



## Tulalip Charitable Contributions Funds Distribution Report

**NAME OF AGENCY:** First Place

**ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 22536, Seattle, WA 98122

**CONTACT:** (206) 323.6715; [www.firstplaceschool.org](http://www.firstplaceschool.org)

**GENERAL GOALS:** Our first priority is to stabilize and support the social and emotional health and growth of children. Fostering resilience and trust in a safe, inclusive, trustworthy community of teachers and volunteer mentors successfully conquers the many barriers to learning our students face.

### **SPECIFIC USE FOR THIS AWARD:**

With generous funding from the Tulalip Tribe Charitable Fund, First Place was able to continue to meet the emotional and educational needs of children like Amelia and Robert. Our small class sizes, wrap-around services for the entire family, and tireless community volunteers that mentor each student make a significant impact in the lives of our students and families. Your support helped us serve over 160 families by providing excellent culturally competent education, housing and support services to provide a path to permanent stability.



For more information regarding the specific uses of the award, see the following pages from First Place.

# First Place

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February 15, 2013

Ms Marilyn Sheldon  
Tulalip Tribes Charitable  
Fund 8802 27th Avenue NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271

Re: Report for grant code Q1-2012-14.2

Via email to [msheldon@tulaliptribes-nsn.gov](mailto:msheldon@tulaliptribes-nsn.gov)

Dear Ms Sheldon;

Thank you for the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund's generous grant to support First Place students and families. Your support helped us serve over 160 families by providing excellent culturally competent education, housing and support services to provide a path to permanent stability. We are pleased to share this report on our activities.

## Activities and Accomplishments

At First Place, our first priority is to stabilize and support the social and emotional health and growth of children. Fostering resilience and trust in a safe, inclusive, trustworthy community of teachers and volunteer mentors successfully conquers the many barriers to learning our students face. Students achieve stability and make significant social, emotional and academic gains. First Place's ability to provide effective services throughout the recession is a major accomplishment that has been made possible by generous supporters like the Tulalip Charitable Fund.

### 1. Continue direct services to students and their families in need:

In 2011 – 2012, First Place served over 50 Kindergarten through sixth grade students who have experienced trauma from homelessness, poverty, abuse, separation from a parent, and other crises in their family. Meeting the social and emotional needs of our students requires the awareness and focus of our entire community; a team of educated and caring teachers, staff and volunteers. We provide each student with the benefits of small classes with a teacher to student ratio of 1:14 and stimulating learning experiences inside a community of peers and friends who face similar hurdles. Each student is matched and meets weekly with a volunteer mentor. We offer a nutritious breakfast, lunch and daily snack, safe transportation to and from school, a fully stocked children's clothing bank, on-site nurse and school psychologist.

First Place also continued direct services for families in need with wrap-around support services for over 100 families including intensive case management, life skills training, employment readiness and counseling. We assisted over 220 individuals with housing assistance to prevent

eviction and with service-enriched transitional housing. We are proud to be providing additional future housing with the building of Imani Village, a 16-unit apartment complex that will house low-income families with school-age children and will be completed in March 2013.

## 2. Meeting sustainability challenges:

First Place originated in 1989 as a school for homeless children and has expanded to include wrap-around services to families in need. With less than 20% of our funding from government sources, First Place relies on the support of a wide range of foundations, businesses, individual donors and a caring community. Over 200 volunteers including students from Seattle University, Seattle Preparatory School, Garfield High School as well as other members of the community contribute more than 4,000 hours each year to act as a mentor to each student, assist teachers in their classrooms, and participate in day of caring events.

## 3. Continuing Strong Outcomes in 2012:

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, the high mobility associated with homelessness causes children to frequently change schools. One study estimates that homeless children are nine times more likely to repeat a grade, four times more likely to drop out of school, and three times more likely to be placed in special education programs than their housed peers. First Place School's Education program prevents these negative outcomes. Students at First Place achieve social and emotional stability to gain a basis for lasting academic success. In 2011- 2012, First Place student outcomes showed great progress in social and emotional stability:

- 61% of our students demonstrated stability or showed improvement in their ability to take direction from adults.
- 76% of our students demonstrated stability or showed improvement in their ability to stay on task for an appropriate length of time.
- 80% of our students demonstrated stability or showed improvement in their ability to concentrate when producing work on solving social problems.
- 87% of our students demonstrated stability or showed improvement in their ability to get through challenging assignments without giving up.
- 89% of our students demonstrated stability or showed improvement in their ability to work cooperatively with their peers.
- 100% of our students demonstrated stability or showed improvement in their ability to take pride in their accomplishments.

Once students gain stability, they can work on academic goals. First Place measures and tracks outcomes by administering standard assessments throughout the academic year. Our current assessment tools include: Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA); Test of Early Mathematics Ability (TEMA), Standardized Testing and Reporting (STARS) for reading and comprehension, KEYMATH to measure understanding and application of mathematics skills and concepts and the Washington State Measurement of Student Progress (MSP). Last year First Place students met these outcomes in academic improvement:

- 64% of the combined 1st & 2nd grade class showed meaningful academic improvement with the highest gain of one full year in progress.
- 79% of the combined 1st & 2nd grade class showed significant improvement with the highest gain of one year and three months in academic standing.
- 71% of the combined 4th, 5th & 6th grade class showed excellent improvement with a full 2 year academic gain by one outstanding individual within this grade range.

To facilitate emotional and academic gains, First Place provided simulating educational experiences. Our students delight in and benefit from these opportunities:

- Students learned about advocacy for self and community and traveled to Olympia to participate in "Have a Heart Day".
- A four day/three night trip to Islandwood, an outdoor learning center for young people on Bainbridge Island, gave students the opportunity for hands-on experiential learning about gardening and wildlife biology.
- Participation in "Roots of Empathy", a highly acclaimed nationwide program that offers students the opportunity to develop empathy through supervised direct contact with a newborn baby brought into their classrooms for this purpose.

Behind these successful outcomes are individuals like Amelia and Robert (name changed). Here is one family's story:

*Amelia and Robert joined the 4th, 5th & 6th grade classroom at First Place and began catching up on their academics and improving their coping skills after they experienced the trauma of being removed from their mother's care. Their former life with their single mom, Rachel, had been good. Rachel had a job, a comfortable home in Portland and two wonderful children when a car accident destroyed her American dream. Two painful back surgeries complicated by an addiction to prescribed pain medication caused Rachel to lose her job and home and led to the temporary loss of her children. After graduating drug-free from a shelter program, Rachel and her family moved into one of First Place's transitional housing units and began slowly rebuilding family bonds and trust. This year, Robert continues to do well at First Place. Amelia has successfully transitioned to Middle School where she is doing well in her classes, making new friends and has joined the cheerleading squad and glee club.*

### Use of Grant Funds

With generous funding from the Tulalip Tribe Charitable Fund, First Place was able to continue to meet the emotional and educational needs of children like Amelia and Robert. Our small class sizes, wrap-around services for the entire family, and tireless community volunteers that mentor each student make a significant impact in the lives of our students and families.

### Upcoming Plans

#### *Transition to New Leadership*

First Place's former Executive Director Doreen Cato retired from the organization in August 2012 after dedicating 15 years of service. To facilitate the transition to new leadership, the Board

of Directors has engaged consultant Amanda Madomo as Interim Executive Director. Amanda has a proven track record as an interim nonprofit leader and leadership coach and is looking forward to working collaboratively with all stakeholders over the next six months to achieve a seamless transition in leadership.

*First Place Family Saturday School Program*

Family Saturday School, started February 2013, promotes First Place's goal of helping families gain stability. One Saturday each month students and their parents participate in fun and creative learning activities at First Place School and at neighboring partner sites Rotary Boys and Girls Club and Atlantic Street Center. Eleven First Place families who are in non-time limited housing have attended the program. Activities include breakfast for families and a half school day of classes for the children and their parents. Parents attend classes in life skills, money management and parenting with a computer lab time provided for job seeking and presentations from program partners Seattle Jobs Initiative, Goodwill and Odessa Brown Clinic. The Family Saturday School concludes with lunch and an opportunity for children to show and tell their parents about their activities. First Place is piloting this innovative program for 6 months and based on outcomes achieved may open the program to families in the community.

We greatly appreciate your past support and we welcome you to visit First Place to see our services in action. Please contact Cynthia Taylor at (206) 748-3510 or [ctaylor@firstplaceschool.org](mailto:ctaylor@firstplaceschool.org) to arrange a visit or if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Amanda Madomo  
Interim Executive Director