



Annual Impact Report

Serving Snohomish County

Fiscal Year: July 2018 – June 2019

FY 2019



Annual Impact Report

Dawson Place exists because EVERY child victim of sexual or physical abuse in Snohomish County deserves the professional care that they need to be safe, to seek justice, and to heal.

Dawson Place Child Advocacy Center 2018-2019 Fiscal Year Review

Dawson Place Child Advocacy Center (Dawson Place) took a leadership role in Snohomish County to bolster the existing system that responds to allegations of child abuse. The Executive Director of Dawson Place led a host of pointed discussions with the heads of agencies that deal with various aspects of child abuse such as Child Protective Services, law enforcement, and hospitals. These agencies often refer families to our Center, and can dramatically affect how many families we serve at Dawson Place. The ongoing discussions gave both sides a firm understanding of each other's roles, how agency roles fit within the entire system, and identify areas where improvements can be made. The overall goal is to increase the number of child abuse victims and families who come to Dawson Place for safety, justice, and healing. These discussions will continue so that more families gain access to improved services.

The systemic discussions were focused on two areas - one where Dawson Place worked to increase accessibility to our Child Advocacy Center, and thus increase the number of children and families served. The second area was met by the Community Outreach Program and focused on connecting with schools, service clubs, churches, community resource fairs, and front-line professionals who refer victims to our Center.

The combination of these two efforts has shown encouraging progress toward protecting and healing EVERY child abuse victim in Snohomish County. Dawson Place delivered services to 1,117 child abuse victims and families between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. This total is a 4.7% increase from the previous year (1,066 service users), and statistically matches our five-year annual average of 1,120 children and families.

The achievements outlined in this report were made possible by the general operation/program grants from private foundations, grants and contracts with government agencies, corporate donations/sponsorships, and individual donations gifted to Dawson Place at the annual *Transforming Hurt to Hope Luncheon* and throughout the year.

Achievements

Dawson Place attained several achievements that will strengthen our capability to provide child abuse intervention services and will broaden our impact in Snohomish County.

Clients Served

Dawson Place successfully delivered vital intervention and healing services to 1,117 child abuse victims and their non-offending family members. Most of these children received multiple services at Dawson Place and many returned and continue to return to our Center for prosecution services and ongoing therapy. Since Dawson Place opened in 2006 over 13,000 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.

Lobby and Fish Room Enhancements

Dawson Place puts a high importance on the warmth and welcoming atmosphere created at our Center to enhance our client experience. In 2019 we added soothing paintings, uplifting framed affirmations, a small water feature, plants, and a soft music system to the main lobby. The overall effect makes the lobby more inviting for new arrivals, and more comfortable for those waiting for their child's or their own appointments.

Adjacent to the lobby, many of our younger service users prefer waiting in the fantastical Fish Room. This beautiful room boasts 360 degrees of under-sea murals, books, toys, and coloring/drawing books. In 2019 the Fish Room's movie station was upgraded to a new flat screen and DVD player that can be controlled from the front desk, thanks to a fund drive by Access Laser and its employees. The improvements also give us access to more viewing options by streaming children shows and movies via the internet.



Fish Room murals and fish tank

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

Public Relations Highlights

Dawson Place made strides to increase our public exposure while increasing awareness about child abuse and the services available at Dawson Place.

Child Abuse Prevention Month (April)



The Community Engagement Lead instigated a public relations push to highlight that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. She initiated a campaign titled “Coffee, Cookies, & Conversation” that distributed important information through eight local bakeries and coffee shops. The business owners agreed to bake and sell blue pastries and to prominently display a “April is Child Abuse Prevention Month” sign with informational materials for their patrons to take and read.

A second element of the campaign involved the locally owned Anthony’s Restaurant chain. During the month of April, Anthony’s promoted Child Abuse Prevention Month and Dawson Place by donating a portion of every Blue-Plate Special sold during April. This successful public relations effort culminated in Anthony’s donating \$5,000 to Dawson Place to support the protection and healing of EVERY child abuse victim in Snohomish County.

Seattle Storm

The Seattle Storm, 2018 Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) World Champions, contacted our Community Outreach Lead and invited Dawson Place to be the featured nonprofit at their home-opener hosted in downtown Everett at the Angel of the Winds Arena. Before the game a select group of Dawson Place ambassadors was honored for their work with child abuse victims. The announcer described to the nearly sold-out crowd why Dawson Place Child Advocacy Center exists, and representatives from Anthony’s Restaurants awarded us the \$5,000 check from the April Blue-Plate Special promotion.

Community Outreach Program

The 2019 fiscal year marks the first full year of the Community Outreach Program at Dawson Place (Program). The goal of the Program is to increase accessibility to Dawson Place so that EVERY child abuse victim in Snohomish County receives our child abuse intervention services. The program: 1) spreads public awareness about the services at Dawson Place, 2) grows our network of professionals who refer victims to our Center, and 3) encourages child abuse victims and families to get the help that they need and deserve to stop abuse and live safe and healthy lives.

Professional Network

Dawson Place relies on off-site professionals to direct children and families to our Child Advocacy Center. In April 2019 we hosted our second annual Professional Open House so that professionals who deal with issues of child abuse recognize Dawson Place as a valuable resource for their work, and for their clients’ needs. The event was attended by over 50 professionals.

Resource Fairs



Cedar Valley Community School Resource Fair, Lynnwood, WA.

The Community Engagement Lead hosted information tables at 15 community resource fairs. Hosting a table at these events creates opportunities to directly engage with the public. This promotes discussions, sharing of information about resources and services, and often results in new contacts to grow our professional network, and the reach of the Program.

Schools

There are 15 school districts with over 200 schools teaching upwards of 180,000 children in Snohomish County. National statistics state that ten percent of these children will be sexually assaulted before they are 18 years old, and another four percent will experience physical abuse or neglect in that timeframe. This means that over 25,000 of these children and young adults currently need, or will need the services at Dawson Place over the next eighteen years; 1,415 annually.

The Community Outreach Program connects with student advocates staffed at the schools. Their positions put them in proximity to children, their role is to make sure students are listened to and get the help they need, and they also hold mandatory reporter status. In the 2019 fiscal year the Community Engagement Lead made inroads with the Edmonds, Mukilteo, and Marysville school districts, presenting to over 70 student advocates, teachers, and counselors.

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 are also used to build our professional network. In the 2019 fiscal year we presented to eight service clubs, including one presentation given in Spanish to the Latino Mom's Coffee Club.

Military Families

Dawson Place secured a grant from the National Children's Alliance for the Coordination of Child Advocacy Center Services for Military Installations. These funds are being used to expand the community outreach program to reach families stationed at Naval Station Everett, Naval Support Complex (Marysville), Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, and U.S. Coast Guard stationed at the Port of Everett.



Dawson Place visits U.S. Coast Guard crew on the CGC Henry Blake; Port of Everett WA.)

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.

Annual Luncheon

The *6th Annual Transforming Hurt to Hope Luncheon* was attended by over 600 guests and raised over \$194,000 in gross revenue. Gross revenue was comprised of corporate sponsors, in-kind gifts, and 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.

Cribs for Kids

Dawson Place has been an official member of the national *Cribs for Kids* organization since 2015. We purchase and distribute cribs for free to families who do not have a safe place for their baby to sleep. In our first full year we gave out 24 cribs. The 2019 fiscal year had 111 families referred to Dawson Place for a free crib by 12 different organizations. Families who received the free cribs were from nine different cities within Snohomish County.

Challenges

Dawson Place had a 4.8% increase in the number of clients served over the previous year, which puts it right in line with the 5-year average of 1,120 child abuse victims and families served annually. This marks two consecutive years of increases from 986 in FY2017 to 1,066 in FY2018, and to 1,117 in FY2019. However, the current two-year 6.7% average rate of increase needs to be marginally higher to meet the 5% annual increase goal and to outpace the natural population growth in Snohomish County.

Dawson Place has increased its operational capacity to serve child abuse victims and families over the last three years. We also initiated the Community Outreach Program in March 2018 to connect more victims with our intervention services. These were internal actions that we directly controlled. Many of the challenges that were confronted last year involve the communications and processes between our partner agencies and with organizations that operate outside our Child Advocacy Center.

Systemic Change

Though the incremental increase in clients served over the last two years is promising, it is not enough to close the 26% gap that exists between the number of children served at Dawson Place and the statistical number of children in need of our services. Management and the Board of Directors assessed

several years of operational capacity increases, service improvements, facility enhancements, and program expansions and realized that a different approach was needed to close this service gap in a timelier manner.

The Executive Director has promoted interagency communications since she was hired in the Fall of 2013. Her efforts have produced robust and effective Child Advocacy Center operations and have fostered an important element of trust between professionals from the various disciplines and agencies at Dawson Place. She applied this same approach to help agencies with professionals that operate outside our Center interact to establish a foundation of mutual understanding that trust could be built upon. She invited outside professionals to internal meetings and trainings so that more people who refer clients to Dawson Place see us as a resource for their work. This also led to greater professional understanding, respect, and new relationships between disciplines.

Roundtable Discussion with Law Enforcement & Child Protective Services

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families, (DCYF) regional manager of Child Protective Services sits on the Dawson Place Board of Directors, as does the Snohomish County Sheriff and the Deputy Chief of the Everett Police Department. During the annual Professional Open House at Dawson Place (April 18, 2019), our Executive Director and these Board Members organized a working-lunch roundtable where over 30 professionals faced each other and discussed issues that they felt were inhibiting their ability to work together in a more effective way. This tense conversation was a stepping stone that has led to a mutual agenda to continue to address the issues over time.

An immediate result of the roundtable was that the Child Protective Services specialists who participated in the discussion have requested more Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDTs) meetings for difficult cases. MDTs bring all the professionals working on the same case to a meeting to share information, voice concerns, and formulate a plan on how best to move the case forward. These meetings open communications between agencies, build professional relationships, and increase the likelihood of a positive result for the children and families involved.

Inclusive Professional Trainings

Dawson Place hosted a one-day professional training to protect professionals who work with child abuse victims and families from secondary trauma (a.k.a. Vicarious Trauma and Compassion Fatigue). The purpose of the 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. Invitations were extended to current and former Dawson Place staff members and to organizations that deal with child abuse but are not located at our Child Advocacy Center. There were around 100 attendees who included: prosecutors, law enforcement officers, child interview specialists, Child Protective Service specialists, victim advocates, nurses, and therapists. This important event was well attended and well received and was another example of Dawson Place promoting interagency networking to improve child abuse services at a systemic level.

Conclusion

The 2019 fiscal year proved to be an exciting year of progress for Dawson Place. There was promising growth in the number of children and families served at our Child Advocacy Center. The Community Outreach Program expanded its network to new schools, established itself as a mainstay in the area's community resource fairs, expanded into public relations, started presenting child abuse prevention trainings in English and Spanish, and cultivated new connections with regional military installations. Dawson Place Management and the Board of Directors recognized and accepted the leadership role required to foster interagency communication, understanding, and respect needed to fix issues that adversely affect our services at a systemic level. Thirteen years ago, Dawson Place started as six organizations learning how to work together to help child abuse victims. It later moved into a new building and evolved into a cohesive collaboration of services working to protect and heal. Last year Dawson Place tapped into its collective wealth of knowledge and began to assess and improve the system that is in place to provide safety, justice, and healing to EVERY child abuse victim in Snohomish County.