

A Season of Magic:

You gave Ryther children and families a reason to believe!

By Colin Powers, Administrative Director, Ryther's Cottage Program

Every year, I spend Christmas morning with the children in the Cottage Program. The volume of presents under the tree, along with the plate with only cookie crumbs, and the reindeer tracks in the mud outside let the children know that Santa did not forget about them this year. While they come down the stairs in their brand new pajamas, holding onto their brand new stuffed animal, staff direct kids to start with their stockings thanks to Trilogy for Kids. It says a lot about what has been missing from their lives when they are ecstatic about a spin-brush, and more than one child asked to go brush their teeth, even with many presents beckoning them. They were delighted to have their wishes met when they opened their Star Wars toys, Nintendos and games, nail polish and make-up, and arts supplies galore.



But they were also pleased to see that people responded to their needs. Books to help learn to read, fidget toys to help keep busy hands occupied, and feelings journals. These were just some of the things that had the kids equally as excited as the toys.

And while all that is happening, I can't help but think about the immense amount of work that "Santa" went through. So, our heartfelt thanks to

the donors who brought in gifts big and small and who went the extra mile to find one child's "princess zippy blanket" (Disney sleeping bag), another's Native American doll ("so I can have one that looks like me"), and another's bike ("Because now I can be healthier!"). Thank you to all of the volunteers who wrapped hundreds of presents from easy (nice rectangular boxes of Legos) to nearly impossible (skateboards, unicorns, and beanbag chairs). In total, you provided gifts for more than 160 children and families served by Ryther! We also thank the Dickens Carolers as well as the Ryther League for their Kids' Holiday Store and all the holiday cookies. We could not have had such a wonderful holiday season without each one of you! Here is what one grateful parent told her Ryther Outpatient Mental Health therapist:

"When I filled out the list of needed items for my children, I also listed some items my kids were really hoping for, knowing they may not come. To our surprise, and their screams of delight, not only were their needs met, but their holiday wishes as well. I am deeply touched by the thought, care, and effort that was put into helping our family. The feeling is indescribable.

Thank you all very much!"

Thank you for your support!

\$102,505: Ryther League (Healing Hearts Fund & Cottage Program)

\$100,000: Anonymous (Maintenance Reserve Fund)

\$25,000: Medina Foundation (General Operating)

\$25,000: Lisa Mennet (General Operating)

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Thank you also to our in-kind donors!

The F-factor: Clothing, Marla Salmon & Jerry Anderson: Grill, Sgt. Mike's Bootcamp: Socks, Windermere Real Estate - Northlake: Shoes from "Kicks for Kids" drive, Calico Unit: Undergarments, Jessica Hermsen: Speakers, bike, and food warmer, Whitman Global Carpet & Floor Care: Carpet cleaning service

There are more donors than we can list here! A complete listing will be in the 2016 Annual Report.

Message from Karen Brady, Executive Director/CEO:



The coming of a new year brings the opportunity to take a moment to look back at the passing year. At Ryther, that reflection leaves us so much to be grateful about.

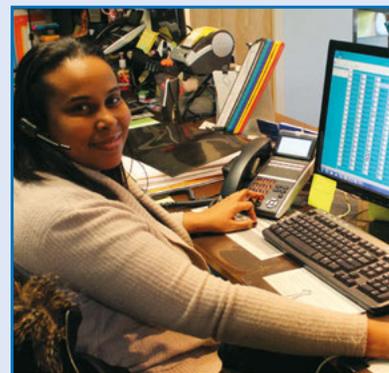
First, because of the generosity of the Employees Community Fund of Boeing we were able to replace our very antiquated telephone system (for which we could no longer find

parts when new ones were needed because it was so old) with a new VoIP telephone system. We were honored that this group of hard working employees picked Ryther – and our employees - for such a workplace changing gift.

Second, our Group Care Enhancement program was the recipient of a grant from the Seattle Foundation's Youth Grantmaking Board because of the compelling work those employees do with some of the most challenged members of our community – homeless and justice system involved youth and young adults who struggle with substance use and mental health issues. To have youth-serving-employees recognized by youth for the work that they do was a high compliment.

Third, because of the generosity of so many of you, the children, youth, young adults and their families now come to a campus that has been revitalized and made more welcoming and professional. While we continue to look for donations against our \$200,000 Renew Ryther matching gift, we are putting the finishing touches on the campus and we are planning an open house this Spring! Our path "Pave the Way to Healing" has many names, great quotes and affirmations for the bricks that will be installed before the open house and there are still a few more bricks available.

Finally, we are grateful for all of you that support us, cheer us on, and quite frankly, help us keep our doors open so that we can continue to provide the high quality services that we do for some of the most vulnerable in our community. Thank you all for making 2016 such a great success and helping us look towards 2017 with hope and excitement.



Thank you 2016 Holiday Gift Donors!

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Change is a process, it's not an event.

*An interview with David Flack, MA, LMHC, CDP
Ryther's Co-occurring Disorders Program Manager*



I circled back to Ryther after about 10 years of working in the mental health field and getting more training and now supervise mental health therapists and substance abuse counselors as well as developing new programs for the substance use and co-occurring programs here. My experience is in working with teens and families impacted by substance use, trauma, and mental health challenges.

My first challenge has been and continues to be figuring out a more effective and efficient way to treat teens with both a mental health and substance use disorder. Co-occurring disorders is the term that fits those battling both challenges. In fact, data show that 80-90% of teens in King County who are in treatment for substance abuse also have a mental health disorder. At Ryther, we use a short assessment tool called the GAIN to determine if a teen has a co-occurring disorder. Whether a teen (13 or older) comes in for either a mental health or drug and alcohol assessment, we will know if further assessment and treatment is needed in either area or both, based on the teen's responses to the GAIN's 15 questions. Common mental health issues we see here are

ADHD, anxiety, depressive disorders, externalizing issues like conduct disorders as well as PTSD as a result of trauma. One of the interesting things I am seeing now that was rare in the past is that there are more teens with co-occurring disorders who are on the Autism Spectrum.

What I am excited about is that we have brought on one of the few evidenced-based treatments for teens with co-occurring disorders – the Seven Challenges. The concept behind it is that change is a process, not an event so we meet teens where they're at in this process, using journaling, experiential activities and discussion to encourage them to honestly evaluate their life and choices, explore the pros and cons of substance use, develop problem recognition skills, and create effective long-term plans. This treatment approach can be done individually and in a group and we are starting a group at Ryther. To attend, the youth will have to be a client with a diagnosed substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder by us or someone else in last six months.

We now provide co-occurring counseling and outpatient substance abuse treatment that is once or twice weekly. We are also working on ways to get parents involved, because we know that outcomes are better when that happens.

If you are concerned about a teen's mental health and/or substance use, please call our intake line at 206.517.0234.

What's New?

Giving Help

Got time or talent? We need some helping hands in Advancement (fundraising and marketing) to help us with data entry, mailings, research, story gathering and in-kind solicitation. Days and hours are flexible. **Please contact Janelle at Janelles@ryther.org or call 206.517.0286.**



Getting Help

We welcome Ritu Gandhi, M.D., Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist to our Bellevue office. Dr. Gandhi believes in a multidisciplinary approach, using medications in combination with psychotherapy. She also has a special interest incorporating yoga, meditation, exercise, and nutrition as part of her treatment recommendations. Dr. Gandhi primarily treats children and adolescents with mood disorders, anxiety, ADHD, and PTSD.



Please call us at 206.517.0234 for information and/or appointments.

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Thank You for healing hearts and homes by supporting Ryther's Cottage Program!

Thank you to all of our guests and supporters of Ryther's November Fundraising Luncheon. Over \$214,000 will support the Cottage program in 2017. Special thanks to our sponsors, MC Jean Enersen and Keynote Speaker Laura Porter of ACE Interface. Please save the date for November 16th at our new venue, the Olive 8 in downtown Seattle for the 2017 luncheon.

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