



Tulalip Charitable Contributions Funds Distribution Report

NAME OF AGENCY: Hand in Hand Kids

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GENERAL GOALS: Hand in Hand's mission is to provide critical care and support for children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, drug raids, abandonment and other dangerous circumstances and entering foster care.

SPECIFIC USE FOR THIS AWARD:

This award went to support operational and program expenses,

For more information please see the attached report from Hand in Hand Kids.

From: Esther Alabi [<mailto:esther@HandInHandKids.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 23, 2016 9:19 AM
To: Marilyn Sheldon
Subject: 2016 Report for Hand in Hand's Safe Place program

Dear Marilyn,

I'm sorry that we have not yet had an opportunity to meet in person and hope that we can do so in the near future. I wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on what the Tulalip Tribes 2015 grant for our Safe Place program allowed us to accomplish.

The support of the Tulalip Tribes has been vital in allowing us to continue to meet the needs of hundreds of children in Snohomish County who are taken into custody by CPS each year. The cases that we take at Safe Place are the unplanned emergency cases - children who have been removed from their homes by law enforcement due to abuse, severe neglect, domestic violence, criminal activity in the home, etc. We have probably all heard or read about horrific stories in the news at one time or another and wondered what happens to these children. Well, these are the children that we take at Safe Place. Unfortunately, there is no system in place outside of Safe Place to properly resource and assess these children while they wait for an available foster family or relative caregiver. Your support allowed us to care for 302 children in 2016 with over 1,000 nights of shelter, 2,000 meals, 1,500 sets of clothing, hygiene and school supplies, health screenings and medical care at Swedish hospital.

Our hope is that we would see the number of kids coming to Safe Place continue to go down because less kids are being abused and neglected. But as long as the need exists, Safe Place continues to meet a critical need in our community. Unfortunately, we currently have what State officials and child advocates are calling a "foster care crisis" in Washington State and I wanted to share with you some highlights from an article recently published on Crosscut.com that conveys the urgency of the situation and the need for programs like Safe Place.

- While the state for decades had about 6,000 foster homes, over the last eight years that number has dropped to about 5,000. At the same time, the number of kids removed from their homes has increased in the past few years.
- Children entrusted to state care after they are abused or neglected by their parents are bouncing between hotels and other emergency housing, and even being shipped out of Washington State with growing frequency, victims of a severe shortage of foster homes.

- Social workers have increasingly resorted to housing kids as young as 2 in hotels at night, then babysitting them in state child welfare offices during the day.
- Hotel stays among Washington’s foster kids skyrocketed in the last year to more than seven times the previous year’s numbers. In the past 12 months there were 883 placement exceptions (hotel stays or overnight stay at DSHS office) involving 221 children.
- Social workers in DSHS Region 2, spanning Western Washington from King County north, received a string of emails from supervisors with subject lines such as “Placement crisis in the region” and “Emergent help needed!” The regional administrator wrote of “*a placement crisis that continues to worsen*” and warned that mandatory overtime for hotel stays would be required if not enough people volunteered.

“These are youth that probably are in greatest need of stability... and yet these are the ones that don’t know where they are going to be sleeping the next night”

- So many foster children move so often, for so long, that they have become what experts dub “homeless in foster care.”
- Between 2012 and 2014, the percentage of children with three or more moves in the first year of care rose to 19 percent from 15 percent. With each move, kids’ behavior often worsens, making it harder to find a foster family.

“I looked in the back, and I just seen all my stuff in plastic bags, and I just started crying. I cried ‘cause of how bad it was to sit there and look at that ... and how many times I’ve had to take my stuff out of those bags, and like a week or two weeks later, having to put them right back in there.”

While this is hard news to bear, the vision and support of organizations like Tulalip Tribes is making a huge difference towards addressing this crisis by helping to provide a safe haven during this very difficult transition to foster care. We are so incredibly grateful for your support of our Safe Place program over the years. If you have any questions about this report or our program, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for all that you do and I look forward to an opportunity to meet you in person in the near future.

Esther Alabi

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 Hand in Hand
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<http://features.crosscut.com/washington-foster-care-system-failing-children-investigation>



Foster Care Crisis - features.crosscut.com

features.crosscut.com

**Foster Care Crisis More than a decade
after the courts ordered the state to
clean up its foster care program, kids are
still left rootless, vulnerable.**
