SEATTLE DAY NURSERY: FILLING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AT RISK (B)

Therapeutic Child Care (TCC) is Institutionalized Statewide

Prior to the 1983 legislative session, Pat Gogerty proposed that the state implement TCC statewide. DSHS senior management liked Gogerty's idea, backed up by the results of the two-year study, and lifted the language from HB 1207 (the previously funded TCC study) to craft new legislation. They proposed to contract with nonprofits around the state for TCC services. The federal funding requirement for parental consent, however, still loomed. Fortunately, through continued dialogue, supporters of TCC at DSHS found a solution: services funded by a line item in the General Fund were not subject to federal requirements. So, DSHS added 50 TCC General Fund slots to its request. To ensure smooth and consistent implementation (and replication) of the services SDN had pioneered and refined, SDN offered to develop a TCC training manual.

When the state budget was approved, SDN and several other nonprofits bid for the TCC slots, but SDN received the entire allotment. CPS case managers began to refer families to SDN, which received full monthly reimbursements of $16/day (covering about 75 percent of the actual cost) for all filled slots, so long as attendance averaged 80 percent. The agency had moved to a new era of involvement in state policy and funding.

What's in a Name?

In his first decade at the helm of Seattle Day Nursery, Gogerty had successfully restructured and stabilized existing operations, and developed three new programs. Owing to its innovative
nature and high profile, therapeutic child care had replaced day care for working families as SDN’s signature program. Gogerty felt, however, that the organization's 65-year-old name didn't reflect its new mission, services, and constituents. When he received a phone call from someone looking for flowering rhododendrons, he knew it was time for change. Board member Gordon Bowker, a marketing executive, convened a naming committee, which yielded “Childhaven.” “Seattle Day Nursery” became a thing of the past. The broader mission to influence state, and later Federal, policy had helped the agency grow and serve needy clients more effectively.

A New Mission Brings New Dollars

By 1986, two years after Childhaven had become a state contractor and changed its name, its budget had grown to more than $1.5 million. United Way's total support continued to increase, but its percentage of the budget shrank to 37 percent. Childhaven's coffers had benefited from contracting with DSHS. In 1986, 45 percent of its revenue came from the state. These additional resources now supported a staff of 57 full-time and 25 part-time employees, including a clinical psychologist, a family therapist, an army of social workers, a pediatric nurse, and trained child-care teachers. At this time, Childhaven also boasted 300-plus volunteers. In the three existing facilities, staff and volunteers could serve 150 abused and neglected preschool children and their parents. With ever-growing demand for Childhaven’s services, the Board of Trustees announced plans to build and operate a fourth facility to serve an additional 80 children and their parents.

By this time, the composition of Childhaven’s Board had also changed. Once led by a well-intentioned group of grassroots volunteers and Seattle Day Nursery clientele, it now read like a “Who's Who” of local business. Frank Schrontz, then a vice president of Boeing, and his wife Harriet, were strong supporters and enlisted other influential and visible members. Fundraising and public relations were the primary responsibilities for Gogerty's reshaped Board, which quickly garnered $1.2 million for the new facility.

By the mid-1980s, Gogerty's visibility in the community had increased as well. He rarely hesitated to speak out – often in criticism of state government – when an issue or event warranted it. Such an event occurred in 1986, when three year-old Eli Creekmore was beaten to death by his father in Snohomish County. Prior to his tragic death, CPS had placed Eli in protective custody but had returned him home three days before his death. Although Childhaven didn't work in Snohomish County, Gogerty wasted no time in calling DSHS on the carpet in a letter to The Seattle Times (see Appendix 1). New legislative support for child abuse prevention came soon thereafter.

State Funding Comes Under Fire

In January 1989, as state agencies finalized their budget figures for the 1989 legislative session, Gogerty and representatives from other nonprofits that now provided TCC services in other
parts of the state approached the Deputy Secretary of DSHS to discuss a vendor rate increase. Gogerty and his colleagues argued that an increase was necessary to cover the actual costs of providing the services, which were costly but effective. The Deputy responded that the Governor’s budget was complete, and he refused to support a change. Unwilling to take no, Gogerty contacted Gary Locke, Chair of the House Budget Committee. Locke was an ardent supporter of child welfare, and was sympathetic to the request. He added a uniform vendor rate increase to the House budget. Barring any political battles, the increase would go into effect on July 1, 1989.

On June 30, Gogerty received a memo from the TCC program manager at CPS, who was regarded by some as hostile to TCC or at least to Childhaven. Gogerty was shocked to read that she was withholding funding for TCC services until September 1. This was just the type of situation he had feared. He asked himself if these types of political headaches and funding problems were worth the effort. He shook his head and reminded himself of why he had gotten into this business in the first place – the children who needed help.

**Bringing In the Big Guns**

Pat Gogerty’s response to the memo was a sure sign of how much he and his organization had changed. He called two of his most prominent Board members from the business community and invited them to accompany him on a visit to Olympia. Gogerty’s destination was the Governor’s office. The group from Childhaven was well received by the Governor’s Chief of Staff, who described the situation to the appropriate officials and thus convinced them to release the TCC funds immediately. Although Gogerty’s trip to Olympia had been a success, his tactics had undeniably altered Childhaven’s relationship with CPS, and particularly those directly involved with the TCC contract. This would not be the only time Gogerty and the CPS staff in Olympia were on opposite sides of an issue or decision affecting therapeutic child care.
Appendix 1

Gogerty letter to The Seattle Times, published October 25, 1986

We at Childhaven agree with this statement – “Today in Washington State, the towering, most compelling governmental political issue is the safety of our children” – from Richard Larsen’s Oct.12 Times column on the impact of the death of Matthew Eli Creekmore. Here in our Seattle/King County program, we have dealt, for nearly 10 years, with abused/neglected infants and toddlers by transporting them to our centers, providing therapeutic care and treatment, and returning them to their homes each day. The 150 children who spend six hours a day in our care, five days a week, are checked daily for further signs of abuse, and pictorial as well as written records are kept of such indications. All children are referred by Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services caseworkers.

Ongoing contact with the families, including therapy and parenting help, provides them with an increased ability to care for their children. Constant communications with Child Protective Services workers about those contacts gives them objective data on which they can base their assessment of families and, if legal action is required, make recommendations to the court. Only a court can permanently remove a child from a home. Because of daily observations of our professional staff, we can provide the court with the comprehensive, detailed information necessary to make a fair decision as to whether a child’s safety would or would not be jeopardized by their remaining with their parents. Research on this program has shown that it reduced the incidence of abuse by 66 percent and improved the lives of the parents as well as the children.

Currently there are 18 programs like Childhaven’s in communities across Washington State; unfortunately none in Snohomish County.

Child-abuse prevention requires broad based community support and effort; everyone must become involved. We were too late for Eli; but let us all move rapidly to ensure that this does not happen again.
Appendix 2

Budget Overview with TCC Contract Slots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>United Way Allocation</th>
<th>Reimbursements from DSHS for TCC</th>
<th>Other Contributions</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$49,458</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>$477,351</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>$42,185</td>
<td>$1,346,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>$504,371</td>
<td>$605,123</td>
<td>$49,458</td>
<td>$1,158,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>$554,138</td>
<td>$721,666</td>
<td>$74,484</td>
<td>$1,350,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>$670,762</td>
<td>$737,224</td>
<td>$72,989</td>
<td>$1,480,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>$772,025</td>
<td>$1,010,224</td>
<td>$117,652</td>
<td>$1,899,901</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(1) Legislature authorizes DSHS to contract with nonprofit organizations to provide TCC.*