



THE *chronicle*

THECHILDRENSCENTER.ORG | MEETING FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS | FALL 2024



Kindness Abounds at Annual Benefit Dinner

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In-demand items topping our donation wish list

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YOU ARE NOT ALONE

My copy of child and adolescent psychiatrist Dr. Ken Duckworth's book, *You Are Not Alone: The NAMI Guide to Navigating Mental Health*, is filled with underlinings and notes. I'd like to share with you a selection I highlighted that gives a snapshot of the "unfortunate historical legacy" of mental illness:

"For centuries, we have somehow collectively agreed that if the most complex organ in the body [i.e. the brain] has a disturbance and provokes a mood, thought, or perceptual experience that results in behavioral issues, we need to retreat to shame and isolation or to lock the "disturbed" person away in an asylum. . . In a society that has long sidelined mental health conditions, it can be hard to recognize and accept that you may have one."

This paragraph reminds me of the tragic history of how we have treated the mentally ill. While I'm grateful that we have come a long way in our understanding of mental illness and the treatment of those living with it, we still have more work to do. The legacy of stigma and shame surrounding mental illness continues to linger in our society, but it does not have to be this way. We can break the stigma if all of us advocate, champion, and foster a culture that allows those living with mental health conditions to be open in sharing their experience. Together I am hopeful that we can help create a different historical legacy.

Matthew Butte, Executive Director

NEWS FROM CHILDREN'S CENTER

- **THANK YOU TO ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL**
Their penny drive raised \$908 to benefit Children's Center!
- **THANK YOU TO ORCHARDS ADVENTIST CHURCH CONTINUED SUPPORT**
From dental supplies, to summer toys, school and art supplies, food baskets and sponsoring a family — their generosity throughout the year is so appreciated!!
- **FOOD DRIVE: NOW THROUGH NOVEMBER 20TH**
Every fall we double down on our food drive efforts so that we can give an extra bag of food to the families we serve in November, prior to the holidays. **See page 6 for donation wishlist and donation drop off details**
- **SAVE THE DATE: TOY AND GIFT CARD DRIVE NOV 25TH – DEC 13TH**
Holiday gifts help make the season special and provide a sense of normalcy for struggling youth. See back page for suggested items. **Donation drop-off: Mon–Thurs, 8am – 7pm**

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.

"We feel that it is extremely important to have children's mental health care here in the Vancouver, WA area. There are so many kids that benefit from these services. The fundraiser was a critical part of assisting those children who need the most help in our community."

— MIKE AND TERRI GERICH'S
BENEFIT DINNER VOLUNTEERS

OUR MISSION

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Donald Brunell, *Vice President*
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More Than Gifts: How Food and Toy Drives Create Hope for Families in Need

Your donations make a statement about our community and what we stand for

Our annual Food and Toy Drives go beyond holiday generosity — they're a chance to put values into action. Your support is proof that our community values children's mental health care and stands in solidarity with families facing tough times. With every donation, we're not just filling a pantry or stocking a toy shelf; we're renewing hope and showing Clark County families that they are not alone.

FOOD DRIVE: SOMETIMES HOPE LOOKS LIKE AN EXTRA BAG OF GROCERIES

Every year, Children's Center partners with local schools, businesses, and generous donors to gather non-perishable food items that help ease the burden for struggling families. It truly takes a village, and many donors find fun ways of gathering donations. Longtime supporter *St. Joseph Catholic School* hosts friendly competitions between grades, with pizza and donut parties for the winners. Businesses like *Halo Designs* and *Therapydia* also step up, placing collection boxes in their offices so clients can donate during their visits.

In the week leading up to Thanksgiving, our team of volunteers works hard to collect and sort the donations: canned vegetables, soups, pasta, tuna, peanut butter, and of course, everyone's favorite comfort food, mac 'n cheese. SO much mac 'n cheese! It's a big undertaking and ten to twelve volunteers are needed each year to collect and sort all the non-perishable items. These grocery bags, lovingly packed by volunteers, are then distributed to families. Last year we provided more than *500 bags of food!*

Providing a basic need can help families already struggling focus their financial resources elsewhere. Not only that, but your generosity is a powerful reminder of the kindness and support families in need can find right here in our community.



TOY DRIVE: HOLIDAY CHEER FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

After Thanksgiving our holiday Toy Drive gets underway. For many of our families, the holidays can be difficult as they may not have the funds to buy gifts. And so, since our founding in 1989, Children's Center has partnered with businesses, churches, schools, clubs, and many other generous donors to provide toys to our families in need. We are moved (sometimes literally to tears) by such generosity which captures the true spirit of the holidays and brightens the lives of the children and youth we serve.

Businesses like *Pacific Lifestyle Homes* and *Raymond James*, along with many others, help make this possible. We receive everything from baby toys to art kits, board games, and gifts for teens. Generous donors and companies like *MacKay Sposito* sponsor families, ensuring no child is left behind during the holidays.



Our Toy Drive is not just about putting presents under the tree — it's about creating a sense of belonging, support, and hope for families in need, and showing kids that they're seen, valued, and loved.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Want to organize your own food or toy drive? Interested in sponsoring a family? Are you able to help with pickups or sorting? Volunteers are needed and we'd love your support! Call Jennie Hoheisel at 360-699-2244 or email jennieh@thechildrenscenter.org for more information.

TIPS FOR HOSTING A DRIVE

Check out our Food Drive wishlist on page 6, and read our *7 Tips For Planning a Successful Donation Drive* at thechildrenscenter.org/drive



An Inspiring Evening on the Columbia River Raises Spirits and Funds

Your generous support raised \$166,000 to serve Clark County children's mental health needs

A new venue with beautiful views was the perfect setting for Children's Center's 2024 Benefit event. The Black Pearl on the Columbia River served as a stunning backdrop to celebrate 35 years of providing children's mental health services in Clark County.

Guests were greeted by volunteers from Kings Way High School and welcomed into the event. On the lower level, Bluegrass music from the band *The Ramblin Kind* played while guests mingled and enjoyed wine from *Pete's Mountain Vineyard* and appetizers from *The Kitchen Goddess*. Two cars from *The Brothers Collection* were featured on the lower level to announce our September fundraising event with rare access to one of the country's finest private car collections. Guests enjoyed being able to walk outdoors and take in the view of the Columbia River and the Marina at the Port of Camas-Washougal.

Our program began with Executive Director Matthew Butte greeting guests, extending a thank you to all for coming and introducing the evenings Emcee, Board Member Karen Smith, Principal Technical

Program Manager at Microsoft. A guitar performance by teenage brothers, Victor and Walter Curtis of *Lonnie O Music* served as a musical lead in to the highlight of the evening — our keynote speaker Dr. Elia "Al" Vecchione.

Al is the Founder and Clinical Director of the *Francis Foundation*, a private non-profit that serves people with extremely challenging behavior. He is also the co-founder of the *Vermont Crisis Intervention Network*, the only statewide crisis service for people with developmental disabilities

in the country, as well as the founder of the *Francis Foundation Learning Center*, a school that served children and adolescents with traumatic histories and unmanageable behavior. Al has been a champion of Children's Center for four years, providing staff training, guidance, and insight. He was also a guest on Episode 5 of our podcast, *Hope & Healing with Children's Center*.

During his keynote address, Al spoke of the suffering experienced by children living with mental health conditions and suggested that the key to helping them, "is being kind

GORDON FAMILY GIVING FUND PROVIDES MATCHING GRANT

Special thanks to our matching sponsor the Gordon Family Giving Fund. Their generous \$50,000 matching grant doubled the impact of your support!



(CLOCKWISE) Dr. Al Vecchi's inspiring keynote address, Julius Kozisek delivers spoken word, Guitar trio from Lonnie O Music, The Rambling Kind performs amid cars from The Brothers Collection, Pat Busick and guests, Emcee Karen Smith kicks off the night



Did you miss the Benefit Dinner or just want to hear more from Dr. Al Vecchi? Check out Episode 3 of our podcast Health & Healing with Children's Center. Listen for free on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, YouTube Music, or our website.

all the time. And when they're having a really difficult day, be even kinder."

Guests were inspired by his stories and compassion for those with mental health challenges.

Following Al's moving speech, Julius Kozisek, a recent graduate from Evergreen High School, shared his personal connection to mental health and performed a spoken word piece, *Living with Mental Illness*, by Ronald Banks.

The event came to a close with the presentation of the *Peg Busick Champion of Hope Award*. Each year we recognize a member of our community who has gone above and beyond in their generosity and commitment to Children's Center. The 2024 winner is Charlene Bancel, owner of Halo Designs Salon in downtown Vancouver.

Charlene has been a champion of Children's Center for over 20 years. Each year, Halo Designs holds both food and toy drives. Through these drives, and sharing our mission with anyone who will listen, she has inspired others to support our work.

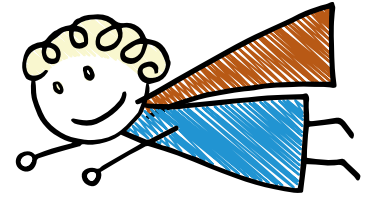
This past December, Charlene and her team at Halo Designs went a step further. They held a Holiday Toy Drive and Fundraiser at the Clark County Museum benefiting Children's Center. It was an amazing event that once again showcased her generosity and huge heart, proving that Charlene is truly a *Champion of Hope*.

Our thanks to everyone involved with the 2024 Benefit Dinner! Whether a sponsor, a guest, a volunteer or a presenter we are grateful for your support of our work!



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...



Volunteers from King's Way Christian Schools greeted and checked in guests



A room full of Champions! (Above left) Dr. Gerald Bader with his wife Lori and guest. (Above right) Denise Burgoyne, Keynote Speaker Al Vecchione, Executive Director Matthew Butte, and Treasurer Maggie Traverso.) (Below) Lisa Schauer, Pat Beckett, Peg Busick, and Juliet Laycoe-Hagley.



Benefit attendees take in the view of the Columbia River Gorge outside — and classic cars from The Brothers Collection inside.



Attendees at our annual Benefit Dinner showed their support for childrens mental health care here in Clark County by raising \$166k!



WANT TO SEE MORE PHOTOS?

Find us on  & 

Children's Center Clark County
@childrenscenter_clarkcounty

Champions in the Spotlight

TERESA NORMAN, FROM ORCHARDS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

As a retired Family Nurse Practitioner, Teresa stays busy by seeking out projects that enrich the lives of others in simple ways. Along with her fellow congregates at Orchards Adventist Church, she's organized drives to ensure the families we serve are well provisioned for everything from children's dental health, to spring cleaning, to back to school.

Early in her career, Teresa learned the impact even a small gesture can make. One Christmas she brought small gifts to her unhoused clients. A 74 year-old man came up to thank her. With a tear in his eye he said, "If it weren't for you, I wouldn't



have gotten anything." She recalls, "It was profoundly sincere and humble. There were tears in my eyes at the power of sharing human kindness. This was the impetus for giving-oriented compassion, to bring joy and specialness to whoever I can."

"The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer"

— GANDHI

Why does children's mental health matter to you? "Children's mental health is all encompassing, not just for the child but for the whole family. Strengthening families helps provide better and more supportive community."

Become a Champion of Hope

Have you tuned into our podcast, *Health & Healing with Children's Center*? Help us spread Children's Center's message far and wide and bring hope and healing to listeners by subscribing. It's free, and your support helps us grow. Find us on your favorite podcast app.

Scan this code with your smartphone's camera for more info!



COMING UP ON THE PODCAST

Subscribe now to get notified when these new episodes launch in early 2025:



Dr. Ken Duckworth

As Chief Medical Officer for NAMI and professor at both Harvard and Boston University, Dr. Duckworth's life work centers on breaking the stigma around mental health



Jenny Lawson

Award-winning journalist, #1 NY Times best-selling author and blogger known for her dark humor and candid storytelling, often delving into her struggles with mental illness



Dr. Courtney Tracy

Also known as "The Truth Doctor", Dr. Tracy is a Licensed Psychotherapist who uses social media and a "human first" approach to support those struggling with mental health

FOOD DRIVE WISH LIST

- Canned meats *tuna, chicken*
- Pantry staples *peanut butter, pasta & sauce, rice, cooking oil, shelf stable milk*
- Boxed dinners *mac 'n cheese, Hamburger Helper, rice mixes, etc.*
- Canned goods *fruit, vegetables, beans, lentils, chili, soup, stew, etc.*
- Toiletries *feminine hygiene products, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, toilet paper*
- Little Luxuries *spices, cake or cookie mix, frosting, coffee, tea*
- Healthy snacks *protein bars, peanut butter crackers, gold fish, fruit leather*

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

Cut along the dotted line
 and stick it to the fridge!

..... CUT HERE

→ → → → **6 Back to School Tips** ← ← ← ←

- #1
- MONDAY
- TUESDAY
- WEDNESDAY
- THURSDAY
- FRIDAY

Create a daily routine — and stick to it

#2 Create a distraction free study space

#3 Ask for help

#4 Stay Involved



#5 Take Breaks



TO DO
 #6 Find healthy ways to manage stress

