Funding Hope Report —
A Monumental Gift to Mental Health Care

Thank you to the Seattle Children’s Guild Association

Generosity Changes Lives for the Better

Seattle Children’s Guild Association has been a transformational supporter for compassionate and innovative pediatric medical care for more than a century. Over the decades, tens of thousands of guild members have been inspired to bring hope, care and cures to Seattle Children’s patients and families. Through Funding Hope, Guild Association members show the collective strength of generosity and equity. Thank you for prioritizing programs that help kids, teens and young adults access the right care, at the right place, at the right time.
Dear Guild Association Members,

I cannot fully express how grateful I am for your compassionate involvement and dedication to our patients. Pediatric mental health programs rarely receive major gifts, and the Guild Association’s $5 million Funding Hope commitment makes a strong statement about reducing stigma and elevating care. Your generous giving translates into concrete actions to address the youth mental health crises in our community.

The numbers are stark: In 2020, depressive disorders were the number one reason for outpatient visits at Seattle Children’s. One in five children in the U.S. has a mental health disorder and 50% of them never receive care. COVID-19 has increased and exacerbated mental health conditions from anxiety to suicidality — and made it even more difficult for kids and teens to get the care they need.

When the pandemic hit, our hospital — like all healthcare systems — faced financial challenges that limited our resources to provide care. But your gifts allowed us to be nimble. Virtually everything our mental health providers and program staff have done in response to COVID-19 has been thanks to philanthropy and the Funding Hope gift. This ranges from community mental health education to building our own and our partner institutions’ crisis capacity.

Fueling our pandemic response is one of the many ways the Guild Association’s commitment is playing a pivotal role in improving youth mental health care. You are also helping us:

- **Build mental health services into all aspects of healthcare.** This ranges from expanding routine mental health screenings for well-child visits through the Seattle Children’s Care Network, our Cancer Care Psychosocial Services team helping families stay strong during cancer treatment to adding anxiety stepped care at the North clinic in October 2020.

- **Offer more solutions for more patients.** Right now, we have comprehensive support programs for kids and teens who need routine counseling and for those who receive inpatient care — but many patients need something in between. We also have family navigators who direct families to timely and appropriate resources. Starting with patients experiencing suicidality and anxiety disorder, we are launching an intensive outpatient therapy program. These comprehensive support programs meet several times per week but do not require a hospital stay.

- **Make mental health care more equitable and accessible.** Thanks to Funding Hope, we have been able to hire more bilingual family navigators and have launched a program offering mental health services via telehealth to Spanish-speaking patients and families. The program is on track to be based out of our Federal Way clinic in fall 2021. We hope to continue growing even more bilingual resources — and working to reduce other barriers to care so we can reach kids all across our state.

We have benefited enormously not only from your generosity but from the insight many of you have from caring for a loved one who has experienced these conditions. Together, we can reduce stigma, meet our community’s needs and continue to elevate mental health as a crucial part of overall health. Thank you.

With my deepest gratitude,

Dr. Lawrence Wissow
Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, Raisbeck Endowed Chair in Pediatric Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine

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**Generous Guilds Designate Funds to Mental Health Research and Care**

Stories are powerful — they can shape how we see the world. We’re grateful to guilds that designated funds to youth mental health programs at Seattle Children’s, including the Eastside Friends for Children’s Guild, Frances W. Nordstrom Guild, the KC Howard Guild, the Tina Helsell Guild and the Clare Beckett Guild. The stories they shared as they raised more than $345,000 fueled compassion for the patients and families in need of scarce mental health services and challenged assumptions and stigmas about these conditions.
WOW! The impact our guild association has on our community is simply incredible. **Funding Hope** is one of the ways we show up for children and their families. This annual initiative helps teams at Seattle Children’s address pressing program priorities and turn roadblocks into thruways.

Here’s how it works: Leaders at Seattle Children’s identify several key priorities. Representatives from those areas then make presentations to the Guild Association Board of Trustees. Sometimes our funding is split among programs, sometimes we focus on one.

Sometimes a program area warrants multiyear support: Youth mental health is one of those. The two-year **$5 million** allocation is one of the largest in Funding Hope’s history. It reflects the urgency to address gaps in youth mental health care that have been building for years. The board knew Seattle Children’s had the expertise to make meaningful change — they just needed the funding.

Now, thanks to you, a variety of projects are underway so kids and adolescents can get the care they need when and where they need it, and families can navigate the mental health care system more easily.

Giving and innovation are part of our Pacific Northwest culture. When we see a need, we take responsibility to make it better. Seattle Children’s Guild Association — more than **4,000 members** and **300 guilds** strong — embodies this. We’re the biggest all-volunteer fundraising network of any hospital in the United States. Our support empowers Seattle Children’s to do things that other hospitals can’t. And it starts with you.

**The Power of Our Collective Action**

By Mebie Thompson, board chair, Seattle Children’s Guild Association

Funding Hope: Seattle Children's Guild Association Gives $5 Million to Mental Health

Over the last few decades, the Guild Association has made a collective gift called **Funding Hope**. This gift directs a portion of annual funds raised toward priority research and hospital funding needs, and is selected by the Guild Association Board of Trustees.

In support of the **It Starts With Yes: The Campaign for Seattle Children’s**, the Guild Association Board selected to direct the 2020 and 2021 Funding Hope gift towards funding new mental health programs. This **$5 million** contribution funded programs that address mental health issues early in a child’s life, support mental wellness, and help families navigate their child’s mental health challenges. This gift also funds critical positions like family navigators and bilingual triage staff who are integrated into clinics and specialty areas of care.

While every guild is inspired by a unique connection to the Seattle Children’s mission and vision, Funding Hope is a gift we make together. Funding Hope enables guild members to meet the emerging needs of patients and offer hope where it’s needed most. Thank you for giving the gift of hope, today and always.

Javi Barria, 24, spent time in Seattle Children’s inpatient psychiatry unit. She is now an advocate for youth mental health.
Mental Health Providers Surround My Family with Support and Strength

By Dr. John McGuire, division chief of critical care medicine, Peter’s dad

As division chief of critical care medicine at Seattle Children’s, I’m used to seeing families rally to support children who are going through physical health crises. But when my 17-year-old son Peter was experiencing mental health challenges, I thought I had to keep it to myself.

Peter started showing signs of anxiety in kindergarten and depressive symptoms in middle school. Getting him to go to a therapist was hard. Asking for help was even harder. Peter was in and out of outpatient therapy for years, and was hospitalized at Seattle Children’s inpatient Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine Unit for severe depression at 13. But I rarely discussed his mental health. Instead, I retreated into my job where I could be a confident physician rather than an uncertain, anxious parent who didn’t know how to help his son.

We eventually found a good psychiatrist and Peter did better for a while. Unfortunately, high school presented new challenges, and we struggled to find new solutions. Ultimately, we got him into a wilderness treatment program and then to a therapeutic boarding school. Now, Peter is looking ahead to college. Most importantly, he is openly talking about his feelings.

Getting on board with Peter’s therapy plan required me to speak openly about our family’s experience. Colleagues have shared similar experiences — which has been inspiring. I now welcome the questions about how Peter is doing rather than shying away from the topic. I am beginning to build a support community at work, which is tremendously comforting.

The name of your gift, Funding Hope, truly lives up to its name and gives parents like me the hope we’re looking for. Mental health needs to be as visible and as “normal” as physical health. Coping with a child struggling with mental health should be something we can safely share as much as asthma or diabetes. There is a long way to go, but I am grateful that Seattle Children’s is working to change this.

Every day, I see the impact guilds and donors have on our hospital, which makes our excellent care possible. I’m so grateful that donors like you are making mental health a priority in your giving. I can’t thank you enough for supporting this work.

Island Friends Junior Guild Builds Bridges to Advocate for Their Peers

POSITIVE VIBES/POSITIVE MIND is the tagline of the Island Friends Junior Guild of Mercer Island, which supports the Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine Unit at Seattle Children’s and educates the community about the importance of mental health.

The guild enjoys trying different ways to raise money, from Back-to-School Socials to selling specialty items. The tea and scone gift sets they created for Mother’s Day were a big hit. Thank you to the Island Friends Junior Guild for raising more than $30,000 since 2015.
How Intensive Outpatient Therapy Changed My Son Xander’s Life

By Stephanie Simpson, Xander’s mom

In 2018, when our son Xander was 9, he started having headaches. They got so bad that he needed inpatient psychiatric care. Treatment helped, but then his behavior started to change. He would withdraw and curl into a ball and couldn’t make it through a school day. Then he told us something horrifying: He was having thoughts of ending his life.

We eventually connected with Seattle Children’s Behavioral Health Crisis Care Clinic, which supports kids and teens experiencing mental health crises. Generous donors like you help make vital mental health programs available and ensure every family receives care regardless of their finances. Psychologist Dr. Eileen Twohy diagnosed Xander with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and helped us understand that he was experiencing intrusive thoughts.

For Xander, this meant he was constantly afraid that he was going to hurt himself. He would hide under his bed to stay safe. He would be playing soccer and all of a sudden say, “I have to leave, I’m scared I’m going to kill myself.”

As parents, this was terrifying and isolating. When kids experience physical health crises, their families are met with care for their other children, casseroles and incredible support. With mental illness, we’re often met with stigma and fear. But any childhood health crisis is a nightmare, and all families need love and support.

Xander’s care started with therapy and medication. In November 2020, he joined Seattle Children’s OCD Intensive Outpatient Program. Philanthropy helped build and sustain this program — and it has changed Xander’s life. For four months, he did three hours of therapy a few days per week and OCD homework every day. This helped Xander learn how to work through his fears. It also equipped us with resources to support him.

We never imagined he would be doing this well. Not that every day is easy. But it has been amazing to watch him grow and to hear him laugh again — we hadn’t heard him laugh in years. Now, he’s back at school and playing with friends like a typical 11-year-old.

We’re so grateful for Seattle Children’s expert care. We’re thankful for the donors who help make these programs possible. Thank you for making mental health care a priority. Thank you for helping us move closer to a world where families experiencing mental health crises are met with love, compassion and the resources they need.

OCD Guild Helps Families Find Their Rhythm

Grateful for the strides their children made in Seattle Children’s OCD Intensive Outpatient Program, three parents formed a guild to expand access to the program and train more University of Washington clinical psychology students to treat OCD.

Though COVID-19 precluded in-person events, the guild raised over $35,000 through tech companies like Microsoft, Facebook and Google.

“The program was life-changing for us and we want more adolescents and families to benefit.”

— Mariyan Fransazov, OCD Guild co-founder

Xander, With his puppy Ozzie.
The CARE Team Helps Kids Safely Transition Back Home

By Kristen Arquette, mental health therapist, Community Advocacy Resource Engagement (CARE Team)

On behalf of the CARE Team, I want to thank you. Thank you for taking a chance on an innovative new idea. For empowering a small, patient-facing team to address a glaring gap in care. For investing in our patients.

Your support has already helped more than 150 of our most vulnerable young people return safely to their home communities after a hospitalization in our Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine Unit.

Did you know that more than 15% of children and teens hospitalized for mental health issues are readmitted within 30 days? Many more seek help in an emergency department (ED). There are many reasons for this. Often, they haven’t found ongoing care and don’t know where else to turn. Access to mental health care is limited. Pediatric mental health clinicians are in short supply. Navigating the system is time consuming and frustrating. And, typically, the onus of setting up ongoing care falls on the family.

You are helping change that. Launched with support from Funding Hope, the CARE Team is stepping in early to get youth set up with the care and resources they will need after leaving our inpatient psychiatric unit.

We currently focus on kids who are at the highest risk of being readmitted. We work with about 20 families each month, digging in to understand their needs so we can match them to the appropriate services and clinical care. We also provide short-term counseling and coaching while they transition to their new providers.

This pilot program is new to Seattle Children’s and it’s unique in the mental health field. We based it on care coordination programs for people who have complex chronic conditions such as diabetes or congenital heart disease.

Our first 18 months — made more challenging by COVID-19 — show the difference we’re making. The cohort we served had 11% fewer psychiatric hospitalizations and 44% fewer mental health visits to an ED in the 60 days after discharge from our inpatient psychiatric unit, compared to the 60 days before they were admitted. We hope to have an even greater impact in the coming year.

We plan to present our findings and publish a paper later this year so professionals around the country can see the impact we’re having and maybe do something similar in their communities.

Funding Hope made it possible. Thank you for building a bridge families can cross toward a healthier future.

“During my freshman year of high school, I was admitted to the PBMU for three months. My team got me through my darkest days by getting to know me as an individual and believing in me, even when I didn’t believe in myself. Seeing Seattle Children’s shining a light on mental health and making it a main focus has meant the world to me. When I was going through my hospitalization, I felt like no one really cared that there were kids struggling in this unit. To see Seattle Children’s making this work a high priority shows me people really do care. I’m excited to be a part of this change and part of this movement.”

— Javi Barria, patient ambassador
Helping Cancer Patients Reach True Recovery

By Dr. Joanna Patten, pediatric psychologist, clinical lead, Cancer Care Psychosocial Services

Thanks to modern therapies, most kids survive cancer. But the mental health impacts can be tremendous and long-lasting: Every day, I work with young people enduring the many challenges of treatment, like feeling sick and experiencing major body changes. I also see teenagers — at a time in life when most of their peers feel invincible — struggling to navigate the fear of potential relapse.

Seattle Children’s is working to make behavioral health care part of every child’s cancer treatment. Philanthropy helps make this possible. Along with Dr. Abby Rosenberg’s resilience programs, our Cancer Care Psychosocial Services team is providing more support than ever. We start with helping children and families adjust to their diagnosis. And we’re there throughout treatment — assisting them through long hospital stays and separation from typical school and extracurricular activities. We also help guide families into life after cancer treatment, which is often more challenging than they anticipate.

Thanks to the Funding Hope gift and key individual donors, we’ve been able to expand this program by bringing on a psychology fellow. Added staffing has helped us grow mental health services within our Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Cancer Survivor Program. We’ve also expanded Child Life and Creative Arts services, through which we started support groups for parents and siblings of kids going through treatment.

One of the highlights of last year was launching virtual AYA groups to bring young adults from across the state together. We talk about common challenges, like body image and long-term effects of treatment. Most participants have never met another young adult who has had cancer. This is so valuable because as much as I try to normalize each person’s experience, nothing is more assuring than connecting with peers who have endured many of the same things.

Moving forward, we’re working to make these programs as accessible and equitable as possible. This includes offering more behavioral health programs via telehealth so that patients can access services without commuting to the hospital. We’re also seeking multilingual staff to help us deliver truly accessible and equitable care.

I’m so thankful for all of the guilds’ work to sustain cancer research and care — and grateful that you’ve made supporting psychosocial needs a priority. Your gifts are vital to helping patients and families heal and reach true recovery.
Making Mental Health Part of Routine Healthcare

By Dr. Sheryl Morelli, chief medical officer, Seattle Children’s Care Network

For most of my 18 years as a pediatrician, I’ve seen patients’ physical and mental health largely being managed separately. If a child has a physical problem, they typically seek and receive timely care. But kids with mental health conditions often wait months or even years before getting care.

Those who do pursue help are referred out of primary care practices and face very long waits for appointments. About half of patients with behavioral and mental health conditions never receive care at all.

At Seattle Children’s Care Network (SCCN) — a pediatric network focused on improving the quality, cost and experience of care — we’re working to change that. And progress wouldn’t be possible without the Guild Association’s support.

Thanks to your generous gift, we’ve been able to provide upstart salary support to hire behavioral health professionals and psychiatric consultants in pediatric primary care practices across the Puget Sound region.

We’re also providing comprehensive training and support to build programs that are responsive to patients’ needs and ultimately sustain themselves. The goal is to integrate mental and behavioral health services into practices where kids already go for routine care, enabling them to get screened early and connected to appropriate services as soon as possible.

This makes a huge impact: Parents of young children with disruptive behavior can connect with behavioral health specialists in a place they know and trust. Teens experiencing depressive symptoms can be identified and helped sooner in a familiar environment. Having someone on staff with expertise in these conditions helps to reduce stigma — one of the leading barriers to receiving appropriate and timely care. Getting such support early has been proven to prevent more serious problems down the road.

I can’t underscore how grateful we are for the donors who fuel this work, and especially for the Guild Association’s significant commitment. Since launching this program, we’ve had calls from pediatricians interested in implementing similar programs in other states. Your gifts will have a significant impact on youth in our community and across the nation. Thank you.

On average, it is eight to 10 years from when a child has their first symptoms of mental illness begin to when they get treatment.

Thank you for bringing new hope, better care and lifesaving cures to the children and families we serve. Your support fills a need that’s never been greater, ensuring every child in our region receives the care they need, regardless of their family’s ability to pay. We are beyond grateful for your generosity and support. Thank you for saying yes to kids.