

SAFAH Helps Secure Housing **Personal Efforts Improve Family's Future**

A WOMAN OF FEW WORDS, SHARON impresses people in other ways. Deftly handling the demands of three boys under the age of four and managing a household on an income that is barely enough to pay the rent, Sharon impresses with her strength and her strong sense of right and wrong.

With nowhere but her car to sleep, Sharon came to the WCCAO shelter in August last year. With her were her boys, Coleton, almost three, Steven, not quite one, and Efrain, two weeks old. After a three-week stay in the shelter, she found the apartment she's living in now, where she pays rent of \$435 per month out of her \$565 grant from welfare.



Photos by Connie Sherrard

Things are looking up for Efrain, Steven and Coleton, above, who were homeless but now live in a two-bedroom apartment.



Sharon, left, with Steven, is facing a brighter future, including a career for which she is training.

At three, Coleton was not speaking yet. He communicated by grunting, pointing, and, often, hitting in order to get his point across and express his frustration. Sharon received referrals from the Health Department to get him tested, but when she tried to follow up, was told that they didn't know who she was or what she was talking about. Confused and frustrated, Sharon gave up.

At the same time, Sharon was trying to get subsidized housing through the Department of Housing Services. Since she had been homeless, she was told that she was on the priority list. Because she has three children, regulations require that she live in a three-bedroom unit. Unfortunately, no three-bedroom certificates were available. Sharon became more and more frustrated. She was trying to do the right thing, but rules, regulations and procedures just seemed to be standing in the way.

In November, Sharon was visiting a friend she had met in the shelter when Olivia Estrada, a WCCAO case manager, came by. Her friend recommended that she talk to Olivia and get involved with the SAFAH project. SAFAH, which stands for Supplemental Assistance to Facilities that Aid the
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Spring Newsletter Focuses on Children



This issue will focus on the needs of children and how WCCAO is working to meet them. Look inside for information on what's happening to better the future — through our children. ♦



Shirley Huffman, Chair
WCCAO Board of Directors

~Message
from the Board Chair and
Executive Director~



Jerralynn Ness
Executive Director

Focus on Children: Making a Long-Term Difference

Dear Friends:

This issue of WCCAO's newsletter will focus on how our work touches children. Over half of our organization's resources are dedicated to the healthy development of low income, pre-school children. It is through these program services that we have some of the best opportunities to make a positive, long term difference in low income families' lives.

WCCAO's Child Development Department was established in 1988 as a result of our strategic planning process. Since then we have expanded our

Since 1988, Head Start services have expanded from an enrollment of 153 four-year-olds to 346 three- and four-year-olds in 1994-95.

Head Start services from serving 153 four-year-old children to 346 three- and four- year-olds during the 1994-95 school year. We will operate these services in twelve centers around the County. As we have added new centers, we have expanded our services to better meet the needs of low income families. In two of our centers we have enrolled severely disabled children who are flourishing in the Head Start environment. Staff from Tualatin Valley Mental Health provides on site services that have been invaluable. In Gaston we offer child care to the community and student intern placements from the high school. These centers provide creative models for delivering more comprehensive services to the community.

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Mervyn's Sponsors Clothing Drive July 14 - 16

HUNDREDS OF DONATIONS of usable clothing are expected to be donated from July 14 - 16, as Mervyn's celebrates the Grand Opening of its Tanasbourne store with a clothing drive.

On those days, anyone who brings an article of usable clothing to that Mervyn's will receive 20% off an item in the store. Each piece of clothing allows a discount on one item.

WCCAO volunteers will be on hand to receive the items, which will be distributed to the family shelter and other Washington County "clothes closets."

The project is part of Mervyn's commitment to give back 5% of company profits to the communities in which they are located. Mark your calendars and come to Mervyn's!

WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATION

ACTION NEWS is the quarterly newsletter of the Washington County Community Action Organization (WCCAO), published by the WCCAO Administration, 451 S. First, Suite 700, Hillsboro, OR 97123. ACTION NEWS is produced by Connie Sherrard and Pam Brown Wilkinson, WCCAO staff members, and Nancy Scott Graphic Design (volunteer). (Please inform WCCAO of any address corrections.)

... People Helping People

The Washington County Community Action Organization (WCCAO) is a private, non-profit corporation providing a wide variety of services to the needy in Washington County, Oregon. Information on WCCAO programs is available from the following individuals:

WCCAO Administration (Jerralynn Ness, Executive Director)	648-6646
Client Services Dept. - Intake, Information & Referral	648-0829
Cheryl Hilbert, Director	648-6646
Heating Assistance (December - March)	640-8951
Neighborshare (South and East County)	639-0495
Child Development Dept. (Cathy Wise, Director)	648-6646
Housing & Energy Conservation Dept. (Leon Laptook, Director)	648-6646
Resource Development Dept. (Pam Brown Wilkinson, Director)	648-6646
"Play It Again" Thrift Store	644-8956

Mardi Gras 1994 Features Food, Fun, Elegance!

WHAT DID PEOPLE ENJOY MOST about the 1994 Mardi Gras Ball benefitting WCCAO? Excellent food, decorations, casino, entertainment, elegant masks for sale, costumes and wine tasting! That about covers it! Many comments have been made about the phenomenal job the volunteers did to put on a very classy event that was well organized and anticipated the participants' every need.

The success of this year's event - as with every other year - is to the credit of a wonderful team of volunteers, headed up by Co-Chairs Sandy Miller and Debby Baker. Everyone contributed hundreds of hours and tons of energy to make sure that everything was superb.

The corporations and businesses who sponsored the event also deserve a great deal of credit for the success. Through their generosity, much of the cost of the event was underwritten.

We're already looking forward to the 9th Annual Mardi Gras Ball, scheduled for February 11, 1995 at Montgomery Park. The event will focus even more on the traditions of Mardi Gras in New Orleans and will include many of the popular features from past years, plus more! Mark your calendar now!

Costumed and black-tie party-goers, above right and below, were among those who enjoyed the casino at the 1994 Mardi Gras Ball. Thanks to corporate sponsorship, much of the event was underwritten.



THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Honorary Chairs:

Eric Schmidt & Francine Raften-Schmidt

Steering Committee Co-Chairs:

Sandra Miller and Debby Baker

Steering Committee:

Sister Delores Adelman (Decorations)
 Janice Deardorff (Materials)
 Darlene Galster (Casino)
 Kandace GreyThorns (Art Director)
 Marge Hoopes (Sponsorship)
 Kim Jacobson (Food & Beverage)
 Nina Knowlton (Contests, Souvenirs & Prizes)
 Tam Martin (Entertainment)

Linda Thompson (Volunteers)
 Gayle Welsh (Ticket Sales)
 Fran Woodcock (Promotions)

Committee Members:

Irma August	Dede Baker
Maggie Boehmer	Kelly Cole
Heather Dudley	Lois Ebel
Darlene Galster	Patty Hust
Delene Johnson	Diane Johnson
Sr. Marilyn LeDoux	Tam Martin
Sr. Angeline Sohler	Jayne Scott
James Thompson	Gayle Welsh
Cheryl Van Beveren	
Teresa Underwood	

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Housing, Parenting, Education and More: WCCAO Touches Children's Lives in Many Ways

CHILDREN ARE, ULTIMATELY, THE ONES most profoundly affected by poverty, a fact that we at WCCAO don't forget. Although not all our services deal directly with children, they still address the immediate concerns of families with children.

Following are a few examples of the ways WCCAO touches children's lives:

HEAD START

This year, Head Start has served **363 three- and four-year-olds**. On any given day, you might find children playing house, pretending, solving puzzles, creating artistic masterpieces, hearing stories, "writing" letters, building with blocks, singing, painting, eating a nutritious lunch, brushing their teeth, running and climbing outdoors, learning a few words in a new language, and making friends. In addition to this comprehensive, **developmentally appropriate pre-school curriculum**, the children participate in **health, nutrition and speech and language screenings**, and their families receive social services and are encouraged to be involved in the program in many other ways.

For children and families with special needs, additional services are available. **The Early Success Program**, operated in conjunction with Tualatin Valley Mental Health Center, incorporates family and individual therapy for emotionally disabled children in the classroom. **Developmentally and physically disabled children are mainstreamed into the classroom** in conjunction with the Early Intervention Program.

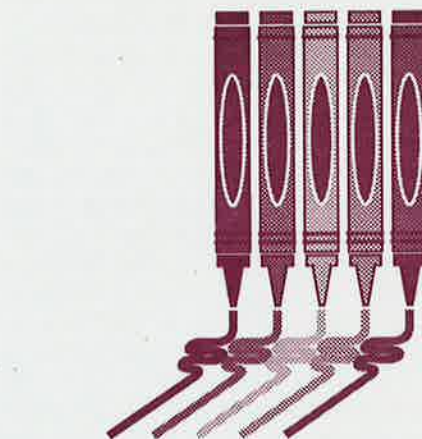
PARENTING CLASSES

Taught in various sites around the county, these classes offer parents a chance to learn new and different ways to deal with their children in order to prevent potential child abuse. Since last fall, **173 parents have attended 42 classes**.

HOMELESS PROGRAMS

WCCAO housed a total of **115 homeless children under 18** and their parents between July 1993 and March 1994 in the **Family Shelter Home**. While in the shelter, families are provided food, a place to stay and case management support. The younger children participate in the shelter children's program, which offers them a safe, secure place to be while their parents are out looking for housing and employment.

In addition, **WCCAO's rent assistance program** helped **127 children** and their families who were in crisis to pay their rent for one month, thus preventing homelessness.



HOUSING ADVOCACY

Over half of the housing discrimination calls WCCAO receives, reports Diane Hess, Housing Advocacy Manager, are **from families who feel they have been discriminated against because they have children**. Although it is against the law to deny housing to a family because they have children, some landlords continue to do so. WCCAO works to resolve these complaints, ensuring that the children in these families will have a roof over their heads.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

A study in Boston indicates that children in families who face high utility bills are more likely to be clinically underweight during the coldest months of the year. One reason for this, according to the National Consumer Law Center, is that families are forced to choose between "heating and eating." Last year, WCCAO ensured that **1,812 households** didn't face that dilemma by providing them with energy assistance. In those households, there were a total of **1,246 children under 6**.

(Continued on Next Page)

Photo by Teresa Kohl

Letter, Continued: Affordable Child Care, Parent Education are Some WCCAO Successes

(Continued from Page 2)

Through new funding from United Way we have been able to add parent education services. These classes focus on the needs of low income parents and provide them with information and tools to support their children's healthy development and prevent the possibility of neglect or abuse.

WCCAO has increased its involvement in the area of affordable, quality child care. Low income working parents have very few child care options available to them. Yet, their ability to work is dependent upon their children receiving adequate and affordable care. As a result of this concern, we have added child care services to two of our Head Start centers, advocacy to increase child care resources, and child care outreach and education services for low income families.



Photo by Teresa Kohl

SELF-HELP WEATHERIZATION

Since July 1, 1993, **Thirty-two single-parent families** learned how to **lower home heating costs** by installing storm windows, weather-stripping, and other energy-saving devices in their homes. The children in these families can now sleep warmer at night and their parents won't be as burdened with the choice between paying the bills and buying food.

These are a few of the ways WCCAO has an impact on the lives of children. Every time we work with a family, whether it is a one-time information and referral call or long-term case management, we are doing our best to ensure that children's futures will be brighter. ♦

We just received word from the Washington County Community Development Block Grant Program that we will receive \$324,000 to assist with the costs of adding a child development center to our new multi-service center facility. As a result, we will build a new central kitchen that will be able to serve up to 200 low income children a day in Hillsboro and prepare and deliver up to 2000 meals per day to low income children at our eleven other centers in Washington County.

We are overwhelmed by the tremendous support we have received as we move ahead to stabilize our services to families and children. Our new facility alone will save us \$100,000 annually in overhead costs, funds which will go back into services. As we go to press, we have reached nearly 70% of our \$2.5 million capital campaign goal. To all of you who have been our friends and supporters, we extend our deep gratitude.

With Warm Regards,

Shirley Huffman, Chair
WCCAO Board of Directors

Jerralynn Ness
Executive Director

What's Happening

Fair Housing Workshop Slated for Landlords, Managers

WCCAO Board of Directors meets the third Wednesday of each month, 6:00 - 8:00 PM, Hillsboro Conference Room, 451 S. First, Suite 600; call Pilar, 648-6646, to confirm date, time and place.

Head Start Policy Council meets the second Tuesday of each month (Sept. - June); contact Susan, 648-6646, for time and place.

Washington County Human Services Coalition meets the second Friday of each month from 9:00 - 11:00 AM, Washington County Administration Bldg., 155 N. 1st, room 140.

Housing Development Corporation Board of Directors meets the third Thursday of alternating months at 7:00 PM, Hillsboro Conference Room, 451 S. First, Suite 600. For information, call Diane at 648-6646.

"Fair Housing: Understanding and Following the Law" Workshop for landlords, property managers, realtors, and anyone else interested in learning the rights and responsibilities outlined in state and federal Fair Housing laws. Tuesday, June 21st, 7:00 PM, PGE Auditorium, 14655 SW Old Scholls's Ferry Road, Beaverton. ♦

Sharon, Continued: Career Training Underway

Case Managers work with families who have been homeless in the past to help them stay in permanent housing. Since each family's situation is different, the case managers help them to identify what their strengths are, and what resources are available in the community to help them maintain their housing and never return to homelessness.

Olivia remembers vividly their first appointment. "She was running from baby to baby, everything felt out of control. She had no relief, it was a big frustration, day in and day out." Steven was beginning to model Coleton's behavior, hitting and being aggressive. Sharon was exhausted by having to get up in the middle of the night to tend to the youngest and chase around after the others all day. She really wanted to work, but it was clear that wasn't possible yet, with everything else she was dealing with.

Olivia worked with Sharon to get her back on the housing list and found out that she could sign a waiver that will allow her to move into a two-bedroom unit. She is scheduled for an orientation at Housing Services, after which she will receive a Section 8 subsidized housing certificate. She hopes to stay in the apartment she's in now, but will find another one if that doesn't work out.

when he wants your attention, and is beginning to speak in recognizable words and phrases. Sharon appreciates the time when he's at school, too. Having just two children at home feels almost like a vacation. Olivia also notices a change in Sharon. "Early Intervention broke the cycle," she says. She seems more in control and hopeful than before. Coleton will attend Head Start in the fall.

She was trying to do the right thing, but rules, regulations and procedures just seemed to be standing in the way.

Together, they managed to figure out what had gone wrong with the referrals for Coleton's testing. He now attends an Early Intervention (EI) class three times a week and a worker comes to the house once a week to work with Sharon and Coleton together. The difference in his behavior, say both Sharon and Olivia, is remarkable. He's less likely to hit

Sharon is enrolled in the JOBS program through Adult and Family Services, and will be attending a soldering class, with plans to get a job in electronics assembly. Her long-term goal, though, is to have her own ceramics shop. Her hopes for her children are simple: she wants them to "go to school, get an education, and get good jobs, and never go through what I have."

The Great Exchange to Benefit Emergency Shelter

Gambol Sportswear is sponsoring an event called THE GREAT EXCHANGE and WCCAO's Shelter will be one of the beneficiaries.

What is THE GREAT EXCHANGE?

It's an event that will be held at five sites in the tri-county area over the five Saturdays of August and the first Saturday of September.

How does it work? In exchange for a good quality used garment or \$10.00, you will receive a GREAT EXCHANGE T-Shirt, printed with a design in six bold colors. All of the used clothing will be professionally cleaned and, along with all of the money received, distributed to six human service agencies in the area, including WCCAO's Shelter.

Start checking your closet for a good used garment that someone less fortunate will appreciate receiving and watch for more details about THE GREAT EXCHANGE in July and August. If you show up for the event, you can be pretty sure you'll get a chance to meet someone famous, too!! ♦



When asked how she'd change the system for people like herself, her first solution is to make sure that the people who need the help can get it. "The people who know how to use the system get the assistance, not the people who really need it."

The other problem, she says, is that it doesn't pay to get off welfare. Minimum wage is so low and housing is so expensive, she says, it's more affordable to stay home with the kids than go to work. "I don't like being on welfare. I'd rather be working than sitting at home." ♦

You Can Help

Volunteers needed:

Reception work, information and referral at WCCAO's Neighborshare office in Tigard; call Carla, 639-0495

Data entry, information and referral at WCCAO's Hillsboro office, call Judy, 648-6646.

Sales Clerk at WCCAO's thrift store; call Thelma, 644-8956

Human Resources Specialist; call Connie, 648-6646

Child Care Volunteer at the Shelter; call Michael, 640-3263

Night/Day Supervisors at the Shelter; call Michael, 640-3263

Child Care Assistant for Parenting Classes; call Renee or Susan, 648-6646

Phone screener to contact weatherization clients; call Joan, 642-3236

Donations Needed:

Equipment and Supplies: Computers, printers, color TV, VCR, cellular phones, electric staplers, adding machines; call Pilar, 648-6646.

For Neighborshare Office in Tigard: General office furniture and supplies; Call Carla, 639-0495.

For Head Start Centers: 35mm camera, film and film developing, portable tape/CD players, TV with VCR built in, camcorder, old uniforms for dress-up corners, electric meat slicer, computers, printers; call Cathy, 648-6646.

Furniture: Adopt a transitional house or a room in the house and furnish it; call Michael, 640-3263.

Dolls and doll clothes for use in play therapy: Call Lupe at Metropolitan Family Services, 648-0753. ♦



CDBG Funds Awarded for Three Projects; Includes Multi-Service Nutrition Center

WCCAO will soon receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support our work with low income families. In March and April the Washington County Policy Advisory Board approved the following requests:

\$44,000 for the Farmworker Advocate Project. A Farmworker Service Specialist will provide outreach and needed social services to farmworkers and their families by:

- Coordinating services to the farmworker community
- Building coalitions of service providers
- Making the service system easier to understand by the farmworkers themselves
- Contracting with local organizations to provide health outreach and purchase culturally appropriate foods
- Providing emergency services funds.

This project will begin in 1995.

\$324,000 for construction costs of the Child Development and Nutrition Centers in WCCAO's new Multi-Service Center. This year's allocation plus two previous grants brings CDBG support for the project to thirty percent of the total cost. These grants demonstrate to other potential donors that the project has a secure funding base, that investing in the project will bring results, and that it has community support.

\$178,000 to Lutheran Family Services for the Homespring Project. WCCAO is one of the partners in this project, led by Lutheran Family Services and joined by the Washington County Domestic Violence Resource Center and Tualatin Valley Mental Health Center. One hundred sixty women and children coming out of emergency shelter will live and receive supportive services in the former Good Shepherd Home in Cornelius. Last year, only 13 female-headed households coming out of Washington County shelters were able to move into transitional housing. Some funding for this project will come from HUD and the Emergency Shelter Grant Program, other funding is still being sought.

Community Development Block Grant funds are Federal dollars administered by the County to support social services and community improvements. The County allocates funds every two years through a competitive grant-making process. The Policy Advisory Board, which makes the final decisions, is made up of local community members. ♦

Gubernatorial John Kitzhaber toured the North Beaverton Head Start Center recently, where he had a chance to see the therapeutic classroom and draw a picture with a student.

Photo by Cathy Wise



Argus Photo by Michal Thompson

Omar Prado was welcomed into the world at the WCCAO Family Shelter. Maria de Concepcion Gusman gave birth to the infant at 6 a.m. Saturday, February 5. He joins his father and brother, Mario Prado Sr. and Jr. Other temporary residents included Scotty and Jennifer Ebnitz and their mother, Angie Ebnitz, holding new sister Amber.

Housing Discrimination Exhibit Available

DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING, for many Oregonians, is something that happens somewhere else. But is it? A new exhibit of photographs, sponsored by WCCAO, shows that such discrimination has a very real history in our state. The show outlines the experiences of Oregonians who have been denied housing based on race or other factors.

The exhibit's premiere showing was at the Oregon Historical Society through May 19th. It is now available for showing in places like schools, libraries, local government buildings, community centers, and for special events. If you are interested in more information on the exhibit and how you can bring it to your event or organization, contact Diane Hess at 648-6646. ♦

Washington County Community Action Organization

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