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Children – in their earliest years – it’s when they need us the most.

At Relief Nursery children struggle with social and emotional regulation, and many have learning and developmental delays. More than half of our children have had some involvement with child welfare, and we can say with confidence, that almost all Relief Nursery parents were *themselves* victims of abuse or neglect as young children. **This is why Relief Nursery’s core programs – therapeutic early childhood classrooms, home-visiting, substance abuse recovery support and parenting education – are uniquely designed to interrupt the intergenerational cycle of abuse.**



Research affirms what we see every day – ***that trauma suffered in early childhood has a tragic correlation to lifelong physical and mental health challenges, and to whether someone will perpetuate that cycle of abuse as an adult.***

The consequences of *not* helping are simply too great. In our work with children and parents, we see many cycles in life, many journeys, and many stories that remind us that people can change, and it’s worth the effort to help them.

Rob’s inspiring journey is one of them. Rob, in the throes of the chronic illness of his addiction, was caught in the self-destructive cycle of drug use, prison and homelessness. **That was then.**

This is now. Today, Rob is on the front lines at Relief Nursery, *helping* the highest risk families with safety concerns for their children – children who have witnessed violence, experienced homelessness, whose parents have substance abuse and mental health issues.

Rob’s journey was truly transformational and came full circle at Relief Nursery, but it began at Lane County Treatment Court where Relief Nursery staff work as Peer Support specialists. This letter from the Treatment Court team underscores the effectiveness and need for our Peer Support Program.

“There is something to be said about when a client feels they have nothing left, and then they hear the story from a peer that they have been there, they have experienced similar struggles and now they want to be a mentor to help mold their recovery. It’s powerful - and this dynamic, led by Relief Nursery’s Accessing Success Peer Support Program, has changed many lives in Lane County’s Treatment Court.

During our long partnership, we have seen the tireless work put in to support parents who have barriers to housing, employment, food and medical resources. The Peers help them find their way through guidance, hope and strength.

Jenny's story is one of survival. A mother of 4 children, no child care, no family support, struggling to meet her family's basic needs, and not allowed to have contact with her children's father because of violence in the home. Relief Nursery's Peer Support jumped in, secured food boxes for the children, enrolled them in school and after school programs, helped find child care for the youngest, and respite was provided at the Courthouse while she was in court. Jenny could focus on her treatment, addressing her trauma and finding ways to heal while her children were safe. Jenny's Peer Support worked with her to find ways to manage all her children's obligations and helped her find recovery meetings she felt comfortable to be in. Without this support, Jenny was ready to shut down and lose her children back into foster care and live the unhealthy life of addiction. Instead, she fought through and found strength because of her Peer.

At Treatment Court we have seen firsthand how Relief Nursery's work has impacted many and saved lives. Relief Nursery is not only a place for children, but a place for children and their parents to be in a safe environment with staff who so deeply care about their struggles, allowing them to heal from the disease of addiction.

With much gratitude, Danielle Hanson and the entire Lane County Treatment Court team

We write to you each year at this time, to share our stories of hope and resilience and to ask for your continued support. Following is another story of success, this one, from the DHS Family Navigator Program.

I received the DHS referral for a single mom with three children, ages 7, 6 and 2. Mom was a victim of domestic violence who had filed a restraining order. Dad left the home. Mom could not afford the rent. The main goal for this family was stability. Part of creating stability was to find affordable housing and for mom to receive child support. The Navigator Program helped with application fees, move-in deposits, a utility account transfer and obtaining birth certificates required for the child support case to move forward. Over the three months I met with mom on a regular basis to offer emotional support and to problem solve. We talked about time management, budgeting and resources in the community. When our time was up I referred mom to Relief Nursery for ongoing services so this family could access parenting support, respite and counseling. The final email from her caseworker stated, "Thank you so much for everything you have done for this family. **Though I know that all is not ideal in her world, I am very glad that she has found some security and that her children are safe and sound, thanks in large part to your hard work.**"

From Relief Nursery Family Navigator case notes

You may have already guessed – Rob, like Jenny, was a Lane County Treatment Court client. He began the program in 2015 as part of a plea bargain. "It was intense and required a lot. I did get off track and ended up in a residential treatment center for 60 days. That was just what I needed to reflect and really think about who I wanted to be. When I came back, I finished the program and graduated," Rob says.

Wanting to use his recovery experience to help others, Rob joined the Treatment Court Peer Support team at Relief Nursery. But his journey didn't end there. Today, as a Family Navigator at Relief Nursery he works with the highest risk DHS Child Welfare families who struggle with many difficult issues – drug and alcohol addiction, domestic violence, homelessness – to help them get back on track and help them keep their children safely at home.

At Relief Nursery, with your generosity, we demonstrate what a community can do when it pools its resources to strengthen families and keep children safe. As you consider your year-end giving, **please know that Relief Nursery needs your support.** *Your gifts are deeply appreciated and carefully stewarded.*

Gratefully,



Rory Robison, President
Relief Nursery Board of Directors

P.S. Fully a third of our revenue comes from individuals like you. ***Thank you for investing in Relief Nursery children and families. We are healthier as a community when we take care of each other.***