



THE *chronicle*

THECHILDRENSCENTER.ORG | MEETING FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS | SPRING 2023

A photograph of a miniature dollhouse room. A doll with orange hair, wearing a blue sweater and a white patterned skirt, stands in the center. The room contains two beds with patterned bedding, a white table with a red cushion, a white dresser, and a blue tufted ottoman. The walls are light green and the floor is brown.

Play Therapy Helps Kids Explore Tough Topics

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\$100,000 MATCH MET
How this generous grant was a catalyst for giving
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TENDING TO OUR TEAM
Wellness Program Helps Protect Staff from Burnout
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SPREAD THE WORD
Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is May 7th
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DO WHAT YOU CAN WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

I have recently been enjoying some of the work of the poet Nikita Gill. The final stanza of her poem "Your Soft Heart" struck me in particular. She writes:

*"Kindness is the greatest endangered thing.
And here you are, existing, your heart so full with it."*

This resonated with me because when we look at the world, it certainly seems that kindness is indeed "endangered." In contrast, when I look at the Children's Center community I can see kindness in abundance. I see your and our staffs' hearts "so full with it."

This is evident in your generosity during food and toy drives. It can be seen in the teens that hosted a volleyball fundraiser. I see it in the hearts of the trustees and staff at the M.J. Murdock Trust and The Firstenburg Foundation whose grants are transformative. I see it in our staff that give of themselves to help heal those with mental health challenges and recover from trauma. And I could list so many more of you that show us your kindness.

Thank you for your support and all you do make an impact on the lives of youth here in our community.

Matthew Butte, Executive Director

NEWS FROM CHILDREN'S CENTER

- **SAVE THE DATE: OUR ANNUAL BENEFIT LUNCHEON RETURNS JUNE 1ST**
We can't wait to see you! See the back cover for more information about our in person Benefit Luncheon on June 1st at The Heathman Lodge.
- **THANK YOU TO CLARK COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS**
CCAR awarded Children's Center a \$1500 grant to purchase door alarms and door locks for families whose children are struggling to stay safe. We appreciate your support!
- **THANK YOU TO KING'S WAY VARSITY VOLLEYBALL TEAM**
A huge thank you to some of our Youngest Champions! The varsity girls volleyball team at Kings Way Christian School raised \$1,621.50 at their 2nd annual volleyball tournament in December. Amazing young community members!

COMMUNITY VOICES

What do you want people to know about children's mental health? Join the conversation by sending your thoughts to Jennie Hoheisel at jennieh@thechildrenscenter.org.

"More than ever, I see children needing adults to be examples of how to handle mental health issues: asking for help, advocating for others, beating the stigma, interacting with others and developing reliable coping skills. They need to see these examples in our homes and schools, our community, our world."

— GARNET HAYES
CHOIR DIRECTOR/TEACHER, WY'EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL

OUR MISSION

*We serve children,
youth and families
through comprehensive
community-based
mental health services.*

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- ADCO Printing & Graphics, *printing*
- Jennie Hoheisel, *writing*
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The Power of Play: Using the 'language of toys' to help kids heal

Children's Center therapists sharpen skills with four workshops during Play Therapy Week

"Play is the child's natural language and the toys are the words," says Garry Landreth, one of the founders of Child-Centered Play Therapy. Clinical Supervisor Heather Fairlee Denbrough couldn't agree more. As a 14-year veteran of Children's Center she's seen how Play Therapy can help kids explore feelings, express complex emotions, and engage in tough topics.

Play therapy is a widely used practice for many kinds of mental health issues that children experience, and is one of the many therapeutic approaches we use at Children's Center for children ages 2 – 13.

"Giving folks an experience of play therapy is important to me because it gives our therapists more possibilities to do powerful work with our child clients and their parents."

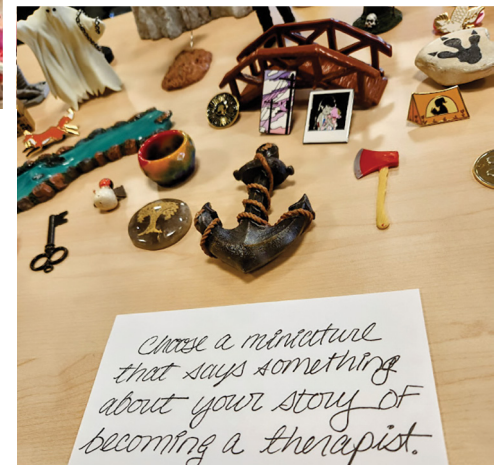
— HEATHER FAIRLEE DENBROUGH
CHILDREN'S CENTER THERAPIST



This February, Children's Center therapists took advantage of National Play Therapy Week to strengthen their Play Therapy skills through a series of four workshops, led by Denbrough, who is a Registered Play Therapist Supervisor and a Certified Synergetic Play Therapy Supervisor.

"Giving folks an experience of play therapy is important to me because it gives our therapists more possibilities to do powerful work with our child clients and their parents," said Denbrough.

The workshops gave staff the opportunity to learn about and experience what play therapy is. Workshop topics included the basics of play and sand tray experiences, and all the workshops had a hands-on component. Therapists practiced the skills and interventions with their colleagues in small groups or pairs, and applied refreshed skills in the therapy room right away.



Jehadi and Melissa sharpen their play therapy skills with an experiential practice exercise using a sand tray

Your support helps make trainings like these available to our staff. They are important for the growth of our clinical staff — but most of all, they give us one more proven method in our toolbox to change and save lives!

M. J. Murdock Trust Inspires Generosity with a \$100,000 Matching Challenge Grant

Emergency fund created to address rising demand for mental health services from COVID-19

In response to the rise in the demand for mental health services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the M.J. Murdock Trust established a Mental Health Innovative Solutions Initiative – an emergency fund to support organizations in our region that provide these critical services.

AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO UNPRECEDENTED NEED

The M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust developed the Mental Health Innovative Solutions Initiative to encourage partnerships and innovative approaches to expanding delivery of services to vulnerable and at-risk individuals.

The Trust invited Children's Center to apply for a grant from this emergency fund. In the autumn of 2022 we were thrilled to receive news that our grant application had been approved! We were awarded Matching Gift Funding of \$100,000.

"It is our honor to support Children's Center' work," said Jill Lemke, Senior Director Training and Capacity Building at the Trust.

The grant, titled *Transforming Children's Lives*, provided unrestricted funding at a 1:1 match, to catalyze broader philanthropic support. Unrestricted funding is particularly powerful support because it allows for flexibility to direct spending toward the most needed areas.

IT TAKES TWO

Matching grants double the impact of a donor's support, making them a compelling incentive to take action. So, we reached out to our heroic community to help match this \$100,000 gift. We were overwhelmed with the generous response and by December we were able to unlock the full potential of

this grant to change and save lives right here in Clark County.

MOBILIZING OUR COMMUNITY OF CHAMPIONS

Special thanks to Jeff and Lisa Gordon who gave our first gift to begin our match, and to the Candace Young Advised Fund who's matching gift started a new school program.

Thank you to those that donated to our Give More 24! day of giving which brought in over \$40,000, and to each one of you who said, "Yes!" to our matching campaign.

Whether long-time supporters or recent recruits, our 'Champions of Hope' recognized the opportunity to double their impact and responded generously to the call.

Our development office launched an email and social media campaign to reach new donors. (Many of you may be receiving this newsletter for the first time after discovering Children's Center and donating or volunteering for the first time. If so, welcome! We're so glad to have your support for kids and families in Clark County!)

We are grateful to the M.J. Murdock Trust and to all our donors that gave generously to match this grant. However you gave, your support helps us respond to strategic challenges — such as the need to attract and retain staff, increase access to treatment, and address rising operational costs.

"It is our honor to support Children's Center' work"

— JILL LEMKE
SENIOR DIRECTOR TRAINING AND CAPACITY
BUILDING AT THE TRUST



M.J. Murdock
CHARITABLE TRUST

ABOUT THE M.J. MURDOCK CHARITABLE TRUST

The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust has been supporting the growth of Pacific Northwest nonprofits since 1975 through grantmaking and enrichment programs.

The late Melvin J. "Jack" Murdock, co-founder of Tektronix, Inc., was an innovative, entrepreneurial leader with business interests throughout the Pacific Northwest. Upon his untimely death in 1971, his will directed three Trustees to establish a charitable trust "to nurture and enrich the educational, cultural, social and spiritual lives of individuals, families and community."

The Murdock Trust has since partnered with more than 3,000 nonprofits serving the diverse needs of the communities that comprise the Pacific Northwest.

New Program Aims to Address Staff Shortages (So We Can Serve More Kids!)

\$150,000 multi-year grant funds wellness and retention program for Children's Center staff

In the U.S. today there are 35% less mental health professionals than there were since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Here at Children's Center we've felt that strain on resources personally. A new grant from the Firstenburg Foundation will fund programs designed to retain and attract the highly skilled therapists who change and save lives every day at Children's Center.

PANDEMIC STRESSORS CAUSE MORE DEMAND, LESS STAFF

Before the pandemic, one in five Americans experienced mental health issues. During the pandemic, those number sharply rose — with some studies suggesting a 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide¹. Kids are some of the hardest hit. A recent study from the WHO showed that young people are disproportionately at risk of suicidal and self-harming behaviours¹.

With that increase in acuity comes an increase in demand on mental health professionals. In March 2020, while many of us sought hobbies to fill our newfound time, mental healthcare workers scrambled to translate years of training and expertise into a telehealth format virtually overnight. They served as a refuge for clients weathering the stress, fear, and uncertainty of a global pandemic — while going through it all themselves too.

The added burden, coupled with national shortages, lead to widespread burnout. The state of Washington is designated as a Metal Health "Health Care Professional Shortage Area", with only 16.2% of need met, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)². While Clark County is among the better served areas of our state, families here still struggle

to access care. Children's Center exists to ensure every child in Clark County gets the care they need — and we rely on the skills of highly trained therapists, clinicians, and home health workers to achieve this mission.

GRANT FUNDS STAFF WELLNESS AND RETENTION PROGRAMS

In the light of the challenging workforce landscape Children's Center received a generous grant of \$150,000 from The Firstenburg Foundation to help support our staff by creating a robust staff wellness program which includes fostering protective factors against burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, as well as financial incentives to encourage staff to remain at Children's Center

Some of our staff wellness programs included staff wellness days with an activity and time to connect, time with supervisors to help manage stress and additional staff wellness training during monthly meetings.

As a result of their generosity we will increase our capacity to recruit and retain staff which will allow us to serve more vulnerable children and families in our community — giving hope and healing to those living with mental health disorders. In other words, changing and saving lives of more children!

"We hope this grant helps rejuvenate, reward and retain staff members at the Children's Center so that they can continue to focus on their patients while taking care of themselves."

— JENNIFER RHOADS, CFP®
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ABOUT THE FIRSTENBURG FOUNDATION

The Firstenburg Foundation is a private philanthropic organization committed to improving the quality of life of citizens in Southwest Washington.

Established to continue the philanthropic legacy of First Independent Bank founder E.W. Firstenburg and his wife Mary, the Foundation invests in non-profit organizations where they see the greatest potential for unlocking and promoting transformational change.

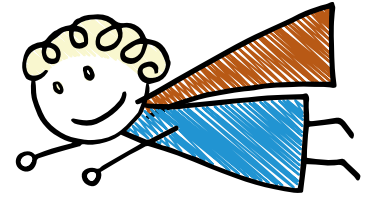
The foundation awarded its first grants in 2008. To date, the Foundation has approved grants of over \$22 million.

1 - www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide

2 - www.kff.org/3bfeb38/

Champions of Hope

When you support Children's Center's mission, you become a 'Champion of Hope' for a child in need. Here's what our generous Champions have been up to lately...



Holiday Food Drive donors and volunteers sent hundreds of pounds of food to the families we serve!

L-R: St. Joseph Catholic School, Christopher Wishon and daughter Kyra, volunteers Judy, Shirley, Anne, Eve, Karen and Julie

WANT TO SEE MORE PHOTOS?

Find us on  & 

Children's Center Clark County
@childrenscenter_clarkcounty



Holiday Toy Drive donors and volunteers gave big to make the season bright for the kids and teens (and alleviate financial stress for the parents) of the families we serve

Clockwise from above: Affinity Elves, Raymond James Financial Services, Twisted Roots Salon, Koreys Joy Drive, Pacific Lifestyle Homes, MacKay Sposito, Halo Salon, Judy and Charles Plamp, and Lynn and Bill Vandervort



Champions in the Spotlight

NATALIE O'NEIL

Natalie is a junior at King's Way Christian High School where she stays busy with advanced classes and both Varsity and club volleyball. You may recall our article in the Summer '22 newsletter about how Natalie and her teammates organized a fundraiser that benefited Children's Center. This year, the same event tripled attendance and raised over \$1,500 for Children's Center!

Why does children's mental health matter to you? *"Over the last few years I have known people my age that have greatly struggled with mental health. Witnessing this struggle has been heartbreaking. I've felt so helpless and not known what to do. Although we're just kids, my teammates and I knew we could do our part to help raise awareness and fund programs that support children's mental health."*



Photo credit: Melissa Brewer Photography

What moved you to take action and support Children's Center? *"Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults. We want kids*

"It is the history of our kindness that alone makes this world tolerable."

— ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

to feel supported so they can function well at home, school, and in our community."

What do you wish people knew about Children's Center? *"I wish people knew that help is available and closer than they think. The struggle is real and these services could greatly improve a person's quality of life — and even save a life."*

Become a Champion of Hope

TAKE PART IN CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

Each year, National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day (May 7) seeks to raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health and show that positive mental health is essential to a child's healthy development. It's also a prime opportunity to celebrate your dedication to

healthy families and spread awareness among friends, family, coworkers, neighbors or peers. Whether it's by sharing a post on social media, organizing a volunteer outing with friends, hosting a fundraiser, or simply making a donation, we welcome your support!



DONATION WISHLIST

- Healthy Snacks *protein bars, peanut butter crackers, fruit leather, etc.*
- Care Kit supplies *fidget toys, stress balls, sensory putty, journals, small bubbles for breathing techniques, etc.*
- Stuffed animals (new, min. 26") *Volunteer sewers turn these into weighted "Heavy Helpers" to sooth young clients with sensory issues*
- Art supplies *sketchbooks, markers, colored pencils, watercolors, etc.*

DONATION DROP-OFF

Donation drop-off: Mon–Thurs 8am–7pm

Shopping online? You can have donations sent to us directly! Ship to:

Children's Center
Attn: Jennie Hoheisel
13500 SE 7th Street
Vancouver, WA 98683



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SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 1, 2023

Children's Center Annual Benefit Luncheon

AT THE HEATHMAN LODGE

Join Children's Center staff and supporters for a joyous return to our annual benefit luncheon — live and in-person!

This year's keynote speaker uses humor and humility to break the stigma of mental health and make tough topics more approachable. John Moe, host and creator of the award-winning hit podcast *The Hilarious World of Depression* and the author of the book of the same name, has been featured in *The New York Times Magazine*, on *Weekend America*, and many other national publications and radio programs.

More information to come!

