

Charles' Story

Sometimes people associate Intermountain with children from low income families that have been abused or neglected. While that is part of our work, it is not the full story. You see, anger and loneliness come from families at every income level. Here is Charles' story, as told by Liz Kohlstadt, our Chief Clinical Officer.

"Charles was a handsome, athletic, intelligent boy from a very wealthy and powerful family. Charles's mother was so sad and worried herself that she couldn't tolerate her little boy's need for affection and she locked her toddler son out of her room, despite his desperate pounding on the door. Charles' father was too absorbed in acquiring and strutting his wealth and power to pay attention to Charles.



So, Charles was parented by a succession of nannies. He was given every possible luxury except the one he needed most – a mother who loved him and a father who cared. Charles turned destructive and willful – he destroyed property, bullied the hired help and even threatened his brother with a gun.

On arriving at Intermountain, Charles announced that he didn't need relationships and told us that he was better than the other children because his family was rich and he got lots of presents. Staff knew that beneath this bravado, Charles felt scared, lonely and unloved, so we rocked him and listened to him just like we did with the other children. Staff helped him talk about the emptiness of his life and he started to understand the poverty of his inner world.

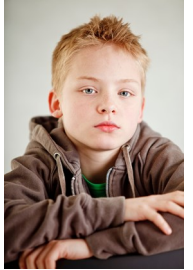
As he began to heal, Charles reached out to a little boy who was severely brain damaged and so primitive that he ran on all fours like a monkey. This little friend was the opposite in background, status and ability from Charles, but he became a protector, friend and mentor. Charles found that by connecting with others, he could experience the importance and love he was seeking. The value of presents and possessions diminished and the importance of authentic relationships emerged.

By experiencing the commonality of human experience, Charles got back more than he gave. His changes influenced his family and now they share a depth of relationship that had been impossible before. He had gone from a hurting, mistrusting and manipulative boy to a young man that could trust others enough to have genuine relationships."

Charles' Story

Sometimes people associate Intermountain with children from low income families that have been abused or neglected. While that is part of our work, it is not the full story. You see, anger and loneliness come from families at every income level. Here is Charles' story, as told by Liz Kohlstadt, our Chief Clinical Officer.

"Charles was a handsome, athletic, intelligent boy from a very wealthy and powerful family. Charles's mother was so sad and worried herself that she couldn't tolerate her little boy's need for affection and she locked her toddler son out of her room, despite his desperate pounding on the door. Charles' father was too absorbed in acquiring and strutting his wealth and power to pay attention to Charles.



So, Charles was parented by a succession of nannies. He was given every possible luxury except the one he needed most – a mother who loved him and a father who cared. Charles turned destructive and willful – he destroyed property, bullied the hired help and even threatened his brother with a gun.

On arriving at Intermountain, Charles announced that he didn't need relationships and told us that he was better than the other children because his family was rich and he got lots of presents. Staff knew that beneath this bravado, Charles felt scared, lonely and unloved, so we rocked him and listened to him just like we did with the other children. Staff helped him talk about the emptiness of his life and he started to understand the poverty of his inner world.

As he began to heal, Charles reached out to a little boy who was severely brain damaged and so primitive that he ran on all fours like a monkey. This little friend was the opposite in background, status and ability from Charles, but he became a protector, friend and mentor. Charles found that by connecting with others, he could experience the importance and love he was seeking. The value of presents and possessions diminished and the importance of authentic relationships emerged.

By experiencing the commonality of human experience, Charles got back more than he gave. His changes influenced his family and now they share a depth of relationship that had been impossible before. He had gone from a hurting, mistrusting and manipulative boy to a young man that could trust others enough to have genuine relationships."