


Community Action celebrates 16 years

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The Community Action Celebration of Spirit Gala was held April 4 at the Oregon Zoo. The event, now in its 16th year, was created as a way for Hillsboro-based nonprofit Community Action to distinguish those in the public for their service to the organization.

The gala honors those who have exhibited meritorious assistance to Community Action in its mission to assist families and make the community a better place for all.

This year, Community Action recognized the Women's Independence Scholarship Program, Inc., as "outstanding corporate/foundation partner."

Diana Stotz of the Washington County Commission on Children and Families was the outstanding community partner, and Richard Odell of Kaiser Permanente Northwest, was named the outstanding business leader.

The Women's Independent Scholarship Program has provided Community Action clients with more than \$250,000 in scholarship funding. The organization has helped hundreds of women who struggle to overcome the challenge of domestic violence.

Most importantly, the scholarships give recipients "a sense of hope and a future for those women who otherwise might not have a chance at a college education," said Catherine Crooker, director of advancement for Community Action.

Stotz began her career as a Head Start teacher. Her partnership with Community Action has helped thousands of children facing poverty by developing relationships with service providers.

Odell was recognized for his ability to find creative avenues for seeking financial sponsorships and expanding Community Action's base of support.

The foundation was initially created as a way to supplement President Lyndon Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act. A group of civic-minded individuals saw the need in 1964 to address the issues of poverty in Washington County, and the Community Action Agency was formed in 1965.

The agency's mission to this day is to "eliminate the conditions of poverty and create opportunities for people and communities to thrive."

Community Action helps Washington County residents with a variety of services, ranging from assistance with utilities to providing shelter for the homeless.

Last week's event, emceed by Kendall Clawson, director of executive appointments for Gov. John Kitzhaber's office, was attended by 250 people and raised more than \$100,000 for the foundation.