The NWCF Forum: Six ideas to spark thought, discussion and action

Spring is here and thanks to our enthusiastic, collaborative community, we're feeling more hopeful than ever. NW Children’s Foundation just concluded its Winter grant cycle, distributing more than $444,000 to 25 hard-working agencies in March (see page 4) and is beginning the evaluation process for the Spring cycle. We also hosted our NWCF Forum earlier this year, bringing together 900+ members of our community for a powerful discussion about childhood trauma and well-being.

The 2019 NWCF Forum – Community Trauma and Child Well-Being: Trauma-Informed Care and the Future of Healing – focused on the central role community plays in childhood health and adversity.

Our exceptional Forum presenters addressed topics of racism and politics with honesty and grace, challenging the audience to examine the lenses through which they view life. One attendee said “it was by far the most thought-provoking, hold-me-accountable presentation I’ve ever attended. I am inspired to step out of my comfort zone and think deeper about healing-centered treatment.” We couldn’t agree more.

Many of the ideas presented by Forum speakers Dr. Shawn Ginwright (professor, author and CEO of California-based Flourish Agenda) and Dr. Benjamin Danielson (Seattle pediatrician and community leader) inspired so much continued conversation, we wanted to share some of them with you:

1 ACES: Expand your understanding.

Since the 90s, the famed Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study has been used to illustrate the dramatic links between childhood trauma and negative health outcomes. Ginwright reminded us that it's not just individuals who suffer trauma, “sometimes the very systems we’re in are traumatized.” For this reason, Ginwright encouraged
us to broaden our thinking to include another set of ACES – *Adverse Community Environments*. These ACEs take into account inequities such as systemic discrimination, a lack of affordable and safe housing, community violence and poverty.

2 Don’t bypass the healing phase.

Before a child who has experienced trauma can build self-confidence, he or she needs to heal. The same goes for those who are helping children. Ginwright encouraged us to bring a healing-centered approach to our trauma-informed practices so that kids have the tools and confidence they need to grow and develop. Similarly, our communities need to invest in robust strategies to heal so that we don’t continue to reproduce the inequalities that have caused us harm. By doing so, we focus on the root causes of trauma.

3 Reduce the toxins in and around us.

Ginwright and Danielson discussed how social toxins – chronic instances of adversity rooted in social injustices – affect child well-being. According to Danielson, we must identify and name these toxins, and recognize how they influence our lives and bodies. Things like racism, classism and poverty have a toxic impact on our well-being, not only on the individual level, but they also affect our relationships, policies and institutions. We need to work at every level to eliminate these toxins.

The Pair of ACEs

*Adverse Childhood Experiences*

- Maternal Depression
- Physical & Emotional Neglect
- Emotional & Sexual Abuse
- Divorce
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Illness
- Domestic Violence
- Incarceration
- Homelessness

*Adverse Community Environments*

- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Community Disruption
- Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital
- Poor Housing Quality & Affordability
- Violence

To conclude the 2019 Forum, Dr. Ginwright moderated an inspired Q&A session with Kaaren Andrews (principal of Interagency Academy); Sheila Capestany (Senior Advisor for Children and Youth of King County Best Starts for Kids); and Dr. Danielson. They took this important discussion to the next level, offering reflections from the educational, policy-making and medical perspectives.

4 Language matters.

While recognizing and addressing trauma is critical, Ginwright reminded us that children are not their trauma. By using expedient labels (e.g. abused child or homeless youth) we define children by the abuse or neglect that happened to them. It strips them of their power and hope, forcing them to focus on the negative events of the past instead of the positive potential of the future. Making small-yet-important changes in our language can help remind individuals that their trauma may be part of their history, but it doesn’t have to define their future.

5 Embrace discomfort. Fight apathy.

Talking about the inequities that exist in our communities is uncomfortable, but skirting these issues won’t make them go away. Danielson reminded us, “We have to fight this sense of apathy – the desire to sit and hope with our kindness and passivity that something good is going to happen. We have to challenge ourselves to push harder to do something that makes us uncomfortable in order to change, because change feeds on discomfort.”


If you want to expand your capacity to be open to new ideas, Danielson recommends taking a step back. The process of “unlearning” something actually allows you to think more creatively. Ginwright added, “We’re so focused on reducing the misery that we don’t think imaginatively about how to create new kinds of opportunities for our youth.” We explore ways to reduce violence, but how do we increase peace? We discuss ways to reduce illness, now let’s talk about ways to build hope.

You may view the entire 2019 NWCF Forum on Community Trauma and Child Well-Being online at nwcf.org/events/forum. Share the link with friends and keep these important conversations going.
NW Children’s Foundation Winter 2019 Grants

### Healing Children

**Boyer Children’s Clinic:** In-home therapeutic intervention to support foster parents in building nurturing relationships with young children who have special healthcare needs.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**King County Sexual Assault Resource Center:** Therapeutic interventions to support healing in child and youth victims of sexual abuse and their families.  
*Amount Awarded: 33,000*

**Lutheran Community Services Northwest:** Provides safe, secure and permanent homes for children who have experienced abuse and neglect.  
*Amount Awarded: 17,000*

**Pediatric Interim Care Center:** Immediate, short-term, medically supervised care for drug-exposed and fragile infants.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**Ryther:** Implementation of a trauma-informed framework for intervention with youth and families who have experienced multiple and/or prolonged traumatic stress.  
*Amount Awarded: 30,000*

**Toddler Learning Center:** Education services and therapy in the home for young children and families with intensive medical, mental or social risk factors.  
*Amount Awarded: 18,000*

### Strengthening Families

**Center for Human Services:** Support services and parenting education to help related caregivers of at-risk children gain skills and resources to ensure the children in their care thrive.  
*Amount Awarded: 18,000*

**El Centro de la Raza:** Training for low-income Latino families to increase parenting skills, promote school readiness and improve their child’s life outcomes.  
*Amount Awarded: 18,000*

**Lydia Place:** Parent educator home visits, group parenting education and therapeutic interventions for children in shelters and transitional housing.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**Rescue Mission:** Academic and socio-emotional support for children ages 2-18 living in Rescue Mission facilities.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**Secret Harbor:** Therapeutic foster care, in-home support and residential treatment services for young people who have suffered significant trauma due to abuse and neglect.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**Solid Ground:** Programs and support for children who have experienced homelessness and domestic violence.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**Vine Maple Place:** Comprehensive housing and support services for single parents and their children to build stability and self-sufficiency.  
*Amount Awarded: 20,000*

**Vision House:** Transitional housing and integrated support services for homeless mothers and their children.  
*Amount Awarded: 14,000*

### Empowering Youth

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Washington:** Mentoring for children who are at risk of dropping out, violence, substance abuse and other juvenile problem behaviors.  
*Amount Awarded: 17,000*

**Cocoon House:** Quality, safe and stable housing and wraparound support services for homeless youth ages 12-17 and teen mothers for up to 18 months.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**Communities In Schools of Peninsula:** Academic mentoring to students through one-on-one weekly meetings throughout the school year to improve skills in reading and math and build confidence.  
*Amount Awarded: 12,000*

**Communities In Schools of Renton:** Mentoring, tutoring and wraparound support services for at-risk students.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**Friends of the Children:** Long-term professional mentoring to guide children facing tough challenges to reach their potential and achieve their goals.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**Northwest Youth Services:** Emergency housing and case management for homeless youth ages 13-17.  
*Amount Awarded: 18,000*

**Ryan’s House For Youth:** Quality, safe and stable housing, including emergency shelter, transitional housing and drop-in center, with wraparound services for homeless youth 12-24.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**TeamChild:** Advocacy and specialized legal services connecting high-needs youth in crisis with support programs and services.  
*Amount Awarded: 12,000*

**Treehouse:** Comprehensive support for the educational needs of youth in foster care.  
*Amount Awarded: 34,000*

**Youth Tutoring Program - Catholic Community Services:** Afterschool tutoring and enrichment program for children living in Seattle’s low-income communities.  
*Amount Awarded: 15,000*

**YWCA Clark County:** Case management and support services for foster youth transitioning from state care to independence.  
*Amount Awarded: 17,000*

### Total Awarded:  $444,000
NW Children’s Foundation is thrilled to put a well-deserved spotlight on the recipients of our 2019 Evergreen Grants: Treehouse and YouthCare. These $100,000 three-year grants are awarded to organizations that have developed consistently effective programs aimed at breaking the cycle of child abuse and neglect.

Treehouse is committed to pursuing equity for youth in foster care, providing the essential support they need to graduate and build successful futures. Their innovative Graduation Success program earned Treehouse its Evergreen Grant from NWCF. The program provides middle and high school students in foster care with education planning, monitoring, coaching and other support to help them stay on track for graduation. Treehouse had such success with its endeavors in King County, they are looking ahead to statewide expansion. Their new goal: By 2022, youth in foster care across the state will graduate at the same rate as their peers, with support and a plan to launch successfully into adulthood.

YouthCare works to end youth homelessness and ensure that all young people are valued for who they are and empowered to achieve their potential. NWCF’s Evergreen Grant will help YouthCare provide homeless youth with individualized support including: safe and consistent housing, direct mentorship or connection to education, counseling, health care, wellness services and job training programs. Supported by 24/7 wraparound programming and trusting relationships with caring adults, young people experiencing homelessness can rely on YouthCare to help them find a safe path to long-term stability.

For more than 30 years, NWCF has been a committed funder. This steadfast support has enabled YouthCare to grow, innovate and help more youth and young adults experiencing homelessness find safety today, and build a future for tomorrow.

- Melinda Giovengo, Director, YouthCare
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NW CHILDREN’S FOUNDATION
GALA + AUCTION
APRIL 27, 2019    |    FREMONT STUDIOS
155 NORTH 35TH STREET, SEATTLE

Together we can break the cycle of child abuse and neglect and reach for a better tomorrow.

- Festivities begin at 5:30 PM
- Silent auction and wine tasting
- Dinner by Chef John Howie
- Live auction with John Curley

Can’t make it? You can still bid. Contact NWCF at 206-682-8447

Check out our auction catalog at NWCF.MAESTROWEB.COM