

# WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY **ACTION** NEWS ORGANIZATION

Summer 1990

## Local food drive replenishes low stocks

"Our program has recently experienced a 67% decrease in the amount of USDA food available to people in need," states Val Donley, Director of WCCAO's Hunger and Nutrition Department, in her testimony to the State Hunger Task Force on April 6, 1990. "When we were able to hold mass distributions of food to the public on an on-going basis, requests for emergency food boxes were much lower. When we ran out of staple foods such as powdered milk, rice and cheese, some emergency programs spent precious dollars trying to replace those items in the food box and had to begin serving fewer numbers of people."

In response to the increasing numbers of families going hungry, United Way and Oregon Food Bank funded a six month position working in Val's program to increase donations of food from the community. Ten food drives were planned. The first of those was Project Second Wind. Between February 26 and March 9, 1990, 24 churches, 5 businesses and 25 schools participated to gather almost 10,000 pounds of food. In addition, Stagg Foods made a special donation of 25,000 pounds of their high quality canned chili.

Glenn Howell, National Account Sales and Regional Sales Manager of Stagg Foods, said that his company's president feels responsible about supporting the needy in the community. He realizes that "all of us are needy at some time or another. When you have the resources, they should be spread to benefit everyone." This donation of 25,000 pounds is the second donation of

that volume made by Stagg Foods since the first of this year. "Not only are we donating food," says Howell, "but we are donating good food. Our chili is

high protein, 93% fat free and contains no preservatives or MSG."

On March 27, an awards ceremony was held to honor those groups that were able to gather the most food:

- High School Division:**  
*First Place Trophy* - St. Mary's of the Valley  
**Junior High Division:**  
*First Place Trophy* - Tualatin Valley Junior Academy  
*Second Place Award* - Mountain View Intermediate  
**Grade School Division:**  
*First Place Trophy* - Aloha Park Elementary  
*Second Place Award* - Chehalem Elementary  
**Churches:**  
*First Place Trophy* - Gales Creek Church of God  
*(continued page 2)*



Photo courtesy of The Oregonian

## Hunger in the midst of affluence: Still haunting America in the 90's

"Hunger haunts America. Millions of people across our land are regularly without enough food to sustain them. In recent years, more Americans have been standing in soup lines than at any time since the Great Depression. No region of our country has escaped this

tragedy. It cuts across ideological and political lines, afflicting young and old, people of all races, and members of rural, urban, and suburban communities. Hunger reduces children's ability to learn, decreases productive energy,  
*(continued page 7)*

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# It's Happening!

★ **Brown Bag Distributions:**

- Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin - Aug. 10, Sept. 14
- Hillsboro - Aug. 17, Sept. 21 - Forest Grove/Cornelius - Aug. 31, Sept. 28 -

★ **Vacation Bible School Food Drives during August**

★ **Beaverton Good Neighbor Days**, Sept. 7, 8, 9; stop by the food booth sponsored by Tualatin Valley Food Center.

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

★ **WCCAO Board of Directors** meets the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 PM, Hillsboro Conference Room, 451 S. First Suite 600; call Pilar (648-6646) to confirm.

★ **WCCAO's 25th Anniversary Banquet**, October 17, 1990. Time and place TBA.

★ **5th Annual Mardi Gras Ball**, February 9, 1991. Time and place TBA.



## Board Chair's Message Mayor Clifford Clark

### WCCAO: Saving our world

Twenty-five years ago, there were people in this country who actually thought they could save the world. Think of it. In the 60's, there was a feeling that even the most serious problems facing the nation could be fixed, once and for all, and that they would stay fixed. Civil rights abuses, hunger, unemployment, even poverty itself. One by one they would fall, finally toppled by all that was good and right and true. The 60's were like that.

It was in this atmosphere that the War on Poverty was born. Agencies were created, and among them were the Community Action Programs, designed to tap into the can-do attitude of the time. Short on money but long on enthusiasm, they were invariably staffed by people who knew the pay would never be great, and supported by volunteers who were willing to donate their time to help their own communities.

The war was launched on many fronts, and the workers went forth into the hollows of Appalachia, and into the ghettos of our major cities, and into a thousand other places across the coun-

try, and set about trying to solve problems that were already generations deep.

In virtually every program, the most sobering realization to strike these workers was that the enormity of the problems of poverty had been underestimated, by several orders of magnitude. There were always more clients than could be served, and too few staff to do the job. Always.

But even as this work began, other issues fragmented the effort. Demonstrations, assassinations, an intractable and divisive foreign war, political scandal and disgrace. Soon, the social issues identified only a few years earlier became a lower priority. Idealism waned, and was replaced by apathy and an indifference toward the problems faced by others.

Now it is 1990. The world has changed in the 25 years since the beginning of the war on poverty. In many ways, America itself is a different place. But in one very important way, it hasn't changed: poverty is still with us.

Poverty amid affluence remains the continuing paradox of this nation. In

*(continued page 8)*



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 coordinated by WCCAO staff member Pam Brousseau and is edited and designed by volunteer Stephen W. Smith. (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 (Tigard, Tualatin, Sherwood) .....	639-0495
Children and Youth Department (Cathy Wise, Director) .....	648-6646
Housing & Energy Conservation Dept. (Leon Laptook, Director) .....	642-3236
Hunger & Nutrition Dept. (Val Donley, Director) .....	642-3236
Resource Development Dept. (Pam Brousseau, Director) .....	648-6646
"Play It Again" Thrift Store .....	644-8956



## Executive Director's Message Jerralynn Ness

### Defining self-sufficiency goals

Promoting self-sufficiency for low-income individuals and families is fundamental to our mission, our goals and our program services. So, for the past few months we have been taking a hard look at what this means to us and whether we are having the impact we intend to have.

Connie Sherrard, a P.S.U. student working on her masters in Social Work degree, was placed with us as a student intern this year to guide us through this project. We were very fortunate to have her!

As a result of our initial work, we developed the following definition of self-sufficiency:

*Self-Sufficiency: Reaching an individual's potential to be socially integrated and economically independent.*

**To Be Self-Sufficient Means:**

- Having the problem solving skills to successfully address barriers.
- Being able to manage both health and mental health needs.
- Having formal and informal networks that nurture and support.

- Having an income or resources to meet basic needs.
- Living in stable and livable housing.
- Being free of substance abuse.
- Being free of victim and victimizing situations such as abuse and criminal behaviour.
- Possessing a level of education or skill necessary to achieve individual goals.
- Ability to support the healthy growth and development of their children.

From here we will be evaluating program efforts to promote self-sufficiency and identify training needs. We have implemented a "pilot project" to provide case management services to homeless and Head Start families. Through identifying individual barriers to self-sufficiency, setting family goals, providing comprehensive services and monitoring progress in a supportive manner, we believe we can increase a family's ability to become self-sufficient...our ultimate goal!

### Food drive replenishes stocks (continued from page 1)

**Businesses:**

*First Place Trophy -  
Deluxe Check Printers*

Tualatin Valley Junior Academy, winner of the first place trophy in the junior high division, has won that award for the last six years. Academy spokesperson, Dorothy Berger says, "the success of our school in the food drive stems from the fact that we have community outreach as part of our curriculum and actually spend some class time on the projects we select. We are not

concerned whether or not we get the trophy. It's part of our Christian teachings."

Several businesses contributed to Project Second Wind, although they did not actually gather food. Those businesses are Portland General Electric, Tektronix and Benjamin Franklin Savings & Loan. Thank you to all the donors, food gatherers and supporters for a very successful food drive that went a long way to help replenish the food closets in Washington County.

## You Can Help!

**Volunteers Needed:**

- for Tualatin Valley Food Center to drive delivery trucks and assist drivers with loading and unloading of trucks; 3 hr. shifts (9:00-noon or 1:00-4:00) daily; call Bev or Marty, 642-3236
- for reception work, clerical tasks and data entry; call Pilar, 648-6646
- for information & referral work with clients and caretaker or receptionist at the family shelter; call Judy, 648-6646
- for computer data base consultation; contact Jerralynn, 648-6646
- for graphics design, lay-out, typesetting and printing; call Pam, 648-6646
- as drivers, dispatchers and clerical assistants for the Transportation Program; call Steve, 648-6646.
- to work as a clerk at WCCAO's thrift store; call Thelma, 644-8956
- for educational outreach activities with county residents; Spanish or S.E. Asian language ability desirable; contact Donna, 642-3236.

**Donations Needed:**

- Equipment/Supplies: computers, printers, color TV, fax machine, phone message machine, table for the conference room; call Pilar, 648-6646
- Furniture: adopt a transitional house or a room in the house and furnish it; call Shari or Norma, 648-0829
- Food: The Food Bank is in need of high protein and staple food items, such as tuna, rice, pasta, canned fruits and vegetables; call 642-3236 for more information.

**Volunteers & Donors:  
WCCAO's Lifeblood -  
Thank You!**

# Volunteers honored at annual banquet

The theme of this year's Annual Banquet and Volunteer Recognition, "The Difference You Make, Makes All the Difference", was never more true. Three hundred and twenty volunteers donated over 10,000 hours of volunteer time helping WCCAO accomplish its mission in 1989-90. All three hundred and twenty were honored at the event with their names on a banner and WCCAO Volunteer Pins presented to them to wear. Twenty-nine outstanding volunteers also received plaques.

The event, featuring a social hour and dinner in addition to the awards ceremony, was held at the Hillsboro Elks Lodge on June 27 1990. The Master of Ceremonies, Beaverton Mayor Larry Cole, also was one of the speakers, has been a long-time volunteer for WCCAO and was the 1989-90 Board Chair. He introduced three other volunteers - Lynda Tatum from Portland General Electric, Margaret Turner and Gene Hermelin - who inspired the audience with their feelings about and experiences with volunteering at WCCAO.



*Outgoing board member Juan Urrutia receives thanks from Mayor Larry Cole, WCCAO's outgoing Board Chair.*

A surprise performance came from a volunteer for the food center - **Brittney Thompson** - who entertained the crowd with her beautiful singing voice. Brittney had been preparing for the Miss Ore-

gon competition and found out on Saturday, July 14, that she was the winner. Now on to Atlantic City and the Miss America Pageant. Congratulations, Brittney! We are proud to have you as a volunteer!

In addition to the program volunteers recognized at this event, four outgoing WCCAO Board Members received plaques and recognition. Those Board Members were **John Meek, Nancy Wilcox, Juan Urrutia and Carole Moore**. New Board Members and the new Executive Committee of the Board were introduced and welcomed. WCCAO's Board Chair for 1990-91, Forest Grove Mayor **Clifford Clark**, was introduced by Mayor Larry Cole to make closing remarks.

To all of our volunteers, serving WCCAO through programs and on the Board, we thank you once again for all that you've done to "make a difference" in Washington County over the past year. And a special thank you to all the donors who made this event possible!

## Outstanding Volunteers 1989-90

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| June Blank                 | Ted Smith               |
| Melanie Battilega          | Jerrri & George Coville |
| Moses Davis                | Marion Alleman          |
| Marilee Thompson           | Lynda Tatum             |
| Jennifer Chance            | Pat Greisel             |
| Stephen Smith              | Thelma Cate             |
| Margaret Turner            | Katrina Pirkle          |
| Alyce Emerson              | John Landon             |
| Shelly Orn                 | Martha Watt             |
| Barbara Smith              | Gwen Blair              |
| Kathy King                 | Mary Lariviere          |
| Eugene Hermelin            | June Morgan             |
| Nancy Macrina              | Shari Marquez           |
| Ed Meidenbauer             | Andrea Nigro            |
| Rosemary Brumley (for Rod) |                         |

## Sponsors

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Fujitsu America    | Fought & Company |
| Waker & Associates |                  |

## Donors

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Baseline Thriftway   | Beaverton Bakery     |
| Farmington Thriftway | Hill Florist         |
| Hillsboro Elks       | Jerralynn Ness       |
| Oregon Roses         | Perfection Bakery    |
| Rainbow Printery     | Safeway Tanasbourne  |
| T.V. Highway Florist | Wiley Can Food, Inc. |

## 1990-91 Board of Directors and Officers

- Chairman** - Mayor Clifford Clark
- Alternate** - Theresa Clark
- Vice Chair** - Sherry Robinson
- Alternate** - James Van Dyke
- Secretary** - Mayor Shirley Huffman
- Alternate** - Don Suhrbier
- Treasurer** - Jose Jaime
- At Large** - Dr. Shirley Harper
- Alternate** - Lynda Tatum
- At Large** - Gale Patterson, Attorney
- Alternate** - Marco Hernandez
- Bob Casey, Consultant
- Kathy Heisler
- Alternate** - Al Foltz
- Maria Loreda
- Russell Wilkinson, CPA
- Mayor Larry Cole
- Commissioner Eve Killpack
- Alternate** - Mary Sorenson
- Representative Tom Brian
- Alternate** - Derene Meurisse
- Bob Shoemaker, Attorney
- Sister Ina Marie Nosack
- Michael Buckley
- John Vasquez
- Dr. Robert Blake

## Larry Cole honored as outgoing Board Chair

Beaverton Mayor Larry D. Cole has served WCCAO ably in the past few months as interim Board Chair. Larry is no stranger to that position, having been chair of the WCCAO board in the years 1981-83.



Larry Cole has served on the WCCAO board for the past fourteen years. "During these years," says Larry, "I have seen WCCAO gain in stature through the efforts of competent staff and through increased dedication by an active and concerned Board of Directors."

Mayor Cole has played an important role in the growth of WCCAO. Thank you, Larry, for serving in so many important ways for so many years.

## Head Start services expand

Head Start service to an additional 36 children and their families will be possible during the 1990-91 school year due to awards of expansion grants to the Washington County Head Start Program (part of WCCAO's Children and Youth Department). Eighteen of

parents for the past two years. The first year of the project was not funded and was considered a pilot project. Successes from that year prompted Meyer Charitable Trust to grant \$8,000 to continue the project. Funds are being sought now for the third year. \$10,000 is needed



the children will begin the program in September and will be drawn from the Hillsboro area. The other 18 will be enrolled starting in January 1991 and will be incorporated into a Beaverton classroom site. Total enrollment for 1990-91 will be 180.

Additional good news for this department came from the Great Start Program, part of the Governor's Childrens Agenda. WCCAO is being recommended for \$92,614 to conduct a child care program. Under the program, care for 35 low income children under the age of 5 will be subsidized in centers around the county. WCCAO will enroll the children and will provide monitoring of their progress through an education specialist that will be on staff.

Children and Youth Director, Cathy Wise, is excited about the chance to expand services, since past funding levels have only accommodated about 13% of the eligible children in Washington County.

Concern continues over funding for the Parenting Center that has provided classes and follow up for low income

to continue and expand the project during 1990-91. Any information regarding possible funding sources should be relayed to Cathy Wise or Pam Brousseau, 648-6646.

## "Play It Again" thrift store reopens with new volunteer manager, Thelma Cate

In case you haven't driven down Hall Blvd. in Beaverton lately, you may not know that WCCAO recently reopened its thrift store, "Play It Again". We were very fortunate to find a co-sponsor for the store - the Area Agency on Aging. One of their Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) members, Thelma Cate, volunteered to manage the store. Other volunteers, who worked at the store previously, are helping to run it again. Since the shop opened on June 4, twelve active volunteers have donated a total of 338 hours. Thelma has given over 35 hours per week since late March, when she started getting the store ready to re-open.

Thelma successfully operated a similar thrift store for a non-profit agency in the Bellevue, Washington area. She

## PLAY IT AGAIN

"Sizzling Summer Sale"

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10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Don't miss this chance for even  
greater bargains than usual!

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## Gene Hermelin honored for volunteer driving

"The Mushaw Center is honored to announce your selection as a 1990 Community Service Award winner for Washington County." So began the letter of congratulations from Lance M. Mushaw, Director of the Mushaw Center, inviting Eugene ("Gene") Hermelin to attend an award ceremony and dinner at the Rock Creek Country Club on March 29, 1990, an evening that Gene and his family will long remember.

If you've never met Gene, keep your eye out for WCCAO's Transportation Program van with a Tri-Met symbol on it that Gene drives an average of 10 hours a day, 5 days a week. Why on earth would a volunteer want to work 50 hours a week for no pay, no benefits? Aha! But there are benefits, says Gene. "There are so many people out there that need the help."

How did Gene get started with the Transportation Program? According to Gene, "I was minding my own business playing pool down at the Senior Center in Forest Grove when Linda Earl came up to me and told me that she had volunteered me to help drive seniors and handicapped people around the county. It was only supposed to be for 4 hours, 1 day a week. Then I saw the



*Eugene and Helen Hermelin*

need out there and before I knew it, I was hooked!"

Eugene Hermelin has been driving since he was 13 years old, when he took his sister from Reedsville, Oregon to Payette, Idaho. His mother couldn't drive and they had to get there, so Gene did the driving. They had 13 flat tires on the way, one for each of Gene's young years. Since that time Gene has

had two major careers - logging (20 years) and working as a merchant seaman (23 years). After those careers ended, he drove a truck on long hauls for two years with his son. Now he drives for WCCAO's Transportation Program and a lot of people in Washington County are glad. Besides the regular runs he makes for people to get to doctor appointments, etc., Gene hosts group rides on Saturdays for members of the senior centers to go on recreational and social outings.

"I get a lot out of helping people," states Gene. "There are these 3 sisters, all of them in wheelchairs. I pick up 2 of them to meet the third one every Monday at the senior center in Beaverton. The one that lives in Bonny Slope always has a treat for me - cookies or cake. These sisters wouldn't see each other at all if it weren't for the Transportation Program.

"We need more volunteers. We could use at least a dozen more right now. We can't nearly meet the demand for rides. My experiences have benefitted me a lot. I could teach compassion and how to handle handicapped people to anyone who wants to know."

## Housing and Energy volunteers serve as advocates for affordable housing in Washington County

One of the key goals of WCCAO's Housing and Energy Conservation Department is to increase the access to and availability of quality affordable housing for low income residents of Washington County. WCCAO is fortunate to be able to count on several volunteers who are helping reduce barriers and provide the advocacy needed to meet this goal.

### June Blank

In the past several years, June Blank has volunteered countless hours to WCCAO programs. This year she has joined the Housing and Energy Department's team to help update our housing data base. When questioned why she has chosen such a tedious task, she simply answers, "I know that anything

I do at WCCAO, however insignificant it may appear to others, will eventually pay off for all low income people."

### Vicki Vosper-Fenton

Vicki Vosper-Fenton was referred to WCCAO by a friend who told her that, of all the options to work with Hispanics, WCCAO would provide her with the best opportunities. She followed her friend's advice and has been involved in developing an outreach project to promote Fair Housing for Hispanics. The project is part of a requirement for "Hispanics in the U.S." class at Pacific University.

### Al Peniche

Al Peniche, a Board member of the Housing Development Corporation of

Washington County, recently organized a training for Elm Park Farmworker Housing Project tenants to promote homeownership. What was unique about the presentation was that the entire program was done in Spanish. It included a talk on the advantages of purchasing a home, an explanation of loan requirements and information about insurance issues. Mr. Peniche is a Sales

Associate with Century 21, Wright-Christie & Associates, Inc. He was joined in this volunteer effort by Bertha Ferran, Senior Loan Officer with Commonwealth Mortgage, and Rolando Parajon, an agent with State Farm Insurance.

Heartfelt thanks go to these three volunteers who are helping WCCAO make a difference in this community by promoting housing opportunities.

## Hunger still haunts America (continued from page 1)

and threatens the competitiveness of American's workforce now and in the decades to come. Hunger in this land of plenty is morally unacceptable." (From "Foodlines: A Chronicle of Hunger and Poverty in America, February 1990, Volume VIII, Number 1)

The "haunting of America" is finally being felt as far away as Washington D.C., where our lawmakers, the ones who have the greatest impact on the problem, have decided to *study* the problem. A House Select Committee on Hunger was formed to go out into the local communities (5 of them) and take testimony to help explain why hunger is increasing, while unemployment is down and the economy appears to be

improving. Washington County was selected as one of those communities, probably because it is the fastest grow-

### "Hunger in this land of plenty is morally unacceptable."

ing and most affluent county in Oregon. In spite of that affluence, over 12% (32,000 people) of the population in Washington County are low income and are at risk. Representative Les AuCoin's office worked closely with Oregon Food Bank and WCCAO's Hunger

and Nutrition Department to organize the day of testimony, held May 30, 1990, which included both service providers and low income residents.

The idea was excellent. Who else should know better *why* they are hungry than the people who are experiencing it? A number of people stepped forward to tell their stories. They realized that they were being filmed by TV stations and quoted and photographed for newspapers. Their privacy was invaded. They were asked questions by the House Committee which were difficult to answer. Many of these people had never done any public speaking. But they knew that it is time to speak out—past time, and so they did. (See story below)

## Hunger in America: The silent victims speak out

The following are excerpts from testimony given by three Washington County residents before the House Select Committee on Hunger on May 30. They are real people, working hard to become self-sufficient as quickly as possible—and they are often your neighbors.

### Debra:

Debra is married and has four children. Though her husband is employed as a journeyman carpenter, their family cannot make ends meet without help from the Food Bank.

- "In 1972 my parents rented a house on ten acres . . . for \$150 a month. Today . . . the land it sat on is selling for over a million dollars. That gives you an example of what is happening to housing costs and how it's affecting families like mine who call this area home."

- "As you can tell, neither of us want to be on public assistance and will do anything we can to stay off it. We . . . are fortunate to live in a four bedroom home owned by the Washington County Housing Authority which rents for \$377 a month. A nearly identical house next door rents on the open market for \$850 a month."

- "I even buy gallons of 1% milk and dilute it into two gallons of 1/2% milk . . . and I can still only let my kids have milk for breakfast."

- "As soon as my husband gets a raise,

our food stamps are reduced and our rent is increased so we stay in the same place. It seems no matter what we do, we can't pull ourselves out of a hole."

- "We try not to use the food bank every month because we feel there are other families more deserving than our-



selves, but it has really been helpful when we've needed it."

- "We have the perseverance to overcome these current setbacks, and hope to pull ourselves out through hard work and maintaining our tight budgets."

### Patricia:

Patricia is married and has three children. Her husband has steady employment as a janitor, but they can only afford to live in a two bedroom apartment.

- "We cannot afford the payments for

medical coverage offered by his [husband's] company. We have had to pay for medical emergencies and care for our baby with cash. Cash is not always available."

- "We receive an emergency food box every other month, we participate in the food bank's Brown Bag program and have received Christmas baskets."

- "My husband is very proud and does not want to accept any public assistance. We are certain things are going to get easier for us, and are thankful for what we do have."

### Rene:

Rene has four boys. Though she is a trained medical assistant, she cannot earn enough money working to care for her family.

- "The first thing I want to say is that I'm not a lazy person. I want to work. I want to be able to provide for my children. I don't like to tell my children that they can't eat."

- "I have to depend on a food box program every other month, sometimes more often. I volunteer at the food bank every week in order to give back as much as I receive."

- "I sadly came to realize that in order for me to get off welfare and continue to support my children I would have to find a job where I could earn at least \$10 per hour with full medical benefits."

## Board Chair's Message (continued from page 2)

1990, we read about billionaires and their empires while families scramble just to make ends meet. The stock market reaches the 3,000 mark, and children go to bed hungry. Tens of thousands of working couples live on the edge of catastrophe, just a paycheck or a layoff-notice away from homelessness.

Sometimes, the media takes note, does a story or two, and moves on. But that's just as well, because most of us don't really want to know too much more about poverty and its effects, anyway. "It's too depressing", we say, and then we too, quickly forget.

But there is one group of people who can't forget. Every day, they see the damage poverty does. Who are they? They're the people working in Community Action programs across the country, still carrying on the struggle begun all those years ago.

Day after day, month after month, they hear the heart-rending stories the

rest of us don't want to hear. Stories of the fall from middle-class America to the grinding humiliation of poverty, often told by parents who are both working. Stories of abuse and fear and violence, and of desperate attempts to break the cycle before yet another generation is drawn into it. Stories of whole families living in a car or a tent or an unheated shed in the dead of winter.

The 60's are long gone, and so are many of the programs that came out of the fervor and optimism of the early years of the war on poverty, victims of the shifting sands of public policy. And the apathy and indifference of the late 70's and 80's have been replaced by an even more troubling cynicism.

As we look out through the veil of that cynicism, we often decry a landscape barren of heroes, of people we can look up to for what they do, for how they make the world a better place. Oh, sure, you can find them, if you look hard enough. They're out there, some

in business, some in religion, some in politics, some in private life. People who are not afraid to stand up for what is right, to speak out, to take action that will make a difference.

But for my part, I know where they will consistently be found, doing what they can with the scarce resources they have, almost invariably laboring in obscurity. Very often, they bring to the job a brand of idealism that is reminiscent of the 60's. But if you take a closer look, you will see that it is an idealism tempered by a quarter-century of real-life service delivery in a society fraught with changing priorities and conflicting goals.

Twenty-five years into the war on poverty, the heroes we seek will be found among the staff and volunteers at WCCAO and other Community Action agencies like it, where dedicated people are working to save the world, one person at a time.

### Washington County Community Action Organization

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### WCCAO Executive Committee:

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Sherry Robinson, Vice Chair  
Mayor Shirley Huffman, Secretary  
Jose Jaime, Treasurer  
Dr. Shirley Harper, At Large  
Gale Patterson, At Large

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*"20 Years of People Helping People"*

**WASHINGTON COUNTY  
COMMUNITY ACTION  
ORGANIZATION**

**Board of Directors**

**1985-1986**

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Belinda Green, *Alternate*  
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Jan Young, *Alternate*  
Roger Campbell, *Alternate*  
Jose Estrada, *Alternate*

Dear Friend,

Over 32,000 men, women and children live in poverty in Washington County. They live in the midst of prosperity, hidden from the casual observer or the occasional visitor.

When most people visit Washington County, they are impressed by the rich, lush farmland, the thriving new businesses, and the explosion of development. It seems an oasis of abundance, but look again.

Who are these people who live in poverty?

They are the *elderly*, mostly women, living on Social Security incomes of less than \$400 a month.

They are the *young, single parents of small children*, whose incomes after child care and rent barely leaves enough to buy food or pay for basic medical care.

They are the *laid-off workers* who can no longer keep up with their mortgage payments.

They are the *job seekers* whose heating bills in their unweatherized apartments take up more than half their unemployment benefits.

They are the *large migrant and refugee families* who have many young and old to care for on their meager earnings.

They are the people Washington County Community Action sees every day. *It is on their behalf that we are making this appeal to you.*

Washington County Community Action Organization is a private, non-profit corporation. This year, as it has for the past 20 years, Community Action has provided a wide variety of services to the needy in Washington County.

- 3,884 families were given assistance in paying their heating bills.
- 530 homeless families were provided with temporary emergency shelter.
- 219 low income families had their homes or apartments weatherized.
- 962,692 pounds of food were gathered and distributed to provide 68,383 emergency food boxes for hungry people.
- 684 disadvantaged youth received employment and training services.

Community Action is more than a service agency. It is "People Helping People". **Nearly all of our projects involve the needy in helping their neighbors and themselves.**

- 545 low income members of the Crop Gleaning Project gathered and shared 102,000 pounds of leftover crops with the elderly and disabled who couldn't pick for themselves.
- 276 low income parents volunteered in the Head Start classrooms helping other children as well as their own.
- Nearly 4,000 hours were donated by volunteer wood cutters, who cut and shared 303 cords of donated firewood with 131 low income elderly and disabled persons.
- Families staying temporarily in our Emergency Shelter Home donated \$7,000 in volunteer labor and goods.
- 265 volunteers in the Retired Senior Volunteer Program donated over 31,200 hours to helping others.

**Still the need continues to grow.** As winter approaches, we are increasingly concerned about our less fortunate neighbors. **And we believe that private citizens, like yourself, want a chance to help, too.** We can no longer rely on government to do this for us.

**Please join us.** Your contribution will provide a helping hand to neighbors in need. Read the enclosed description of Community Action's programs. Then fill out the donation envelope directing Community Action to **use your contribution in the program of your choice.**

Just indicate where you want your donation to go and Community Action **will effectively put your dollars to work** in Washington County.

Your response to our appeal at this critical time will be greatly appreciated! Please help now.

Sincerely,



Al Young  
WCCAO Board Chair



Jerralynn Ness  
WCCAO Executive Director

P.S. Remember, no gift is too small. Thank you for your **tax deductible donation.**