Weeded and raked around Ryther’s campus.

Leaves out of the parking lot and, on top of all that, cleaned windows, painted a classroom, blew the Ryther got a “Back-to-School” look thanks to Ryther’s experiential Challenge Course wasn’t a “challenge” for Ryan, Seawson & Cleveland, PLLC: As part of United Way of King County’s Day of Caring, they weeded, trimmed and pruned the vegetation, restained a wooden obstacle and even removed buckets of rotting apples.

The energetic members and friends of the Puget Sound Business Travel Association (PSBTA) worked hard in sprucing up and weeding Ryther’s entire ten-acre campus.

One family’s story of thanks

This past summer, Ryther staff received an email from the parent of an Aspiring Youth participant and former Cottage D resident, Trenton. It’s not unusual for staff to receive follow up emails or letters from parents with updates on life after Ryther. But what made this email so special was that Trenton wanted to give back to Ryther after his experiences with both programs. His father’s note read:

"Every year at our block watch party, Trenton sets up a snow cone stand and gives proceeds to a charity. This year he has chosen Ryther cottages as the place he wants the $ to go towards. He usually raises between $50-$100, so it’s not a huge sum but he always feels good about it and we encourage his philanthropy.”

Not only did Trenton raise $60 but he and his father Joe also participated in two public service interviews at Clear Channel Radio. Trenton was candid about being bullied at school and struggling with anxiety. Joe noted that Trenton’s acting out due to anxiety and fears are what led his 14 year old to receive treatment in Cottage D for 18 days. Joe felt that “as a family we needed a reboot” and that he felt Ryther would be a safe and appropriate option because “staff understand the kids’ counseling” and kids get better. Ryther helps kids with "tons of issues like them. I've had those issues before," Trenton also says that Ryther helps kids with "tons of counseling" and kids get better.

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For the sixth straight year Ryther has continued to grow in terms of the number of seriously disturbed children it serves in its hospital alternative residential (Sub-Acute) cottages. Between July of 2012 and June 2013 Ryther admitted 61 children between the ages of 6 and 14 to this program. All came in with the highest complexity and severity rating as determined by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Since Ryther has maintained an annual utilization rate for its beds of 97% or more for the same time period the question could be asked as to how is this possible? The answer is that the Ryther staff is continuing to reduce the length of stay by improving the quality and quantity of treatment services provided thus allowing kids to move to more homelike settings as possible. For the children discharged in this time period, 80% were discharged to less restrictive settings. For about half of these kids meant a permanent placement, either reunified with their parents, placed with another relative or adopted. We continue to track the behavioral improvement that we see through different approaches and perspectives. If you are interested in more specific information about how the Ryther children are improving, Ryther’s Annual Stakeholder’s Report is about to be published. Call (206) 517-0204 to receive your copy.

Lee E. Grogg: Executive Director/CEO

Now Teens in Cottage B have furry friends, too!

Abbygail, a golden-doodle, along with her owner Joan, are canine therapy pioneers, bringing the benefits of interacting with a therapy dog to the teen boys in Ryther’s Co-occurring Inpatient Chemical Dependency program. Kids in the Sub-Acute Treatment program have been working with 13 pairs of furry friends and their owners for a few years, but for Cottage B, this is new.

Now, Stephen, with his retired racing dog Hoyt, and Elana, with pint-sized Mitzi, (photo below), join the duo. Even though teens stay an average of 30 days, these weekly canine visits are valuable as well as highly anticipated by clients and volunteers as well as the dogs. Canine therapy goes a long way towards supplementing treatment and reinforcing new interpersonal skills that the boys learn in individual and group sessions. As 16-year-old “Mike” said, “Being with Abby is relaxing and peaceful.” Being in a state of calm and mindful of the feelings it evokes allows Mike and the other teens to more effectively participate in treatment.

Joan noticed that with each visit the boys gain a greater sense of accomplishment. While she says that this is her hope, Joan knows that it, indeed, is the case. After 45 minutes of playing ball, teaching Abby to sit, stay and wait, and taking a walk, the teen will have some juice and cookies that Joan provides while he writes in a journal about his experience with Abby. He then shares his thoughts with Joan. Joan says that she has been “amazed and humbled” as she hears from the teens that they feel better about themselves after interacting with Abby. The fact that a volunteer brings his or her kind, interactive and accepting animal to visit gives these teens permission to think “I matter.” Once that takes hold in the mind of a 14-year-old boy who has been using drugs or alcohol for a few years, staying clean and sober becomes a lot more attainable.

Blue Ridge Unit ReStyle for Ryther keeps giving

It was another great event and evening overlooking Elliot Bay, with friends, food and fantastic fashion finds. There were many raffle baskets and great items including a Lenovo Yoga III donated by Microsoft and a vacation in Palm Springs. Thanks to Blue Ridge and all who attended, procured and donated items and clothing. Over $11,000 was raised including contributions for the fund-a-wish for clothing and shoes for children in Ryther’s Sub-Acute Residential Treatment Program. Plus, all left over clothing and accessories will be sold in the ReStyle for Ryther thrift store.

A real thrift store makeover

After 42 years in Ballard, the Ryther League’s all volunteer-run thrift store, formerly known as the R-Shoppe, reopened recently with a ribbon cutting ceremony, showing off its new name (ReStyle for Ryther) and look with fresh flooring, paint, lighting, displays and shelving. Much of the work and materials were donated. We thank you! ReStyle for Ryther is located at 5435 Ballard Ave NW and is open Tues.-Sat. noon to 6pm and Sun. noon to 4pm. To donate, drop off quality used items needed and not accepted. Contributions for the fund-a-wish for clothing and shoes for children in Ryther’s Sub-Acute Residential Treatment Program. Plus, all left over clothing and accessories will be sold in the ReStyle for Ryther thrift store.

For the Business of Caring Luncheon with Maud Daudon, CEO & President of the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, on Tuesday, November 19, 2013 at Sherris@ryther.org.

RSVP NOW