



**The Inside Story**  
***Positive Actions in Uncertain Times***  
**April 2009**

**Preamble:** This is the next in a series of letters from the Executive Director of Starlight Children's Foundation – WA to our special donors, partners and constituents. Through these letters I hope to provide you with “the inside story” of our activities, our progress, our plans and our thinking. These letters are intended to be somewhat exclusive in that some of the information will be shared with you before we share it in more public formats. I am including you to receive these letters because you are very important to Starlight and this is one way to share directly with you and to invite you to provide feedback.

The economic slowdown that started last year resulted in fewer donations to Starlight and we made some difficult reductions in labor and expenses to adjust. As corporate and individual donations reduced last year necessitating cuts to our budget, two bright spots were grants from Foundations and employee giving, meeting budget goals for those items. Although we ended the year with a significant deficit, our strategy to diversify our revenue streams has been helpful especially in times like these.

Along with everyone else, we are watching closely for glimmers of the economy improving. As we watch with everyone, we are being conservative in 2009 and will maintain the reductions in labor and expenses we made last year. This act alone will make it more and more difficult to maintain support to the seriously ill children and families we serve. Additionally, the Starlight-WA Board and staff have adjusted our strategic planning to address the short term challenges and position our chapter for long term strength.

In early March our Board conducted a planning retreat for Starlight-WA. Two main areas of focus included expanding Starlight's network in reach and breadth, and to explore new or improved revenue activities. Many ideas were generated from this brainstorming session.

Expanding Starlight's network has both short term and long term goals. On the short term, working to get more individuals and businesses connected to Starlight will help us achieve our financial goals on volume. In a tighter economy we may be more successful in going after four donations of \$2,500 instead of one \$10,000 donation. Long term, as we grow and expand our network to two to three times the current size, not only will we have the volume benefits but also when the economy improves and businesses and individuals are more able to make larger donations again, Starlight will have a larger network and be better positioned to grow and serve more children and families.

Starlight will continue to strategically build its Board of Directors, Board of Advocates, Alumni Board, and the Leadership Council in Spokane. Actions we will engage in include everyone connected to Starlight reaching out to individuals, employee groups, and businesses and inviting them to learn more about Starlight. This can be approaching companies we know or work for and ask if the Starlight Executive Director or one of Starlight's Board members can come and make a lunchtime presentation to employees. It could be setting up a one-to-one meeting with business or community leaders where I or a Board member presents Starlight to increase awareness and the opportunities to get involved. It will also be inviting friends and associates to our annual events like our Luncheon, Golf Tournament, Fashion Show, Oscar's Night Gala, or Breakfast in Spokane. You can also help Starlight strategically by helping in one or more of the above actions. Please call me with ideas.

Starlight Children's Foundation – Washington

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[www.starlight-washington.org](http://www.starlight-washington.org) ~ Starlight is a 501c3 charity, Federal ID#91-1558287

*Starlight helps seriously ill children and their families cope*

*with their pain, fear and isolation through entertainment, education and family activities.*

The networking strategies above will also result in individual and business donations over time. The other focus of the planning retreat was on new or improved revenue strategies. Many revenue brainstorming ideas were generated and then prioritized. These included expanding inclusion in employee giving campaigns with targeted companies, expand relationships with businesses that will promote donation opportunities through their on-line portals, develop more cause-related marketing relationships with local and regional businesses, and explore on-line social networking portals. For the first time, earned revenue strategies were also included. Opportunities with our healthcare partners will be explored.

As I have talked to colleagues in the private sector and the non-profit sector, forward thinking leaders are focusing on two things: a) manage in a tighter economic environment, and while doing so b) position and invest in ways that will make the organization stronger and ready to take advantage of the economic upturn. I am proud to say, and you should be happy to know, that the Starlight leadership of the Board and staff are taking actions to advance this strategy for Starlight.

2009 is the year for positive actions on everyone's part as individuals and businesses: positive actions for our families, our businesses, our community, our nation, and for Starlight Children's Foundation. Please include Starlight in your positive actions this year. We need you and we are counting on you.

Our annual Golf Tournament will be on May 15 at The Golf Club at Newcastle. Kick off the golf season with Starlight. Register through our website. Also, Fashion First (our new partner) and Starlight are collaborating on their high end and very popular fashion show as a fundraiser for Starlight in September 2009. It is among the most exciting and well attended fashion shows in greater Seattle. Funds raised from these events support our children and family programs. Watch our website for details. [www.starlight-washington.org](http://www.starlight-washington.org). P.S. we have a new website, check it out!

Please contact me directly to get more information or to explore how you can get more involved or benefit Starlight: [steve@starlight-washington.org](mailto:steve@starlight-washington.org), 425-861-7827 x101.

You are part of this partnership where together we act on the value that seriously ill children and their families deserve and will get the support they need to deal with the fear, pain, isolation, and trauma of serious illness. Together we bring light and joy into some of the darkest moments of these children's and families' lives. Thank you and bless you for sharing and acting on that value.

*Steve*

Steve McGraw, *Executive Director*  
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***Starlight's popular Fun Centers***

*provide fun, entertainment, and distraction for both in-patient Starlight kids and their visitors.*

*More than 175 Fun Centers are in hospitals across the state, including several of the 2008 model with the Nintendo Wii system! Across the country, more than 6,000 have been placed. Nintendo gifted four to our chapter in March, to be placed at Harborview, Skagit Valley, Valley Medical, and Lourdes.*

*At left is Starlight child Diana McKune with an earlier Fun Center. At right is the new Wii system Fun Center.*

