Parents deserve our compassion

By Maria Chavez Wilcox
Childhaven President

Most of the parents who come through our doors are loving moms and dads. I’ve learned from my own life experiences and my time at Childhaven that the majority of parents are doing the best they can in very difficult circumstances. They had bad parenting role models themselves, were caught up in addictions, made bad choices of partners, or just didn’t know how to protect their children.

That was the case with my own mother. Years after I left home after being abused by my stepfather, my mother told me she suspected. But she had no resources, no help, nowhere to turn. Was she wrong not to protect me? Yes. Should we fault her for being a fallible human being trying to do her best for four children and falling short? Maybe not...

Childhaven works with parents to give them the skills and confidence to be effective, nurturing, protective parents because it is the only way to prevent future abuse and neglect and to break its vicious cycle. And the parents who work with us know that, too.

As one mother recently told me: “I love my son so much, but I just didn’t know how to handle his biting, kicking, screaming, out-of-control behavior. Now, thanks to Childhaven, I can cope. I can give him what he needs. I can do this.”

Thank you for supporting Childhaven and giving loving parents a second chance.

Helping parents become their children’s strongest champions

Dale Allen never let himself get discouraged during the two and a half years he spent proving that he had what it took to be a caring and responsible father to his baby girl.

When he first found out he was going to be a dad, Dale was homeless and battling drug and alcohol addiction. He enrolled in a treatment program and parenting classes. His girlfriend also struggled with substance abuse, and in January 2010, little Daleonia was born with cocaine in her system.

Determined to do right by his daughter, Dale took two-hour bus rides from South Seattle to Auburn to visit Daleonia at Childhaven. He made those journeys alone, embracing single fatherhood as a chance to start over. He approached every challenge with patience, persistence and optimism.

“I just wanted to be an awesome dad,” Dale says.

Childhaven greets parents and guardians as invaluable allies in the work we do to help children heal from abuse and neglect. We invite caregivers to get involved by visiting their children’s classrooms, where they can get real-time coaching and gain confidence that they can meet their children’s needs.

Dale visited his daughter’s classroom occasionally at first. Eventually, he showed up almost every day. Daleonia kept her distance for a while. In time, the wide circles she’d walk around him got smaller and smaller, until she’d run straight to him, squealing, “Daddy!”

“Each child is an adventure into a better life — an opportunity to change the old pattern and make it new.” — Hubert H. Humphrey
An investment in children and parents pays huge dividends

Shawn Plaster
Childhaven Board Member
CEO & Founder, Plaster Group

My wife, Ginger, and I have three thriving children who delight us to no end. Yet we worry every day whether we're doing all the right things, whether we're nurturing Luke, Elise and Maeve in all the right ways.

Parenting isn't easy. Children act up and melt down. Ginger and I focus on staying calm and positive when our kids hit a rough patch. We approach every tricky moment as an opportunity to learn how to be better parents.

Childhaven takes the same type of approach to helping moms, dads and other caregivers gain more confidence in their parenting skills. It's a commitment that's critical to ending the cycle of child abuse and neglect.

Before I joined the board, I did a lot of research about local organizations that are doing valiant work to give vulnerable kids a better shot at a bright future. The more I learned about Childhaven, the more convinced I became that it's doing all the right things and making a major difference.

Research makes a compelling case for early intervention. It pays off to invest in our youngest children when they are developing the moral compass that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

With early treatment, young abuse victims bounce back and make stunning strides. When parents and guardians take strides alongside their children, they will go far — and we as a society will share in the lasting benefits of their success.

The generosity of Childhaven donors, combined with the commitment of our long-time partners the Seattle Seahawks, resulted in a record-setting $798,000 raised at Childhaven's annual fall auction. Thank you!

The football team's support of an annual gala event to benefit Childhaven goes back to 1999, when Childhaven was selected as a "Courage House" by the National Football League.

"The Seahawks are proving on the field this season that they're one of the best teams in the NFL,” Childhaven President Maria Chavez Wilcox told auction guests. "And together, with all of you, they are proving that they're equally committed to helping Childhaven solve the terrible problem of child abuse and neglect.

“We are so, so grateful to the team and to all of you for helping us to make an impact for a lifetime in the lives of young children who need our help the most and for supporting our vision of forever ending the cycle of abuse of neglect."
The confident father raves about Childhaven's supportive and judgment-free approach to working with parents.

"They take the fear out of being a parent," he says. "Before, I was always afraid of making mistakes."

Dale is an alum of our Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), a series of classes that follows an evidence-based curriculum aimed at giving parents increasing levels of support so they can build stronger, healthier relationships with their children.

He also has attended monthly parenting meetings that offer practical tips and a chance to hear about how others navigate the highs and lows of parenting. And he’s now getting involved with the Parent Advisory Committee that gives Childhaven valuable feedback about our services and allows parents to connect with one another.

It’s been more than a year since Dale won full custody of Daleonia, and he now works part-time as a “veteran parent” in King County’s Parents for Parents program, sharing the lessons he’s learned to help other parents turn their lives around and reunite with their children.

Helping parents

Continued from page 1

The Frontiers of Innovation research we’ve done over the past year in partnership with Harvard University, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Washington has shown that children get the most out of learning games — which teach concepts like taking turns and solving problems — when they are emotionally even-keeled and truly focused on the moment.

We call that mindfulness. And as we embark on a third year of research, we are eager to learn whether incorporating mindfulness exercises into our classrooms can help children get even more out of learning games.

How will children practice mindfulness in our classrooms? Imagine a deep breathing exercise kids do while gathered in a circle, lifting and lowering a parachute. As everyone watches and feels the parachute rise and fall, teachers talk about how lungs do the same thing when we breathe in and out.

When children are mindful, they have an easier time staying calm, figuring things out, following directions and moving from one activity to the next — all especially difficult things to master for a child whose life has been disrupted by abuse or neglect.

The ultimate goal of our grant-funded Frontiers of Innovation research is to find new ways of helping vulnerable children make big strides through early learning.

Researching the power of mindfulness in learning games

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Nadia

When Nadia moved up to a 3-year-old classroom, she’d arrive at Childhaven so upset that she would throw up. She would keep to herself and melt down many times a day.

Changes can be rough for children. But in this case, teachers figured out it was young Nadia’s mom, Susan, who was having the toughest time adjusting. Her anxieties were rubbing off on her daughter.

Susan had never healed from the abuse and neglect she endured in her youth by the time she became a mom in her teens. It was clear she wanted Nadia to have a happier, healthier childhood than she’d had.

Teachers worked hard to gain Susan’s trust, doing whatever they could to encourage and support her free of judgment.

“I just tried to meet her where she was, to show her, ‘I’m not going to jump in and teach you how to parent,’” a teacher remembers.

Things started to change once Susan started visiting the classroom. One day, a teacher gave her the recipe for the playdough kids were molding. It was an olive branch that seemed to change everything. From that moment on, Susan’s anxious little girl grew more comfortable and outgoing every day.

With bright smiles, Nadia would invite friends to play and loved gluing things together with small-group project partners. When it was time for Nadia to leave Childhaven, her mom broke down in tears saying good-bye.

“It really struck me that we meant something to her,” Nadia’s teacher says.

Your support makes stories like Nadia’s possible. Thank you for caring about the children and families we serve and for making a difference in their lives!
Childhaven fundraiser features actress Patty Duke

To theatre-goers and movie audiences, she was the stage phenomenon and Oscar-winning young Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*. To a generation of 1960s teens and adults, she was the precocious twins on *The Patty Duke Show*. To fans for more than 50 years, she has been a versatile actress, best-selling author and relentless advocate for mental health. But to her family and friends, she is Anna, who survived decades of private misery before learning to forgive herself for her mistakes and others for theirs.

Patty Duke shared her remarkable life story in her 1988 autobiography, *Call Me Anna* and later in the 1997 book, *A Brilliant Madness: Living with Manic Depressive Illness*. At Childhaven’s Celebration Luncheon, she will inspire guests with her remarkable story of a childhood lived in poverty in New York; abuse at the hands of her managers; her struggles with addiction, suicide attempts and undiagnosed mental illness; and her triumph as a mother, activist and woman.

“It’s toughest to forgive ourselves,” she has said. “So it’s probably best to start with other people. It’s almost like peeling an onion. Layer by layer, forgiving others, you really do get to the point where you can forgive yourself.”

Best known for movies like *The Valley of the Dolls*, Patty has remained an in-demand actress. She recently filmed guest appearances on the hit TV shows *Glee*, *Drop Dead Diva* and *Hawaii Five-O*. She also is a popular actress in many made-for-television movies. Patty and her husband, Mike, live in Idaho.

The Childhaven Celebration Luncheon

Tuesday, March 11
WASHINGTON STATE CONVENTION & TRADE CENTER

Learn more and register at www.childhaven/luncheon

Captain a table, rally corporate support to make a profound impact on children

Every person who attends Childhaven’s Celebration Luncheon on March 11 has the opportunity to make an enormous difference for abused and neglected children by making a requested donation of $150 or more. Those who want to make an even more profound impact are signing up right now to be table captains and corporate sponsors.

Table captains invite nine of their friends, co-workers and family members to join them at the event. We can provide you with support to fill your table, such as sample language for e-invitations that tells your prospective guests about Childhaven and lets them know that a donation of at least $150 will be expected.

By becoming a corporate sponsor, your company tells the community that it cares about abused and neglected children. Sponsors also get a wealth of benefits, including a table for 10 and recognition at the event.

If you would like to be a table captain or sponsor, contact Danielle Thompson at daniellet@childhaven.org or 206.957.4806.
Why I give
Mune Tanaka
Childhaven Donor

For as long as I can remember, I have felt both anger and pain any time I see or hear about an innocent child being abused or neglected. It’s unconscionable — a vicious cycle that must be stopped.

Many organizations do important work to heal the victims of abuse and neglect. But as I researched which ones were making the biggest difference, I decided to support Childhaven because they focus on intervening as early as possible to prevent abuse and neglect from taking a deep and lasting toll on a child.

Another reason I give to Childhaven is that they do more than provide nurturing care for children. They work closely with parents, many of whom were victims of child abuse or neglect themselves.

I have seen parents at Childhaven make tremendous strides as they gain confidence in their parenting abilities. I have seen the smiles on children’s faces brighten to a gleeful glow as they share joyful moments with their parents.

As a Childhaven donor, I feel deeply honored to have played even the smallest part in helping to make some of those joyful moments happen.

You don’t have to be rich to leave a legacy

How do you want to be remembered?

Most of us hope to leave a mark on the world when we’re gone. And what better way to leave a legacy than to help abused children?

No matter how you choose to share what you leave behind with Childhaven, you’ll know that you’ve made a real and tangible difference.

Many people leave a specific amount or percentage of their assets to Childhaven in their wills.

Others name Childhaven as a beneficiary of all or part of a 401K, IRA or other retirement plan.

You can also choose to leave art, stocks or property to Childhaven.

Consider talking to your attorney or financial advisor today so you can leave a legacy tomorrow. And please let us know about your decision so we can include you in our Roots and Wings Society.

Questions? Contact Dawn Griffey Petricciani at dawng@childhaven.org or 206.957.4808.