



November 2007 Update

From the desk of Washington Chapter's Executive Director, Steve McGraw



We are extremely grateful for the hundreds of volunteers and donors who support Starlight's many program areas. Over the past three months, more than 1,700 volunteer hours have helped our program services, office support, and fundraising events.

Recently elected to our board of directors are Brian McNaughton, Spokane business leader; Andrea Martini, business owner and Starlight parent, and Ron Dick M.D., pediatrician and hospitalist at Seattle Children's Hospital.

New staff over the past three months include two in eastern Washington, based in Spokane: Susan Faltermeyer, resource development officer, and Paige McKee, program coordinator. Joining our Redmond staff are Margaux Ramos, marketing manager; Tami Gibb, volunteer coordinator; and Ann Haven, special events coordinator, who will oversee our chapter's three big events – Starlight Luncheon, Oscar Night® America, and Golf Classic & Auction.

Luke's Story

by Sue Searles, Starlight Mom

Luke had a drowning accident three years ago when he was 17 months old. He was dead for at least 40 minutes before he came back to life. He sustained an anoxic brain injury; going from being a very active healthy child to an unresponsive child with no emotions at all. He left the hospital after 30 days with a tracheotomy, j-tube for eating, and cerebral palsy.

Our family was turned upside down when Luke's accident happened. My older kids had to take over the running of the home many times during that first year after Luke's accident. Luke has had many doctor appointments and therapy sessions. He has spent over 50 days in the hospital, though I'm thankful to say he has not been in the hospital in 17 months. I try to make sure that I have special time with all my children, whether that's taking them out to lunch, reading books with them, or just making sure I have some one-on-one conversation time with them each day.

Finding out about Starlight has been a huge blessing in our lives. Starlight knows that the whole family is affected when they have a special needs child. Having Starlight schedule and plan fun outings is wonderful; and the icing on the top is that they are free. Financially having a special needs child can be stressful, as we do not qualify for any financial help. We are blessed to have wonderful insurance coverage, but with Luke's medications, extra therapies, and supplements, we just don't have extra money for fun outings; they just aren't a priority.

I love telling people about the progress that Luke has made. Three years ago, Luke had absolutely no emotion; he could not communicate with us at all. Now he is full of smiles, lets us know when he is in pain or uncomfortable by moaning. The doctor had told us that Luke would have a trachea tube for the rest of his life; he got his trachea tube out seven months after it was put in; though he still struggles at times with lung issues, he is getting stronger all the time. Luke used to just stare off in the distance all the time, now his eyes actually follow people and he will look at a book when we read to him. Iron is the only medication Luke is taking right now, which is huge since he was on five different medications a day. I often tell people that though Luke has made slow progress, it is always going in the right direction. We keep a positive attitude towards Luke's progress, faith that Luke will walk and talk again someday.



Please Support Starlight!

- Designate your workplace campaign pledge
- Attend the Disney on Ice Princesses Party (11/7) and Trans Siberian Orchestra Concert (12/1)
- Donate holiday or year-end gifts
- Plan to attend Oscar Night® America (2/24)
- Donate auction items for Oscar or Golf events
- Schedule a Santa at your home or workplace
- Donate new toys and books to the holiday toy drives – Starbucks, Bellevue Square, business, schools
- Donate craft and office supplies - most wanted are pencil sharpener, paper cutter, stapler, scissors

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, alienation, 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.

Our 15th Anniversary Luncheon in October was a wonderful celebration! Howard Lincoln (lower right), currently CEO of the Mariners, was presented with our first "Starlight Citizen" award (photo at left), recognizing his leadership at Nintendo in 1992 in helping form the Washington Chapter. Providing insight into the value of Starlight were, from left, Starlight Mom, Sue Searles; Skagit Valley Hospital's director of volunteer services, Steve Schultz; and Bellevue business owner Dave Hamilton, who is a program and event volunteer.





"Great Escapes" are much enjoyed by our Starlight families, whether it's baseball, theater, dinner, boating, or a trip to a petting zoo. Shown here are families at a kangaroo farm. These events are made possible by donations and discounts for which we are grateful.

From Our Starlight Families:

Shawn & Megan Baker - Liam Baker, Starlight Child: We became involved with Starlight because our son, Liam, was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) at 5 ½ months. We learned about Starlight through a relative, and have been involved ever since. Starlight provides us with opportunities that may not otherwise be available to us financially, due to the large medical & pharmaceutical bills that are associated with a terminal disease. The events allow us to forget about CF for awhile, and just have fun as a family. I am also familiar with the foundation for another reason: I worked for Starbucks for two years and was involved with the toy drive over the holidays. It has meant even more to me to be involved since my son was a benefactor of this wonderful foundation. It was great to know that Starbucks was such a driving force in this tradition.

Amy Miller - Zac Miller, Starlight Child: Zac is the youngest member of our family, a sweet, energetic four-year-old with heart and kidney issues and Kabuki syndrome, all of which have caused growth problems, and a number of physical delays. Our involvement with Starlight has given Zac, his four siblings, and us as his parents, wonderful opportunities to meet other families in difficult, sometimes scary, situations like we experience, and opened up doors for us to do fun things as a family that we couldn't do before. We love being involved with Starlight!

Karen & Bruce Smith - two Starlight children: We became involved with Starlight because it is concerned with the entire family. There are organizations that do wonderful things for children with chronic illnesses and disabilities, but people often don't realize the sacrifices that the siblings of these children make. Starlight focuses on the whole family and makes all the children feel special. We're thankful to all those who help make this program the success that it is.

Wanted (and much needed!) Interns!

Positions are available for service in several activities:

- Program services
- Business operations
- Fund raising, grant writing, special events
- Marketing
- Volunteer management

A minimum of a three-month commitment is required to work at the Starlight office two days a week during office hours (9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday).

Internships are not paid, but offer a great deal of hands-on experience. School credit may be available for students.

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Chapter Staff

Steve McGraw, *Executive Director*

Erin Behen, *Program Services Director* ~ Joyce Bottenberg, *Development Director*

Margaux Ramos, *Marketing Manager* ~ Ann Haven, *Special Events Coordinator*

Tami Gibb, *Volunteer Coordinator* ~ Stefany Peterson, *Office Manager*

Spokane Office:

Paige McKee, *Program Coordinator*

Susan Faltermeyer, *Resource Development Officer*

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Starlight Starbright is a 501c3 charity, Federal ID #91-1558287

Volunteer & Intern

Hospital parties
In-community family events
Warehouse & Office
Fundraising events
Marketing
Graphics
Committees

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