

Do You Believe In Santa?

This is a question we don't have to ask at Ryther... because of you!



You are the reason Santa pays extra attention in fulfilling the wishes and needs of the children in the cottages, our foster homes and in our low income outpatient families. When these children

and their families wake up on Christmas day, magically, the very gift they want is wrapped and waiting for them, along with many other presents on their lists.

When we asked a child in Cottage A about Santa he looked outside and was so excited as he exclaimed, "They ate! They ate! The reindeer ate the carrots!" That was proof enough. Among older kids, one said that the overnight staff ate Santa's cookies but that it was OK. When asked where the gifts came from he said, "People who donated them, that's who got us the gifts." His favorite was a Tyler Lockett jersey, and he as well as the other kids who had their wishes fulfilled send a huge thank you your way!

While the holidays bring smiles and lots of wonderful donated special meals, Gordy, a long time staffer in Cottage C explained that the day is also hard in some respects: "The kids are missing families or wishing they had families to miss. They know something is missing." One girl got a bicycle and was thrilled because her first one had been stolen when she was in foster care. Staff processed these sad and happy feelings with her. This gift made things better because instead of people taking from her, she experienced people giving to her.

The kids in the cottages had a wonderful day because of you as did so many children and families served through Ryther's outpatient program. One family that often finds the holidays stressful due to lack of resources, received a gift card from a generous holiday gifts donor and was so grateful they sent the following note to their therapist:

"Thank you so much for thinking of our family and sending us such an amazing gift this holiday season. Being low income makes things tough, and this made it possible to buy our son a few things outside of a second hand store. Your thoughtfulness and generosity made a difference in our lives and touched me deeply."

We can't thank each and every one of you enough. From toys, laptops, tablets, games, bedding, diapers, clothing, sports jerseys, books, to holiday dinners and so much more, this season is one that these children and families won't soon forget.

\$110,035 Ryther League

\$25,000 Lisa Mennet & Gabe Newell

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Thank you also to some of our in-kind donors!

Ruth Carlson: Wii, Foundry10: 3 Surface's, 3 PCs, Carolyn & Bill Hart: 35 Sets of Flannel Sheets, Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes: Wish List drive items, Pacific Science Center: 50 passes, The F-factor: Clothing for kids, Cory & Melissa Van Arsdale: Art Supplies, Betsy Wiecks: Beanie Babies,

Thanksgiving Food Drive: Redmond Athletic Club, UPS, Kymberly Maine, Amanda & Matt Simantov, Bri Vanderlinden, Katie Westhoff

There are more donors than we can list but all will be in the 2015 Annual Report. We thank you for your ongoing dedication and generosity!

Message from Lee:

While it's irrational, it is also hard to dismiss the notion that with the New Year comes renewed hope. That notion is reinforced when in the old year one can find some positive signs. For example, in 2015 Ryther provided 15,000 **outpatient** visits to children and families. That's the most ever. 2015 also saw utilization by private insurers of Ryther's Hospital Alternative (residential) program increase significantly (27%) for the fourth straight year. While we still face the serious challenges of ongoing grossly inadequate rates paid by DSHS, Ryther is proving to be durable and resilient, in spite of an oft repeated State goal of reducing or eliminating the kind of care we provide.

There can be no doubt that the enthusiastic support of our volunteers, friends and donors is the reason for Ryther's resilience. I think it is also clear that the reason for their enthusiasm is the fact that the care Ryther provides is desperately needed by many more children than the policy wonks want to admit or recognize.

To be sure, Ryther is not totally self-sustaining or secure yet. That will require more hard work and the continued good will of everyone who reads this. Just remember that the children you have supported are constantly at risk of being shunted aside and forgotten because they do not come with easily solved problems. Thank you for your continued commitment to the idea that we should never give up on these unfortunate kids.



Lee E. Grogg
Executive Director/CEO

Donate securely online at: ryther.org

Thanks to all of Ryther's Santas for giving help!

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What's New?

Giving Help:

New Year, new volunteer opportunities: Read to and play with children in our lobby while parents visit with their child's therapist. Contact Chris at Chrisv@ryther.org or call 206.517.0286.



Moving into my new room

The Campaign to Renew Ryther continues with the second children's cottage just finished, leaving one more to complete. Each day we get closer to reaching our campaign goal of \$7,000,000, but we have more work to do and funds to raise. Please contact Austin Kellogg at austink@ryther.org or call 206.517.0204.

Getting Help:

Ryther now offers a one-time **Teen Substance Use Check-Up** for parents along with their teen as well as a parent only session to learn warning signs of drug/alcohol use.

Drug & Alcohol Assessments: Ryther offers teen Drug and Alcohol Assessments that meet school and court requirements as well as Level 1 Outpatient Treatment.

Wise Minded Parenting Group based on Dr. Laura Kastner's work helps parents with challenging children ages 3-18 on Wednesdays at 5:30pm in Seattle with rolling enrollment through June 8.

Call 206.517.0234 for information.

Fresh and welcoming, the new outpatient lobby area with a special kids' corner



Ryther League NEWS

What's Happening.

For children in the Cottage Program, holidays start with the Kids Holiday Party and sounds of the Dickens' Carolers. League volunteers make sure the evening runs smoothly and bake fantastic cookies that are enjoyed as children wait patiently to tell our volunteer Santa and Mrs. Claus what they would like to see beneath the tree.



Ryther League "elves" get ready for the Kids Holiday Party



Success at the Holiday Store

As you can see, the kids scored big at the League's Marion Baer Holiday store, which brought the joy of giving to children as each chose several gifts, many for caregivers, extended family, social workers, siblings and canine companions.

The flurry of recent League projects included the always entertaining Mardi Unit Auction and Dinner on Whidbey Island, a new, casual Blue Ridge Unit event featuring getaway live auction items, Sou'Wester's ever growing Poinsettia Sale and the Noel Unit's elegant Holiday Luncheon. Together, these projects raised over \$100,000 to support the Cottage Program! Plus, the annual All-League Holiday Luncheon provided funds

for children's clothing and shoes and the League's biannual donation was presented by Chair Paige Otero to Board President Karl Quackenbush for \$89,000.

The League also runs the all-volunteer ReStyle for Ryther thrift store in Ballard. Get involved in donating, volunteering and shopping! Contact Sharon Setzler at 206.499.3710 for information. If you are interested in learning about the Ryther League and would like to attend the next gathering in March, contact the League Liaison at robinb@ryther.org or call 206.517.0215.

Ryther

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Thanks for celebrating and supporting Ryther's Cottage Program!

Thank you to all of our guests and supporters of Ryther's Celebrate Children-Celebrate Community Fundraising Luncheon. You raised over \$220,000 for the Cottage program! Save the date for next year's luncheon on Thursday, November 17, 2016 at the Seattle Marriott Waterfront. Special thanks to our Sponsors, to MC Dennis Bounds of King 5 TV and Keynote Speaker Eric Pettigrew.

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Ryther *voice*

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