



The Inside Story
Affirming Life and United by Hope in 2009
January 2009

Preamble: This is the next in a series of letters from the Executive Director of Starlight Children's Foundation – Washington to our special donors, partners and constituents. Through these letters I hope to provide you with “the inside story” of our activities, our progress, our plans and our thinking. These letters are intended to be somewhat exclusive in that some of the information will be shared with you before we share it in more public formats. I am including you to receive these letters because you are very important to Starlight and this is one way to share directly with you and to invite you to provide feedback.

As it did for many people, 2008 brought Starlight many challenges and necessary adjustments. The economic slowdown resulted in fewer donations to Starlight during the second half of the year. The impact was significant enough that we had to reduce our staffing and make other cuts to operations. We did what many other businesses and organization have had to do to maintain viability and continuity.

Thankfully, there were also some bright spots in 2008. We brought on some new energized Board members, advanced our Board of Advocates, and activated our new Alumni Board. Through the leadership of new Board member, Dr. Ron Dick, pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital, we put the plan together for a new program to be launched next month for medically-complex pediatric patients. Our Leadership Council in Spokane put on their first major fundraiser concert event in November and raised \$25,000 to support operations in Spokane.

As I read the news and talk to others, I believe that we all are looking forward to 2009 with optimism and hopefulness. We know a full economic turnaround will take some time, but with new national leadership and a growing consensus on solutions, we are ready for leadership and heroes nationally and locally among ourselves. Over the years, Starlight has had many local heroes that collectively have made it possible for Starlight to brighten the lives of so many seriously ill children and their families.

Our heroes are people like you who take action to do good and feel good as a result. When there is so much gloom in the news, these proactive gestures are wonderful statements of saying “yes, I will do something that makes me feel good by doing good in my community.” It is a choice for the positive, an affirmation of life, and a connection to others.

***2009 is the year for this positive affirmation to act and to be united by hope in our community
and for Starlight Children's Foundation.***

A great example of this affirmation on the program services side of Starlight is our soon to be launched Medically-Complex Children program. Medically-Complex Children are a group that is now officially a part of Seattle Children's Hospital. These children have multiple medical issues and often are treated by various specialties within the hospital. The interactive nature of these conditions and an integrated medical approach are often overlooked. Dr. Dick is leading an innovative effort at Seattle Children's Hospital to bring all these specialties together into an integrated medical treatment approach to these children.

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*Starlight helps seriously ill children and their families cope
with their pain, fear and isolation through entertainment, education and family activities.*

To help this group of children feel more accepted at the hospital and as though they have a “home”, we are piloting this project where upon admittance to the hospital their social worker, nurse practitioner or child life specialist will fill out a specialized referral form, fax it to us and we then select play and interactive items that are appropriate for that child to help ease the time in the hospital as well as aiding in some therapeutic activities. We will utilize our volunteers to create these gift bags and deliver them to the hospital within 48-72 hours of admittance. As of right now, over 200 children have already been identified as part of this population and have been enrolled at Seattle Children’s Hospital.

To help support Starlight for this and other programs and initiatives, please join us on February 22 for our annual Oscar’s Night® America event at The Triple Door in downtown Seattle. It’s a great way to watch the stars and your favorite movies compete for the “Oscar” on the big screen, see some stars among us at The Triple Door, eat gourmet food, bid on auction items, and have some great fun while supporting Starlight. It’s a great way to start 2009 with feeling good by doing good. Go to our website (www.starlight-washington.org) for more information and to register. Seats are already being reserved.

Our annual Golf Tournament will be May 15th at Golf at Newcastle. Kick off the golf season with Starlight. Also, Fashion First, our new partner, and Starlight are collaborating on their high end and very popular fashion show as a fundraiser for Starlight in August 2009. It is among the most exciting and well attending fashion shows in greater Seattle. Funds raised from these events support our children and family programs. Please contact me directly for more information or to explore how you can get more involved or benefit Starlight.

You are part of this partnership where together we act on the value that seriously ill children and their families deserve and will get the support they need to deal with the fear, pain, isolation, and trauma of serious illness. Together we bring light and joy into some of the darkest moments of these children’s and families’ lives. Thank you and bless you for sharing and acting on that value.

Steve

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Starlight-Spokane’s Holiday Party was held December 14th at the Mobius Children’s Museum, underwritten by Wells Fargo for venue, food, and a board game for each family. Santa also made an appearance. The families had a blast! And in spite of the weather, we had many families attending! Ashlynn (at left) and Kelsey with “Jack”, the Wells Fargo mascot, are posing with gifts from the bank. Wells Fargo also held a holiday toy drive for Starlight, as did Hollywood Video stores statewide, Bellevue Square Mall, many Starbucks stores, and numerous churches, organizations, schools, and individuals. Toys are distributed throughout the year to Starlight families and to over 100 hospitals and pediatric organizations throughout Washington.