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Sisu is a Finnish verb that means to have tenacity, determination, and courage in the face of adversity. We know children with disabilities show much sisu. It is our desire to help them where needed and to let them know that we believe in their abilities.

Sawyer Griffin and Mom Appear in *Fiddler on the Roof*

June 7 performance at Bellingham Theatre Guild will benefit Sisu Children's Fund

Sawyer Griffin and his mom Christine, very special friends of Sisu Children's Fund, are appearing this year in the Bellingham Theatre Guild production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Sawyer is a young man who exhibits great Sisu. He has worked to overcome problems with hearing and vision and, with the help of Sisu Children's Fund, has participated in therapy programs offered by the Sacarin Center in Seattle and the Alderwood Vision Therapy Center.

Sawyer's mother reports wonderful results with the vision therapy Sawyer is receiving. "We went for Sawyer's yearly eye exam on April 5 and afterwards were told Sawyer's double vision, tracking and accommodation (focusing near to far) are all at 100%! It's no wonder his reading has been improving, and with it, his self confidence, enabling him to follow through in auditioning for the play. I can't begin to tell you how astounding this is."

Sisu Children's Fund has reserved the Bellingham Theatre Guild on Thursday, June 7, for a very special performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*. This exciting event will start at 6:30 p.m. with a wine and appetizer reception and silent auction.

While you enjoy the refreshments provided by Harborside Bistro, you'll have an opportunity to place your bid for some wonderful items donated for our silent auction.

You'll find baskets filled with gifts that will make you feel pampered and others filled with prizes designed to satisfy a discriminating palate. There will be gift certificates that will take you to fantastic restaurants or fun places to get away. You'll also find some beautiful quilts, the latest Microsoft software, and some very practical gifts that will help you or someone you know get started on new home improvement projects. Need a side-by-side refrigerator from DeWaard & Bode? You'll find that at our silent auction, too.

The curtain will go up at 8 p.m. for a heartwarming production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Coffee, tea and dessert will be served during intermission. Winning bids for silent auction items will be announced at that time.

After the final curtain goes down and the cast takes their bows, you'll have an opportunity to meet the performers and pick up your silent auction items.

If you haven't already done so, contact a Sisu Children's Fund board member now to get tickets for this special June 7 performance. Tickets are just \$25, and all proceeds benefit Sisu Children's Fund. You will have a fun time enjoying a great show and helping us as we help some very deserving children and young adults in our community who are dealing with major medical problems or physical disabilities.



Sawyer Griffin will be performing in the Bellingham Theatre Guild production of "Fiddler on the Roof."

Your Dollars Are Helping These Children

We are sending 18-month old **Maxwell** and his mother to California in July to attend a national conference on CHARGE syndrome (each letter stands for a medical problem). Airfare was arranged at a discounted price with the help of LaDonna Smith at Whatcom Travel. Maxwell has been through heart surgery, gets fed through a gastric tube, and has multiple other



Maxwell

medical problems. Other families dealing with CHARGE syndrome and physicians from all across the country who are specialists in this field will be attending this conference. There will be much information available to help parents care for their child with CHARGE syndrome.

We are helping to pay for speech therapy for **Cassie Waters**, a darling five year old, soon to be six. Cassie has a unique speech problem. The correct words are in her head, but they come out as something different, which means people cannot understand what she needs or wants to say. This was so frustrating that for awhile Cassie stopped trying to speak.



Cassie

The prognosis for Cassie is very good. When she was first seen for speech therapy, her problem was diagnosed as profound. After six weeks of intensive therapy, she was diagnosed as moderate.

Her speech therapist now projects that by the time Cassie goes to first grade, she will be diagnosed as mild, a great success story.

Sawyer Griffin's is another success story. Sawyer first received grants from Sisu Children's Fund for a special learning program to help with his frustration at school, caused by a hearing problem. After two sessions, he was referred for additional testing. It was determined at that time that he had a vision problem. We then began helping to pay for therapy at Alderwood Vision Clinic. Sawyer's vision is improving, along with his reading ability. As noted earlier in this newsletter, Sawyer is performing with the chorus in the Bellingham Theatre Guild's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. You will have an opportunity to meet him at the very special performance benefitting Sisu Children's Fund on June 7.

We will be providing funding for 50 percent of the fee for the Sacarin Learning Center program for **Josiah Puderbaugh**, a three-year-old child who so far is non verbal. If the first session is beneficial, we will share the costs for two additional sessions. This is the same program that has helped three other children from Bellingham.

We are providing funding for therapeutic riding sessions at Northwest Therapeutic Riding Center for **Bailey Torres** and **Timothy Pilkenton**. We believe this program, operated by Julia Bozzo, is making a wonderful difference for these children, physically and by giving them the power of the horse.



Timothy

If you would enjoy seeing children ride at the Northwest Therapeutic Riding Center, call us at (360) 671-8766 for times and days.

The assistance Sisu Children's Fund is providing for therapies for these children will amount to over \$14,000 this year. These amounts have been approved by the Sisu Children's Fund board members, but we would like to do more.

We have paid for speech therapy for **Cort Dalgliesh**. Funds have been exhausted, but his need has not. Cort is continuing to show improvement directly related to the two hours that speech therapy students have been working with him. He is learning to respond appropriately, signing new words and working on the alphabet and sounds.

We also have a request pending for physical therapy for a two-year-old child with spinal muscular atrophy type II, which is one of the forms of muscular dystrophy. He needs physical and occupational therapy three times a week, but his family's insurance allows only 15 visits per year. He also will be needing a power wheelchair soon. The wheel chair, a necessity for his quality of life, will cost about \$10,000.

We would like to have enough funds to pay for the power wheelchair and to respond to other requests for help. Unfortunately, we are able to fill less than half the requests we receive.

To raise more funds, we have reserved the Bellingham Theatre Guild (1600 H Street) for a special performance on June 7. We hope you will join us that night. The \$25 ticket price includes wine and appetizers, dessert and coffee, opportunities to bid on wonderful silent auction prizes, and great entertainment provided by the cast of *Fiddler on the Roof*. All proceeds benefit Sisu Children's Fund.

About Sisu Children's Fund

What do we do?

Financially assist children and young adults with their medical bills, equipment, therapy, and schooling when they are dealing with major medical problems or physical disabilities.

Who do we serve?

Children and young adults in Washington State, with priority to Whatcom and Skagit county residents.

How are donations spent?

Over the past six years, Sisu Children's Fund has provided more than \$50,000 to children and young adults for scholarships, specialized therapy programs, computer aides and medical equipment such as wheelchairs, hearing aids and a Braille Notetaker.

Scholarships	\$ 17,000
Special equipment	\$ 6,630
Therapy programs and diagnostic testing	\$ 26,496

How do we keep operating expenses low?

Sisu Children's Fund was founded by Barbara and Frank Sanchez and is operated out of their home with no expenses charged for rent, telephone or utilities. All board members serve on a volunteer basis. There are no employees. Operating expenses include the cost of printing and mailing a newsletter twice a year and occasional expenses for special fundraising events.

Where does our money come from?

Family, friends, neighbors, and businesses. Sisu Children's Fund also receives donations made through the Whatcom Foundation, United Way and the Independent Order of Foresters.

Your donations to Sisu Children's Fund are tax deductible. We are a 501(c)3 organization registered with the State of Washington as a nonprofit charity. We are listed in the Whatcom Foundation online catalog. We also are listed on www.guidestar.com, a clearinghouse for charitable organizations.

For more information, visit our website at www.sisuchildrensfund.org.

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June 7 Benefit Performance of Fiddler on the Roof

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**A 501(c)3 organization
helping children with
medical and/or physical
disabilities**

Special Thanks

Our special thanks go to all the businesses and individuals who have donated a fantastic collection of prizes for our silent auction fundraiser, being held in conjunction with the June 7 Bellingham Theatre Guild benefit performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Thanks are due also to everyone who has helped to make this what is sure to be a sold-out event. Tickets are just \$25, and all proceeds will benefit Sisu Children's Fund. If you haven't purchased your tickets, contact a Sisu Children's Fund board member or call (360) 671-8766.



We hope to see you at the theatre on June 7, but if you can't attend, you can still help by donating an article for our silent auction. Call (360) 671-8766 for more information.

Visit our website at www.sisuchildrensfund.org. If you would like copies of the Sisu Children's Fund brochure, please email snabblady@msn.com or call (360) 671-8766.
