



The Inside Story
Only Together Can We Brighten Lives
October 2008

Preamble: This is the next in a series of letters from the Executive Director of Starlight Children's Foundation – WA 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.

In my last letter I updated you on many fronts: new Board members, new leadership structures, progress in Spokane, new partnerships, and the Board of Director's retreat on strategic direction. I'll update you on these areas, and close on two important issues for Starlight.

One of the strategic directions is to grow the Board in size and configuration. To enhance its insight into the families Starlight serves, the Board has maintained Starlight parents on the Board. Last year the Board recruited Dr. Ron Dick, pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital. Dr. Dick is doing some innovative work at Children's Hospital that I will tell more about later. Our newest additions to the Board include Bill Rielly, a department director at Microsoft, and John James, business owner of Instant Imprints in Redmond. Starlight's Board is making very good progress on its strategic Board development goal.

In my last letter I mentioned the creation of a Board of Advocates who will welcome high level community and business leaders and influencers. This group will help Starlight's mission through advocating and opening doors for Starlight. This group is just forming. One of this group's projects will be the Fashion First fashion show I described in my last letter to you. Fashion First is a new partner for Starlight. We 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-attended fashion shows in greater Seattle. Please let me know if you would like to join our Board of Advocates or want more information (steve@starlight-washington.org, 425-861-7827 x101).

Our efforts in Spokane continue with hospital and community activities for the Starlight children and families in that community. To develop local support for these efforts, the Spokane Leadership Council's next major fundraiser is a benefit concert “Emerald Concert” on November 29 at the Bing Crosby Theater in Spokane. Detailed information will be on our website soon.

My last words will focus on the two issues I referred to earlier. With the leadership of Dr. Ron Dick, Starlight Board member and pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital, our Starlight chapter is launching a pilot project to address the needs of medically-complex pediatric patients. This is an area of specialty for Dr. Dick. Children with medically-complex conditions are dealing with multiple

Mission: We help seriously ill children and their families cope with their pain, fear and isolation through entertainment, education and family activities

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ailments, diseases, or disabilities. A good example is children with Cerebral Palsy who also often suffer with other medical conditions due to the primary condition. Current medical practice typically addresses these needs as specialties with each specialist only looking at the one condition they specialize in. 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.

Dr. Dick is partnering with Erin Behen, our Program Director, on a pilot project where Starlight provides developmentally-appropriate toys and interactives to help provide positive distraction and entertainment for these children while they are in the hospital. Some of these children cannot manipulate toys, so Starlight will provide toys that use a different sensory modality such as sound, sight, smell, etc. The pediatric patients will be welcomed by specially-oriented volunteers and they will receive a special welcome bag with these toys and other items when they are admitted to the hospital. The pilot launches in January and, based on results, other Starlight chapters and offices will approach their local children's hospitals to multiply this effort. This is the first step in an exciting innovative direction to better understand and serve the depth of the needs of seriously ill children.

Finally, I bring to you a sincere plea for your support of Starlight at this time. One of the effects of the uncertainty of the current economic climate is that many people are waiting - waiting to purchase, waiting to invest, and waiting to donate. We have seen a significant drop in donations over the last three months. Unfortunately, the needs of seriously ill children, their families, and our hospital partners who depend on our programs and services do not change. As you expect any business to make adjustments at such times, we are making adjustments to reduce expenses including possible staffing changes. However, without your support, further drops in donations and further adjustments to reduce expenses will result in making it very difficult to operate our chapter and provide services to these children, families, and hospitals. I am reluctant to be so frank on this subject but I am left with the reality that Starlight and fulfilling our mission can only happen through the direct support of our donors and constituents. We are organizing and partnering for positive outcomes for next year. We need stability now to be able to take advantage of these opportunities. Please say yes to Starlight and send in a donation at this time. Please call me if you would like to talk in more detail.

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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Please help us provide the smiles, fun, entertainment and distraction for our Starlight children and their families as they battle serious illnesses and other traumas.

