

SPRING FAMILY RETREAT

MARCH 31-APRIL 2



Family art project inspired life conversations.

During Spring Retreat 2017, three young adults played a sunny round of mini golf together, full of joyful, competitive banter – not to mention several balls flying off the course. All three, born with HIV in the 80s and 90s, are heroes to us at REACH. They navigated a childhood riddled with medical and social complexity, and more than a few wounds of rejection and isolation. These young adults have known each other since they began with REACH at 3, 5, and 10 years old (now 23, 25, and 30). REACH is a family with deep roots, that continues to expand each year. The bigger the family gets, the closer everyone continues to be. How is this possible?

There's an inspirational, yet intangible quality that happens at a REACH retreat that is difficult to describe. Our core values describe the intangible quality best – Unconditional Acceptance, Community, Trust, Joy – but they can't convey the depth of it. Fleshed out, that looks like kids bolting from their cars at rocket speed to find their friends. Parents finding seats together at dinner and settling in for a long visit. When party games happen, people who are usually wallflowers get up out of their seats and find themselves doing the limbo. **When someone shares a life struggle without the usual "filter," with gut-level honesty, they are embraced, respected and surrounded.**

We asked several REACH parents, "What brings you to the retreat? Why is it worth giving up a weekend at home?" Their answers surprised us. Rather than describe all the benefits to their family and what they receive from REACH, they simply told us what they were missing out on at home. One family told us that their kids' select soccer teams had their final game of the season, but the kids just couldn't miss retreat. Another described a cousin reunion that happens only once every 5 years. But the decision was easy – they needed to be at REACH retreat. Put simply, they said,

"REACH is our family!"



One family's art project

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Director's Column



Dan Stoehr

Our Vision for the Future

2016 was another inspirational year of unconditional acceptance, safe community, joy, and trust for our kids, families, and young adults. You can see the facts and figures on page 4 (take note of our volunteer hours...it's a big number). Of course, our true measures of success are the life-shaping impacts expressed by our families. A parent said, "We feel a lot of pressure and isolated as a family. I plan to call other REACH parents to keep up a connection." And another, "I'm glad we have 'sacred space' to share the joys and sorrows together."

2016 was also a year of discerning God's calling on REACH in the years ahead. After consulting with 14 local agencies serving people with HIV, we have adopted new initiatives. We will continue with our 22-year strength for serving families with HIV-positive young children, and we also feel called to begin serving teens and young adults who contract HIV after early childhood, as well as HIV-positive mothers, regardless of their children's status (these are also families affected by HIV). We feel energized and excited. Please learn more on page 3.

We appreciate you and your investments in the lives of our families. Thank you!

Why is it so difficult to take HIV medications?

Some REACH teens and young adults struggle with staying on their HIV meds. Studies show this is very common nationwide.

Medication adherence means sticking firmly to an HIV regimen—taking HIV medicines every day and exactly as prescribed. HIV treatment regimens can be complicated. Most regimens involve taking multiple pills each day. Some HIV medications must be taken on an empty stomach, while others must be taken with meals, or before or after doses of other medications.

If you skip a dose of your medication—even once—the virus can take that opportunity to replicate, and make more HIV. When you skip doses, the virus can mutate, and you may develop strains of HIV that are resistant to the medications you are currently taking—and possibly even to medications you haven't taken yet. If this happens, it could leave you with fewer treatment options.

Adherence can be difficult for many reasons:

- Side effects from some HIV medicines, such as nausea and diarrhea.
- Side effects from interactions between HIV medicines and other medicines.
- Medication dosing schedule might not fit well into a person's routine.
- Illness or depression.
- Having an unstable living or housing situation.



Ref: aidsinfo.nih.gov, National Institutes of Health, "HIV Medication Adherence"

Good Stewardship through Legacy Planning

You are a good steward with the resources God has given you in the here and now. Do you have a plan to be a good steward of those resources after you no longer need them?

Leaving a gift to REACH and your other favorite charities can be as simple as:

- Making us a beneficiary on your insurance, IRA, or retirement plan.
- Making a gift of cash, appreciated stocks, bonds, or property in your will.

Contact our Director, Dan Stoehr, at 253.383.7616 or dstoehr@REACHministries.org to discuss possibilities. Also, please let us know if you have already taken any of these steps so we can celebrate having a strong and growing Legacy Society.

REACH is a registered IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Tax ID # 91-1644321

Our Vision for 2017-2020

For 22 years, REACH has served families with young children who are HIV-positive. We welcome new families every year, and the infants and young children who started with REACH in the beginning are now young adults, who are still active in our “safe community.”

In 2016, we conducted a process to discern God’s calling on REACH over the next few years. We sought input from 14 organizations who provide services to people who have HIV or are at risk for contracting it. We will continue to serve our existing REACH community, and we have adopted three initiatives to serve even more children, teens, families, and young adults affected by HIV.

1. Connect with more adoptive families

To date, our primary referral sources have been pediatric HIV care providers, social workers, and our own families who invite new families they know.

Plan: Partner directly with international adoption agencies as new referral sources for families who adopt HIV-positive children from overseas.

Goal: Welcome three new families per year, beginning at Labor Day Camp 2017.



2. Welcome HIV-positive mothers and their families

HIV medications now prevent HIV-positive mothers from passing the virus to their children. However, even if the children are not HIV-positive, these are still families affected by HIV, facing the same fears, rejection, and life challenges as our current families.

Plan: Connect with adult HIV clinics and organizations providing social services to HIV-positive mothers as new referral sources.

Goal: Welcome 10 new families by 2020, beginning at Labor Day Camp 2017.

3. Serve teens and young adults who contract HIV

There are approximately 15,000 new HIV infections among 13-24 year olds in the U.S. every year. They are all around us in our local community. Some contract HIV through unprotected sex, and some contract it from an HIV-positive abuser. Others run away or are kicked out of home. Once on the street, they may be forced into prostitution or turn to drug abuse, or both, putting them at risk for HIV. Finally, some are seeking asylum in the United States because they are persecuted in their home countries for having HIV.

Plan: Meet young people in these circumstances by connecting with organizations that are already in relationship with them and providing social services.

Goal: Welcome 25 HIV-positive teens and young adults by 2020.

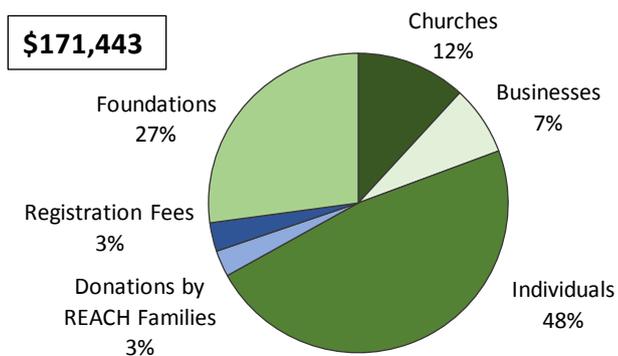


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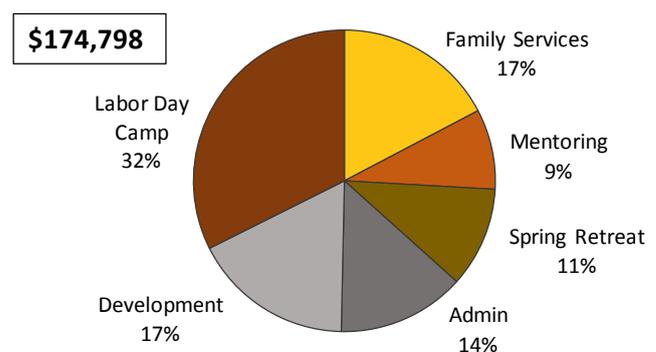


Staff and volunteers at our 20th REACH Camp on Labor Day weekend 2016. Not shown, in order to protect their confidentiality, are 150 HIV-affected children, family members, and young adults.

Stakeholder Shares in our Mission 2016 Sources of Income



Investments in REACH Families 2016 Program Expenses



We love our "All-in" Volunteers

Nearly **100** individual volunteers
 Filling **141** volunteer positions
 Providing over **5,400** hours of service
 That's the equivalent of **15** volunteer hours
 per child and family member served, and
 It's the equivalent of our annual paid staff hours, which
 means **every \$1** donated to REACH
buys \$2 of service

Program by the numbers

348
 Family Members Served:
 Labor Day Camp, Spring Retreat, mentors, home
 visits/calls, encouraging cards, and family reunion
 events such as picnics and holiday parties.

19
 Year-round Mentoring Relationships

9
 States where REACH families live

Our vision is that HIV-positive children, families, and young adults throughout the Pacific Northwest flourish with dignity and self-worth in the face of rejection and isolation.

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Safe community for those affected by HIV