



Orcas Island Children's House

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www.oich.org

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Dear Friend,

It's like an old joke I've heard many times. I know you've probably *thought* it, too. "Why do the preschools *always* have their hands out?" You see us fundraising time and time again. You see us on the grant list over and over again. "Why **DO** preschools always have their hands out?" Because we know how important preschool education is to the future of our community, AND we can't do it without your help!



At Children's House, we make it our mission to ensure ALL children in our community have access to high-quality preschools and the kinds of classroom experiences that best prepare them for kindergarten and for later life. We think every child deserves this opportunity no matter where they live.

The challenge is living on the island is expensive and young families struggle. Did you know 1/3rd of the households in our county are identified as in poverty or can't meet basic needs? On Orcas, housing affordability is poor, job opportunities are often seasonal and wages are fair at best. Without better wages and more affordable housing, young families struggle to find funds for early education.

This is why Children's House keeps tuitions within reach of most families and uses a combination of fundraising, grants and donations to help bridge the funding gap. But the average tuition shortfall per student annually is \$2,500 – and growing. Why? The cost of providing the necessary quality can't be fully supported by tuition payments alone, not even in combination with state and federal subsidies for those that qualify.

And research shows a *quality* preschool environment is one of the greatest predictors of school success. This is why we know it's critically important to maintain quality programs and why we need your help in sustaining it until long-term funding solutions are in place. We know it's a lot to ask, but we truly understand how important early education is to our community!

We believe EVERY child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. All children deserve the opportunity to access early education and at a level of quality that makes the most positive impact in their lives! In fact, we owe them that.

Susan L. Anderson – Executive Director
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This is why Children's House participates in WA State Early Achiever's program, where we've been focusing on improving quality in our program. And why I've been working with other preschool directors – in collaboration with an early childhood education initiative – to help fund student access and continued improvements in teaching in all our schools. And this is why the Washington State Department of Early Learning is asking the State Legislature for financing solutions to funding preschool more fully.

But until those permanent funding solutions are in place, Children's House can't do it without the generous support of people like you.

Your contribution makes a meaningful difference in all our lives. **When you make a contribution to Children's House, what you're really making is an investment in our community and its youngest citizens.**

Your investment is a gift to our community and returns to you through a vital, healthy and successful working community. Your support helps young families gain access to educational opportunities for their children at a cost they can afford.

When I look around our classrooms, I see the emerging faces of our future. These children will be firemen, artisans, chefs; they will run restaurants, teach math and perhaps even doctor us! And they will give back to our community in extraordinary ways. Thanks in great part to people like you!

Please help us bridge the tuition gap so we can continue providing educational access to the neediest and sustain quality improvements that make a lasting difference!

With gratitude,



Susan L. Anderson
Executive Director



P.S. Take a peek at how local families benefit from the Children's House program in this short video: <http://www.oich.org/video.html>

P.P.S. Learn more about what quality preschool environments look like: <http://www.orcaslandece.org>