



CHILD & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT



### Meet Marina

Marina brings a smile to everyone she passes as she walks through the halls of Joya. But it wasn't that long ago her parents worried if she would ever be able to walk or be healthy enough to interact with those around her.

"When I was 13 weeks pregnant we received a Down syndrome diagnosis," recalls Marina's mom, Esmeralda. "At around 28 weeks during an ultrasound they noticed she had two holes in her heart. We monitored it when she was born, and they determined she'd need open heart surgery at around 6 months old."

As if that weren't enough for the young family to handle, before Marina could even get her surgery, she had to endure many more health scares. She was hospitalized for heart failure and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus). "At that point she completely stopped eating and taking a bottle," said Esmeralda.

Marina ended up with a feeding tube to ensure she could gain weight and get the nutrition she needed before her heart surgery at 6 months of age. The surgery went well but because Marina was on a feeding tube for an extended time she forgot how

to drink and refused a bottle. Esmeralda and her husband, Christian, turned to early intervention in New Jersey, where they were living at the time. But that was short-lived.


"My husband and I are both active duty Air Force, so we were relocated from New Jersey to here in Spokane (Fairchild AFB) in June of 2022," said Esmeralda. "When we found out we would be moving here we had heard such good reviews from people on base about Joya, so we knew for sure we wanted her to be seen by them."

Marina started with Joya at 9 months of age, receiving speech, feeding, occupational and physical therapies in home. As she got older, Marina was able to join a toddler group at Joya where she really started to thrive, learning not only from her therapists, but from her special education teacher and other children as well.



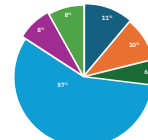
*"Joya has truly made all the difference in Marina's life in numerous ways."*

Marina's parents can't imagine where she'd be without Joya.

"Joya has truly made all the difference in Marina's life in numerous ways," said Esmeralda. There was a time we thought she'd never be off the feeding tube, then here comes Nikie (her speech therapist) and after a couple of months she was drinking from a straw. There was a time we wondered if she'd ever walk, then here comes Cheryl (her physical therapist) and after a year she is walking and running. I have never met a Joya therapist, aide, worker, or family coordinator that was not kind and welcoming." 

### INSIDE:

- [Program Spotlight](#)
- [Alumni Profile](#)
- [Staff Spotlight](#)
- [Annual Report](#)





Colleen Fuchs

### A Message from the Executive Director

## MEETING OUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

When a group of energetic Spokane ladies organized guilds and started offering respite care to families of children with special needs back in 1960, they were responding to an unmet need in our community. More than six decades later, their work lives on at Joya, where we strive every day to ensure children and families in our community impacted by developmental delays and disabilities are given every opportunity to grow and thrive, no matter their situation.

Continuing to provide a bright future for families with infants and toddlers enrolled in our birth-to-three program remains our highest priority. In order to do this well, we must adapt to the changing needs of families with young children. There is an undeniable need in Spokane for child friendly environments where everyone is welcome. Where social and language opportunities for young children, reliable information for anxious young parents, and trusted experts to help parents to confidently raise strong, resilient children are available. At Joya, we believe that developing healthy children is the key to developing a healthy community.

You will find the theme of community evident throughout this annual report, and I hope you'll read on to learn more about our Community Groups. These accessible learning opportunities, open to the community, are just one of the ways we are reaching more children than ever. This past fiscal year, our team provided special education and therapy services to 638 infants and toddlers. That's more than double the number we were serving just three years ago. Better yet, more than half of those children reached their age-appropriate milestone by age three! This is a testament to our Joya community: the parents, caregivers, staff, volunteers and donors who make our work possible and successful.

We go to great lengths to provide services that maximize daily learning opportunities. Our team drove over 74,000 miles to provide services in homes, daycares, and throughout the community last year. That is the equivalent of circling the globe 3 times!

When you read about all we have accomplished in the past year, remember that you share in our success, and we could not do this work without you!

If you haven't been in for a tour, we welcome you to visit. Tours can be arranged by contacting us at 509-326-1651.

**See the impact of this very special community!**

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

### COMMUNITY GROUPS

**Did you know Joya has play groups that are free and open to children of various ages?** We are excited to offer five different Community Play Groups for infants & toddlers. You do not have to be enrolled in Joya's early intervention program to take part and no registration is required. Drop in to check it out and enjoy some quality time with your little ones!

#### STORYTIME

Join us for a community storytime with your toddler. Enjoy stories and playtime led by Joya teachers.

Every Tuesday  
9:30 -10:30 a.m.  
All ages welcome

#### FAMILY PLAYTIME

Movement and sensory fun for everyone! Led by Joya Occupational Therapists.

Every Monday  
10:30-11:30 a.m.  
Ages 1-5 years

#### MINI MINGLERS

Enjoy songs, stories and activities to build engagement and communication skills with your little one. Led by Joya Speech Therapists.

Every Monday  
1:30-2:30 p.m.  
Ages 1-5 years

#### MINI MOVERS

Promoting movement through play while working on strength, balance and coordination in a fun environment. Led by Joya Physical Therapists.

Every Thursday  
4-5:00 p.m.  
Children 18 months to 5 years

#### PLAYFUL BEGINNINGS

Learn about the first year of development and how to promote play with your infant. Led by Joya Physical & Speech Therapists

Every Monday  
9:30-10:30 a.m.  
Ages 0-15 months

Parents are required to stay for all groups. If you have questions or would like to learn more, visit our website at [joya.org/playgroups](http://joya.org/playgroups) or give us a call at 509-326-1651.



## DYLAN RAY

The sweet smile coming from the face of two-year-old Dylan Ray as the poster boy for the annual Kids for Kids Penny Drive in 2001 still shines through more than 20 years later.

Dylan attended the Spokane Guilds' School (now Joya) from five months to age three.

**He was born with Cri-du-chat syndrome, also known as 5p-syndrome, a chromosomal condition that occurs when a piece of chromosome 5 is missing. The disorder is characterized by intellectual disability and delayed development. Dylan's family turned to the then Guilds' School for early intervention therapy, starting a relationship that's lasted to this day.**

"The Guilds' School was a safe and supportive place to learn how to care for my son with special needs," said Dylan's mom, Tonya Gmeiner. "It also gave me the resources I needed to start our journey after he turned three. It really helped to prepare me for what was next in the school district programs."

Dylan received early intervention services, including occupational, physical and speech therapy, before turning three and moving on to the Central Valley School District for preschool, elementary, middle and most of high school. He ended up graduating from Liberty High School in Spangle and took part in programs there until he was 21.

Now 25 years old, Dylan, his mom, and dad, Dave Ray, recently paid a visit to Joya's new home and caught up with some familiar faces. His special education teacher, Susie Scarborough, and speech therapist, Ann Pirrtima still work at Joya and were happy to see Dylan doing so well. His family shared Dylan's poster from 2001 and recalled how much that experience meant to them.

"My best memories were when we worked with Faris Charbonneau (Penny Drive founder) going to schools talking about Dylan and the Penny Drive," said Tonya.

**"The whole Penny Drive experience was great. It helped me to overcome some of my fear of speaking to people and learn to be an advocate for my son as he got older and started school."**

His parents are grateful for the good start in life he received at the Guilds' School and love to see Dylan embracing the world and people around him.

"We live south of Spokane near Spangle on ten acres," said Tonya. "He loves it here! Dylan has a pool and basketball court, loves riding in the side-by-side and throwing sticks in the burn piles. He loves his family and absolutely adores his nieces and nephews."

#### SHARE YOUR STORY

Interested in learning more about becoming a Joya spokes-family at school Penny Drive presentations? Or are you a Joya alum who wants to be considered for a future story? **Contact Teresa Conway at Joya: [teresa.conway@joya.org](mailto:teresa.conway@joya.org).**

## ALUMNI PROFILE



Dylan and his former teacher, Susie, at Joya.

# THE NUMBERS

## Board of Directors 2024-2025

- President**  
**Wendy Schuller** (alumni parent)  
 Real Estate Agent, John L. Scott Real Estate
- Vice President**  
**Eric Suarez** (alumni parent)  
 Private Client Advisor, J.P. Morgan Wealth Management
- Treasurer**  
**Nico Archer**  
 Partner, DH
- Secretary**  
**Aaron Fielder**  
 SVP / Commercial Group Manager, First Interstate Bank
- Community Representatives**  
**Emily Ham**  
 Substitute Teacher, Freeman School District
- Justin Hurtubise**  
 Chief Mission Officer, Providence
- Lawrence Garvin**  
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- Ben Loewen**  
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 Executive Director, Nuestras Raices Community Center
- Julie Rensch**  
 Retired, VP Cybersecurity
- John Roll**  
 Professor and Vice Dean for Research, WSU, Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine
- Deanna Stark** (alumni parent)  
 Health Program Specialist, Spokane Regional Health District
- Cherbon VanEtten**  
 AVP Business Development INW Region, MultiCare Health Systems
- James Zimmerman**  
 Retired COO, Washington State University, Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine

**638** infants and toddlers served, up from 509 children the year prior

**74,693** miles driven for in-home therapy sessions

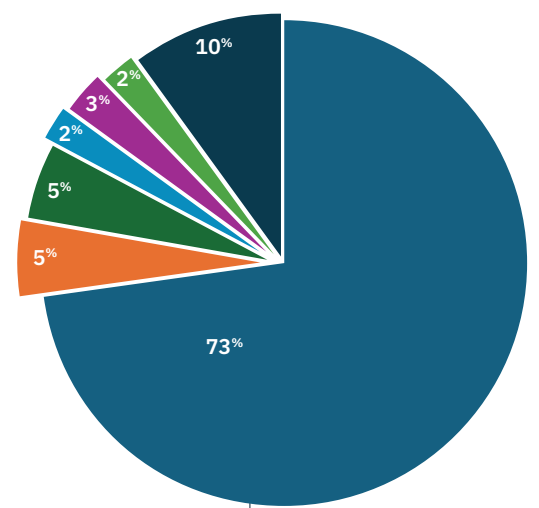
## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-'24 JULY - JUNE



### Joya Annual Report – FY 2023-24

REVENUE & SUPPORT	TOTAL
Fundraising	1,505,763
Government Contracts	3,291,675
Insurance & Program Fees	935,644
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$5,733,082</b>
EXPENSES	TOTAL
Personnel	\$4,439,139
Program	330,813
Occupancy	273,177
Contract/Professional	122,151
Fundraising	203,682
Interest Expense	135,989
Depreciation	595,796
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$6,100,748</b>
<b>FY23 CHANGE in NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(\$367,667)</b>
<b>FY23 ENDING NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$11,337,814</b>
<b>FY24 ENDING NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$10,970,147</b>

**20,771** therapy and special education services provided



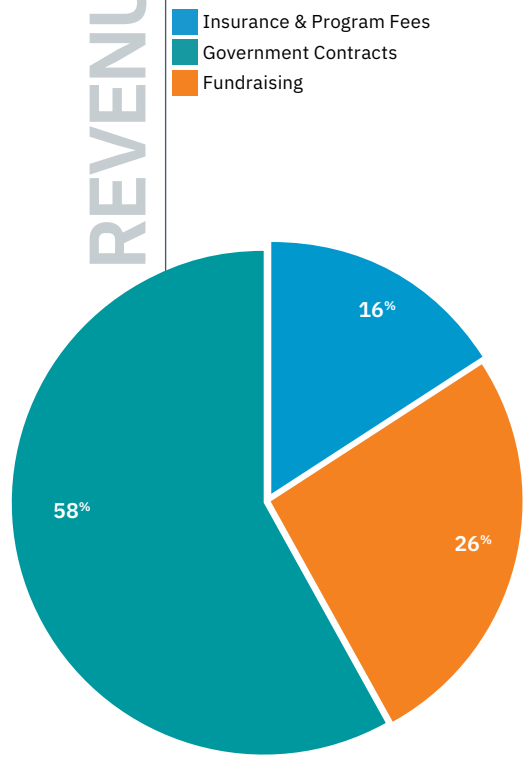
- Personnel
- Program
- Occupancy
- Contract/Professional
- Fundraising
- Interest Expense
- Depreciation

**448** parents and guardians received training to understand and support their child's development

**648** hours of professional development Joya therapists participated in

**56%** of children who exited Joya last year reached age-appropriate milestones by age 3

### REVENUE



- Insurance & Program Fees
- Government Contracts
- Fundraising



THE PEOPLE



KRYSTIN ENSIGN

**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST**  
AT JOYA SINCE 2024

**EDUCATION**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
SPEECH AND HEARING  
SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

MASTER OF SCIENCE  
SPEECH LANGUAGE  
PATHOLOGY  
GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

**CERTIFICATIONS**  
CERTIFIED LACTATION  
EDUCATOR



**Where are you from?**

I grew up in the Tri-Cities. I lived in Seattle and Washington D.C. while going to school. I moved to Spokane right after graduate school and have been here since!

**What inspired you to become an SLP?**

I knew I wanted to do something medical or teaching. I stumbled across the idea of speech therapy in high school and it made a lot of sense for me. My brother was born with a cleft lip and palate and deemed me as his “translator” as I could always understand him. Once I was in my speech therapy graduate program I quickly realized my brother was also on the Autism spectrum. Growing up with him and watching his experiences really shaped who I am as a therapist.

**What is so special about working with this population?**

Working with the 0-3 age population is so much fun! I really enjoy being able to work with the families and build their confidence as their child’s first teacher. I think as early intervention therapists we have the opportunity to lay a strong foundation for future learning and progress. The brain changes so much during this time period and I believe early intervention makes a big difference. One thing I love about Joya is how much focus is on using a collaborative, team approach. We have so many talented therapists and educators and it’s great to be able to learn from them!

**Why is it important for you to continue to grow right alongside the kids you serve?**

I strongly believe in lifelong learning and questioning my practice. I enjoy hearing about the latest research in the field of speech therapy and I strive to incorporate evidence-based practice into my daily treatments. I am always looking for the next class to take to strengthen my skills!

I have pursued additional training in the area of feeding, and currently treat children 6 months and above. I have a goal to work with infants and have taken additional coursework in lactation to become a lactation educator. I also really enjoy treating speech sound disorders.

I was fortunate to earn my master’s degree at Gallaudet, the school for the Deaf. I have to admit that my ASL skills are pretty rusty, but going to school there really gave me a unique perspective, especially when it comes to children with hearing loss. I am a strong advocate for access to all methods of communication. It was very eye opening to be the one who struggled to communicate, as using ASL is expected everywhere on campus except in the speech department classrooms.

**What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

It is hard to narrow down the most rewarding part of my job! Seeing children make progress in their communication is so special, or when a family reports that mealtimes are no longer stressful. I think one of my favorite things is seeing a child who was previously withdrawn feel confident enough to say “no!” or to be a little feisty! Self-advocacy is one of the best skills I can hope to encourage in a child!

# Wilde Flower

**REMEMBERING DEBRA WILDE**

Joya lost a longtime friend and advocate over the summer. Debra Wilde passed away on July 20, 2024, at the age of 73.

While many in the community knew Debra from her long and distinguished career as a TV news anchor at KHQ and KXLY in Spokane, Joya knew her as a steadfast supporter of the children and families we serve.

For years, Debra volunteered at the Spokane Guilds’ School (now Joya) helping however she could, but most notably as an emcee and storyteller. She annually shared the stories of our kiddos on KHQ during the Kids for Kids Penny Drive and authored a column in the Guilds’ School newsletter called Wilde Flowers where she highlighted a child each issue.

Retired Joya Executive Director Dick Boysen worked closely with Debra for many years and recalls the impact she had on our community.

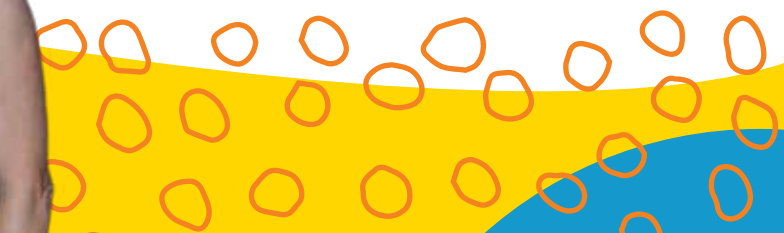
“Debra was one in a million when it came to a local spokeswoman for Joya,” said Dick. “In my 42 years at the program, Debra was far and away the best. She loved the children, parents and staff and showed it. She donated so many hours to the organization and its many events. Above all we loved her. She was a complete sweetheart. She will be missed by so many.”

Joya is so grateful for Deb’s giving spirit, which continues to this day. Many thanks to her family which made Joya a beneficiary of memorial gifts in her honor. We are humbled to be one of the local nonprofits that Debra lent her talent and energy to over the years.



“Debra was one in a million when it came to a local spokeswoman for Joya.”

– Dick Boysen





Child & Family Development  
1016 N. Superior St.  
Spokane, WA 99202

44th Annual Gala & Auction  
MARCH  
**14**

Joya Telethon on KHO  
APRIL  
**20  
25**



Joya Golf Classic Downriver Golf Course  
Sept 2025



**JOIN US** FOR THESE  
UPCOMING SPECIAL  
EVENTS IN 2025

To stay up to date on the latest with events,  
to register or become a sponsor, visit:

**JOYA.ORG/EVENTS**