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Community Foundation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Local partnership brings Shriners Outreach Clinic to Whatcom County Families

Bellingham, WA- January 4, 2018 – Washington Federal, Chuckanut Health Foundation and the Whatcom Community Foundation are pleased to announce their partnership to fund Shriners Hospital for Children – Portland to bring their outreach clinic to Bellingham.

Families that discover their child has a neuromuscular or skeletal problem face daunting challenges: learning about their child's condition and navigating a complex healthcare system, as well as accessing and paying for the care and treatment their child's needs. Thankfully in our region, Shriners' Hospital for Children – Portland (Shriners) helps to address those challenges. Perhaps best known for their signature hat (the fez) and driving tiny cars in parades across the nation, Shriners International opened its first hospital for children in 1922. The organization was determined to give all children access to the specialized care that they need to live up to their fullest potential.

To ensure that kids in Whatcom County receive care, Shriners submitted a funding request to the Whatcom Community Foundation so that they could bring their traveling outreach clinic to Bellingham. In 2016, they cared for 15 children with orthopedic needs, easing the financial and travel burden for as many local families. That's how the partnership began.

Community Foundation Executive Vice President Pamela Jons saw connections: connections with a partner in the Whatcom Center for Philanthropy (the hub for community philanthropy established by Chuckanut Health Foundation, United Way of Whatcom County and the Whatcom Community Foundation) and the Center's landlord, Washington Federal Bank.

“The request was a great fit for our partners because we could collectively bring a much-needed service to the community”, remarked Jons.

Sue Sharpe, Executive Director of Chuckanut Health Foundation, added, “As a local health funder, we are aware that there are challenges providing health services to children with special needs in Whatcom County. The mobile orthopedic clinic is essential for families without the means to travel for assessment and treatment. Chuckanut Health Foundation is grateful to be part of making this clinic possible for local families.””

The connection for Washington Federal Bank was more personal. Jons added, “Cory Landers was Credit Analyst and newly minted Relationship Manager at the bank. He was born with brittle bone disease, precisely the kind of condition that the Shriners Hospital system strives to address. He passed away suddenly in 2016.”

“While this request was slightly outside the Washington Federal Foundation’s focal areas, the connection to a valued team member that we lost far too young made it the right thing to do,” said Washington Federal’s Northern Washington Regional President Tom Kenney.

Each organization is investing \$5,000 to bring the outreach clinic to Bellingham. The shared goal of honoring Cory’s life and legacy in a way that will touch the lives of local children and families has been powerful. “It means a great deal to our entire team to be a part of this collaboration,” noted Kenney. “Cory was respected and loved by all his colleagues here in Bellingham.”

Jointly investing in the Shriners to bring their clinic to Whatcom County is just one example of the power of connections and partnerships made possible through the Whatcom Center for Philanthropy, located in the Washington Federal Bank Building on Cornwall Avenue in downtown Bellingham.

For more information about Shriner outreach clinics please visit <https://www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/salt-lake-city/outpatient-clinic-services>

Whatcom Center for Philanthropy - Building Community. Together. For more information, visit www.whatcomcenterforphilanthropy.org.

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