**Shanie McLaren shines a light on preventing kids’ injuries**

**Trauma Services’ educator, also known as “The Organ Lady,” takes her unique safety program virtual.**

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**InOurCircle**

Thursday, November 18, 2021

Later today, Providence Regional Medical Center Everett will “[**Shine a Green Light**](https://onfirstup.com/ProvidenceHealth/InOurCircle/contents/28031367)” in support of National Injury Prevention Day. Injuries are the leading cause of death and disability to U.S. kids ages 1-18. Not only do our caregivers treat kids after they’re injured, they also work hard to **prevent** injuries in the first place.

Take, for example, Shanie McLaren, community outreach education specialist. Shanie’s worked for Providence for 20 years in a number of teaching roles: birth and family education, CPR and Stop the Bleed. Since 2019, she’s been “The Organ Lady,” taking [***Inside Out: The Original Organ Show***](https://www.providence.org/locations/wa/providence-regional-medical-center-everett/for-patients-and-visitors/classes-and-events#tabcontent-2-pane-4) to area schools and community events.

*Inside Out* serves up compelling health information in a unique way: by showing the changes that happen inside our bodies as a result of drug and alcohol use, poor eating habits and unsafe behaviors. The popular and innovative program was developed 30 years ago by Kathy Ketchum, RN, to help with injury prevention efforts. Kathy worked with Providence caregivers and families to obtain organs from deceased individuals and, more importantly, to tell their stories and help kids and teens make healthy choices.

A person holding a stuffed animal

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Due to COVID restrictions, Shanie is sharing *Inside Out* virtually now – three times this week alone. During the hour-long presentation, Shanie might show a cross-section of a healthy brain, as well as one from a person who used drugs like cocaine or meth. She’ll explain how the drugs affected the patient’s brain, but she’ll also explain why it’s important to protect our brains with helmets when we bike, skateboard or ride a scooter.

She shows a healthy liver, along with the liver of a 22-year-old person with alcohol use disorder. She might hold up a healthy heart next to the heart of someone who smoked cigarettes or marijuana. Or, she could show a healthy esophagus or stomach next to the same from a patient who drank alcohol and smoked.

Like every good communicator, Shanie tailors her presentation to her audience. “For grade schoolers, we focus on the importance of protecting our brains by wearing helmets and being cautious crossing the street,” Shanie said. “For middle schoolers, we talk about brain development and decisions can have lasting effects on our lives.” And, since 75% of high schoolers have vaped at least once, Shanie again talks about decision making – and shows them the CT scan of a young vaper who needs a double lung transplant.

“To hold somebody’s organ in your hands,” Shanie said, “it’s important to empathize, be respectful and tell their story. It all comes down to sparing kids from preventable injuries.”

Over the years, the Organ Ladies have reached more than 300,000 people with the *Inside Out* program – to rave reviews. A local teacher recently said: “Students were enthralled with Shanie’s presentation. It surfaced many critical questions and taught them important facts about drug/alcohol abuse that they won’t forget.”