



Annual Impact Report

Serving Snohomish County

Fiscal Year: July 2019 – June 2020

Operations Budget: \$1,220,430

FY2020

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Annual Impact Report

Because EVERY child abuse victim deserves safety, justice, and healing

Dawson Place Child Advocacy Center 2019-2020 Fiscal Year Review

Dawson Place Child Advocacy Center entered the 2020 fiscal year with direction and momentum. Our five-year strategic plan, implemented in 2019, gave direction to prioritize community outreach in order to provide EVERY child abuse victim with safety, justice, and healing. The Community Outreach Program completed its first full year and continues connecting with new community members and professionals across Snohomish County. Increased outreach gave momentum to our 13th year of existence that culminated in the **7th Annual Transforming Hurt to Hope Luncheon** setting new benchmarks for attendance and funds raised. Most importantly, we were on pace to exceed our five-year average of 1,120 children served annually. And then the COVID-19 pandemic happened.

The direction and momentum that had carried Dawson Place into March 2020 was refocused to respond to the pandemic. Our Staff responded to this challenge to create a safe work environment so the 50+ professionals at Dawson Place could provide “Essential Services” to child abuse victims and families safely. Outside our Child Advocacy Center, fear and chaos had gripped the community. Inside, the amazing staff at Dawson Place refused to let the COVID crisis interrupt our mission to respond to concerns of child abuse and promote healthy families.

Methodically, new operational procedures were drawn up and implemented. New safety features were installed: air scrubbers, Plexiglass partitions, hands-free water fountains, and strategically placed automatic hand sanitizers. Technology was used to provide virtual therapy sessions so kids can meet with their therapist from the safety and convenience of their home. The pandemic response required an “all-hands-on-deck” mentality that strengthened the fabric of our organization. Dawson Place deals with the crisis of child abuse every day so it is fitting that at this momentous time in history our staff answered the call with unity, energy, strength and pride.

Achievements

Dawson Place had several accomplishments that improved our delivery of free child abuse intervention services and broadened our impact in Snohomish County.

Clients Served

Dawson Place successfully delivered essential intervention and healing services to 1,077 child abuse victims and their non-offending family members (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020). Most of these children received multiple services at Dawson Place. Many continue to return to our Center for prosecution services, follow-up medical exams, and ongoing therapy. Since Dawson Place opened in 2006 over 14,000 child abuse victims and their families have received the professional care and treatment that has put them on a pathway to healing. Our Center serves around 22 new child abuse victims every week.

On March 16, 2020 the COVID-19 lockdown was issued by the Washington State Governor, yet it took until May for the lockdown and social turmoil to affect the number of children and families served at our Center. In April we served 115 clients and were on pace to serve 1,129 clients by June 30, 2020. Then in May we experienced a precipitous 54% drop in clients served (53 clients). Dawson Place was open throughout the pandemic; however, schools were closed, police officers were dealing with social unrest, and hospitals were inundated with COVID patients and new safety protocols. Our network of professionals who refer families to our Center was severely disrupted, and the number of clients served in May and June reflect that fact.

Client Demographics

Child abuse victims served at Dawson Place; these cases involved 937 alleged offenders.

Gender	Clients	%
Male	307	28.5%
Female	765	71.0%
Transgender	5	0.5%
Total	1077	100.0%

Age	Clients	%
0-6 years	429	39.8%
7-12 years	328	30.5%
13-18 years	320	29.7%
Total	1077	100.0%

Abuse Type	Clients	%
Sexual	774	65.0%
Physical	281	23.6%
Neglect	85	7.1%
Witness to Violence	22	1.8%
Drug Endangerment	6	0.5%
Other	23	1.9%
Total*	1191	100.0%

Race	Clients	%
White/Caucasion	589	54.7%
Black/African Amer.	46	4.3%
Hispanic/Latino	148	13.7%
Amer/Alaskan Native	22	2.0%
Asian/Pac. Islander	31	2.9%
Other	241	22.4%
Total	1077	100.0%

*Some clients bore multiple abuse types

Direct Services by Partner Agencies

Dawson Place Child Advocacy Center is a unique combination of the five agencies in Snohomish County that respond to issues of child abuse. Dawson Place collaborates with these co-located organizations to provide safety, justice, and healing to child abuse victims and families in Snohomish County.

Providence Intervention Center for Assault & Abuse (PICAA)

PICAA is located at Dawson Place and provides victim advocacy and medical healthcare services such as well-child checks and forensic examinations. The victim advocates play a crucial role in helping families navigate the inter-agency process, to access financial and other recourses, and even to fill out forms for everything from restraining orders to job applications. Most importantly, they help the family schedule for any services at Dawson Place that will help them through their situation. Last year PICAA provided 703 exams or treatments.

Compass Health Child Advocacy Program

The Compass Health Child Advocacy Program (CAP) provides mental health therapy to the kids and families who come to Dawson Place. Their services are given at no cost to the clients and are delivered as long as they are needed by the child and family, or until they reach the age of 22 years. Last year CAP therapists completed 239 initial mental health assessments, provided 4,095 hours of therapy, and carried 435 ongoing clients. On top of this formidable workload, they also led two non-offending parent groups, one elementary-age coping skills group, and a teen group for survivors of sexual assault.

Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: Special Investigations Unit (SIU)

The Special Investigations Unit located at Dawson Place includes a team of seven Detectives led by the unit's Sergeant. They respond to allegations of child abuse and sexual assault and are vital to the protection of the children and families who come to Dawson Place, and to the community at large. Last year, in addition to their ongoing caseload, this devoted team investigated 165 new cases of child abuse in Snohomish County.

Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office: Special Assault Unit (SAU)

The Special Assault Unit located at Dawson Place accepted 404 cases for prosecution, had 123 convictions, 114 plea deals, and 6 acquittals. The ability to work down the hall from the detective investigating the case, the CPS agent who works with the alleged victim, and the nurses and clinicians at our Center contributes to a higher prosecution rate.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

Child Protective Services is part of the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, & Families. They investigate allegations of abuse, often before a case has been filed by law enforcement. There is one CPS special services agent located at Dawson Place, and the regional manager serves on our Board of Directors. CPS is the front-line against child maltreatment. They refer families to our Child Advocacy Center and help them develop safety plans so that the State does not have to dismantle the family for the child's safety.

Fish Room Enhancements

Children and families who come to Dawson Place have the option to wait for their services in the soothing lobby or the fantastical Fish Room. The Fish Room is a favorite of our clients (and staff) for the beauty and wonder of the 360 degree under-the-sea mural. Last year we had a generous family donate their fish tank which nearly doubled the capacity of water, fish, and fun. The Mill Creek Women's Club funded the replacement and upgrade of the furniture that kids use to draw, write, read, watch movies, or creatively play. The child-focused furniture helps the kids see that this room exists for them.



The Fish Room is a secure and fun waiting room for children and families.

The children and families who come to Dawson Place often return for weeks, months, and sometimes years for therapy and other services. The enhancements to the Fish Room were made to increase the likelihood that our clients keep coming back for the help that they need and deserve for safety, justice, and healing.

Facility Safety Upgrades

Dawson Place provides “Essential Services” that cannot be halted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Center served families in crisis from child abuse throughout the lockdown that was ordered on March 16th and will continue to offer our array of intervention and healing services throughout the pandemic. Most of our services need to be provided in person: forensic medical exams, child forensic interviews, trial preparation for prosecutions, and initial mental health assessments. We invested in several safety features to mitigate or eliminate the spread of the virus between staff and clients within our facility.

Air Scrubbers



Dawson Place installed HVAC air scrubbers to filter the virus out of enclosed areas where staff and clients must interact. Early research stated that the droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze can stay in the air for 3 hours. The scrubbers make it so that our in-person appointments can still be scheduled back-to-back which allows us to continue to serve near the same capacity as before the pandemic.

Plexiglas Dividers



A variety of portable Plexiglas room dividers and affixed desk shields were purchased and installed to make staff and client interactions safer. Clear partitions were placed between desks and workspaces so that staff who work in proximity to each other are protected from droplet transfers.

Automatic Hand Sanitizer Dispensers



Twelve touchless wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispensers were strategically placed throughout Dawson Place to decrease the potential spread of the virus and germs via surface transfer, like doorknobs and light switches.

Hands-free Faucets & Water Fountains



Two public water fountains and ten bathroom sinks in our building are being upgraded to allow staff and clients to drink and wash without contracting or spreading viruses and germs.

Technology Upgrades

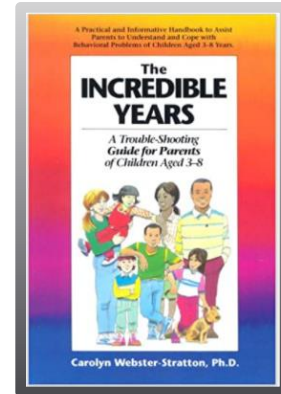
Dawson Place now uses virtual meeting technology, Zoom and Microsoft Teams, to interact with each other. Some of our staff can accomplish their work from home so this technology keeps them connected with the direct service staff who work on site. Another tool we implemented for virtual mental health care was Telehealth. Telehealth has been used by physicians for years to connect with patients in rural areas or those who are not mobile. Our Compass Health mental health therapists use this technology to help kids and families continue their therapy sessions to heal from abuse from the safety and convenience of their home.

Professional Development

Dawson Place organized and funded a one-day resiliency training for over 100 current and former staff and partners whose careers expose them to such horrific evils that they can experience trauma. This is often called secondary trauma, vicarious trauma, or compassion fatigue. The purpose of this training was to strengthen the resiliency and overall well-being of those who are exposed, through their work, to the traumatic violation of innocent children. Attendees included: prosecutors, law enforcement officers, child interview specialists, Child Protective Service specialists, victim advocates, nurses, and therapists. The workshop was led by Francoise Mathieu, a highly sought-after international speaker and founder of Compassion Fatigue Solutions.

Parenting Education Pilot Program

Dawson Place serves over **1,100 families** dealing with child abuse annually. Our service to the community connects us with many families who are overwhelmed by their situation. They want knowledge and skills to help them nurture and guide their children, and they want the confidence to lead their family. They need a positive, practical, research-based approach to parenting. In response to this need the **Parenting Education Pilot Program** was scheduled to launch in Spring 2020. The Pilot has been converted to a virtual platform and will now begin in September 2020.



The **Parenting Education Pilot Program** was created to 1) educate parents so that their children are safe from abuse and neglect, 2) build families' capacity to support, nurture, and guide their children, and 3) promote responsive parenting to improve children's emotional, physical, and social well-being. The Program will use the Incredible Years® curriculum to give support and education to parents/caregivers of kids 6-12 years old over 16-18 weeks. Dawson Place intends to raise funds to expand the Pilot Program into concurrent modules for parents of different aged children.

Community Outreach Program

Dawson Place initiated the Community Outreach Program in March 2018 to 1) spread public awareness about the free services at Dawson Place, 2) grow our network of professionals who refer victims to our Center, and 3) encourage child abuse victims and families to get the help that they need and deserve to stop abuse and live safe and healthy lives. Last year we were awarded two substantial grants to expand the program from 0.75 FTE to 1.75 FTE in the fiscal year starting July 1, 2020.

Community Resource Fairs

The Community Engagement Lead hosted information tables at 8 community resource fairs. Hosting a table at these events creates opportunities to directly engage with the public. Additionally, it promotes discussions and sharing information about resources and services. This often results in new contacts that grow our professional network and expand the reach of the Program. There were 7 spring resource fairs canceled due to the pandemic.

Child Sex Abuse Prevention Training

Dawson Place facilitates 2-hour trainings for adults to learn how to recognize the signs of child abuse, how to respond to disclosures of abuse, and learn to establish protocols that prevent the sexual abuse of children in their care. We hosted a training for 115 bus drivers from the Lake Stevens School District, and performed 4 trainings for 71 people from Naval Station Everett, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Everett Community College, and first responders from Westgate Chapel in Edmonds. Additionally, our Community Engagement Lead is becoming certified to offer these child sex abuse prevention trainings virtually.

 **DARKNESS to LIGHT**
END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE



KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

Service Clubs

Presenting to service clubs like Rotary International and Kiwanis educates groups that are already active within their communities about the importance of Dawson Place. These presentations also build our professional network. In the 2020 fiscal year we presented to 109 communitarians from eight service clubs; one presentation was given virtually.

Increased Service Capacity



Dawson Place hired a third Child Interview Specialist, a part-time Parent Educator, and will be adding a full-time Community Outreach Specialist position to increase capacity to deliver our free services. The third Child Interview Specialist increases scheduling flexibility, and the ability to provide Child Forensic Interviews for the 18 law enforcement agencies in Snohomish County. The Parent Educator will run the Parenting Education Pilot Program that starts in September. The

Community Outreach Specialist will bolster the Community Outreach Program to help close the gap that exists between the number of child abuse victims served and the statistical number of kids in need of our services. These additions coincide with our 5-year strategic plan and will help Dawson Place bring safety, justice, and healing to more families in Snohomish County.

Cribs for Kids

Dawson Place has been a member of the national *Cribs for Kids* organization since 2015. We purchase and distribute cribs for free to families who cannot afford a safe place for their baby to sleep. Ten different organizations, including Sea Mar Community Health Centers and Child Protective Services, requested 90 cribs from Dawson Place for families they serve from nine cities in Snohomish County. We experienced a drop in requests for cribs in May and June due to COVID restrictions. However, many families have lost their jobs and have fallen into poverty. We expect a surge in demand for our Cribs for Kids program as our communities open back up.

Annual Luncheon



The 7th Annual *Transforming Hurt to Hope Luncheon* was attended by 750+ guests and raised over \$204,000 in gross revenue. This revenue included corporate sponsors, in-kind gifts, and individual donations made during the event. Revenue raised at the annual luncheon is unrestricted, and provides needed flexibility to invest in programs, capital improvements, and growth of operational capacity. For example, the Board of Directors approved the Parenting Education Pilot Program before enough funds were raised to cover its expenses because we had unrestricted reserve funds raised at the annual luncheon.

New Facility Dogs



Dawson Place welcomed two new Facility Dogs, Sibella (left) and Razzle (right). The dogs were trained for two years by Canine Companions for Independence to bring comfort and joy to the children and families who we serve. They play an important role in helping kids share their traumatic experience during Child Forensic Interviews. They also help with public relations, group counseling, and offer their loving affection to the 50+ professionals working at our Center.

Challenges

Dawson Place was on pace to meet or exceed our annual average of 1,120 clients served before our network of professionals who refer families to our Center was disrupted by COVID-19. It was a tremendous challenge to continue to provide our “Essential Services” during the lock-down and into the phased reopening. Accurate information on how to modify our facilities and deliver services safely was first difficult to find, and then overwhelming. Coordinating new safety protocols for operations along with the provision of services from the five partner agencies located at our Center required clear communications. Fortunately, our Executive Director and the managers of the other agencies have built strong relationships based on accountability and trust. These bonds proved essential to overcome the many challenges that arose from the pandemic.

Conclusion

The 2020 fiscal year for Dawson Place was uniquely challenging and ultimately fulfilling. It was broken into two distinct parts: All-Systems-Go and All-Hands-on-Deck. Much like the children and families who come to our Child Advocacy Center for help, Dawson Place showed strength, determination, and resiliency in our response to this dangerous pandemic. Staff members took necessary precautions to keep themselves, their families, and their clients as safe as possible. These same devoted staff members took calculated risks to their own health and possibly their lives so child abuse victims could still find safety, justice, and healing amid an historic pandemic and social unrest. We head into the new fiscal year knowing that the pandemic continues, and new challenges will surely arise. The dedicated leadership, passionate Board of Directors, and amazing staff at Dawson Place are confident that together we will overcome the obstacles that await us with unity, energy, strength, and pride.