Proudly wearing the cape for Childhaven

Maria Chavez Wilcox named 2015 Superhero for Washington Families

Calling her a “vivacious leader” to whom “the impossible always seems possible,” ParentMap magazine recently recognized Childhaven’s president as one of its 2015 Superheroes for Washington Families. Here are quotes from Maria in the magazine’s article about the honor.

“As a child-abuse survivor, it’s my mission to end child abuse and neglect. I believe becoming the president of Childhaven has brought me back to the path I ultimately needed to end up on. Somebody has to do it, and we are going to take it on, one step at a time!”

“When I came to the United States (from Peru), I was treated very, very badly because I wasn’t blond and I didn’t speak English. My fourth-grade teacher believed in me and spent a lot of extra time after school with me. She showed me that I could have a better life, that I was worthy of care and support. It didn’t matter that I wasn’t like everybody else.”

“Having one person who believes in you, and shows you a different way, is all you need to turn your life around. For a lot of kids, that happens at Childhaven.”

You can be a superhero, too! Learn how at www.childhaven.org/get-involved.

Your support helps our youngest children heal, hug and thrive

With a 6-month-old nestled in one arm, Denise Jackson scoops up a saucer-eyed girl with pom-pom pigtails who toddled over for some mid-morning hugs.

During her first few months at Childhaven, Eleanor* wanted nothing to do with her teachers, classroom volunteers and classmates. Neglected as a newborn by a single mom struggling with drug abuse, Eleanor wouldn’t smile. She wouldn’t make eye contact. She showed no emotion – about anything at all.

“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.

What did it take to earn Eleanor’s trust? Lots of patience and a steady, comforting routine that helped her settle down and learn that at Childhaven, she was safe. If she was hungry, someone would feed her. If she needed a diaper change, someone would get on it right away.

When nurturing adults attend to babies’ needs quickly, calmly and predictably, our little ones’ developing brains shift away from the fight-or-flight mode triggered by chaotic or traumatic experiences. They can start to heal.

Denise treasures the work she does with our youngest children at such a critical time in their lives, when they’re most vulnerable to the harm of abuse and neglect and most responsive to the

“I am very pleased and excited about the progress my son is making. I am proud of his accomplishments. He gets excited on a daily basis when the van arrives to pick him up.” — A Childhaven Mother
It’s not just nap time... it’s therapy.

Your gifts bring healing care in a child’s extra ‘ordinary’ day

Nothing about a Childhaven classroom is ordinary. Sure there’s story time, nap time, and play time. Kids learn colors and ABCs. Thanks to you, a Childhaven classroom offers much more. It’s individualized therapy for little ones who’ve experienced the trauma of abuse or neglect.

It’s rooted in brain science and an attitude of endless patience. Each day brings a structured routine where children learn what it feels like to have their physical and developmental needs met. Fearful, angry, sad, and confused kids work with teachers to first identify their emotions, and then talk about them.

For many, this the first time they are able to build trusting relationships with adults. Acting out is met with limitless patience. Clear boundary setting succeeds in calming and healing little minds.

Your generosity fuels the intensive therapeutic care we provide to hundreds of children every year – thank you!

Strategic giving saves the day

As CEO of Brighton Jones and a Childhaven board member, Jon Jones believes investing in charitable organizations is equally as important as investing in the stock market. Both require strategy and planning, which is why Jones helps people examine their legacies – the long-term impact they want to make on the world – along with their portfolios.

That philosophy is reflected in Jon’s personal philanthropy and commitment to Childhaven, as well as in his company’s support of its employees’ volunteerism and charitable giving.

“When our people donate and volunteer, they feel fantastic about it. They come back to work more engaged. So, the company benefits, the individual benefits and the nonprofit benefits,” Jon explains.

We have to agree, that’s pretty cape-worthy. Childhaven’s approach to ending the cycle of child abuse and neglect is also a sound investment, says Jon. By supporting Childhaven, individual and corporate donors can not only live more satisfying lives themselves, they can help countless generations of families do the same.

“There’s a process, a strategy and proof that what Childhaven does works,” Jon shares excitedly. “We have the opportunity to make a massive impact on people’s lives – not just here but as a model nationwide.”
Benefits of attentive and therapeutic care.

Over the years, Denise has seen child after child make amazing transformations. Some of them stay in touch, like a deeply appreciative dad who swings by every now and then with his daughter—now in her early teens and doing great in school—to remind Denise what a difference she made in their family’s lives.

Years from now those visitors could include Eleanor, who has you to thank for the bright future that lies ahead. Today, she’s too busy climbing into Denise’s arms every chance she gets.

*We have changed the Eleanor’s name to protect her privacy.*

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Responding to abuse in the media: It’s not mission impossible

From celebrities to politicians, recent news stories show that abuse and neglect occur in all socioeconomic and cultural landscapes. With over 3,000 reports of abuse in King County this year, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed.

But for every horrific report, Childhaven is rewriting a story of hope. Said Seattle Times columnist Jerry Large in a recent article: “Ending childhood neglect and abuse is possible, and it happens now at Childhaven.”

**Three simple ways to respond:**

1. **Report abuse in Washington by calling 1-866-ENDHARM**
2. **Support Childhaven in breaking the generational cycle of abuse**
3. **Talk with your own kids about feelings and personal safety**
Meet Leanne

How you supported her self confidence

One day, a boy riding on Leanne’s van to Childhaven scowled at her and snapped, “Those braids are ugly!” With an unfazed glare, she replied, “If ugly means beautiful, then you’re right!”

Holding back a chuckle, her teacher felt a rush of pride listening to the sassy 3-year-old stand up for herself. Leanne used to be so sullen and withdrawn, she’d often slink off to a corner of her classroom at Childhaven – showing no interest in playing with her classmates.

Her teachers would ask her how she was feeling, and she’d stare back blankly. She didn’t know what to say. No one had ever paid much attention to her before. Her birth mom had neglected her, and she hadn’t fared much better in foster care.

In time, as Leanne watched her friends play, her teachers would narrate their feelings. “Can you see that Bobby has a smile on his face?” they’d ask. “He must be happy!”

If Leanne fell and skinned her knee, they’d say, “I feel sad when I skin my knee. It’s OK to ask your teacher to help you.”

Like a wilting flower that springs back when watered, Leanne soaked up all those words, all that warmth. As her self-confidence grew, Leanne moved in with a loving foster family that later adopted her.

Leanne’s new family still keeps in touch, raving about how well she’s doing in school, on the soccer field, in Girl Scouts – always building on the self-confidence that took root and blossomed at Childhaven.

You make stories like Leanne’s possible. Thank you for caring about Childhaven’s children and families and for making a difference in their lives!
You helped redefine childhood

*This year’s Box Lunch event provided more than delicious meals. It served up inspiration.*

When the lunches were delivered, diners found cards reading “Childhood is ____” nestled among the apples and sandwiches. Social media was abuzz as participants took a stand against child abuse by posting their “lunchies.”

To add some spice to this year’s event, we made it a community challenge. Competitors certainly stepped up to the “plate,” with the Seahawks lining up against the Huskies, and Swedish Hospital departments vying against each other.

Thanks to everyone who participated!

**Over $31,000 raised to support Childhaven’s healing care**

3,800 meals delivered

121 Largest number of lunches ordered by challenge-winner Premera Blue Cross

217 participating companies and organizations

400 miles driven by staff and volunteers

80 involved volunteers

80

It’s the Super Bowl of auctions!

*Join us for our Dinner & Auction event in November*

For the 14th year in a row, Childhaven is teaming up with the Seattle Seahawks to host an incredible evening of fabulous auction items, delectable food and many surprises. It’s our biggest celebration of the season, and your chance to mingle with our own football superheroes.

The event takes place on Monday, November 9, at the Hyatt Bellevue. Watch our website or Facebook page early this fall for details and registration.

Go Seahawks and Go Childhaven!
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.