

# THE EVERETT HERALD

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## United Way, Everett Foundation give \$160K to nonprofits

By Julie Muhlstein  
Herald Writer

Mari's Place is an art studio that doubles as a dance school. Sometimes it's a music room, other times a hip-hop venue. From its tiny headquarters, the Everett nonprofit works to foster creativity and confidence.

As a recipient of a \$9,200 grant awarded by United Way of Snohomish County and the Greater Everett Community Foundation, Mari's Place will keep up its effort to enrich the lives of kids through exposure to the arts and culture.

The money for Mari's Place is part of nearly \$160,000 in grants the two agencies will award this year to 20 local nonprofit organizations. Each recipient, in its own way, works to alleviate poverty in Snohomish County.

"This is a place where kids can have a voice," said Mary Toews, who founded Mari's Place four years ago. She said about 800 children have participated in activities at Mari's Place, which is staffed by volunteers. Many of the helpers are college students.

Rather than pay directly for the nonprofits' programs, these "capacity-building" grants are aimed at strengthening the organizations. The money will be used to help the nonprofits be more effective, said Karri Matau, the Greater Everett Community Foundation's vice president of philanthropic services.

This is the second year United Way and the foundation have provided grants aimed at the long-term effectiveness of local nonprofits. It's the first time the two agencies worked jointly on the effort.

"It's been a great partnership," said Dennis Smith, president and CEO of United Way of Snohomish County.

Maddy Metzger-Utt, president of the Greater Everett Community Foundation, said recipients will benefit from working with both agencies. "Our overall goal is to strengthen our community and help these nonprofits do a better job of providing services for their clients," she said.

For Mari's Place, the \$9,200 won't be used to buy paintbrushes or guitars. It will go toward computers, software and to get help in accounting services and grant writing.



Painting by Andrea Villa, 2013.

In her office on Monday, Toews said it's a struggle to pay for computers, a printer and ink.

"I try to give opportunities, said Toews, 54, whose interest in how the arts help kids was sparked by her son's involvement in drama at Lake Stevens High School. Fluent in Spanish, she runs her nonprofit while working as a translator at area hospitals.

In 2012, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced an \$880,000 award — \$440,000 each to United Way and the Greater Everett Community Foundation — to help fight poverty in Snohomish County over several years. The two agencies will jointly offer technical support and training for grant recipients. Matau said \$58,000 of the nearly \$160,000 awarded this year came from the Greater Everett Community Foundation, and that United Way provided the rest. It wasn't all Gates Foundation money, she said, adding that some came from another donor.

Here are the 20 recipients of grants totaling \$159,927, and how that money will be used:

Academic Link Outreach: \$4,400 to im-

prove the capability, knowledge and resources of its board of directors.

Arlington Kids' Closet: \$5,000 to develop and maintain a new website.

Community Resource Foundation: \$10,000 to support its volunteer center.

Everett Recovery Cafe: \$5,448 to open doors and begin operations by hiring a floor manager.

Farmer Frog: \$10,000 to upgrade and expand its website.

Foundation for Edmonds School District: \$5,387 to upgrade its database and improve an online giving portal.

Granite Falls Family Support Center: \$8,900 to improve fund-raising and develop a fund-raising plan.

Greater Trinity Academy: \$10,000 to contract with a grant writer, upgrade a computer lab, expand STEM curriculum, and offer computer access and training.

Hand in Hand: \$10,000 to pay a staff person to manage volunteers and work with

local service providers.

Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County: \$7,768 to purchase computer hardware and software, and to work with a professional grant writer.

Interfaith Association of Northwest Washington: \$10,000 for an internal evaluation to determine more efficient, sustainable and creative ways to serve homeless and low-income families.

Integrative Psychological and Social Services: \$3,188 to train staff who work with under-insured and uninsured clients.

Lake Stevens Family Center: \$8,200 to increase technical data reporting capabilities to quantify results of the agency's work.

Latino Educational Training Institute: \$9,656 to expand English language instruction and create a computer skills training center.

Mari's Place: \$9,200 to buy computers and software, and to contract for accounting services and grant writing.

Monroe Public Schools Foundation: \$9,960 to improve fund-raising, establish a donor database and improve marketing materials.

North Counties Family Services: \$8,500 to provide board and staff training, hold a community workshop, and to help pay for a part-time human resources manager, facilities and equipment.

Safe Harbor Free Clinic: \$6,320 to pay for professional financial reviews and grant writing, staff and board training, and attendance at conferences.

Snohomish County Legal Services: \$10,000 to hire a part-time development coordinator to work on private grants and individual giving, and to contract with an accounting firm for quarterly reviews.

Take the Next Step: \$8,000 to contract Database Sherpa, an organization that helps nonprofits in setting up a database.

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Students show off their artwork at Mari's Place.



Children participate in Ballet classes at Mari's Place, 3-9 years old.



Painting by Andrea Villa, 2014.