



Funds Distribution Report

Recipient Organization:

Amara

Address:

5907 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South
Seattle, WA 98118

Contact:

(206) 260-1700
<https://amaraputskidsfirst.org>

Organization's General Goals:

Amara works to ensure that every child in foster care has the love and support of a committed family – as quickly as possible and for as long as each child needs.

Date of Award:

2017 Q4

Level:

\$500 to \$2,500

Specific Use for This Award:

This award went towards administrative and program expenses. For more information, please read the attached report from Amara.

8802 27th Ave NE
Tulalip, WA 98271

TulalipCares.org

Disclaimer: This report may be a summary of content provided by the recipient, not always complete quoted material.

Amara

October 18, 2018

Marilyn Sheldon
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions
8802 27th Avenue NE
Tulalip, WA 98721
msheldon@tulaliptribes-nsn.gov

Dear Marilyn,


On behalf of all of us at Amara, thank you for the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions' March 2018 grant (Q4 2017 14.2) of [REDACTED] to help us provide services and a warm and supportive environment at *Grandese's Place*, the Amara Emergency Sanctuary in King County, for children who have been removed from their homes for their own safety.

We are grateful to you and the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions trustees for your support for these vulnerable children. As of the end of September, we have cared for 179 children so far this year, and almost 70% have entered our Sanctuary with their siblings. We project caring for more than 250 children total at the Sanctuary in 2018. Thanks to you, we are helping to meet a truly basic human need for vulnerable children in our community – a chance to escape trauma and find a safe, nurturing home.

If you have any questions about Amara, this report, or our King County Emergency Sanctuary, please contact me at john@amaraputskidsfirst.org, or 206.260.1701.

With best regards,


John Morse
Chief Executive Officer
<https://amaraputskidsfirst.org/>

Hope all 15 well, Marilyn


Enclosure

5907 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South Seattle, WA 98118 206.260.1700 amaraputskidsfirst.org

Amara works to ensure that every child in foster care has the love and support of a committed family – as quickly as possible, and for as long as each child needs.

Report to the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions
Q4 2017 14.2 Grant for \$10,000
Report – October 2018

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

One of the greatest needs for children entering the State's foster care system is a safe place to go when they are abruptly removed from their home for their own safety. Amara's King County Emergency Sanctuary – *Grandese's Place*¹ – directly responds to this urgent need, and is the first and only facility of its kind in King County. The Emergency Sanctuary is 100% supported by philanthropy.

Inspired by the Native American saying, "If you hold the hand of a child in trouble, don't let it go until you know that the child is safe," *Grandese's* represents Amara's commitment to hold the hands of children new to foster care and to hold those hands as the children transition to homes well-suited for their needs and situation.

Since we opened *Grandese's* doors, the Sanctuary has been a child-focused safe place for almost 900 children traumatized by neglect or abuse.

Objectives of the Emergency Sanctuary

The specific objectives of *Grandese's Place* are to:

- Decrease the stress level for traumatized children at this time of significant uncertainty and help the children prepare for placement. Since 60% of the children we serve at the *Grandese's* are very young, its home-like setting is especially important. For example, recently we took a middle school-age boy, his two toddler siblings, and other children staying at *Grandese's* to the zoo. All of the kids were playing except this little boy – he stood near the adults and kept an eye on the smaller children playing, to make sure they were OK. The adult let him know that she was happy to watch the kids if he also wanted to play on the playground. His eyes got big and he said, "Really? I can go play?" It was a joy to watch him have the opportunity just to be a child.
- Better inform the placement matching process. While the children are at the Sanctuary, our staff and volunteers gather information about each child in an "All About Me" form, so that state caseworkers and potential foster families can understand better the needs of each child. Recently, our Pierce County Director received a phone call from a foster parent who was placed with a child whom we had cared for at the Sanctuary. The foster parent called to thank Amara for sending this sweet little one to her home "in style." The foster mom said that children often come to them with their things (if they have any) in a trash bag. Not only was this not the case with this child, but she also had a nice *NEW* duffel bag with her name on it. The duffel bag was packed with three days of **new** clothes and a basics kit! The foster mom said, "We found the 'All About Me' form so helpful, especially at bed time. The staff at the Sanctuary provided step-by-step instructions for a bed time routine that we were able to

¹ Amara named this Sanctuary *Grandese's Place* to honor Louise Jones McKinney, a community philanthropist, child advocate, and former Amara Advisory Council member.

continue, bringing this child comfort as she fell to sleep in a new place. Even better, she came with stories about how nice everyone was to her at the Sanctuary. Thank you for sending kids with dignity and nice things they can call their own."

- Remove barriers to foster parents' capacity and ability to embrace and nurture a child immediately upon placement. We do this by enabling placement to occur at a time of day that works for foster parents, ensuring that the child is as clean, well-fed, and well-rested as possible, ensuring that the child arrives at the foster home with everything they need for the first several days of placement, and relieving foster parents of the responsibility to schedule and facilitate the medical provider visit for child's Initial Health Screen. We recently facilitated a transition of a child in our care from *Grandese's* to a foster home. We called ahead to the foster home and let them know about his likes and dislikes. The foster home let us know that they didn't have the right car seat. When we dropped off this little boy (and a car seat that we had purchased for them) they greeted him with a *Thomas the Train* book – his favorite! Our staff stayed at the foster home for an hour while he got to know this new family. When he stood up and took the foster dad by the hand and said, "Let's go!" while walking back toward his room, we knew he felt safe and comfortable in his new placement.

How Amara met these objectives

We opened *Grandese's*, so that, in the midst of a crisis, children could be met where they are at (scared, confused, traumatized) **and** to allow the state caseworkers to focus on finding the *right* foster family. *Grandese's* gives:

- The children a safe and nurturing environment during this traumatic transition;
- Sibling groups the ability to stay together – since almost 70% of the children we care for at *Grandese's* are sibling groups, the Sanctuary is especially important in reducing trauma by enabling these children to remain together during this crucial initial period.
- The children time to stabilize under the watchful and experienced care of the Emergency Sanctuary staff and 118 specially trained community volunteers. This is not only beneficial to the child, it also benefits the family that will care for that child next;
- Amara staff the time to observe, record, and share the children's needs so that the children will not be total strangers to the foster family that will soon welcome them;
- Amara staff the opportunity to take them to a healthcare provider for an initial health screening as well as follow-up care;
- Kids the chance just to be kids – playing games, making art, or going to the zoo.
- Appropriate clothing, books, and supplies for each child, and suitable luggage for their new belongings;
- State caseworkers time to locate appropriate relative or foster caregivers when possible;
- Foster families the time to get ready to accept the child and welcome them with information from *Grandese's*;
- The courts time to determine each child's initial case plan and decide whether the child can safely return home or must enter foster care.

Just as a hospital ER is the entry point for patients needing emergency treatment, *Grandese's* is an entry point for children entering care suddenly, those whose needs – beyond the obvious and the immediate – are not yet fully identified or understood. ***Grandese's* is unique – there is no other facility in King County that provides these needed services for traumatized children.** The caseworkers who will focus on the children both during their stay at *Grandese's* and beyond that time will work on the floor above. This is a transformational program that provides a safe, child-focused transition to a healing path for our community's most vulnerable children at an especially traumatic moment in their young lives.

We know we are decreasing the stress for traumatized children, by seeing the impact on the children we care for. For example, recently a shy young boy arrived, quite scared and speaking little English, only Spanish. Within a few hours, he was smiling, eating, and playing with trains with the Sanctuary volunteer. His social worker said, *"I have been with him all morning and this is the first time I've seen him smile."* We then welcomed three siblings who were bilingual and were soon helping the little boy feel much more comfortable. We were told that without *Grandese's*, the siblings would have been separated from each other on their first night away from their family.

Additionally, since we opened *Grandese's*, we have measured and monitored outcomes and surveyed the families, State social workers, volunteers, and community partners. We have used feedback from all of these to inform our work plan and make changes as needed. For example, we sent out a survey to the State social workers in our King County region and conducted focus group meetings. The social workers' responses about their direct experiences with *Grandese's* were very positive. However they identified the need for additional assistance in identifying and supporting the best placement option for each child – including parents, relatives, community members and foster placements. We therefore developed and launched at *Grandese's* our new Placement Support services to assist the social workers and increase placement stability for the children leaving *Grandese's*.

***Grandese's* Statistics**

We measure our progress at *Grandese's* by tracking:

- **Number of children served and their length of stay:** In 2017, we cared for 241 children at our King County Emergency Sanctuary; their average stay was 4 days; YTD in 2018 we have cared for 179 children – almost 70% have entered our Sanctuary with their siblings. We project caring for more than 250 children total in 2018.
- **Number of children who receive an Initial Health Screen:** We continue to arrange for Initial Health Screens at either Seattle Children's Hospital or Harborview for all children placed at *Grandese's*, unless they have been previously assessed medically or do not stay long enough at the Sanctuary to participate in a medical exam.
- **Number of tangible goods and other special items provided:** We continue to receive substantial in-kind donations for *Grandese's* through our amazon.com wish list, foundations, agencies, and individuals. For example, recently a young woman who wanted to volunteer at the Sanctuary but did not meet the age requirement (21+) held a drive and collected backpacks and school supplies for the children at the Sanctuary.

- **Number of comprehensive child-centered reports provided to State caseworkers to inform placement matching and to inform the next caregiver:** Staff and volunteers continue to gather information during every child’s stay to contribute to an “All About Me” form. *Grandese’s* staff or volunteers fill out this form and give it to the State caseworker for every child who stays with us. Also, for each child who leaves *Grandese’s*, we provide social workers with copies of all medical records, incident reports, and other paperwork. We maintain contact with social workers throughout the child’s stay and keep them updated as to what we learn about each child.
- **Number of volunteers at *Grandese’s*:** Volunteers are crucial to our ability to operate the Sanctuary 24/7. We currently have 118 fully trained and vetted volunteers who are providing direct services to the children at *Grandese’s*, with additional volunteers in training.
- **Donations to the Sanctuary:** In addition to the grant from the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions, we have received dedicated support for operating *Grandese’s* from many individuals, businesses, and foundations, including the Muckleshoot Tribe, Danica Children’s Foundation, Biel Trust, Archibald Trust, Loeb Charitable Foundation, and Leland and Dorothy Olson Charitable Foundation. We also support the Sanctuary’s operations with unrestricted donations.

Future Plans for *Grandese’s*

In 2014 we purchased a campus in Seattle’s Rainier Valley as the site for Amara’s permanent headquarters. In late 2015 we moved our operations into our newly renovated headquarters. The final phase is building, equipping, and furnishing a new purpose-built, on-site, permanent home for *Grandese’s* and the caseworkers who support the children and their families. We began construction of this new facility in mid-2018 (*see photo*). This new building will be called Harnish House to recognize major support from the Harnish Foundation.



The new facility is needed for several reasons:

- Building a permanent home for *Grandese’s* on land that we own vs. purchasing a home in the rapidly rising Seattle real estate makes fiscal sense.
- At *Grandese’s* current location we are on a monthly lease extension with no long-term security.
- The proposed location on our campus is near our primary State partner – the *Department of Social and Health Services*, and the State caseworkers we collaborate with are just a few blocks away.
- *Grandese’s* new permanent home will be a tangible reminder of our strategic plan goal: extending our hand to a child and not letting go until that child is safely in a permanent home.
- And most importantly, it will ensure that we can carry out our unwavering commitment to each child’s privacy and safety on our central, after-hours secure campus.