery, programs operations manager for Childhaven. “We would love to grow the dance and visual arts programs to the Auburn and Burien branches, and hope to find the funding to do so.”

Celebration Luncheon: Join us March 2!

Be our guest as we celebrate you at our annual Celebration Luncheon at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 2, at the Washington State Convention Center. It’s our opportunity to honor you and everything you have made possible for the children of Childhaven.

Our speakers will inspire you.

Nancy Thomas is a renowned therapeutic parenting specialist who’s worked tirelessly to improve the lives of children in thousands of homes in the U.S. and around the world.

Beth Thomas, Nancy’s adopted daughter and star of the HBO documentary “Child of Rage,” will share her story of transformation and unique insights into the mind of a challenging child.

And Jeanné Cole will tell us about the difficult and uplifting journey she and her granddaughter have taken together, with Childhaven’s support every step of the way.

Registration is complimentary and we encourage you to make a donation of $150 or more. If you want to make an even bigger impact, we invite you to:

Be a table captain. Invite nine of your friends, co-workers, and family members to join you at the event.

Sponsor the luncheon. Show the community—and your own employees—that your company cares about children and wants to make their lives better. Learn about sponsorship packages at childhaven.org/events/sponsorships.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2
Celebration Luncheon
Washington State Convention Center
Register online at childhaven.org/events/luncheon
For more information, contact Leslie Jennings at lesliej@childhaven.org or 206.957.4896.
Meet Arthur

Children are rough with their friends sometimes, but Arthur’s aggression was out of hand. The 4-year-old would storm kids, sit on them, and hit them in the face. He would run at teachers, arms swinging, and behave even more uncontrollably at naptime.

Arthur had suffered abuse, but the details were unclear. He refused to talk about what happened at home.

For months, he trusted no one at Childhaven. Then one of his teachers had a breakthrough. She created a mood chart for Arthur and asked him to help her track his daily ups and downs. He chose from sad, angry, happy, and I don’t know.

Whatever he picked, his teacher would ask him why, and then thank him for telling her. No one had ever asked him to think about his feelings that way before. As he learned to label his feelings, he realized there was nothing wrong with those ups and downs.

He worked with an art therapist and started using fine-tipped markers to express his feelings with colorful, intricate drawings. As he got in touch with his own emotions, he learned to experience them calmly, and then started helping friends do the same.

“Are you mad? Are you mad?” he’d ask a child who was acting out. “It’s OK.”

Your support makes stories like Arthur’s possible. Thank you for caring about the children and families we serve and for making a difference in their lives!