

A spotlight on kids doing remarkably good things.

OSO STRONG

—REMEMBERING

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IT'S A DAY that will never be forgotten, a day when the national and the international news focused on a small town northeast of Seattle, a day when a community came together to show itself strong—Oso Strong.

It was March 22, 2014, just over one year ago, that the Oso mudslide engulfed the Steelhead Haven neighborhood, destroying 49 homes and taking the lives of 43 unsuspecting people. As we remember that day and the friends and family who were lost, let's not forget the heroes—those who stepped up to lend a helping hand though they were grieving themselves: emergency personnel,

search-and-rescue, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, and volunteers like Taryn Tamez of Darrington, Washington.

Just 16 years old, Taryn is a veteran volunteer. A member of the Darrington Youth Coalition (DYC) for four years, Taryn says volunteering is second nature to her. She joined the coalition on the heels of her brother, Tracy Tamez. DYC is part of the Darrington Family Support and Resource Center, a program of North Counties Family Services (NCFS).

As a NCFS volunteer, Taryn has helped others from feeding and clothing the homeless to helping with kids' activities for the Kids on the Go program. The Oso mudslide was no exception, according to Marree Perrault, NCFS Program Director. "Twenty minutes after the 530 slide, Taryn was contacting NCFS staff and other DYC members, mobilizing us into action. She was on the front lines since the beginning, always ready to lend a hand, whether it was making lunches for first responders, collecting and organizing donations, or tying yellow ribbons



on the bridges close to the slide. No job was too big or too small for Taryn. She truly is an example and a role model for all."

At the one year anniversary of the slide, Taryn is still heartbroken. She is grieving the loss of her best friend's sister, as well as a friend from school. "The hurting today is endless with who the mudslide has taken," says Taryn. "Both of them were very caring people and they loved their families unconditionally."

When asked what drives her to volunteer for North Counties Family Services when other teenagers are focused on having fun, Taryn responds, "What drives me to NCFS and volunteering as much as I can is my absolute passion for it. Many people my age think going out and doing things at night and on the weekends is such a joy, but I find the greatest feeling in the world is when I help somebody in need. It is an unimaginable feeling that nothing else can bring to me."

"The people who inspire me to move forward and continue to help others are Marree Perrault, my parents, Elisa and Bernie Tamez, and many other members of DYC and NCFS. They have all had an amazing impact on my life and have encouraged me to do better. I have many people I would like to thank for impacting my vision to help others, such as my team at DYC, the NCFS, the Darrington Prevention Intervention Community Coalition, my boyfriend, Alfred Mugho, and my best friend, Brittney Smith."

Taryn Tamez is an example of the difference one can make regardless of age or expertise. Armed with a compassionate heart and a willingness to do whatever needs to be done, Taryn is impacting lives. [onwin](#)

To find out how you can get involved with North Counties Family Services, call (360) 436-0308 and show yourself Oso Strong.

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