

# Alexander, Seattle

## With coverage, doing better than survival



Story body copy. Hafoc Yates is a survivor. Domestic violence tore apart her life and nearly destroyed her son's future, but through her own hard work and with help from the state, she and her son have left the violence behind.

The family's troubled history left Alexander, now 11, struggling to understand and cope with something no child should have to face.

Temporary help came in the form of Medicaid, which the family received when Hafoc turned to welfare for support. Later, when Hafoc got work in the form of part-time jobs with no medical insurance, Alexander got onto the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The comprehensive coverage included both the physical care and mental health services Alexander needed to put his life back together.

"Without health insurance, he would have been a gang member," says Hafoc of Alexander. "He might have ended up homeless."

Instead, Alexander has flourished, and he recently graduated at the top of his class, earning recognition from Seattle animators for a school video project that, according to his proud mom "blew everybody away."

Alexander taught himself how to use technology to create hand-drawn animation, using a hand that he had broken just one week after he got SCHIP coverage. With SCHIP, Hafoc could get her son the medical care he needed without worrying about bills she couldn't pay.

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"If he didn't have health insurance when he broke his hand, he never could have done the animation. He just wouldn't have had the dexterity," Hafoc said.

Telling her story recently before a crowd gathered to publicize Washington's new Apple Health for Kids program, Hafoc broke down crying. So did much of the crowd listening.

"All you have to do is go to downtown Seattle and look at the people walking around. Those homeless people all came from families like mine and were once beautiful, healthy, gorgeous children," she said.

Just like Alexander is today.