



Spring 1996



Comedy Festival to Help the Homeless

Mark your calendars for May 11th for the 2nd Annual HAHA Festival, Homeless and Hungry Aid. Portland Underground Comedy in association with Community Action Organization and six service organizations including the Forest Grove Daybreak Rotary Club are making final arrangements for the event.

The goal is to raise over \$50,000 to benefit the homeless and victims of the recent flooding, while spreading the gift of

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CONNECTIONS

A Quarterly Publication of Community Action Organization

A Flood of Relief for a Family

The flood of '96 brings many images to mind: the rising Willamette threatening downtown Portland; the roar of tons of earth and trees sliding across roads; furniture floating down rivers; whole towns isolated.

For Ilene Holding of Tualatin the flood of '96 has been devastating. She was a ground floor resident of the Riverview West apartments when she received a flyer saying the Tualatin River might flood as much as one to two feet. She had friends and family help put her furniture and other belongings up above the expected flood level. By Thursday the water was already coming into the apartment over her ankles. She left and hoped for the best, returning to five feet of water inside her apartment. Ilene lost virtually everything and was totally devastated,

unsure of what to do.

At the same time, many individuals and organizations were looking for ways to help the flood victims. Community Action's Neighborshare office in Tigard and Community Partners for Affordable Housing began going door-to-door talking to victims. Many community partnerships were formed in order to provide relief to flood-affected families.

Legacy Meridian Park Hospital's foundation established a fund to help low-income residents displaced by the flood in Tualatin, many of whom, like Ilene, lost everything in the disaster. The Community Action Neighborshare office was selected to distribute these funds, which have been used to assist families with shelter, rent, food, clothing, furniture

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Scenes like this were common during the flood of '96.



Comedy fest for a great cause, cont'd.

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laughter by showcasing comedy in its various art forms.

The HAHA Festival will be held at various sites in Forest Grove, beginning at 10:00 am on May 11th with an old fashioned parade through town. It ends with the Gala Finale Celebration at 8:00 pm in the Taylor Meade Performing Arts Center. The festival will also include family shows, vaudeville acts, jugglers, magicians, and, of course, stand-up comedy. Two competitions will be held during the HAHA Festival: the finals of the Portland Laff-off and Hi-school Hi-jinx, a forum for high school students to tickle the funny bone. Performing in the festival are some of the finest national and Northwest acts. Tickets are available from FASTIXX or Forest Grove service organizations.

Local Input for National Dialogue on Poverty Sought

In late May, Community Action will be hosting a forum on the issues of local poverty. This discussion is part of the National Dialogue on Poverty that will be taking place in April and May throughout the United States. The purpose of this dialogue is to engage in a discussion about public policy issues and their impact upon low-income and working poor Americans.

There will be a kick-off on April 19 in Washington, D.C. Jerralynn Ness, Executive Director at Community Action and Holly Grant, Head Start Policy Council Member/ Community Action Board Member will be attending. The

kick-off will include a press conference that will be covered by USA Today and other major newspapers, as well as the national networks. The forum is titled, "A National Dialogue on Poverty: What Does America Know?"

Ness said of the process, "We hope to bring as many interested people together as possible to begin to talk about local issues of poverty and what we can do together to begin to address them."

This information will be used by Community Action in its current strategic planning process. If you would like to participate in the local dialogue, please call 648-6646 for more information.



Volunteers sort donations at the newly reopened Play It Again in Beaverton.

Play It Again Opens; Volunteers Needed

Play It Again, Community Action's former resale shop, opened for business this month to provide clothes, household goods and personal care items at no cost to any low-income residents of Washington County. Clients of Community Action Organization as well as those from other agencies are welcome at Play It Again.

All goods in the store are donated items. The store is operated by volunteers who work a three-hour

shift each week to help shoppers find the items they need.

Hours of operation will increase as more volunteers sign up. Do you have three hours a week to help someone find that perfect job interview outfit? To volunteer, please call Kathy Wilson at 693-3254. To check on current days and hours of operation, call Community Action at 648-6646. Donations will be accepted during hours of operation at Play It Again, 4955 SW Hall in Beaverton.

Community Connections is the quarterly newsletter of Community Action Organization, 1001 SW Baseline St., Hillsboro, OR 97123, and is published by the Development Office and Engrafix Design Group (Nancy Scott, volunteer).

Community Action Organization is a private, non-profit corporation providing a wide variety of services to the needy in Washington County, Oregon. For further information:

Administration: 648-6646

Client Services Department:

Hillsboro 648-0829

Tigard 639-0495

(Neighborshare)

Congrats to Lucky Wine Raffle Winners!

On February 17 at 11:00 pm during the 10th Annual Mardi Gras, Bonnie Hays drew the three lucky tickets for the first-ever wine raffle in the State of Oregon. Each winner received 12 cases of premium Washington County wine that was donated by

Cooper Mountain, Laurel Ridge, Montinore, Oak Knoll, Ponzi and Tualatin Vineyards.

The three winners are Jewell Bailey of Gresham, Sandra Kucera of Aloha and Jeff Hoyt of Forest Grove. Thank you to everyone who participated in this first-ever event.



Jewell Bailey, one of the three lucky winners.

Cornelius Head Start Seeks New Playground



The Cornelius United Methodist church has housed the Washington County Head Start center for nearly 20 years. Church members have supported the program in countless ways. They have shared their Sunday School classroom and their fellowship hall with the noise and clutter of our preschool program for all these years. They have provided and helped to maintain a playground just behind the church. But now the playground is worn out and it is going to take some hard cash to replace unsafe equipment.

Volunteers have removed most of the old wood climbing structures which were splintered, broken and unsafe. A new playground has been proposed that builds upon the existing, still-usable swings that were generously donated by the City of Cornelius several years ago. The proposal has been carefully studied and costs cut or reduced wherever it was thought volunteer labor or donated materials could be used. With these changes \$6,990 is still needed for materials and installation.

If you would like to help with this project, please contact Marilyn Harrison at Community Action, 693-3268.

Businesses, Agencies Help Flooded Families

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and household items. Kmart in Tualatin has agreed to give a 35% discount on household items to flood victims. Northwest Medical Teams, through the Operation Neighbor to Neighbor program, has matched many of the grants distributed through the Meridian Park funding.

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink, Executive Director of Community Partners for Affordable Housing, compiled a list of families in Tualatin affected by the flood and attempted to track them as they were shuttled from friends to motels. She assisted displaced families in locating available housing units, coordinated with FEMA agents, and organized community efforts to distribute donated furniture and household items. South Park Seventh Day Adventist volunteer, Dorothy

Bernard, was generous with her time and resources, assisting families in re-stocking their homes. St. Francis church coordinated donated furniture with families in need.

Ilene was able to receive assistance from these organizations as well as concerned individuals who helped with new clothing, a microwave and new pots and pans. She had spent many days cleaning and scrubbing as much as could be salvaged from her apartment. "The response was overwhelming," she said. "The response of the community is as touching as the flood was devastating."

Ilene and other families still face many challenges as they rebuild their lives. If you would like to help with this response to the flood relief, please call Community Action at 648-6646.



Senator Ron Wyden talks with Ilene Holding of Tualatin after February flooding filled her home with five feet of water.

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