

ReachingOut

SPRING 2020

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPELINK



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hopelink

When Systems Create Poverty

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO, LAUREN THOMAS



By the time she was 12 years old, Deana had already lived a lifetime of hurt; walking to school through streets riddled with crime, gang activity and drug deals. When the pain became

personal – something her grandmother referred to as “family secrets” – Deana ran away from home. Not surprisingly, Deana’s life got a lot worse before it got better. And by the time she turned to Hopelink for help, she had made four suicide attempts.

If her daily struggles weren’t enough, it’s likely Deana experienced a fair amount of judgment during her time on the streets – drive-by assumptions, at best; open hostility on a bad day. Blame for a lifestyle she didn’t choose. But did anyone ever ask why she was in that situation? It’s doubtful.

According to a report by Gov. Inslee’s Poverty Reduction Workgroup, neighborhoods such as the one where Deana grew up play a significant role.

“When it comes to poverty, place matters considerably,” the report concludes. “The more years children spend in a good neighborhood – even when they grow up in a family experiencing poverty – the greater the benefits they receive.”

The report suggests that high-poverty areas lack a number of essential “foundational opportunities,” including good schools, strong economic development, reliable public transit and extracurricular activities

– all of which might have provided Deana with an opportunity to thrive.

The report also outlines a number of root causes as to why poverty and inequality are “stubbornly high;” reasons beyond a lack of social and economic resources. Among them:

- A failure to recognize the lasting effects of historical oppression and discrimination, as well as the impact of childhood trauma.
- The belief of those who have not experienced poverty that someone who is struggling need only “pull himself up by the bootstraps.”
- Misleading stereotypes about why people are experiencing poverty, and whether they “deserve” access to basic resources.

Our vision of a community free of poverty requires that we tackle these root causes: the lack of understanding and respect for one’s history, the oppression and childhood trauma that shape who we are, and the belief systems rooted in stereotype and discrimination that close the doors of fairness and opportunity. We can do better. And our entire community – including those who are growing up in an environment similar to Deana’s – deserve better.

Hopelink is working toward eliminating the systems that create or maintain poverty, amplifying our advocacy efforts at state and local government levels and with businesses and community members. We hope you will join us.

Lauren L. Thomas

Hopelink CEO



WHO'S HELPING HOPELINK



The **Kirkland Firefighters Benevolent Association** has been donating to Hopelink for years. Through their efforts, their fellow Kirkland residents have had access to emergency funds for eviction prevention, utility shut-off payments and much-needed prescriptions. The Association also has donated thousands of gifts over the years to brighten the holidays for Hopelink families.



This year, **T-Mobile** went the extra mile for Hopelink clients. On top of hosting their annual holiday gift drive, employees stuffed bags full of donated goodies to be given to clients as stockings.



Students from **Woodmoor Elementary School** came to Hopelink to see firsthand how their support makes a difference in the community. They wrote holiday cards to wish Hopelink clients well, and also learned how to sort food.



Lake Washington School District Bus Drivers Association again delivered a bus load of toys – more than 1,000 in total – to Hopelink’s Kirkland center. The “Stuff the Bus” event began last year.



Hopelink is one of 10 local nonprofit organizations that will share \$5 million through Amazon's recent employee match campaign. The effort was aimed at encouraging **Amazon** staff to donate to local nonprofits that are addressing housing and homelessness in the company's two headquarter regions.



Emerald Heights Retirement Community made Hopelink holidays sweeter with their annual "Treats for Toys" event. Guests bring donations (including hand-knitted hats) for Hopelink in order to be admitted into the event and eat the delicious treats made by its organizers. This year, they raised more than \$6,000.



OneRedmond hosted their "Community Connections Mingle & Jingle" event to benefit Hopelink. Members donated canned goods and learned about the variety of services Hopelink provides.



Mercurys Coffee donated 100 percent of their December 12 profits to the Bellevue Hopelink center.



Philips Sonicare got creative with their food drive, setting up a friendly competition and later donating more than two tons of food. Employees built a golf course out of cans, and competed to see who could get the best score.



Yelp Seattle Eastside hosted a community food drive for Hopelink at a local brewing company. Employees gathered food donations throughout the event, and also raised more than \$150.

GET YOUR BUSINESS INVOLVED WITH HOPELINK

For sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

Pam Cabrera | 425.897.3718
PCabrera@hopelink.org

For food and fund drives, please contact:

Liz Waesche | 425.897.3721
EWaesche@hopelink.org



Are you ready to GiveBIG?

Every year, for one day in May, individuals and organizations throughout Washington come together to build a stronger, more vibrant community; one that works for everyone.

Last year, GiveBIG Washington raised \$11.4 million for more than 1,500 nonprofits, including Hopelink. And for Hopelink, that added up to a phenomenal \$481,351 from our generous supporters alone!

This year, the annual day of online giving will take place on Wednesday, May 6. For Hopelink, and for the community we share, GiveBIG is an opportunity to invest in our future, and in each other; helping homeless and low-income families, children, seniors and people with disabilities gain stability, while providing others with the tools and skills they need to exit poverty for good.

[Visit Hopelink.org for details!](https://hopelink.org)

Donate at:

GIVEBIG2020.ORG

GiveBIG Washington is a 24-hour online giving campaign that promotes philanthropy across Washington. The event is organized by 501 Commons, who believe "we all rise when nonprofits thrive."

HOPELINK EVENTS

Again in 2019, generous supporters came together to enjoy signature events while raising money to provide Hopelink services.



197 GUESTS

FARM FRESH FEAST

In August, Hopelink’s 6th annual Farm Fresh Feast at Columbia Winery hosted nearly 200 guests who enjoyed a spectacular multicourse, one-of-a-kind menu prepared by local celebrity chef John Howie, along with exceptional wines and an opportunity to bid on unique items and experiences. The event raised \$238,542.



1,894 GUESTS

REACHING OUT LUNCHEON

Nearly 1,900 guests at Hopelink’s 24th Annual Reaching Out Luncheon in October enjoyed a lively Q&A with Queen Latifah, as well as a performance by three students from “The Residency” – a collaboration between Macklemore and Ryan Lewis – and an inspiring speech by former Hopelink client Cathy Powers. The event, at Bellevue’s Meydenbauer Center, generated \$1,129,007 for Hopelink programs.

Presented by The Boeing Company, Elizabeth Ruth Wallace Living Trust, Amazon and T-Mobile Foundation



1,470 PARTICIPANTS

TURKEY TROT

In November, 1,470 runners, walkers, trotters and Kids’ Dashers gathered at Kirkland’s Marina Park for Hopelink’s 19th Annual Turkey Trot 5K Family Fun Run & Walk. Participants and sponsors raised \$84,091 through this event.

Presented by Fred Meyer

HELPING CHILDREN

Hopelink knows that children who have the tools they need to succeed in school have a better chance of success, and that access to healthy, nutritious food is essential for growing kids. And sometimes – especially during the holiday season – kids just need to be kids. In 2019, Hopelink programs served 7,741 children in our community.



2,616 STUDENTS

STARTED SCHOOL READY TO LEARN

Hopelink’s Kids Need School Supplies program enabled kids in Hopelink families to choose a new backpack filled with school supplies before class began in the fall.



2,367 KIDS

FED DURING SUMMER BREAK

Through Hopelink’s End Summer Hunger program, children who receive meals at school during the academic year still have access to fresh, healthy food during the summer months. Families served by this program made a total of 5,845 food bank visits in 2019.



6,834 CHILDREN

ENJOYED A HAPPIER HOLIDAY

Hopelink holiday gift rooms enabled client families to select toys and gifts for the special children in their lives.

END SUMMER HUNGER

hopelink
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FOOD IS ESSENTIAL.

WHEN FAMILIES ARE HUNGRY, STABILITY IS IMPOSSIBLE.

We know that having enough to eat is fundamental to ensuring that kids grow into healthy adults. Yet for thousands of children in Hopelink's service area, the end of the school year puts that basic need at risk; putting an end to regular, nutritious meals at school.

For their parents, that means increasingly tough choices on already tight budgets, as well as often having to choose more

affordable – but less healthy – meals and snacks for their kids.

Hopelink's annual End Summer Hunger campaign helps solve that problem. End Summer Hunger is a grassroots effort to help ensure that kids have enough to eat during the summer months, when their school's free and reduced-price meals are not available.

YOU CAN HELP

Your support will provide food for kids, and it will help local families continue the journey from poverty to self-sufficiency.



Classroom coin drives are a great way for kids to learn what they can accomplish by working together. By combining their spare change, children learn they can make a difference by helping other kids in the community and in their own school.



Businesses and community organizations can hold food and fund drives that can help build a healthier community by ensuring that local kids have enough to eat during the summer months.



Individual donors can make a direct contribution online at hopelink.org/ESH

For more information about how to host a food, fund or coin drive, contact Liz Waesche at **425.897.3721** or **EWaesche@hopelink.org** or visit our website and download the End Summer Hunger Food and Fund Drive kit beginning April 20.



Holding on to Hope

Hopelink helps a mother gain stability in the midst of crisis

Lydia was in her car when the nurse called with shattering news about her four-year-old daughter. The journey to discover what was wrong had already involved more than a dozen doctors in several countries, as well as painful and costly treatments and medications. Now, the diagnosis hinged on one remaining blood test; a test that Lydia was hopeful would be negative.

When the nurse said, “we are very sorry, but it’s positive,” Lydia was stunned.

She pulled into a parking lot, stopped the car, and started asking questions.

“We’re not sure what that means,” the nurse said. “You need to come in and meet with the doctor.”

Everyone Lydia had spoken with since she first noticed her daughter Yelena struggling to stand and speak as a toddler – both in Lydia’s native Russia and in China – had suggested that Yelena had Cerebral Palsy. That’s what they had treated her for, without success.

This doctor had reached a different conclusion.

“He told me, ‘I wish it would be Cerebral Palsy, but it’s not Cerebral Palsy,’” Lydia said. “And I thought, ‘What can be worse? Maybe cancer?’”

Yelena was diagnosed with a genetic disorder – Beta-propeller Protein-

Associated Neurodegeneration (BPAN) – that damages the brain and nervous system. It is unpredictable and extremely rare, with fewer than 500 diagnosed cases worldwide. And it is progressive.

Doctors say that children with this disorder will eventually lose all their skills; becoming totally nonverbal and unable to walk.

Lydia isn’t convinced.

“Doctors are working hard on finding a cure,” Lydia said. “And I believe they will.”

Before coming to the United States three years ago, Lydia maintained a successful banking career in Vladivostok, Russia; a working mom to Yelena and older son Daniel. Her desperation to figure out what was wrong with her daughter had her not only traveling to other countries to pay for treatment, but sending photos of Yelena to doctors all over the world in a frantic search for clues.

“I would say, ‘I will do whatever I need to do – just tell me what’s happening,’” Lydia said.

That’s when a family member living in the United States suggested that Lydia come to live with her.

“No one can help you if they don’t see the child,” she said. “You should come here – we can ask someone here what is going on.”

Lydia and her two children came to the United States, and for a while, the extended family shared a house. When that became unsustainable, Lydia, Daniel and Yelena were homeless. Homeless, and still without a diagnosis.



When she was able to sleep, Lydia would hear her daughter’s voice in her dreams – a voice she has never heard speak – call out “mama.”

Lydia was exhausted. She felt lost. And more than anything, she was worried about her kids.

The fear and pain in her eyes spoke volumes when Lydia ran into a friend at a park, and shared a bit of what was going on.

“My friend said, ‘Hopelink can help you,’ but I said, ‘no, I’m OK – I’m good.’”

“She said, ‘no, you’re not good. You need to call Hopelink.’ And she gave me the phone number.

“I’ve never done that before – I’ve never asked for help, as I was always

hardworking,” Lydia said. “And I was afraid, as I was certain they would blame me and say I did something wrong. But I knew I had to call ... for my kids.”

Lydia said contacting Hopelink changed everything.

“No one asked me ‘why.’ They just asked, ‘How we can help?’”

“They said, “You are a mother with two children and you need help. That’s all that matters.”

Lydia began meeting regularly with a Hopelink Family Development case manager, who ensured the family had food, diapers and some clothes.

A few weeks later, the case manager told Lydia she had a key for her. Lydia was puzzled.

“This is a key for your apartment,” she said. “Here’s the address of your new home.”

“I was shocked,” Lydia said. “She was crying, I was crying ... everyone was crying. It was amazing.”

“And when we got there, it wasn’t just an empty space – it was a furnished apartment, where we would have our own kitchen, laundry and beds.”

The family had lived in Hopelink housing for about two months when Lydia finally learned what was going on with Yelena. She vividly remembers the shock of

the diagnosis, and crying for days. Her case manager stood by her; telling Lydia that she would help her fight for her daughter, every step of the way.

But Lydia also knew she needed to build a new foundation for her family; one that would sustain them throughout Yelena’s journey. So she signed up for Hopelink’s English for Work classes, and later began working with a Hopelink Employment Specialist.

“He was amazing!” Lydia said. “He helped me with my resume and my cover letter, and how to identify my skills and my strengths, and how to speak with future employers ... just everything – he explained everything. And he was always there for me, no matter what I needed.”

Today, Lydia is working two jobs, including one as a sales and marketing manager for a seafood company. She loves her work, and says she has received good feedback – and additional responsibility – from her employer.

She also appreciates the flexibility both jobs provide, which is essential as she cares for Yelena, who just turned six.



Her daughter is in school and receives physical and speech therapy, music therapy and work with a therapist in a swimming pool. Daniel is an active 13-year-old; an attentive big brother who is involved with sports, school activities and friends. Lydia’s schedule is intense – juggling two jobs, two kids and two schools in addition to Yelena’s therapy and doctor visits and trying to learn as much as she can about her daughter’s illness – and there is little margin for error.

There also is very little time for herself, although Lydia would be the last person to acknowledge that. Even her hope of finding someone who can help her on occasion has more to do with accomplishing more than finding relief from the pressure.

“If I could find someone who could come in for two or three hours a day to stay with Yelena, I could work more... I could get more things done,” Lydia said.

Focused and resilient, Lydia also is an exceptionally strong woman, but she winces when people tell her that.

“I hate when people say, ‘you’re so strong,’” she said. “I hate it because I don’t want to be strong – I have to be strong, for my kids.”

She dreams of having a house with a yard, so her son can play basketball and her daughter can have more space to walk and play. And there would be room for the newest member of the family – a black and white puppy expected to arrive any day that Lydia hopes will become Yelena’s best friend.



Looking back to that day in the park – when her usually stoic demeanor cracked just enough for her friend to see that she was struggling – Lydia says the biggest difference is how much more confident she feels, and how tightly she is holding onto hope for her daughter’s future.

She is committed to learning as much as she can about the disorder, and would like to raise money to help find a cure. But Lydia also believes in miracles, and is holding fast to the idea that Yelena will grow up to live out the dreams every mother holds for her daughter.

“That’s why I stopped crying – because I feel that she will be OK,” Lydia said.

“The only things that helped me to survive are God and Hopelink. Hopelink saved my life, and I am so grateful.”

You can read more Hopelink success stories at hopelink.org/success-stories

2019 GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES

Federal Government | State of Washington | King County

Local Governments:

City of Bellevue
City of Bothell
City of Issaquah
City of Kenmore

City of Kirkland
City of Redmond
City of Sammamish
City of Shoreline

CORPORATE AND PRIVATE FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

\$100,000+

Aven Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
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Joshua Green Foundation
The Norcliffe Foundation
United Way of King County

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Medina Foundation
Safeco Insurance Fund
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THANK YOU
for your support!

THE BUSINESS ALLIANCE

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our featured business and corporate partners who have recently given \$1,000 or more. Every effort has been made to list your name correctly, but if you find an error, please contact Pam Cabrera at 425.897.3718. We are equally grateful to the many businesses not listed that have also generously supported Hopelink through cash and/or in-kind donations.

Presenting Partners (\$50,000+)

Amazon
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THANK YOU DONORS!

THE CORNERSTONE

BUILDING A COMMUNITY FREE OF POVERTY

The Cornerstone recognizes a group of philanthropic individuals and families who lead the way in supporting Hopelink programs and services through their generous financial gifts.

If you'd like more information on how to be a part of the Cornerstone, please contact [Jeremy Weatherly](mailto:Jeremy.Weatherly@hopelink.org) at 425.897.3709 or JWeatherly@hopelink.org.

\$50,000+

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Our Vision: A Community Free of Poverty

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DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEEDS HELP?

Below is an overview of Hopelink's programs and a list of our service centers. If you know anyone who may need our help, please share this information and encourage them to contact us at their nearest center.



FOOD ASSISTANCE

Contact your nearest center



ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Call 425.658.2592



FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Call 425.883.4755



FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES

Call 425.250.3003



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Contact your nearest center



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Call 425.250.3030



TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Metro DART: 866.261.3278
Medicaid: 800.923.7433
Mobility Line: 425.943.6760



ADULT EDUCATION

English for Work: 425.250.3007
GED Classes: 425.457.9685



HOUSING SERVICES

Eastside: 206.328.5900
North King County: 206.934.6160

HOPELINK CENTERS

BELLEVUE
14812 Main St.
Bellevue, WA 98007
425.943.7555

KIRKLAND/NORTHSHORE
11011 120th Ave. NE
Kirkland, WA 98033
425.889.7880

SNO-VALLEY
31957 E Commercial St.
Carnation, WA 98014
425.333.4163

REDMOND
8990 154th Ave. NE
Redmond, WA 98052
425.869.6000

SHORELINE
17837 Aurora Ave. N
Shoreline, WA 98133
206.440.7300

Please visit Hopelink.org for full center hours and list of services at each location.

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P.O. Box 3577, Redmond WA 98073-3577



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