Michelle’s Story
Michelle is a survivor of child sexual abuse. Hers is an inspiring story of hope.

The abuse didn’t start right away.

The nice man who lived near our babysitter took his time. He gave my brother and me candy. He built our trust. He groomed us. We were just kids: four, five, six years old. But after awhile, he started making us do things that kids should never do and exposed us to things kids should never see.

My abuser was a trusted adult figure for years and I loved him. He was one of the few adults who paid attention to me. That was very confusing.

Eventually, I told my dad and he called the police. Then my parents found an amazing therapist.

An important part of going to counseling was having someone help me through the loss I experienced, the loss of this man I loved, who had paid so much attention to me.

But I worked through it with my counselor. We were very close. She was an important person in my life for several years. When I went to court, she prepared me for the experience. It’s scary when you have to go to court. It’s very intimidating.

Because my therapist told me what was going to happen, I felt confident going into the courtroom that I would get justice. I will never forget walking up to the podium – I knew I could do it because I had the support I needed.

Abuse doesn’t have to be what defines you and it doesn’t have to ruin your life.

It also helped when I learned that I did not have to be ashamed of what had happened to me. It wasn’t something that I did. It wasn’t something I should be ashamed of. It helped to know the normal reactions for kids who have been molested and to be prepared and to know how it could affect me long-term.

Yes, I was a victim. But I don’t feel traumatized. Abuse doesn’t have to be what defines you and it doesn’t have to ruin your life.*

At CARES Northwest, we believe big people shouldn’t hurt little people. Period.
Three decades of growth at CARES NW

1987
CARES Northwest founded

1997
Prevention education program launched

1998
10,000th child assessed

2002
On-call specialists added to serve children in Emergency Department

2008
Awarded Oregon Department of Justice grant to develop curriculum and training to interview children with disabilities

2012
Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy program began

2018
Prevention partnership with Beaverton School District launched

- CARES served more than 7,000 children this year

Because of you, in 2018 . . .

- We taught **more than 3,000 middle schoolers** about child abuse prevention
- The Association of Fundraising Professionals **lauded** our volunteers
- Our dogs, Harmony and Cortona, soothed and consoled traumatized children
- We saw **1,579 kids** for medical assessments

“It’s heartbreaking to know there are children in our community enduring abuse and neglect. To stand by and do nothing is unacceptable.”

- Marcia H. Randall, Robert D. and Marcia H. Randall Charitable Trust

Walk a child’s path...

- Concerned adult calls CARES NW.
- Trained counselor fields call.
- Child given head-to-toe medical exam.
- Volunteer stays with siblings in waiting room.
- Referral, urgent assessment or regular medical assessment scheduled.
They helped me become a more positive person. All of those negative thoughts, telling myself it would be best if I wasn’t here anymore, really didn’t help.”

– Eighteen-year-old CARES NW patient

She’s in middle school. She lives in a Washington County foster home. And twice a week, she takes a cab to North Portland for trauma therapy, a round trip that sometimes lasts four hours. We can do better for our children.

That’s why we’re working on a new clinic site in Washington County, where the number of children we serve has nearly doubled in the past 15 years.

This new location will allow us to meet children and their families closer to home, removing a tremendous barrier to care and making it easier for them to get the help they need.

Our prevention program is growing exponentially. Last year, nearly 3,800 children attended CARES child abuse prevention programs. This year, more than 9,000 children in Beaverton middle schools are getting healthy relationship and violence prevention training. And we’ve just signed an agreement to educate middle schoolers in Portland Public Schools. We hope to reach 18,000 children with prevention education by 2020.

We’re also excited about our prevention and therapy programs to reduce the trauma from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). By providing treatment and education early, we can make a true impact on the health of our children, their future and the future of our communities.

“Alleviating the suffering of children and helping them heal is the most meaningful work I can imagine.”

– Debby K
Volunteer Program Coordinator
CARES NW

“She tells their story minimal times.

Therapy team preps child for court.

Trauma therapy begins, with CARES counselors and clinic dogs Harmony and Cortona.

Detectives observe videotaped interview.

Child testifies, accompanied by Cortona.

Child graduates therapy, cheered on by staff.

“They helped me become a more positive person. All of those negative thoughts, telling myself it would be best if I wasn’t here anymore, really didn’t help.”

– Eighteen-year-old CARES NW patient
What if we could stop child abuse from happening in the first place? We can and we are, with your help. The best way you can make a difference is by supporting CARES.

Dear CARES,

Thank you for a fun day here. You guys are very nice and you guys are fun every day. I hope you got this and thank you and give this to the cares please thank you.

- Grateful patient

What if we could stop child abuse from happening in the first place?
We can and we are, with your help. The best way you can make a difference is by supporting CARES.

How You Can Help

The need for the assessment, treatment and prevention of child abuse is enormous. We know that one out of every seven children has been abused in the past year.

Your generosity ensures we can provide them and their families with crucial therapy and support as they walk the path to healing and happiness.

Please give. With your help, we can meet the needs of our community, one child at a time.

For more information:
Call 503-276-9496 or email Kathy Hostetler, executive director, Randall Children’s Hospital Foundation, khostetler@lhs.org.

CARES Northwest is a not-for-profit supported by gifts to Randall Children’s Hospital Foundation.

* While Michelle was not treated at CARES Northwest, her story represents the experience of children who benefit from our services.