

How your donations are used – the rest of the story:

Community Youth Services (CYS): EE Board President Jeanne Vosburgh was driving on Henderson Blvd. headed for Tumwater Blvd. when the flagger at the top of the hill turned her STOP sign toward her. As Jeanne pulled slowly to a stop the young woman wearing the bright orange hard hat took a close look at her and grinned as she came toward the car. “I know you. You’re from Explosion,” she said with absolute certainty. “You’re the reason I’m here! I mean not just YOU but everybody, like the Explosion people. They gave the money for me to take Flagger Training last year; and a couple of my friends, too. The Explosion people are some of the GOOD people. Sometimes, just a little bit goes an awful long way. You know? Anyway, you tell them I said Thanks! And God Bless!”

More Community Youth Services: Here are a few examples of how the “unrestricted” donations from EE have been put to use to help the older youth in our community:

- Public storage for a homeless family to store their furniture and belongings
- Greyhound bus tickets for youth to go home and visit/reunite with family
- Tools needed by student to participate in the SPSCC automotive technology program
- Trainings for two youths to become road flaggers with WSDOT
- Gas cards and bus passes for participants to get to school and jobs
- Feeds for food handlers’ permits
- Learning permits and driving school
- School transcript requests
- Parking in Seattle while on job interview.

Hood Canal School in Mason County (EE does an –off-Broadway version of the Big Shoe for some of the smaller Mason County school districts): There is a junior high school boy who wanted to play basketball. His shoes were completely worn through. I could not find a pair that fit him in our donated clothing box, so I got the OK to take him shopping for shoes and to replace his tattered sweatshirt. I suggested he also needed an outdoor coat – he didn’t know what that was. New socks and underwear rounded out the shopping spree. The next day at school he wore everything the EE money had made possible, and he came to show me how he looked. He thanked me and had a lilt in his step and a smile on his face as he left my office.

North Thurston School District: Thank you for your continued support of students in need. The funds have been used to assist homeless and needy students in the district. Funds are deposited in the district HOPE account and are distributed by the homeless liaison as needs arise.

This list represents some of the ways the funds have been used to help children and youth: clothing, bus passes, eye glasses and exam, vaccinations, shoes, socks, underwear, school supplies, calculators, instrument rental, laundromat vouchers,

medication, science fair supplies, copy of birth certificate, jackets, and gas voucher to get to school.

The items above have helped reduce barriers for students to experience school success. The excitement for a student to be able to play the viola because the HOPE account helped with the rental cost is a true gift. Thank you for the continued support to make a difference in a child's life.

Olympia School District: A representative told EE that families living in the Salvation Army Shelter are required to turn over 85 percent of their income to put into savings for them, leaving little money for school supplies and clothes for their children. In part because of the monies from the Big Shoe, school families were able to pick up all of their necessary supplies along with "extras" for home use. During the first week of school, families were able to pick up all of their school supplies with dignity and expediency because of the financial support from the Big Shoe benefit concert.

Rainier School District: "There was a single mother with three children who had been homeless for a couple of years. The mother had been unemployed for some time, but she had finally been able to find a job and save up enough money to pay the rent on a small apartment. Unfortunately, she was \$200 short of having enough to cover the security deposit for the apartment. She went to the school district, but they were unable to use district funds to help her. However, there was money left in the previous year's Big Shoe contributions, and that money was used to help get this mother and her children into an apartment. Three fewer homeless children in the Rainier School District."

More Rainier School District: Last year there was a child attending the school who was living temporarily in a homeless shelter in Olympia. To keep him attending class, the school superintendent volunteered to drive him to school each day. But the boy was getting frustrated because his clothes and other personal possessions were being stolen by other youth at the shelter. So the school used Big Shoe money to buy him a locking foot locker, filled it with new clothes, and let the boy store it at the school – he had the only key. This also encouraged the student to stay in school, where his "stuff" was kept safely.

Rochester: A homeless family at our school had no money for over a month. They seemed to "fall through the cracks" at DSHS with child support collection issues. When their daughter broke her arm, the family needed transportation to and from the doctor, as well as help with medications, and food and school supplies. We accessed the Big Shoe funds to assist. This student was able to stay in school throughout this family crisis.

Shelton School District: The number of homeless children in our district has consistently been at 9-10 percent of our school population for the past five years, approximately 375-400 children. The needs of these students and their families are many. We try to use the funds in such a way as to reach as many students as possible, but to also address some of the unique needs of some of our neediest students. Again thank

you for your fundraising and generous support you give to our homeless children and youth. These include:

- New, durable warm winter clothing such as sweatshirts and winter coats for 30 students.
- Basic school supplies that benefited 200 students.
- Hygiene supplies that benefited 100 students.
- Laundry vouchers for 90 students.
- Food supplies for the Best Choice Café mentoring program that reaches out to street youth to reengage them in school and healthy choices – 40 students over the last year.
- The “family Contribution” portion of the YMCA scholarships for four youth to attend the BOLD/GOLD Diversity in the Outdoors program.
- A 6-month flute rental so a homeless junior high student could continue to participate in band.

More from Shelton School District: "I attended 7 different schools before we moved to Shelton School District, where I was identified as a homeless youth. The school district supplied me with school supplies, access to clothing and food banks, and housing support. We moved to a mission in Centralia in the beginning of freshman year. The Shelton School District provided transportation so we would not have to change schools. When we moved to Olympia they continued to provide transportation. We now live in our own home in Shelton."

Tenino: When discussing attendance concerns with his counselor, a 3rd grade student shared that his mom doesn't wake on time because they don't have an alarm clock. They don't have a car either, so if he misses the school bus, he doesn't have a way to school. After his counselor used these discretionary funds to purchase a new alarm clock, he never missed another day of school. He used his own alarm clock to wake himself up to catch the bus.

Tumwater School District: The homeless and needy student program served about 180 students last year with so many things that we would not have been able to help with if it hadn't been for the donation from Entertainment Explosion from A Really Big Shoe Six. We used the money to help many kids purchase clothing, shoes, school supplies, pay for fees associated with classes, field trips, yearbooks, assist with prescriptions, and so on. One family in particular benefited from Big Shoe donations the last few years.

The mother and her two teenage sons came to us a couple of years ago, escaping a horrible domestic violence situation, being dropped off here in Tumwater with nothing but the clothes on their backs since they left their home in such a hurry. For the past two years our fund has helped them with school clothes, shoes, sports fees and equipment, and even with groceries when their food assistance card was stolen. While they were struggling to put food on the table and not sure month to month if they could pay the rent, mom was always very concerned about giving back to the district as we had given so much to them. Those boys took very good care of every item they wore and when they

grew out of them, mom washed and ironed them and brought them all back to us to donate to the district's clothing bank.

While the family still faces challenges, they have been able to find their own home and mom now has a full-time job. She has openly cried and told us that we were there for her in a horrible time in her life and were able to give her what she needed to turn her life and her boys' lives around. While much of the credit must go to her for her determination and positive attitude, some of it must go to the generous people of our community who donate money that allows us to help these families as they struggle with things that most of us can't even imagine.

Yelm: A primary school student was struggling to learn to read. The student's teacher and other support staff were providing every intervention they could think of, but no significant improvements in the student's performance were occurring. One day the child made a comment that left staff to suspect the child may have a vision problem. The school nurse conducted preliminary testing which resulted in a referral to an optometrist. The parents had no insurance – the counselor used Big Shoe funds – the student was diagnosed with a significant vision problem which has been corrected through the use of glasses. Six months later he is reading at grade level.