

## Taking a challenge to heart (and mind)!

By Servando Patlin, MA MHP LMHC and Michael Freeman, PsyD

We recently started integrating experiential therapy into the school day for children in the Cottage Program, taking an entire classroom out to the Challenge Course.

The six-week curriculum builds off of the prior week, with the ultimate goal of increasing group problem solving skills. We teach kids to “Go for the goal!” Listening, Giving Directions, Include Everyone, No Blaming and Work as a Team are the first five sessions’ goals. The last week incorporates all of the goals.

Key rules that we focus on are to: Be accountable for your actions and your attitude – AKA, follow directions and be kind.

When the activity or challenge is completed and the groups succeeds, we repeat the challenge with a new variation and add a layer of increasing difficulty. Afterwards, we gather around on log seats facing in and debrief. We have the kids do a self-rating, listen to positive and negative feedback from peers and/or adults and then process any emotions or melt-downs if they occurred.

What has been so gratifying is seeing how the kids pick up on another peer’s distress and watching them try to help that child solve a problem. These groups provide a different element to social skills training that you cannot achieve within an individual therapy session, because each activity provides opportunity for in-the-moment use of skills with feedback at the conclusion. Kids see how skills on the course can be applied in other settings, which is really the whole point of experiential learning or therapy.

Everyone can benefit from a group challenge activity. The best part is observing how the kids handle success and failure. We’ve had some pretty challenging activities but at the same time we’ve witnessed some amazing acts of kindness, teamwork, and overall positive attitudes.

**Special note:** With CEO Lee Grogg’s retirement in March, the challenge course has been named in his honor as the Lee E. Grogg Challenge Course. Lee wrote a grant for the Challenge Course in 2001 and Ryther was awarded \$50,000. As Lee said,

*“A Challenge Course provides real insight and teaches people in ways that serve as a powerful intervention tool in changing thinking and behavior.”*



- \$200,000 Ballmer Group Philanthropy
- \$50,000 Karl and Michelle Quackenbush
- \$40,000 May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
- \$5,000-10,000:** Cheryl Pope, Starbucks Coffee Company, Trilogy for Kids
- \$1,000-4,999:** Anonymous (3), Leonie Barnes, J.R. Abbott Construction, Dorian Ford through the Washington Women’s Foundation, Microsoft Giving Campaign and Matching Gifts Program, Starbucks Coffee Company Partner Giving Programs, Whitman Global Carpet and Floor Care
- \$500-\$999:** Marty and Ann Dirks, Capital Industries through United Way of King County, Barbara Fruhling, Helen Gamble through the Seattle Foundation, Lisa McKeirnan, Allison Nickel, Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Church, US Government Accountability Office
- \$250-\$499:** Anonymous (3), Adrienne Burns, Paul Cavanaugh and Trish Lynch-Cavanaugh, Donna Corey and Jay Peterson, Combined Federal Campaign of King County, Margo Day, Abraham Golden, Suzanne and Karl Hoover, Karen Howells through United Way of King County, Sally MacDonald, Charlotte Merritt, Nurturing Pathways, Gerald and Maruta Ormiston, Thomas Pleas, Sherry Portuese, Anya and John Rudd, T-Mobile matching gifts, Treehouse, Judy and Bruce Walker, Jessica Watts

### Thank you to our in-kind donors!

- Olga Barrett: Clothing donation, Carol Bartlett: Stuffed animals and art supplies, Blue Ridge Unit: Seattle Seahawks birthday cake, Rory and Cary Bright: Art supplies, Mary R. Burkland: Games for kids, Calico Unit: Easter baskets, cookies, and birthday cake, Sabrina and Bill Friend: Cakes, Barbara Fruhling: Books, McGilvra Unit: Superhero birthday cake, Moonlighting Unit: Easter baskets and birthday cake, New Wave Unit: Cookies, Noel Unit: Minecraft birthday cake, Nor’Easter Unit: Birthday cakes, Off Campus Unit: Cookies, Paige Otero: Girl Scout cookies for kids, Pat and George Palagi: Birthday books, Mary Reeder: Dallas Cowboys birthday cake, Roosevelt Unit: Pokemon birthday cake, Ryan, Swanson & Cleveland, PLLC: 4 tickets to Mariners game, Sou’Wester Unit: Easter baskets and cookies, Deanna Straayer: Clothing donation, Theresa Wilde: DVDs for kids

## Message from Karen Brady, Executive Director/CEO:

Spring - I love this time of year. The sunny days begin to out-number the rainy ones. What was planted in prior years begins to grow and bloom. Budding trees and flowers bring new color to each day. The world seems full of possibilities and promise. I think it is fitting then, that this is the time of year that our Board of Trustees and our CEO of 15 years, Lee Grogg, chose to turn the reigns of leadership of Ryther over to a new leader. I am honored that I was selected to be that leader. Having worked for Ryther for many years, I know the high quality of work that is done here every day. I know as I set foot on the campus each day that it is the needs of the children, youth and families that we serve that come first. This is a value that is practiced at Ryther with the same “missionary zeal” as it was by our founder, Olive Ryther. It is the value that has kept me here. Ryther is experiencing its own spring. The buildings have been revitalized and updated in a way that not only reflects the high quality of work that is done here but also honor the children, youth and families we serve. The clinical services we provide reflect the wealth of knowledge gained by years of experience while incorporating practices and interventions proven to be the most effective for specific needs. In the coming months, I will share more about our evolving therapeutic work but for now, I think it most important that I communicate that while things continue to change and advance at Ryther, the things that make it stand out as a quality behavioral health leader for children and youth with complicated needs have not changed – a commitment that those we serve come first, a dedication to providing the highest quality of services that we can, and a realized value that on a strong foundation, we can continue to improve and grow.



Karen Brady, M.S.W., M.B.A.

## Summer at Ryther:

### Short-term treatment in Cottages helps kids with severe mental health and behavioral challenges



Last summer, a scared and scarred 12 year old girl arrived at the cottage directly from Seattle Children’s inpatient program. “Lisa” stayed five weeks as she “stepped down” from a hospital environment, ensuring safety for both herself and her family. Cottage Behavioral Specialist staff implemented her individualized behavioral treatment plan developed by Ryther’s psychiatric, psychological, Cottage and therapy team. Medications were monitored and modified, while specific treatment interventions were modeled by staff for her parents for continuity and success when Lisa returned home.

While Ryther’s inpatient program predominantly serves children who are in the custody of the State, our cottages admit children outside this referral source who desperately need a structured, safe, therapeutic and holistic approach to help them succeed in their families. Like some of the children who come to Ryther for a short stay, Lisa had been adopted and had experienced much of the same abuse and neglect that children

referred by the State experience. Other children admitted for short stays may be exhibiting behaviors that are unsafe towards themselves or their families for reasons that may or may not be known. Lisa’s stay at Ryther was authorized and paid for through the family’s health insurance. More insurance companies are realizing that Ryther can yield both positive health outcomes and cost savings in the short and long-term. We are now helping more children and families in our community who have nowhere else to turn. Lisa and her family now work with their Ryther outpatient psychiatrist and therapist for continued support. If you are interested in learning more, please call intake at 206.517.0234.

# THE CAMPAIGN TO Renew Ryther

All of the children are now comfortably settled in their new rooms of their remodeled cottages. They are absolutely thrilled with the light dimmer switch in their rooms and the songs and soothing sounds that emanate from the new music system. Colors are muted and calming, yet the cottages are bright and happy. Built-in furniture stays put, providing space for clothing, belongings, toys as well as a place to do homework or create art. Every room has a "bulletin board" by the child's door where staff write encouraging notes daily.

There is still work to be done and funds that need to be raised. You can make a difference and get involved if you have not yet done so when you **pave the way to healing** with your donation for a personalized brick. Details will be in your mailbox and via email soon. Honor, memorialize, provide inspiration to kids and families or simply have your name engraved!

Contact Austin Kellogg at [austink@ryther.org](mailto:austink@ryther.org) or call 206.517.0204.



## Volunteers and Donors big and small...

**We appreciate you all!**



In one day, the Ryther League dropped off cookies, a Pokémon birthday cake and six quilts. Three birthday books from the Palagi's and two DVDs from Theresa came in the mail. Easter was celebrated thanks to the Junior League of Seattle, leading an Easter egg hunt, relays and crafts and the Ryther League with Easter baskets for every child.

Within the last couple of months, the Arboretum Foundation Twig 94 readied three kids' cottage gardens for spring, while other JLS groups hosted Done in a Day and ENERGY activities. The League also coordinated quarterly on-campus hair cut days as well as attempting to keep the clothing closet organized. UW Beta Theta Pi comes to campus every other week to play sports with the kids. Starbucks groups are coming this spring as well as Guild Mortgage and Moxi/

Windermere to spruce up the grounds. Our volunteers also include Best Buddies and canine volunteers as well as drumming, art, school, spirituality and cooking volunteers.

We applaud everyone who gets involved with Ryther. We can only help these children with your help!

To get involved in volunteering or donating items through drives, contact Janelle Simms at [janelles@ryther.org](mailto:janelles@ryther.org).



**GiveBig on May 3 is the Seattle Foundation's one day online giving event** and we already received notification of our first challenge match! Thanks to an anonymous donor the first \$3000 raised will be matched. No matter what you give, it will make big changes in the lives of Ryther children.

## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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Follow us on twitter.com/rythervoice

### RYTHER HAS THREE LOCATIONS

Main Office: 2400 NE 95th St, Seattle, WA 98115  
Ryther East: 14715 Bel-Red Rd, Bldg G, Ste 100, Bellevue, WA 98007  
Ryther North: 315 Lincoln Ave, Ste C-1, Mukilteo, WA 98275

## What's New?

### Giving Help:

- **ReStyle for Ryther** is a thrift store in Ballard operated by the Ryther League. You can shop, donate quality items and even train to volunteer once per month or more. Email the Liaison at [robinb@ryther.org](mailto:robinb@ryther.org). It's fun and a great way to raise funds for the Cottage Program!



- **Save the Date** for Nov. 17th for Ryther's fundraising luncheon, Healing Hearts-Healing Homes. Keynote Speaker Laura Porter will discuss Adverse Childhood Experiences, homelessness

and protective factors preventing homelessness. We also welcome Jean Enersen of King 5 TV as our Mistress of Ceremonies. Sponsorships and table captain opportunities available. Call Austin Kellogg at 206.517.0204.

### Getting Help:

- **Aspiring Youth** is now enrolling for summer age and theme based camps for children 9-19. Visit [www.aspiringyouth.net](http://www.aspiringyouth.net).
- **Ryther's Co-Occurring Program** is designed to treat the 80% of teens using substances who also have a mental health disorder. Call 206.517.0234 for information.

