Our legacy endures because of you

By Maria Chavez Wilcox
Childhaven President

Thanks to you, Childhaven has more than big dreams for the future. We have thoughtful, ambitious, attainable goals. Because of your loyal and generous support to Childhaven, we have developed a strategic plan with a life-changing vision: healing more children, mending more families and moving even closer towards breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect forever.

In order to do that, we must continue to rely on approaches that are based in scientific research and proven to work. We must share our expertise more widely by helping other organizations learn about and implement the trauma treatment programs we have developed. We also must strive to serve more children, and to expand our parenting programs so that many new families can be served.

By investing in Childhaven, you’re investing in the children who need our help the most. Because of you, the legacy of Childhaven will endure. Together, we will break the cycle of abuse and neglect.

‘Her name is Hope.’

One thriving girl’s journey from despair to the promise of a bright future

Three years ago, Hope and Jeanné embarked on a journey neither of them would have chosen. Today, looking back on the ups and downs they’ve weathered together, with unrelenting support from Childhaven – and from you, our donors – Jeanné Cole’s eyes well up with grateful tears. “Now, she’ll look at me, wait for me to catch her eye, then flash the sweetest smile you’ve ever seen,” says Denise, who’s been teaching in our infant rooms for 16 years.

“My worst nightmare ended up being the most precious gift ever – my miracle,” Jeanné says, smiling as her 5-year-old granddaughter Hope dances around the playground.

When Hope was not quite 2, Child Protective Services removed her from her parents’ filthy apartment. Jeanné raced to her side, hoping that with some support and encouragement, Hope’s parents could turn their lives around.

Every Friday, Jeanné would visit Hope at Childhaven. Just as predictably, Hope would wait and wait for her mom and dad – but they wouldn’t show. So Jeanné stepped up and devoted herself to being Hope’s steady and loving “Grinny.”

At first, Hope hardly ever spoke to her teachers and classmates. How could she trust anyone? Who would be there for her the next day? Or the day after that?

Patiently and methodically, Childhaven helped Jeanné lay the foundation of Hope’s daily routines at home and in the classroom. They taught her to speak to Hope in calm and reassuring tones, make sure she was eating well and getting enough rest.

Slowly, Hope started to talk more – then sing, then dance.

At her child and family therapist’s recommendation, Hope started taking ballet, tap, and hip hop classes as an outlet to express herself through movement and song.

Today, holding back a chuckle, Jeanné smiles with the quiet joy of watching her granddaughter experience little moments of growth – safely, securely and with confidence.

Jeanné recently adopted her granddaughter, who started kindergarten this fall, already counting to 100 and sailing through her alphabet.

“My Hope is my hope,” Jeanné says.

“If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all.” — Pearl S. Buck
Grounded in science, nurtured in hope

Your support creates an enduring legacy for Childhaven and for generations of children and families

More than a century ago, when Childhaven was still called Seattle Day Nursery, struggling families turned to us for safe, affordable child care. Today, we continue to offer the same hugs and hope that supported children and parents back in 1909 – with one important addition.

Healing.

In 1977, community members like you supported our shift from day care to trauma treatment for abused and neglected children – a shift that was grounded in science.

The care provided to these babies, toddlers and preschoolers was not just life changing, it was brain changing. Research proves that the sooner trauma can be addressed, the greater the chance of long-term healing.

Childhaven also chose to work with children regardless of parental participation, putting the child’s safety and needs first. It made sense, but it was revolutionary at the time. Other social service programs focused on family unity; if the parents weren’t involved, the child wasn’t served.

Today, serving both children and their parents is a hallmark of our success. So is an enduring dependence on leading-edge research that proves our program of care literally changes children’s brains for the better.

“We know from research that with the kind of care that Childhaven pioneered, we can reverse the negative effects of abuse on the brain, empower children and give them back some control over their lives,” explains Chief Program Officer Bethany Larsen, who’s been with Childhaven for 25 years.

“We have this incredible window of opportunity to intervene – from birth through the age of five – to influence a human being’s entire life span, break the cycle of abuse and neglect, and benefit their children and their children’s children.”

Consistency, structured routine, attentive listening, the opportunity to make their own choices, and clear limits and boundaries – both in the classroom and, through Childhaven’s work with parents, also at home – work to calm and heal children.

“They gain confidence and feel safe. We see remarkable transformations every day,” Bethany says.
Goodbye to a pioneer and friend

Childhaven and young children everywhere lost a champion earlier this year when Kathryn Barnard passed away.

“Dr. Barnard was a loyal friend whose work continues to influence our programs to this day,” says Chief Program Officer Bethany Larsen.

According to the University of Washington Alumni Association magazine, Columns: "When nurse Kathryn Barnard watched a woman who had been sexually abused withhold eye contact or not even hold her new baby, she realized how vital the caregiver-child relationship was in ensuring a lifelong healthy social and emotional development for children — and how overlooked it was. That realization set her on a path in which she became a pioneer in improving the health of infants and their families."

We are grateful to Dr. Barnard for her visionary work.

Are these dates on your calendar?

Be inspired, have fun and support Childhaven at one of these upcoming events.

MONDAY, NOV. 9
Dinner & Auction

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2
Celebration Luncheon

Register or learn more online at Childhaven.org/events.

Look what you’ve done!

Thanks to the transformational work you’ve made possible, Seattle Business Magazine has included Childhaven in the 2015 Community Impact Awards. We’re nominated as one of three finalists for Nonprofit of the Year!

COMMUNITY IMPACT
Meet Nathan

When children endure lots of chaos in their early years, their behavior often reflects the turmoil that rules their day-to-day lives. Nathan was different. During his three years at Childhaven, he showed amazing resilience and thrived despite his parents' fierce battles with drug addiction.

Nathan was 4 months old when he arrived at Childhaven. His mother and father were each working hard to get clean. They visited him as often as they could. So did his foster mom – and eventually an aunt and uncle who later adopted him.

Together, with steady encouragement from Childhaven's staff, his family showed up for Nathan in their own ways. His teachers and child and family therapist shared simple strategies for connecting with their remarkable boy – whether it was delighting in building a tower of blocks or offering a warm hug when he got upset.

At Childhaven and at home, Nathan learned to talk about his feelings. When he got upset, he'd say, "I'm mad" rather than acting out. If he wanted a toy another child had, he'd walk up and ask, "Can I have a turn?" or "I'll give you this toy if you let me have that one."

Nathan's time at Childhaven prepared him well for kindergarten – and for life. A Christmas card and preschool graduation photo that Nathan's aunt and uncle sent to Childhaven bear the smiles of a happy boy with a bright future ahead of him.

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.