



cares
northwest

Protecting children, healing lives.

2023 Impact Report

APRIL 2024

Dear friends,



In 2023, CARES Northwest focused on expanding our accessibility and growing connections with our community.

Our clinic continues the ongoing work to be a safer, more equitable and culturally competent organization. This year, we established 14 new culturally responsive staff positions with required language fluency and cultural competency skills to better serve our patients from historically marginalized backgrounds. We further improved our language accessibility by making our consent forms available in five languages, with two more planned for the coming year. Guided by our equity consultant, our entire team engaged in a multi-month process to define the kind of clinic we want to be, both as a care provider and an employer, so that everyone feels welcome and respected here.

We made great strides in improving geographic accessibility. At our Beaverton clinic, we expanded our child abuse evaluation services to four days per week and trauma-focused therapy to five days per week. We were also delighted when one of our partners, the Family Justice Center of Washington County, bought a new building in which domestic violence and child abuse organizations will be co-located beginning in 2026. We have begun planning for our future Washington County home.

Our reach also expanded beyond our community. CARES NW team members presented at national conferences and took lead roles in statewide initiatives, such as overhauling the Project Ability curriculum for interviewing children with disabilities, launching a new protective order to protect children's records during the court process, and educating mandatory child abuse reporters how to work effectively with confidential advocates. We ended the year by welcoming more than 150 child abuse professionals from across the state to our annual conference and launching a new, expanded community resources section on our website.

Lastly, a more lighthearted connection: we relaunched our annual fundraising event, Bingo & Brews, to a sellout crowd. It was wonderful to be back in person, having fun together while raising much-needed funds for kids.

Thanks to your support, we are deepening our community connection so that more children and families receive the care and support they deserve. As ever, we are grateful to have your partnership in making this work possible.

Jenny Gilmore-Robinson
Executive Director, CARES Northwest

Elena speaks up and finds support

“My aunt had been through so much already. I didn’t want to hurt her.”

There are many reasons why kids may not tell anyone when they are being abused. Sometimes it’s to protect the adults in their lives. Although Elena was sexually abused by her uncle for almost two years, she stayed silent. His wife — her favorite aunt — was struggling with a cancer diagnosis and Elena did not want to cause her further pain. So, she didn’t tell anyone. As Elena grew older, she found ways to avoid her uncle and eliminate his opportunities to be alone with her. He eventually stopped trying. She kept the abuse to herself and time passed.

A few years later, Elena overheard the adults in her family talking about her uncle. He had sexually harassed an adult cousin, who rebuffed his advances and then told the rest of the family. Elena heard the adults expressing their disgust about her uncle. Although she was nervous about how it would affect her aunt, she thought maybe it was time she shared what he had done to her.

Elena’s family, including her aunt, rallied around her. Without hesitation, they called the police and focused on getting her the support she needed. Elena’s mother brought her to CARES Northwest for an evaluation. Elena was visibly anxious when she arrived, carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders. She smiled politely but nervously when she met the interviewer. He reassured her that she was the boss of her appointment and that anything she wanted to talk about was fine with him, as long as it was the truth.

During the interview, Elena initially looked down at the floor and spoke so quietly that the interviewer could barely hear her. Her voice was shaking, and it was clear she was trying



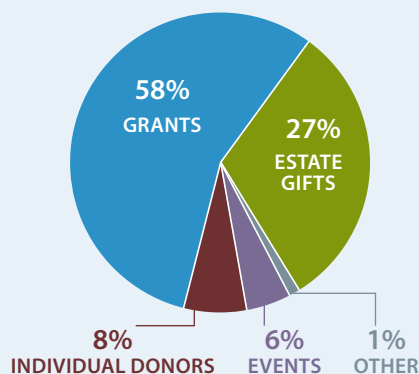
hard not to cry. She kept going, though. After years of feeling like she needed to stay quiet, she was ready to speak up. As she became more comfortable sharing what her uncle had done, her voice grew stronger and more confident. She began looking the interviewer straight in the eyes and by the end of the interview, she smiled at him and said she felt much better.

After the evaluation ended, the interviewer happened to glance out his office window and saw Elena and her mom walking down the street below. Elena’s mom had her arm around her, and Elena was smiling. It was good to see her acting like the kid she was and leaning on the adults in her life instead of trying to protect them.

Elena is just one of the many hundreds of kids who have reclaimed their childhood this year with support from CARES NW and made possible by partners like you. Thank you for your continued commitment to bring safety and healing to our most vulnerable children.

DONORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

TYPES OF DONATIONS RECEIVED



IN FISCAL YEAR 2024, **258** DONORS GENEROUSLY HELPED US RAISE OVER **\$1.17M**

Community support comprises nearly two-thirds of our budget and impacts all of the work we do. Some specific ways donors helped enhance our programs and services last year are:

- Adding two full-time positions for Spanish-speaking trauma therapists, expanding our ability to provide bilingual/bicultural care to the community.
- Training people from across Oregon on our Building Foundations for Healthy Relationships curriculum to improve the delivery of prevention services to youth.
- Purchasing a new exam table to increase capacity to provide medical examinations.

Peer review: Supporting practitioners throughout Oregon in their ongoing development

What is really in the best interest of the child?

This question guides the work of CARES Northwest staff every day. As Rachel Petke, LCSW, forensic interviewer supervisor, points out, the question becomes even more imperative to consider in CARES NW's role as the state-appointed regional trainer and peer review provider for Northwest Oregon. Petke, along with Dan Leonhardt, MD and Kim Jacobowitz, LCSW, are members of the CARES NW regional training team.

Within the 14-county region, CARES NW serves nine children's advocacy centers (CACs) and numerous community health providers, law enforcement members and DHS caseworkers who evaluate and care for children when there are concerns of abuse. Throughout most of this area, which includes many rural communities, multiple CACs and providers operate with limited staff and resources. Those limitations can make it difficult to address complex cases.

This is where CARES NW steps in, providing invaluable support to ensure the best outcomes for children and communities across the region. CARES NW provides access to a host of practitioners with expertise who are ready to help in the areas of forensic interviewing, medical evaluation and trauma therapy.

While peer review specifics vary among the three disciplines, one guiding principle is shared: Create a structured process for case review and feedback on adherence to best practices and standard of care, in an environment focused on learning and growth and sensitivity to the complexity and impact of the work.

"Peer review allows us a space to further develop and hone skills and to maintain knowledge of peer reviewed literature and research in the field of child maltreatment," says Petke.

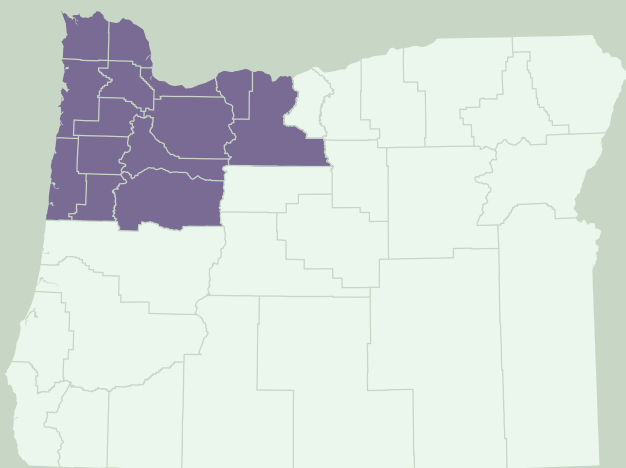


In practice, peer review happens in two different ways at CARES NW. One is through group learning, support and professional development that's provided during regularly scheduled meetings. Here, participants from the region share examples of recent challenging cases and collectively discuss best practices in the field. The other is through real-time consultation on active cases. If a provider needs a second opinion on a challenging situation or help for any reason, they call CARES NW to discuss the case with one of our professionals.

Peer review services also prioritize emotional support for providers, recognizing the toll their challenging work can have on them. By providing a space where professionals can discuss cases that have deeply impacted them and by offering guidance on complex situations, CARES NW helps lessen burnout and builds resilience among providers.

By offering a blend of field expertise, skills training and emotional support, CARES NW empowers providers to deliver the highest standard of care to vulnerable children and families across the region.

CARES NORTHWEST IS THE REGIONAL TRAINING PROVIDER FOR 14 COUNTIES IN NORTHWEST OREGON



CARES NORTHWEST PROVIDES PEER REVIEW EXPERTISE IN THREE FIELDS

- Our **forensic interviewers** have more than 100 years of collective experience helping children describe their experience.
- Our **board certified child abuse pediatricians** are some of the top providers in the state for evaluating physical signs of abuse.
- Our **trauma therapy team** is among the most established in the state, with decades of experience in a rapidly developing service provision.



Protecting children, healing lives.

Kaiser Permanente
OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital
Providence Children's Health
Randall Children's Hospital at Legacy Emanuel

2800 N. Vancouver Avenue
Suite #201
Portland, OR 97227

By the numbers

TOTAL CHILDREN SERVED: **2,980**

ASSESSING CASES OF ABUSE



2,991

CALLS CONCERNING A CHILD'S WELFARE



688

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS



166

EVALUATIONS SERVED BY INTERPRETERS IN 10 LANGUAGES



1,159

MEDICAL EXAMS



225

INPATIENT CONSULTATIONS



1,099

FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

HELPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES HEAL



1,771

TRAUMA-FOCUSED THERAPY SESSIONS



971

FAMILIES RECEIVED ONGOING SUPPORT AFTER EVALUATION

STOPPING ABUSE BEFORE IT STARTS



28

PREVENTION PRESENTATIONS DELIVERED



711

TEACHERS AND YOUTH-SERVING PROFESSIONALS TRAINED

SUPPORTING JUSTICE



185

RECORDS SUBPOENAS



541

SUBPOENAS TO TESTIFY

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



1,069

VOLUNTEER HOURS



703

QUILTS DONATED



190

FOOD AND CLOTHING BAGS DISTRIBUTED

Have questions or want to make a gift?

Contact Kyle Harris, Senior Associate Director of Development
Randall Children's Hospital Foundation
503-276-9495 | kyrharri@lhs.org | www.caresnw.org
CARES Northwest is supported by gifts to Randall Children's Hospital Foundation.

