

WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATION NEWS

Volume 2, Number 2

Summer, 1987

Local funding cut

Homeless families lose emergency shelter resource

Sometimes we affectionately call it the "Wacky WCCAO Shelter Home." But now, when I think about the shelter having to close this summer, I appreciate that craziness. Sometimes, it feels like a tidal wave of humanity washes through our doors and it's all we can do to keep our heads above water. But just as waves leave some pearls among the flotsam and jetsam, the people that come here for help always bring us something too. Because we work so closely with them, we get rare opportunities to hear their stories, benefit from their wisdom, and laugh or cry over their experiences. I frequently go home feeling physically exhausted — but spiritually enriched.

One Friday night last month was a prime example of the "human tidal wave" I just referred to. The shelter was already filled to capacity and the phones kept ringing all day with calls from other homeless people, and I spent much of the morning counseling an ex-resident who was leaving her abusive husband.

Then, at the end of that busy day, five families from Texas walked into the shelter. They totalled 27 people in all. Our secretary, Silvia, popped into our office and in her usual calm, sweet voice, announced that our living room was filled to the brim with people.

Valerie, our Jesuit volunteer, and I were already so tired, and all we could do was look at each other and laugh. We briefly considered crawling out the window, then we all got to work.

Silvia stayed late to get all the names recorded on our statistics sheets, and since the shelter was full, Valerie began making arrangements to issue vouchers for a motel. I went downstairs to make food boxes. Luckily,

there was still a room at a local motel for them. After four days of being on the road and hungry, those ten adults and 17 children found food and shelter and help with clothing and medical needs. They were very grateful.



A recent candlelight vigil, held in the WCCAO Shelter Home, drew attention to the plight of homeless families in Washington County. (Photo by Michael Thompson)

How different things will be this month when the WCCAO Shelter home is closed! We had planned to be closed for two or three weeks to do some major repairs to the building, but due to the loss of local support from the County, and from the cities of Hillsboro, Forest Grove and Tigard, we need to stay closed for two months — all of July and August. And when we reopen in September, we will be operating with fewer staff and providing service to fewer people. For the first time in its 11 years of operation, the shelter will not be there to help the homeless people of Washington County. We simply don't have the commitment needed by local government to keep us going.

(continued on next page)



Sale of the Century

*The Third Annual Sale of the Century will be held August 28, 29, and 30 at the Volunteer Center, 20515 SW Blanton, Aloha. Everything priced to sell. For larger items like furniture and appliances we will take best offer.

Hours: Friday, August 28, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, August 29, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday, August 30, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. **\$1 per bag sale!**

For more information, please contact Denise Andrews at 642-3236. All proceeds go to WCCAO Volunteer Programs.

*USDA Food Commodities Distribution, September 17. Call Tualatin Valley Food Center at 642-3236 for sites, times, and income eligibility information.

*Brown Bag Distribution, second Friday of each month, 1 to 6 p.m., at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 11265 SW Cabot Beaverton.

Third Friday of each month, 12 noon to 6 p.m., Living Word Fellowship, 1927 Pacific Avenue, Forest Grove; and Cornelius Baptist Church, 198 S 16th Street, Cornelius.

*Summer Youth Employment and Training is in full swing. Call Saul or Susan, 648-6646 for more information.

Thanks for donation

WCCAO would like to express our sincere thanks to Tyler Liggett, National Video, 6071 SW 185th, Aloha, for his donation of 200 tickets for a Portland Beavers Baseball game, and to Mark DeMent for his donation of free tickets for children's admission and discount rides for our Hillsboro Happy Days celebration.

Shelter cont'd.

During the closure, we will have a skeleton crew answering phones, providing information and referral, and, as resources allow, vouchering people into local motels. That option, however, will be minimally available, leaving most homeless people in Washington County with nowhere to turn. Some may yet be referred into the Portland area, but for most, that isn't a practical option. The lucky people with cars will probably be living out of their cars for awhile

longer. Others will camp where they can.

The WCCAO Shelter Home officially closed on July 1, with a potluck dinner and candlelight vigil on the grounds. Many members of the community joined in this demonstration of concern for the homeless in Washington County.

If you have concerns about the loss of local support for the homeless, you should call or write your county or City elected officials. Your support is greatly appreciated.

—Bonnie Byron, Shelter Coordinator



ACTION NEWS is the newsletter of the Washington County Community Action Organization (WCCAO), published quarterly by the WCCAO Administration, 245 SE Second, Hillsboro, OR 97123.

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, Exec. Dir.)	648-6646
Energy Program (Pam Banks, Director)	640-8811
Heating Assistance (December through March)	640-8951
Youth Employment Program (Saul Shapiro, Director)	648-6646
Head Start Program (Cathy Wise, Director)	648-6646
Volunteer Center (Linda Davis, Director)	642-3236
Shelter & Housing Services (Cheryl Hilbert, Dir.)	648-0820



Executive Director's Message

Jerralynn Ness

Partnership needed to support human services

Breaking the cycle of poverty for families is a challenging undertaking in the best of situations . . . where there is community and financial support for human services. And because human services are so critical for the success of this effort, the loss of human service funding can be devastating to a community and those suffering from poverty.

Community by community we have become keenly aware of the importance of economic development to our stability, growth, and future prosperity. We have not yet, however, recognized the integral connection between the provision of human services and good economic health.

While economic development assures that there are jobs, human services assure that those able to work have the opportunity to do so by addressing employment, training, health, mental health, housing, child care and

other social service needs. A healthy and trained work force is required to fill the jobs created by successful economic development. And as we all know, employed people contribute to our economic base and require fewer government supported services. If we ignore the unique needs of our unemployed and underemployed we not only are wasting this great human resource, but we are committing our disadvantaged neighbors to poverty and future generations of dependency. In doing so, we are also preventing our county from realizing its fullest potential for prosperity.

It is ironic to me that during this time of increased homelessness, which has attracted state and national attention, that WCCAO is temporarily shutting down our family shelter home due to the loss of local government support (see related story in this newsletter). Homeless families have no hope of becoming employed until their basic need for food, shelter, safety, and warmth are met. And we have no hope of meeting those needs without a partnership of support from United Way, churches, government, and private individuals.

It is my hope that we in the private, public, voluntary and non-profit sectors will work together to find realistic solutions for meeting our county's diverse needs. And in the process, that we will not let human needs drop to our lowest priority, assuming that they will be taken care of by someone else. A humane society looks after the needs of all of its people. I believe that there is great potential in Washington County to do just that.



Board Chair's Message

Shirley Harper

Board assigns needs assessment

We are starting a process of developing strategies to obtain funds from sources other than our current ones. We have known for some time that there would probably be a reduction in funding from governmental sources. The reductions are now occurring. In the last few months the financial support from

governmental agencies (particularly local government) has been reduced.

It appears at this time that we may have to reduce some programs, and in some cases, completely eliminate some services.

It is critical that we develop strategies and identify new sources of financial support for our programs. I consider the primary task of the Board and the Executive Director for the next few months is to develop alternative sources of funding.

In support of this project, the Board has retained a consultant, The Planning Group, to do a needs assessment in the county and to work with the Board to establish priorities, to develop funding sources, and to evaluate the quality of the services that we are providing.

I request your support and services in carrying out these projects.

Thanks to WCCAO donors!

Washington County Community Action Organization extends heartfelt thanks to the following individuals for their caring and generous support from December, 1986, through May, 1987:

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 Delores Winningstad
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 Gary Wilhelms/Pacific NW Bell
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 Beaverton Grange #324
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Tualatin Valley Food Center needs drivers to pick up donated food in Washington County and transport it to our warehouse in Aloha. Volunteers are also urgently needed to help in the warehouse with unloading, sorting, repackaging, and distribution of food. Wednesday and Thursday mornings are the time of biggest need for warehouse

volunteers. Call TVFC at 642-3236 and ask for Gary, if you can help.

The Volunteer Center is having its Third Annual Sale of the Century Rummage Sale, August 28, 29, and 30, and we need sale items. So don't throw anything useful away -- bring it to the Center, at 20515 SW Blanton, Aloha. We would be glad to pick up the items, if needed.

All proceeds will go to the programs housed in the Volunteer Center, which include the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Tualatin Valley Food Center (TVFC), Under Sixty Program, and Volunteers in Service to America program (VISTA).

For more information, please contact Denise Andrews at 642-3236.

WCCAO Gives Thanks

Merci!

Albert and Lillie Zonder
 William and Jane Berger
 Donald and Elaine Bradshaw
 Vera Staub/Cooper Mountain
 Sentinal Club
 Donald and Naomi Davidson
 P.B. and R.L. DeGraff
 William and Dorothy Harper
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 R.B. and Jean Loomis
 James and Virginia McNeal
 Sam and Winifred Stanley
 Harry and Geraldine Wahl
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 Thelma Zartanya
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 Beaverton Chapter #2838
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 Bob Tidwell
 Margaret Gilbert/League of Women
 Voters
 Louise P. Fieldman, M.A.
 Gloria Lach
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Volunteer activities offer opportunities for acts of kindness

The best part of a person's life are the little, often unremembered acts of kindness and love. Yes, little things count for much in the world today — a smile of genuine friendliness, the work which gives someone renewed courage, the material help which assists a person through a crisis.

It is unfortunate that such ordinary actions do not embody dash and daring and dramatic appeal. People like to do things which elicit admiration and stand out as enviable accomplishments. Nearly every person likes to feel that he or she is a potential hero; that if some great challenge were to come, he or she would meet it unflinchingly. But the occasion for testing one's heroism comes to but a few people in a peaceful lifetime.

On the other hand, almost every day it is possible to perform some "little

unremembered act of kindness." There are occasions to make someone feel a little more hopeful about the world.

Drab and unheroic as this may be, each individual should seize and take advantage of every such opportunity that comes along. That such acts may be "the best parts of a person's life" is reason enough, but there is an added reason, expressed in these lines:

"There's a destiny that makes us brothers;
None goes his way alone;
All that we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own."

So, this summer, when you are relaxing or when your teenagers are bored, VOLUNTEER. Almost any volunteer program can use your help, but the Tualatin Valley Food Center can especially use volunteers. When the kids say, "There's nothing to do," consider all the volunteer work available at TVFC. Warehouse work, repackaging food, driving, clerical work, and many other volunteer jobs await those who want to help make a contribution to the lives of hungry people.

Your volunteer acts of kindness will definitely not go unremembered by those of us at the Food Center! Give us a call today at 642-3236 to see how volunteering can become one of the best parts of your life.

Thanks, Volunteers!



Head Start looks toward new year

Head Start still has openings for the 1987-88 school year. The program provides a free preschool experience to low-income children. Classes are held Tuesday through Friday, for three and one-half hours per day. Children must be four years old by September

1, and family income may not exceed Federal poverty guidelines.

Head Start stresses the involvement of parents in the program and attempts to reinforce the parental role as the primary educator of their child. A variety of activities are designed to help parents cope, improve skills, and increase their social networks.

Children are provided with an enriching educational setting that is designed for their individual strengths and weaknesses. Special services such as speech therapy are provided to children requiring them.

Head Start transports children to and from the centers and provides two meals daily. Centers are located in Cornelius, Hillsboro, Sherwood, and Beaverton. Each serves a wide geographic area of Washington County.

Those interested in applying for Head Start should call the office at 648-6646.



Volunteer Transportation Program helps meet senior needs

Tri-Met and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) have developed a Volunteer Transportation Program (VTP). The purpose of the program is to effectively increase the availability of special needs transportation services for senior citizens and disabled persons.

The program depends upon volunteer drivers and support staff to supplement the current service delivery system, as well as to meet other transportation needs.

Are you interested in helping out with this valuable program? Can you answer "yes" to the following questions?

— Am I willing to commit time on a monthly basis on any day of the week?



— Can I maintain a valid Oregon "Class A" drivers' license?

— Can I complete an orientation session and defensive driving course?

If your answer is yes, you are ready to help provide a much-needed community service!

Call Elaine Wells, RSVP, at 642-3236.

Washington County Community Action Organization

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WCCAO Executive Committee:

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