



## KIDS CAN VOLUNTEER *to make a difference*



*Kid-Sized Eastside is a parenting column written by 425 mommies Michele Johansen and Lexie Tigre. They report on kid-friendly places, share ideas and discuss other parenting topics in Kid-Sized Eastside in every issue of 425 magazine! Want more? Check out their blog at [rubyslipperguide.com](http://rubyslipperguide.com)*

**Volunteering is an important** community value in our area. It is probably no surprise that the Seattle/Tacoma/Eastside area ranks No. 4 for volunteering among the 51 largest metropolitan areas. And if all the hours we give here were totaled up, they would value about \$2.5 billion per year, according to the Corporation for National & Community Service.

With that spirit of giving so strong, it makes sense that many parents are looking for ways to help their kids grow up with a commitment to service to others. The Eastside has two amazing nonprofits working with just that goal in mind: kidServe Seattle and Kids Without Borders.

### KIDSERVE SEATTLE

Based in Bellevue, kidServe Seattle is the brainchild of Rachael Podolsky. Hoping to find a way to help her own kids volunteer, Podolsky wished someone would create an organization that linked children with service opportunities. Eventually, she decided to be that someone herself, and created kidServe Seattle. The organization has a mission to promote volunteerism in children ages 5 to 12 through social, civic and environmental

activities in the local community. KidServe Seattle partners with nonprofit organizations in the area to develop volunteering activities especially for kids, rather than just dropping kids into adult situations. "Although some younger children may not be able to totally understand the meaning of giving back, any volunteering opportunity is an open door for parents and caregivers to talk with children," said Podolsky.

Service opportunities focus on five key areas that kids can understand: animals, arts, social outreach, environmental causes, and health and wellness.

Volunteering opportunities range from helping put together and serve food through Operation Sack Lunch to doing an arts activity and playing with other kids at the Hope Place Women and Children's Center.

Although Podolsky already has gotten

interest in starting kidServe branches around the country, she is focusing on making this one a success. "Our goal for young children is to get a great feeling and a sense of what it

means to give back," she says. And that is a big gift to our community. To learn more about kidServe Seattle, visit [kidserveseattle.org](http://kidserveseattle.org).

**"ACTS OF KINDNESS  
CAN START FROM  
HOME."**

-SON MICHAEL PHAM



## KIDS WITHOUT BORDERS

Ten years ago, Son Michael Pham created Sammamish-based Kids Without Borders with the mission of encouraging children to volunteer. He started with a clothing bank in Tukwila then expanded. It has grown into popular programs like Hand Me Up, a project in which kids collect clothes, school supplies, and toys from retailers and manufacturers. These items are then distributed to children in poverty, that are ill, or victims of accidents or natural disasters.

Pham credits his desire to help others and his involvement in children's causes to growing up in Vietnam during the war, followed by his arrival in the United States in 1975 as a refugee. He feels that starting a service organization is his way of "paying it forward." Though it began as a way for students to help others within their community, today Kids Without Borders helps children in more than 30 countries.

Not only does volunteering boost self-esteem and self-confidence in children, but Pham strongly believes that when children help other children, they will see more similarities than differences amongst themselves. And it's easy to get started. As Pham says, "Acts of kindness can start from home."

*To learn more about Kids Without Borders and to find out how you can form your own service project, visit [kidswithnoborders.org](http://kidswithnoborders.org).*



PHOTO BY LISI WOLF PHOTOGRAPHY



REDEMPTIVE



RIGOROUS



RELATIONAL



RELEVANT



## BELLEVUE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

TO SCHEDULE A TOUR  
CONTACT:

[admissions@bcsmail.org](mailto:admissions@bcsmail.org)  
or 425.454.4402 x215

Campuses in Woodinville and Bellevue Preschool through 12th Grade

[WWW.DISCOVERBCS.ORG](http://WWW.DISCOVERBCS.ORG)

## FAMILY LAW OFFICES O'BRIAN & ASSOCIATES

FAMILY LAW REPRESENTATION WITH YOUR NEEDS IN MIND



- Divorce (dissolution)
- Child Support
- Parenting/Custody
- Paternity
- Collaborative
- Document Review

Convenient Eastside Locations

Redmond Town Center Location

425.869.8067

Bellevue Place Location

425.885.3726

[melodie@smobrian.com](mailto:melodie@smobrian.com)

[www.smobrian.com](http://www.smobrian.com)