

Philanthropy in action

GROUP HEALTH WAS RECENTLY NAMED the 2007 Philanthropic Corporation of the Year by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Washington State Chapter. Past recipients of this prestigious award—which honors businesses that give back to their communities—include Microsoft, Starbucks, Washington Mutual, and Boeing.

“This award is particularly meaningful because Group Health was nominated by other organizations that are highly respected for their commitment to philanthropy,” says President and CEO Scott Armstrong. “To be recognized by our peers is quite a tribute and shows that our commitment to community partnerships has made a noticeable difference.”

Last year was especially momentous for Group Health’s philanthropic efforts. The organization made the largest single community contribution in its 60-year history—\$2 million. Half of that amount supported King County’s Child Health Initiative, which aims

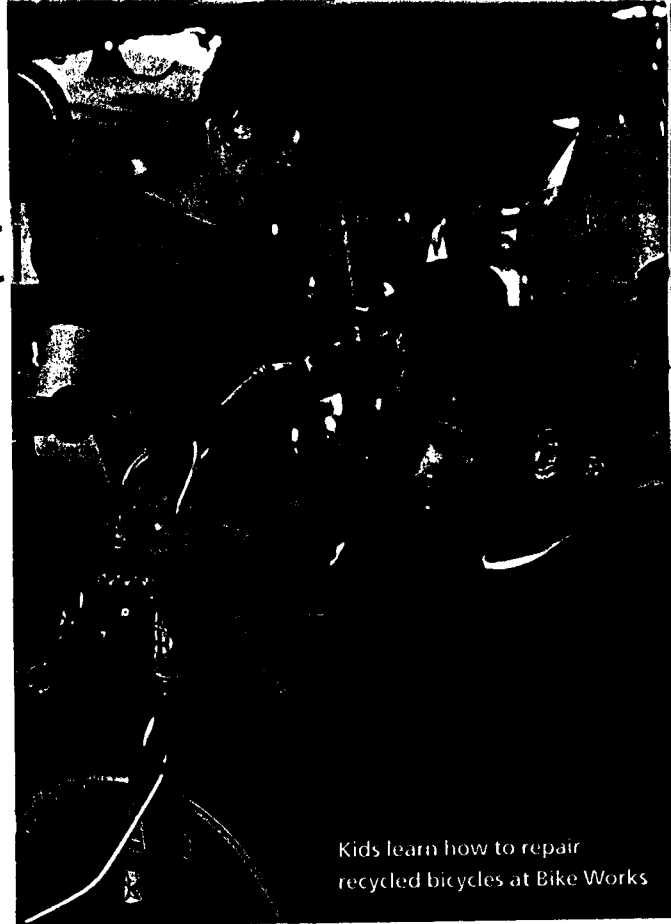
to deliver health care and coverage to 8,000 needy children. The other half went to the Group Health Community Foundation, Group Health’s charitable arm, to improve children’s health care access outside of King County.

Providing care and coverage for low-income Washington state residents, along with many other contributions to the community, exceeded \$44 million in 2006. Some of the money covered financial shortfalls for members in the Healthy Options plan and the state’s Basic Health program, and helped defray the costs of copayments

Foundation gives to kids

The Group Health Community Foundation, Group Health’s philanthropic arm, was established in 1983. Since 2001, Foundation grants have helped immunize 1,276 children, care for 295 homeless teens in Olympia and Tacoma, provide mental health training to 141 child-care providers, and quadruple booster seat use among Latinos in King County.

While many health care foundations exclusively support their parent organization, Group Health’s Foundation is committed to the good health of children, teens, and communities statewide—not just to Group Health members. The Foundation’s programs are funded through private donations, grants, and contracts. More than 6,200 donors support the Foundation each year.



Kids learn how to repair recycled bicycles at Bike Works

and non-covered services. In addition, more than \$1.7 million was awarded by the Foundation to community groups and Group Health departments for health-related programs such as immunizations, oral health care, and diabetes management.

“The health of our state’s residents has been improved significantly because of Group Health’s commitment to supporting and implementing innovative prevention and treatment programs, improving access to health information and care, and supporting cultural diversity in health care,” says Thomas Hansen, MD, CEO, Children’s Hospital & Regional Medical Center.

Keeping kids and families healthy. Jeff Lindenbaum, MD, an adolescent medicine physician and the director of Teen Health Services at Group Health, has seen Group Health’s philanthropy in action. He manages health clinics at four Seattle-area middle schools and high schools.

“Teens can get free care at these centers for anything from acne to depression,” says Dr. Lindenbaum. “Even uninsured kids get the help they need.” The clinics recorded more than 7,000 visits during the 2005–06 school year, and Group Health now plans to expand the program beyond King County.

In Spokane, the Lands Council used a grant from the Group Health Community Foundation to help 500 low-income people in the Hillyard neighborhood learn

PHOTO © TIMOTHY ADAMS PHOTOGRAPHY

about the dangers of cumulative lead exposure from a nearby hazardous waste site, lead paint in older homes, and lead sediment along the Spokane River.

And at Bike Works, in Seattle, a grant from the Foundation supported a program to encourage cycling among youth as a way to promote health and prevent obesity. The Bicycling for Lifelong Health program far exceeded its goals, reaching more than 1,000 kids through various cycling events.

Researching major health problems. The work of the Center for Health Studies (CHS) also contributed to Group Health's selection as the 2007 Philanthropic Corporation of the Year. CHS was established in 1983 to perform research on the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of major health problems. Since then, CHS has advanced knowledge and understanding of injury prevention, smoking cessation interventions, breast cancer screening, treatment of depression, the safety and efficacy of immunizations, and effective treatment of cardiovascular disease.

In 2006, the Center for Health Studies managed federal and foundation research grants totaling \$26.5 million. In addition, the scientific staff provides substantial pro bono services to various local, state, and federal government advisory panels.

Educating patients and medical professionals. Group Health sponsors a variety of classes, programs, support groups, and community health forums for the public on topics that include childhood development, bike safety, and issues related to aging.

The organization also operates several residency programs, as well as internships and externships, to help educate health care professionals. The biggest of these is the Family Practice Residency Program. As part of that program, participants spend two months practicing in a community health center to encourage interest in that area of medicine. Group Health also offers pharmacy and optometry residency programs, and supports several programs and internships in Seattle and Spokane that are designed to develop and encourage diversity in the health care industry.

Doing our part—worldwide. Group Health has a long history of supporting medical and humanitarian care around the world. The organization donates warehouse space, medical equipment such as anesthesia machines, and medical/surgical supplies to medical missions in such nations as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Guatemala, and Vietnam. Group Health physicians and staff also provide care on the missions. —Claudine Benmar

Expanded alternative-medicine discounts. Complementary ChoicesSM, Group Health's alternative care network, now offers 20 percent discounts on yoga, Tai Chi, personal training, and Pilates—in addition to massage, chiropractic, naturopathy, and acupuncture. The discount is available to Group Health members for non-covered complementary care from participating providers. For more information about Complementary Choices, go to www.ghc.org and search for "Complementary Choices."

Grants benefit children and teens. The Group Health Community Foundation recently awarded seven grants to address critical issues facing children and teens—oral health, lack of health insurance, and childhood obesity.

- University of Washington Department of Pediatric Dentistry will pilot a project providing dental care for vulnerable, at-risk children at Seattle's Childhaven.

- Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center will provide dental care to more than 2,000 low-income children. The grant will also fund a pilot program aimed at reducing the risk of premature birth by treating pregnant women who have advanced periodontal disease.

- The Group Health Center for Health Studies received a grant to support the Oral Health in Well-Child Care pilot program at six Group Health clinics. The grant will provide evaluation services to explore the viability for integration into our primary care system.

- Choice Regional Health Network will expand its outreach to enroll the remaining 6 percent of uninsured, low-income children and their families in South Puget Sound in health plans.

- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's Access to Care Outreach Project will extend its work to local schools to help 1,800 uninsured children gain access to care.

- Bike Works, in Seattle, will enhance a project within the Bicycling for Lifelong Health program that introduces riding and healthy choices to children and teens.

- YMCA of Snohomish County will expand its Strong Kids Program to all five YMCA branches in the county. Strong Kids helps overweight youth find healthy and permanent solutions to weight control.

Calling all charter members. *Northwest Health* recently received a call from Alan Phillips, one of Group Health's earliest members with a membership number of 202. In fact, he and his dad became members in the 1940s, before the organization even had medical facilities or physicians. Phillips wonders how many of the original members are still around, and so do we. If you're a charter member, please let us know. E-mail nwhealth@ghc.org or call Ginny Smith at 206-448-2145.