



Sustainability Community Benefit Report

Our Community Benefit Report is integrated with our annual report and is found electronically here:
<https://www.virginiamason.org/community-benefit>



Our goal is to empower kids, like Millinium, with information and skills that will help them have a healthy future.

On Monday afternoons, 8-year-old Millinium arrives at Mary's Place after school, ready to talk about food and jump around. He is joined by up to a dozen other kids who know Mondays are "health class" days and jumping is encouraged. This isn't a standard after-school program, it is Virginia Mason's Nutrition and Fitness Community Benefit program, and it's designed around the needs of kids who don't have an address they can call home.

Mary's Place is a day shelter in Seattle for homeless women, children and families in emergency situations. Their dedicated team keeps struggling families together and provides practical tools and resources that help women find housing and employment.

Millinium and his mom are from Ethiopia and, like most families at Mary's Place, they spend their afternoons at the shelter because it provides a roof over their heads, hot meals and showers.



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“All kids need to learn how to make healthy choices, including eating healthy foods and staying active,” says Beth Olenchek, health educator for Virginia Mason. Beth has been running Virginia Mason’s [Nutrition and Fitness for Life](#) (NFL) program for pediatric patients for more than seven years. This year, she teamed up with [Community Benefit](#) to offer a version of the program to homeless kids at Mary’s Place. Millinium has been a class regular most of the year.

“I’ve learned about food and eating and what healthy foods are,” says Millinium. “I like the jump roping she (Beth) does with us and I’ve also learned how to hula hoop!”

“I love watching a child’s face light up when they know the answer to a question, and they’re so proud when they can show what they’ve learned to their moms,” says Beth.

“Our goal is to empower these kids with information and skills that will help them have a healthy future. We supply a healthy snack, teach them about food and have fun.”

That’s where the jumping comes in. After an interactive lesson on food groups and healthy choices, the kids eagerly line up for an energetic session of jump rope that includes songs, counting and valuable lessons about taking turns, sharing and patience. At the end of the class, the kids help Beth clean up.

“Our families seek a sense of community. We create an atmosphere that is positive and affirming, while also empowering families to move forward in the journey out of homelessness,” says Laura Fay, family shelter assistant director at Mary’s Place.

“I am so excited about the Virginia Mason program. I see the kids’ faces light up when they learn about nutrition or play a healthy moving game. Seeing a familiar person every week for a child going through a transition like homelessness means so much to them because that person cares enough to come play with them and interact with them and teach them. I am grateful every time Virginia Mason comes through the door!”

Virginia Mason conducts a [Community Health Needs Assessment](#) (CHNA) every three years to identify and track health needs and risks in the community, then makes sure its community benefit programs address identified health risks. The 2013–2105 CHNA identified childhood and adult obesity among low income minority groups as a significant community health risk. Data also show homelessness as an ever-growing problem. This data was used to create the nutrition and fitness program at Mary’s Place.

EnviroMason Commitments to Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

Virginia Mason’s award-winning environmental stewardship initiative, [EnviroMason](#) empowers team members to reduce environmental impact in every aspect of daily work. The Virginia Mason Production System helps identify and implement waste reduction measures. The Green Team, made up of members from around the organization, supports — and often inspires — these efforts.

As a result in 2014, Virginia Mason:

- Became the first health care organization in the U.S.S to obtain Marine Stewardship Council certification, which allows to the serving of sustainable seafood in the cafeteria. Approximately 1.5 million meals are served, and almost 40 percent of the



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supplies are local or sustainable.

- Partnered with Pike Place Market to bring an express market to First Hill. The market benefits local residents who don't have easy access to a grocery store with fresh produce. The market is EBT (electronic benefit transfer) accessible and includes Seattle's Fresh Bucks program.
- Expanded the recycling and composting program across the hospital, resulting in the diversion of more than 50 percent of waste from the landfill in an industry where 20 percent is the average.
- Expanded the commitment to clean air through alternative transportation by supporting legislative action that led to a comprehensive transportation program in our state. Team members continued to receive a 75 percent bus pass subsidy and free access to bike cages. These efforts led to being honored by the City of Seattle's Department of Transportation as one of the best employer transportation programs in the city.
- Implemented four hours of free parking while charging electric vehicles on the Blink Network. This expanded support of electrical vehicles increased use of the charging stations by 200 percent.
- Installed new sterilizing equipment, saving more than 2 million gallons of water a year. These more efficient models also use less electricity. Led the call for climate action in Washington as chairs of the Washington Business Climate Declaration. Almost 200 businesses have signed the declaration, including other major employers in the state.
- One of a handful of health care organizations, Virginia Mason was invited to participate in a White House roundtable on climate resilience in health care. Work on this issue continues on a national level.