

Acknowledgments of Recent Significant Donations:

- From the Ryther League: \$61,500 in unrestricted funds & \$3,000 in winter clothing funds
- \$25,000: Aven Foundation through Ryther's Luncheon
- \$25,000: Medina Foundation in unrestricted funds
- \$25,000: Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation for SAFE Program
- \$15,000 from Lynn & Michael Garvey through the Luncheon and \$5,000 for the multi-purpose therapy room
- \$17,500: Women's Philanthropic Investment Group (WPIG) in unrestricted funds
- \$15,000: The Seattle Foundation in unrestricted funds
- \$10,000: George Swindells for a new utility cart for maintenance
- \$10,000: Jean K. Lafromboise Foundation
- \$9,750: United Way of King County including \$1,000 from Capital Industries
- \$5,000: Carol & H. Graham Gaiser; Sylvia Wilks; & Starbucks Matching Gifts Program
- \$4,349: Microsoft Giving Campaign & Matching Gifts including \$1,000 from Margo Day
- \$4,000: Puget Sound Energy Foundation for Specific Assistance
- \$2,500: Premera Blue Cross; Danica Children's Foundation for Specific Assistance; Nicole Engle through the Luncheon
- \$2,000: BNSF Foundation for Specific Assistance; Rotary Club of Mercer Island; Sterling Realty Organization
- \$1,500: Cestjon McFarland through the Luncheon
- \$1,250: Ballard Kiwanis Club
- \$1,200: Rotary Club of Alderwood Terrace
- \$1,000: Nancy & Robert Alvord; Scott Barron; Bishop Fleet Foundation; Dr. Bob Day; Ernest R. & Audrey M. Turner Foundation; Dorrie & Bill Ford; Kevin & Ann Harrang; John & Rosalind Jacobi; John Meisenbach; Oscar Oliveira; Pinkerton Foundation; Robert & Libby Stack in memory of Olga Crane; Nancy & Thomas Steele; Kristin & Leonard Weber; and, DJ Wilson

When to seek professional help for a child or teen: An interview with Dr. Elina Durchman, Ryther Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist



Dr. Elina Durchman completed her medical training, general psychiatry and child and adolescent residency training as well as a fellowship in Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities at the University of Washington.

There is no easy answer for when to seek help for your child or teen, but when there is a behavior or mood change, parents should seek professional help. The most common symptoms are acting out in school or daycare. Very young children who don't know how to verbalize feelings can be aggressive at daycare or preschool. This can be a warning sign that something is going on. There is often a difference between home life and school. Kids can be very calm and happy in the home environment, but very fearful at school.

Why might a child become anxious or defiant regarding school?

Children may become defiant at school because they don't understand what their teacher is saying. Sometimes a child has a learning disability that hasn't been recognized, and it's very difficult for the kids to explain that they have a learning disability. Parents often think the kids are being defiant, and in this situation school can become a stressor. We know that ADHD is a developmental problem that we can measure, and if it's severe enough the child may need to be on medication.

What are the most common psychiatric issues that you address?

The most common struggles are anxiety, depression and ADHD. Teens in Ryther's co-occurring program are receiving help to address both mental health and substance abuse issues. I also work with children and teens with bipolar disorder or other disorders on the psychotic spectrum. There are children who have family stressors due to separation of parents and other difficult home situations. These are often triggers for anxiety, depression and other psychiatric issues. Many people are predisposed to certain mental conditions, and episodes of these can be triggered by a traumatic event. However, if children receive mental health treatment, they will often acquire the tools they need later in life to successfully deal with these events.

What are some common stressors among young children?

Many don't know how to express sadness, wants or needs, and they communicate these by acting out. I often spend time explaining these behaviors to parents. A child might get diagnosed with something like oppositional defiant disorder because they don't want to go to school. The child will throw a huge tantrum, but often it isn't about school at all but rather some source of anxiety or fear related to that particular activity. These conditions cause anxiety and fear for the kids. Think of young children being fearful and not knowing how to explain to their parents that they don't want to go to a certain place. Often their only response is to fight back. A lot of people don't recognize these behaviors or know where these behaviors come from, and they are often times very grateful and happy when the situation is explained to them.

Call Ryther at 206.517.0234 to make an appointment with one of Ryther's psychiatrists for an evaluation or visit our website for more information.

■ From the Executive Director

I have been working with the Child Welfare System for only the past ten years. As many of you know, my career before that was in Community Mental Health. The connection here is that Ryther is as much or more of a mental health treatment organization as it is anything else. Still if you were to characterize the two “industries” there are some significant differences. For me, however, the most striking difference is how so many people in or related to the child welfare system tend to advocate policies as much from wishful thinking as from data. Some of that wishful thinking applies to how to interpret what little data they have.

One of the more frustrating wishful assumptions that I hear repeated often is that every child who has been placed into the system has a home to go to. This may be true for a great many children in the system, but it is not true for a great many others. For a host of reasons, many if not most of the Ryther children do not have a safe family to whom they could be discharged quickly, if at all.

One of the other assumptions made by many workers and policy makers in the field is that group home care or residential treatment is a bad thing. I won't disagree that the frequency of ill considered use of such facilities in the past probably helped create this notion which was also probably true. The real fact is that such placements in today's environment represent a very small fraction of the kids in care, and

the facilities used, like Ryther, are nothing at all like the “residential” programs of the past. Lengths of stay are markedly shorter, and custodial-only care is a thing of the past as well. Ryther today is really a hospital alternative with a treatment-rich environment for the relatively small number of kids in the system for whom there are no satisfactory safe and effective alternatives.

The two concepts listed above are just the tip of the iceberg of curious popular thinking and short-sighted policy making.

I will be the first to concede that the Ryther children represent a small fraction of the children in Washington's child welfare system. Unfortunately, the thinking tends to be that if the numbers are that small they are not important enough to worry about. Funding decisions get made accordingly. I am concerned about this because I witnessed something very much like it in the mental health field forty years ago. In that case it was that mental hospitals were not needed and they were all bad. As a result, many were closed without having any alternative levels of care available. I think it might be useful to ask ourselves if some of the folks under I-5 at Cherry St. are really better off.



Lee Grogg: Executive Director/CEO

■ Taylor Leaves Ryther a Whole (New) Child

At age nine, Taylor had already experienced a lot of trauma, enduring both physical and sexual abuse as a very young child before he was removed from his home to live with a relative caregiver. Despite her best efforts, she was unable to care for him due to his difficult behaviors that included violent outbursts as well as fire-setting.



The first step after he was admitted to **Ryther's Sub-Acute Inpatient Program** was a psychiatric evaluation with Ryther's Child Psychiatrist, Dr. Linda Ford.

Taylor's diagnoses included ADHD, bipolar disorder, depressive disorder and oppositional defiant disorder. Over time, Dr. Ford developed the optimal medication management plan and stabilized his mood and behavior so he could succeed in the therapeutic process of healing. Besides individual therapy, he also had a canine companion, participated in Little Bit therapeutic horseback riding, and attended Survivor's Group, a group for children who have been sexually abused. He was able to explore the abuse of his past, express grief and resolve some key issues. Taylor's caregiver was actively engaged in family therapy at Ryther and developed the skills to provide the structure Taylor needed to succeed in her home.

When Taylor left, his Ryther case manager remarked, “His future is really bright. Ryther staff watched him grow into a boy who is socializing, planning, looking forward to things, and was able to say good-bye. He left a whole different child. There isn't a staff member here who wasn't affected by his success.”

Today, Ryther is treating 36 children like Taylor in the Sub-Acute Care Program. To learn how you can support our work to help heal children from trauma, mental illness, abuse and neglect, visit the www.ryther.org Give Help pages.



Taylor's Therapy Dog Rudy and her owner

ASPIRING YOUTH

Announcing open enrollment at **Aspiring Youth Summer Camps** for campers ages 8 and up. Camps provide an exciting choice of activities, from video production to habitat restoration to art. Some campers are shy, some are quirky and some are twice exceptional. Some of our campers have a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, learning disabilities or other similar traits. To enroll or for more information, visit AspiringYouth.net or call 206.517.0222.

■ New Academic Component for Inpatient Substance Abuse Program

Ryther welcomed Natalie Ramsey, Education Coordinator, to expand academics in **Ryther's Inpatient Substance Abuse Program for teen boys**. Clients can earn school credit in any subject - all taught through the lens of art and its therapeutic value. For instance, Natalie's class just finished a unit on Art and Geometry.

Beyond academics, Natalie's advocacy for students like those in Cottage B - many of whom have struggled in academic settings - is very strong. She follows each client from intake through discharge to get them situated in a school or guide them in earning their GED or meeting community college requirements. Natalie empowers the teens to take charge of their future, spending one-on-one time with each client. She stated, "You see their personal success. They look happier, their confidence builds and, even if they've had a tough day, they come to class and walk away thinking 'This is something I can do'." For many boys, this is the first time they have received positive feedback in school.

To learn more about Ryther's Inpatient Substance Abuse Program for teen boys call 206.517.0249 or visit our website at www.ryther.org.

League News

The Ryther League continues to support the work at Ryther through its biannual donation awarded at the all-League Holiday Luncheon, where members also gave an additional \$3,000 for warm winter wear for the kids. Other events included Noel Unit's very successful Holiday Luncheon, Sou'Wester Unit's wonderful Poinsettia Sale and Off Campus' spectacular February 11th Hearts for Hope Auction & Dinner Dance, supporting the Healing Hearts Fund that will cover costs of therapy groups, materials, psychiatry evaluations and much more. Beta Theta Pi fraternity members visited the boys in Cottage B to talk college, sports and shoot hoops. If you are interested in the League, call the League Liaison at 206.517.0215.

■ Thank You Holiday Donors

The holidays of Ryther children, teens & families were made brighter by our generous community partners. Our deepest "Thank You" to all who helped:



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Ryther Voice



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Save the date for
the Ryther Annual Luncheon on
Thursday, November 15, 2012
at the Grand Hyatt Seattle.

To sponsor or host a table,
contact Ryther at 206.517.0215.

Thank You to Our In-Kind Donors:

Architecture for Humanity: Design services

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Seattle Seahawks: 40 tickets

Woodland Park Zoo: 145 passes

Abatix: Maintenance supplies

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www.ryther.org