

# WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATION NEWS

Winter 1991

## Homeless -Did You Know...

- That WCCAO has increased services for homeless people by 18% in the last year?
- That homelessness in Washington County has increased by 106% in the last year?
- That for every four people that seek shelter in Washington County, three have to be turned away?
- THAT HOMELESSNESS IS NOT A STATISTIC???

### Clare

Her face was pressed against the glass as she peered out into the darkness, rain and wind meeting her on the other side. Her breath made a halo of steam that condensed on the window pane. She knew that for the moment she was safe. The moment was all she had.

Her name is Clare. She came to the WCCAO Family Shelter after her father lost his job in the computer industry. Clare's mother had died a few years before, and, although she missed her mother very much, she and her father became very close and they made sure their home stayed as cozy and inviting as it had been when Clare's mother was alive.

Then, within two months after Clare's father lost his job, they lost their home. They came to live at the Shelter to save some money from his part-time work at Fred Meyer to get into an apartment. Clare got jobs at Dairy Queen and the office at her school to help out.

They are on their own again, living in an apartment together near Clare's school. Her father is still working part-time at Fred Meyer and has started his own computer consulting business. Clare wonders how they would ever have made it without having a temporary shelter to go to until they could save the money for their apartment.

### Bonnie

"Nothing like this has ever happened to us," she said, wiping away the tears with the corner of her apron. "I got a job today. My birthday is Sunday. I have a goal to be in our own home by then."

Sunday will come and go and Bonnie and her family will still be staying at the

out every day looking for a job as a service station or machine shop mechanic. The jobs are few and far between and, since they have no car, the choices are very limited.

They came to Oregon from Minnesota on November 12th on the insistence



of Bonnie's sister, who lived here, that work was available. They spent \$552 to get here by bus and had \$100 left when they arrived at their sister's house, only to find that the sister had moved to Missouri. They spent 8 days in a motel - 4 they paid for and 4 were

Shelter. They can't find affordable housing for the five of them. They've gone to the Housing Authority and Housing Services of Oregon. Nothing is available and won't be anytime soon.

"loaned" to them until they could get the SSI check for their disabled daughter.

The children are all enrolled in school and love it here. Bonnie and Clifton also think that Oregon will be a nice place

Bonnie's husband, Clifton, has been

*continued on page 8*

## IT'S HAPPENING!

- **Brown Bag Distributions:**
  - Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin - Jan. 11, Feb. 8, March 8
  - Hillsboro - Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 15
  - Cornelius, Forest Grove - Jan. 25, Feb. 22, March 29
- **State Employees Food Drive** - month of February
- **Project Second Wind Food Drive** - Recruitment of this year's participants in January; contact Denise, 642-3236
- **Head Start Policy Council** meets the second Tuesday of each month (Sept. - June). Call Peggy (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 date, time and place.
- **5th Annual Mardi Gras Ball** - February 9, 1991; 5:30 PM - Midnight; Tanasbourne Mall. Features silent and oral auctions, Southern cuisine buffet dinner and dancing to "Johnny Limbo & The Lugnuts". See insert and ticket order form on Page 7 of this issue.

## Cathy Spofford joins WCCAO

Cathy, a graduate student at Portland State University, is working towards her Masters Degree in Social Work. We are fortunate to have her assigned to WCCAO for her second year of field placement; working in the areas of staff training and development, data base design and legislative issues.



For staff training and development, Cathy will help put together staff in-service trainings. Cultural competence has been identified as a training area needed by both the WCCAO staff and volunteers and the community at large. An in-house and community participation workshop will be planned.

The data base work Cathy plans to do will include design of a small data base for the new case management program and identification of an appropriate software for management of fundraising and public relations efforts.

Affordable housing will be the focus of Cathy's legislative work. She will be coordinating with other organizations with similar objectives to develop an approach to impact housing legislation during the next session.

## PLAY IT AGAIN

New & Quality Resale Clothing & Accessories



Featuring: Women's, Men's & Children's Apparel, Shoes, Purses, Belts & Jewelry

Open Monday - Saturday 10:00-4:00  
4955 SW Hall Blvd  
Beaverton, Oregon  
644-8956

**Bring in this ad for 10% OFF all merchandise in the store!**

Sponsored by and Benefiting Washington County Community Action Organization (WCCAO). Volunteers needed, call for information.

## WCCAO Receives grant to promote self-sufficiency

The Department of Health and Human Services awarded WCCAO a grant for \$171,000 to promote self-sufficiency among low income families in Washington County.

The grant is a Demonstration Partnership Project and will specifically be used to support WCCAO's case management services, providing greater opportunities for job training and placement and mentorship for 40 Hispanic and other low income families.

## 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 coordinated by WCCAO staff member Pam Brousseau and is edited and designed by volunteer Alisa Corstorphine. (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
Ceryl 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

## 25th Anniversary Special to ACTION News



*"Although the economic well-being and prosperity of the United States have progressed to a level surpassing any achieved in world history, and although these benefits are widely shared throughout the nation, poverty continues to be the lot of a substantial number of our people. The United States can achieve its full economic and social potential as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of the capabilities of each individual and to participate in the workings of our society. It is, therefore, the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation, by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."*

*Preamble, Economic Opportunity Act*



**Join us in celebration of 25 years of "people helping people".  
1965-1990**

## Mark Hatfield links poverty with national security

Over a hundred people gathered at the 25th Anniversary Banquet held on October 24, to celebrate WCCAO's quarter century of helping people in Washington County. The air was charged with excitement - anticipation of the address by Senator Hatfield, a supporter of Community Action since its beginning.

Displays describing WCCAO's history allowed attendees to realize the magnitude of what had been done over the past twenty-five years. Some of the "pioneers", like Birgetta Nixon of Cherry Grove, were on hand to give accounts of WCCAO's tentative beginnings in 1964. Everyone agreed that WCCAO had changed a great deal in two-and-a-half decades, but one thing remained the same - its overall mission to help people help themselves.

Hatfield talked about some of the accomplishments of Community Action. To illustrate our success, he described the results of the Government Accounting Office (GAO) study on cost benefit ratio of all the social programs provided by the Federal Government. He reported that the GAO found that the best dollar return, that is "the most bang for the buck", is in the Community Action Programs across the country.

However, the Senator was quite candid in stating that we have been losing the War on Poverty. He attributed it, in part, to a value problem. "We can certainly afford the billions, the trillions that increase our capacity to destroy life

### WCCAO's founders: Reunion being planned

Listed below are the original founders of Washington County Community Action Organization:

#### INCORPORATORS:

The Reverend Walter J. McGettigan \*  
Robert W. Warner \*  
John L. Dezell

#### BOARD MEMBERS:

Blair N. Preuss Purnell Sisk

but we scrounge, we twist and we turn to find the resources to improve the quality of life."

"It's time to celebrate, yes, but it's also time to realize that we have an unfinished agenda that is very, very impressive in its magnitude. There's a lot of darkness out there. But right here in front of me are the candles and this is, to me, the greatest reason to persevere."

"The health, the strength, the educa-



L to R: Antoinette Hatfield, Senator Hatfield, Jerralynn Ness, Kent Thurber, Clifford Clark

tional opportunity, the housing needs, the infrastructure of our people - all of this is part of our national security. We're not talking about welfare. We're talking about national security. And I suppose if we really wanted to get a little different treatment back there, we'd call this the National Security Community Service Block Grant Program and put it in the Pentagon's budget!"

"I hope that at the end of the next 25

years Washington County Community Action will meet here to celebrate . . . to celebrate its demise, not because you've run out of funds, but because you've won the war on poverty."

Following Hatfield's address, a WCCAO client bravely took the microphone to invite everyone to experience first-hand what WCCAO does and why what is done makes a difference. Her story (see Margie Snyder pg. 6) generated very personal emotions - those of compassion and admiration - emotions that strengthened the audiences determination to persevere in the battle against poverty.

The final address, given by Jerralynn Ness, WCCAO's Executive Director, brought the emotions into focus with a plan for action: an invitation to invest in human beings. "Our strategic planning has prepared us for the challenges of fighting poverty in the 1990's. As we begin to commemorate our 25th Anniversary, we do so with this renewed belief that a human investment - an investment in

low income families - is a powerful act that will eliminate poverty, family by family, and create a healthy community and a strong economy."

"A seed was planted 25 years ago and it continues to grow strong -because of you and the thousands of others that have supported our work and believed in our efforts . . ."

Gerald Hurley	Mrs. David McCarthy
Stanford Cody	L.E. Olson
Walter McKinney *	William B. Prophet, Jr.
Mrs. William R. Sweetman	Howard Hutchins
W. W. (Matt) Mattoon	James Anderson
Donald C. Jones *	Don Burke
Lloyd Dyke *	R.M. Nyman
Hugh McGilvra *	Robert Greger
J. William Young	Marion Spatz
Mrs. W. H. Watson	Marion McCloud
David M. Martinez	Domingo Figueroa

Kenneth Glover  
George Skosberg  
Elvin Shaw

Doug Short  
Roy Merritt

A reunion is being planned for summer 1991. All past and present Board Members, staff and volunteers will be invited. If you know how to contact any of these people, please notify Pilar at WCCAO (648-6646).

\* denotes current address is known.

## WCCAO: A pioneer against poverty in Washington County

Serving over the years as a leader in the community, WCCAO has helped organize anti-poverty efforts that are ultimately operated independently by other groups. Examples of programs organized by WCCAO and "spun off" to the community:

- Food Coops (3)
- Legal Aid

- Pyramid Skills Exchange
- Translators Bureau
- Bi-lingual/Bi-cultural Research Program
- Medical Lending Library
- Welfare Hotline
- Washington County Gleaners, Inc.
- Rural Awareness Project
- Tenants' Rights Project
- Centro Cultural

- Grandma's Corner
- Housing Development Corporation
- Washington County Wood Coop
- Washington County Energy Coalition
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program
- VISTA
- Dentures Program
- Summer Youth Programs

## "The 'Paradox Of Poverty' revisited"

by John Mullin • Director of Clackamas County Social Services

(Excerpts from an article that appeared in *The Oregonian*, August 20 1989, 25th Anniversary of the Economic Opportunity Act)

Our country has debated and re-debated the issues of poverty, developing "poor farms" and "poor houses", replacing these with "outdoor relief" and "scientific charity", and later, social security. Along the way, we have refined welfare and we are now busy reforming it. The debate tells us much about our values as a society. However, there is nothing in the debate today or in the past as audacious as the idea that the United States could actually "eliminate the paradox of poverty."

Most people are not surprised to learn that 48 % of all Americans were poor in 1935, the height of the depression. Yet it is hard to fathom that almost 40 million, or about 17 % of Americans were poor during the economic prosperity of the mid 1960's. Clearly the Johnson administration, after some initial hesitation, was ready to embark on a major effort to turn the numbers around. The vehicle for the administration was the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), created by the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA).

Sargent Shriver, fresh from his success as Director of the Peace Corps, was brought in to head up OEO. In its report on 1966 activities, entitled "The Quiet Revolution" OEO proclaimed that "the War on Poverty has produced personal results that will never be told in headlines ... poverty is being eliminated and the poor are being listened to. The na-

tion has been alerted."

Did the war on poverty succeed? The answer is obvious, complex and as yet unresolved. First of all, poverty continues. However, the 1960's and early 1970's saw a dramatic decline in poverty, reaching an all time low in 1973 when 23 million or 11.1% of the population were poor. The OEO was dismantled under the Nixon administration and the federal resolve and response weakened. The once proud, coordinated OEO system was broken out into its component parts and scattered throughout the federal government.

Yet many of the programs continue after twenty-five years.

\*Community Action Agencies still work locally on the causes and conditions of poverty acting on issues ranging from housing to nutrition to "self-sufficiency" projects.

\*Head Start agencies still work with low income families and their pre-school children utilizing methods which have proved to be efficient and effective.

\*Legal Services still ensures access to the legal system for the poor, in spite of a national board appointed by the Reagan administration which has been, at times, openly hostile to the program.

\*VISTA continues with thousands of stipended volunteers who work in the inner cities and in rural low income communities, even as Congress and the

Bush administration contemplate a "new" volunteer program.

All of this continues into the 1980's, a decade starting with the election of a President who declared, "In the sixties we waged a war on poverty and poverty won."

We now have an underfunded non-system of public welfare and a myriad of social service programs. Our country has more than 30 million poor people. More than 12 million are children. The gap between the richest and the poorest Americans has never been greater.

The Ford Foundation report, "The Common Good: Social Welfare and the American Future" (May 1989), notes that "recently, social welfare policy has not kept up with a changing world. Many people now find themselves faced with personal crises they are wholly unprepared to resolve on their own, and for which the government offers little help."

As we further compare the early 1960's to this age of "retrenchment" it is important to remember what is at stake. Poverty is a scourge that strikes at the individual, the family, our communities, and the nation as a whole. If it is not compassion that moves us, perhaps self interest will rekindle a desire to solve the "paradox of poverty." It is appropriate to ponder the meaning of a statement in the inaugural address of President John Kennedy: "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

## COMMUNITY ACTION . . .

### Breaking the cycle of poverty by preventing destitution and building self-sufficiency...

#### A CLIENT SPEAKS OUT. MARGIE SNYDER \*

"I didn't realize it at the time, but six years ago when I enrolled my daughter in Head Start I was very depressed. My husband was working in construction, making \$4.00 an hour, trying to support six people. All four of our kids were under 6 years old. I had no car and no money. The isolation finally got to me.

The Head Start Program was not only an excellent pre-school, but served the family, as well. My self-esteem was so low when I first got involved with Head Start, I didn't believe I had any talents. But I was treated with respect - like an equal - and I gradually gained more and more confidence in myself. I volunteered in the classroom and, eventually, served on the Head Start Policy Council. I continued on the Council as its President even after my daughter left the Program. Later I developed a workshop on puppetry and a parent support group for Head Start families.

It was wonderful to be believed in and encouraged. In 1987, I took the plunge and enrolled in Nursing School at PCC, which I completed last Spring. I am now working as a Registered Nurse at the Veterans Hospital. My husband will go back to school next. He wants to study to be a dietician.

While most programs are set up to make people fail, WCCAO's programs help people succeed. It's the way you're treated. You are not treated as though being deficient in money means that you're deficient in brains or morals or motivation. You are treated with respect and as an equal. That makes all the difference in the world."

\*A fictitious name has been used to protect the client.

#### STAFF SPEAK OUT. JUDY SCHILLING

"WCCAO is the focal point in the community for helping people affected by our economy and by state and federal policies. These are the people that lack access to equal opportunities for health care, education and employment."

Judy has been associated with WCCAO since 1974, starting out as a VISTA working on solving housing problems. She was responsible for developing the first homeless shelter, laid the foundation for the tenant advocate work now being performed by Legal Services and implemented a senior home



repair program. She worked then as the editor of "The Rural Tribune", a project of WCCAO's Rural Awareness Program, which eventually formed its own non-profit corporation called Print Media Resources Center in 1978. Beginning in 1980, Judy returned to manage energy assistance, crisis prevention and client services projects.

#### LORRAINE HELLER

"I'd say Head Start has made a big difference in many people's lives. Un-

like the public schools, we involve the parents as much as possible. It is a wholistic approach. The staff is able to keep the program flexible, able to change with the changing needs of the families by listening and responding to them. The staff respect the families. They preserve their dignity as they help them problem solve."

Lorraine retired from WCCAO in 1988 after 20 years as a teacher with the Head Start Program. Even once she got her teaching certificate, she chose to stay with Head Start rather than work in the public schools. Since retirement, Lorraine has stayed active conducting parenting classes that she and a colleague developed for low income families. WCCAO has supported that project for the last two years.

#### CHAVELA MENDOZA

"WCCAO sees that the needs of the community are met - one way or another. I have seen so many families get back on their feet with WCCAO's help. Just this last spring, I worked with a family that came to Washington County to pick in the fields. There were five of them - two adults and three children. They couldn't make enough money picking and so they became homeless. We were able to house them temporarily, got them some food, gas vouchers and job interviews. The parents both got jobs paying \$6.00/hour plus benefits. They were fine on their own in only a few months."

Chavela has worked with WCCAO since 1976. Some of her work has been clerical, but since 1983, she has worked directly with clients, helping to meet their emergency needs in a way that preserves their dignity and allows them to regain self-esteem and self-sufficiency.

## YOU CAN HELP

### Volunteers Needed:

- For Tualatin Valley Food Center, to drive delivery trucks and assist drivers with loading and unloading of trucks; call Vicki, 642-3236.
  - For clerical work, word processing and data entry; call Pilar, 648-6646.
  - For graphic design, lay-out, type-setting and printing; call Pam, 648-6646.
  - To work as a clerk at WCCAO's thrift store; call Thelma, 644-8956.
  - For information and referral work with clients; call Judy, 648-6646.
  - For caretaking duties at the Family Shelter; call Judy, 648-6646.
  - For the Transportation Program to drive, dispatch and assist with clerical work. Call Wendi, 648-6646.
  - For help with food service for Head Start; call Donna, 681-8483.
- Donations Needed:**
- Equipment/Supplies: computers, printers, color TV, phone message machine, table for the conference room, high quality 35mm camera equipped with lenses for wide-angle, zoom and close-up photos; call Pilar, 648-6646.
  - Furniture: adopt a transitional house or a room in the house and furnish it; call Norma, 648-0829.
  - Food: Tualatin Valley Food Center is in need of high protein and staple food items, such as tuna, rice, pasta, canned fruits and vegetables; call Denise at 642-3236 for more information.

## WCCAO Releases its 1989-90 annual report

During fiscal years 1989-90, WCCAO implemented the second year of its strategic plan. . . a year which followed a tremendous amount of change and re-organization. "Change is very exciting, but change is also very difficult for many people", commented Jerralynn Ness, WCCAO's Executive Director. "This past year, we began to see the fruits of a very difficult labor. The changes we made improved services to low income families and increased our focus on the promotion of self-sufficiency. We found that our planning gave us a clear direction and helped to unite our diverse programs around a common mission."

Highlights from WCCAO's 1989-90 Annual Report include:

\*815 homeless people were provided with emergency shelter.

\*Over 29,000 low income people received information, referrals and help with emergency and basic needs.

\*14,052 rides were provided to elderly, disabled, homeless and teen parents.

\*6,734 low income people received services to resolve housing related problems and/or prevent eviction and displacement.

\*1,130,567 pounds of surplus food was obtained and distributed to fill 18,983 emergency food requests, 3,634 holiday baskets and 9,600 "Brown Bags"

\*We advocated and assisted in gaining approval for development of 288 new units of low income housing.

For copies of the full report, call Pilar Kleier at 648-6646.



### TICKET ORDER FORM MARDI GRAS BALL 1991

Washington County Community  
Action Organization

February 9, 1991

5:30 — Midnight  
Tanasbourne Mall



Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ ticket(s) @ \$40.00 per person

Please contact me about sponsoring a corporate table  
@ \$500 (seats 10)

I am unable to attend, but I am enclosing a tax deductible  
donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help WCCAO continue its work.

Reserve by February 5, 1991. For information call 648-6646.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail reservations and make checks payable to:  
Washington County Community Action Organization  
451 S. First, Suite 700, Hillsboro, OR 97123

Phone reservations accepted with current VISA card.

THANK YOU!

## Homeless (continued from page 1)

to live and want to stay, if only they can get through this crisis. Unless something happens soon to change their situation, they will be homeless for Christmas, without even a car to live in.

### The Hernandez Family

After coming to Oregon to work, the Hernandez family decided to stay. They wanted to stay so much that Mr. Hernandez returned to Mexico to sell their property, returning with \$1,000 to buy a mobile home.

Currently the eight of them, are homeless. They had to leave their apartment when the migrant labor season ended. When they tried to find another apartment, they were told that, because there were so many of them and they had no credit history, they could not rent. In the process, the property management companies advertising the rentals collected the non-refundable application

fees - money that the family could not afford to lose.

Lack of credit history is the problem now in trying to buy a mobile home. Their income is sufficient to meet payments. Mr. Hernandez and his sister, Ophelia, both work full time. They may be able to move to transitional housing, where they pay up to one-third of their income towards rent, until they can find a way to get their own home.



L to R: Sue AuCoin, Norma Gonzalez - Family Case Mgr., Michael Vigil - Shelter Mgr., Mary Carroll - District Representative for Les AuCoin

## Santa Claus benefit horse show is a huge success

This year was the seventh year that Dorothy and Marvin Baska have coordinated the Santa Claus Horse Show to benefit Tualatin Valley Food Center (TVFC). The Baskas are retiring after this year, the most successful one so far. The concession stand generated over \$800 in revenue and the Show brought in \$4,800. Thank you to the Baskas for all they've done to make this event possible!

Will there be a Santa Claus Benefit Horse Show next year? You bet!! The major contributor to this year's event, the Washington County Mounted Posse, will be next year's coordinators.

## Washington County Community Action Organization

451 S. First, Suite 700  
Hillsboro, OR 97123  
(503) 648-6646

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### WCCAO Executive Committee:

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Mayor Shirley Huffman, Secretary  
Jose Jaime, Treasurer  
Dr. Shirley Harper, At Large  
Gale Patterson, At Large

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