



*“TeamChild immediately became a lifesaver for me and the youth I was charged with serving.”*

**Doug Steers,  
Retired Juvenile  
Court Probation  
Counselor**



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*Anne Lee, Executive Dir.*

## Retired Juvenile Court Probation Counselor: Doug Steers

I recently retired from a 30 year career as a King County probation counselor. During the last 10 years in the job, I had the benefit of working with TeamChild.

TeamChild immediately became a lifesaver for me and the youth I was charged with serving.

Staff attorneys at TeamChild work with young people from all over King County and I've seen how effective they can be as advocates for children and families who have nowhere else to turn.

TeamChild steps in to work with the youth in the most difficult of situations -- those kids who have been pushed out of schools, their homes, and other support that we all would hope to be present in children's lives.

The kids TeamChild serves are in and out of juvenile detention for a variety of reasons. Most of the youth I referred didn't have a high likelihood of success because doors of opportunity were closed to them.

However, TeamChild attorneys opened doors to essential community services and put these kids on a better path.

I worked with TeamChild on a case involving a girl who had been bounced around from one school program to another.

She landed in a self-contained special education program for children with serious behavioral disabilities. I referred her to TeamChild because this school placement was a disaster for her. She was sent home every day, picking up more and more negative behaviors from the other students around her.

TeamChild staff advocated for her to be in a more appropriate school program and continued to be there for her when new issues came up. I'm glad to say that this young woman is now in a dental hygienist program and doing well.

The path for youth is never completely smooth; they need help along the way, and thankfully for this young woman and many others like her, TeamChild is a consistent and effective advocate.

We need to continue to provide funding for TeamChild in our communities. The program was critical in helping me do my job as a probation counselor, and essential to ensuring that we truly do not give up on any child.

# TeamChild

Keeping Kids In the Community and Out of Juvenile Detention



## TeamChild Keeps Kids in School

TeamChild addresses the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency by advocating for education, mental & medical health services, safe living situations and other types of support.

## TeamChild Saves Taxpayer Money

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that taxpayers save almost \$4,000 for every juvenile who receives full assistance from TeamChild.

## Maintain Funding for TeamChild in the 2010 Supplemental Budget

For over 10 years, TeamChild has provided free civil legal advocacy to help low-income youth involved in the juvenile justice system secure access to the education, healthcare, housing and other support they need to achieve positive outcomes. TeamChild serves over 1,000 youth per year in Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Yakima, King, Benton and Franklin Counties.

Close to 50% of TeamChild's operations depend on state funding. In the 2009 legislative session, TeamChild took an 11% cut. Any further reductions in funding would force closure of one or more offices statewide, thereby eliminating essential civil legal aid for vulnerable children with no comparable services to fill the gap. **It is critical that the Washington State Legislature maintain full funding in the 2010 supplemental budget for TeamChild services.**

TeamChild addresses the root causes of delinquency and presents juvenile courts with effective and less-expensive alternatives to incarceration. Juvenile courts and community agencies rely on TeamChild to help youth assert their legal rights and challenge inequities arising from poverty, disability, neglect and abuse, racism and discrimination. Independent program evaluations have found that TeamChild's work reduces the likelihood of youth returning to the juvenile justice system.

Based on a review of cases from the 2007-2009 biennium where youth were facing JRA dispositions ranging from 15 weeks to 2 years (average JRA daily cost of \$243 per youth), TeamChild's advocacy and collaboration with public defenders saved the state approximately \$1 million in Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration incarceration costs.

## TeamChild Keeps Kids in School

70% of kids receiving legal representation are not in school at the time of referral.

However, 90% of those kids are back in school by the time their cases are closed.

## TeamChild Keeps Kids out of Juvenile Court

Kids who are helped by TeamChild are 4 times less likely to re-offend 6 months later, and 2 times less likely to re-offend a year later.



## TeamChild Provides Meaningful Alternatives to Incarceration

Without TeamChild, my son would be caught up in a system that does not know how to care for his needs. My son has a disability that truly affects everyone that is around him. And through TeamChild he has a voice and a chance to succeed in school and in life. TeamChild set up conferences with his teachers, counselors, psychologist and the assistant principal. We all met and TeamChild let them know what my son's needs are.

My son was arrested and the prosecuting attorney spoke to my son and to us and realized that he is not a mean, disobedient person by choice. His actions are the result of his disability. The prosecuting attorney sent him to TeamChild and said they would help him so that he would not get kicked out of school all of the time and they would be able to get things done that I was not able to.

**"I am certain that without TeamChild on my son's side, he would not be in school."  
Pierce County Parent**

Since TeamChild came into my son's life he has not been arrested and the school is not so quick to kick him out for everything he does. The teachers do work with him more and they have learned about his disability, which has allowed them to understand what he is going through and how difficult it is for him. Now he is not punished for his disability. He is being held accountable for his actions and learning from them.

I am certain that without TeamChild on my son's side he would not be in school and he would not be a productive person in society. And if you do not support TeamChild it will only hurt society. We will have more kids dropping out of school and more kids in jail. Please support TeamChild and continue to support our future generation.

**Testimonial from a  
Pierce County Parent**

## Honorable Neal Q. Rielly Spokane County Superior Court Judge



### Dear Members of the Washington State Legislature:

TeamChild plays an irreplaceable role in our community, and provides significant cost savings to taxpayers.

I urge you to fully fund TeamChild in the 2010 Supplemental Budget in order to sustain TeamChild's services in seven counties in Washington.

As a judge, I see youth every day who are cycling through the revolving doors of our court system. Many of them have unmet needs and without intervention will likely continue into our adult criminal system.

TeamChild fills an essential role of securing appropriate educational services, health and mental health care, safe and stable housing, and other necessary supports and services. Putting this support in place gives courts viable alternatives to incarceration in county and state detention facilities.

In Spokane County, TeamChild has the unwavering support of judicial officers, juvenile probation counselors, defense attorneys, and social workers because they know the program works to address the challenges that juvenile justice involved youth face on a daily basis.

Although the state faces significant budget crises, I believe that the relatively small investment in TeamChild will result in a positive financial return by diverting youth from expensive criminal justice system services. TeamChild's work has been proven to reduce recidivism, which results in significant savings in juvenile justice costs to Washington taxpayers.

I strongly urge you to fund TeamChild in the 2010 Budget so that youth in our community will have the continued benefit of this proven program.

Sincerely,

Hon. Neal Q. Rielly

***"TeamChild's work has been proven to reduce recidivism, which results in significant savings in juvenile justice costs to Washington taxpayers."***

***Hon. Neal Q. Rielly***