

Community



Summer 1999

CONNECTIONS

A Quarterly Publication of Community Action Organization

A DIFFERENCE IN ONE LIFE

“Hi, my name is Angel. I have a lot to share and only a few minutes to paint you a picture, so please try to envision everything I am about to share. My mother worked very hard and suffered with depression and still tried very hard to raise 4 children alone. We were poor and sometimes could barely afford food because all the money my mom made went to rent and heat and what little food we did have. I was a latch key kid for as long as I can remember. I left home when I was 16 and vowed never to return!



“I found this world full of excitement for awhile. Then, I started to realize how it really was out there on the streets, where I had chosen to be. Scared and alone and already addicted to meth for two years, I knew I had to learn to survive. I lived with strangers, drug dealers, in cars and even in parks. At the age of 18 I got married thinking the man I married was my knight in shining armor. I was wrong. Both of us addicted to drugs, we went our separate ways. Now, I was alone with a newborn baby. Making only \$5.00 an hour and no help from her father, how were we to survive living place to place?

“I wanted so badly to learn something different about life, but feeling hopeless and hungry for something in life. But, I had no idea what to do or how to do it. I have lived on the streets of nine different states and countless cities. I didn't know the meaning of stability, structure and nesting.

“When I got to Oregon I was starting over once again. Hungry and homeless I

“The support I've received from Community Action has transformed my life and given my daughter and I hope for the future.”

weighed 75 pounds and was barely alive. My five-year-old daughter Kayla kept asking me when we were going home. HOME! We had no home! Looking into her beautiful eyes, it was then that I asked God for help. That was when I knew what I needed to do. I put myself into detox and then into a six month residential treatment center for women with children. From there I went to a transitional home, to work on my living and parenting skills and to continue outpatient treatment for six more months. I was accepted into Community Action's Hopespring program that helps women with children for one year with their housing costs and daycare

expenses so they can work to become self-sufficient. Not only did the Hopespring program give me the support I needed to financially get by, I was also given a family advocate, Martha Westfall, to help ensure I was staying on track and meeting my goals. If it had not been for the social service support and all of the services I would not be here today. I would not have the home my baby was asking me for, and we wouldn't have such a wonderful, healthy, loving, trusting relationship like we do now.

“I work as an Americorps VISTA. VISTA stands for Volunteers in Service to America. I have chosen to dedicate two years of my life to service. I am working for a small living allowance \$600 month and earning scholarships for school. I am working with low-income pregnant women through the Opening Doors program of Community Action. The support I've received from Community Action has transformed my life and given my daughter and I hope for the future.”



CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT

On Thursday, May 6th Community Action Organization hosted their 1999 Celebration of Community Spirit Dinner. The evening began with a social hour at 5:30 during which Cooper Mountain Vineyards, Helvetia Vineyards, Laurel Ridge Winery, Montinore Vineyards, Oak Knoll Winery, Ponzi Vineyards and Tualatin Estate Vineyards provided complimentary wine. Former Congresswoman Elizabeth Furse, a longtime supporter of Community Action,

who served as Mistress of Ceremonies, invited guests to the main ballroom at Embassy Suites for dinner at 6:30 PM. Intel Vice-President and Oregon Site Manager, Jim Johnson, was the keynote speaker and retired GTE General Manager Leroy Bentley was the event chairperson. A former client, Angel Griffin, who shared her personal story of how Community Action helped her to recreate her life, put the evening in perspective. (See cover story).



Outstanding Business:
Baker Rock Resources
Dal Baker, Gary Baker &
Jan Baker-Carlson

CAO's Outstanding Business Award is given to a business that has demonstrated concern for our mission and exhibits an exemplary attitude and commitment to ongoing involvement and support of the Washington County Community. This year, Community Action selected Baker Rock Resources to receive this award.



Outstanding Business Leaders
Russ & Pam Wilkinson

CAO's Outstanding Business Leader Award is given to individuals who have demonstrated support for our mission and a personal commitment to strengthening the Washington County community. This year, Community Action selected Russ and Pam Wilkinson, Wilkinson CPA, to receive this award.

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Community Connections is the quarterly newsletter of Community Action Organization, 1001 SW Baseline St., Hillsboro, OR 97123, and is published by the Development Office.

Community Action Organization is a private, non-profit corporation. In partnership with the community, Community Action assists low income people to achieve self-determination.

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Margaret Eickmann
Board Chair

awareness of the scores of capable and dedicated people who are working to find solutions and to build a healthy community for all in Washington County. I'm proud to be part of this effort. Thanks to the excellent Board and to the phenomenal staff at CAO for two great years!

Thanks, Margaret!

These past two years I've had the privilege of serving as CAO's Board Chair. These have been exciting days for CAO, characterized by growth and consequent change. For me personally, I've been alternately appalled and awed by the stories of my low-income neighbors. The poverty that was nearly invisible to me before serving on the board, is now all too real. But with my new awareness of the problem has also come awareness of the scores of capable and dedicated people who are working to find solutions and to build a healthy community for all in Washington County. I'm proud to be part of this effort. Thanks to the excellent Board and to the phenomenal staff at CAO for two great years!

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Economic Opportunity Act

On August 20, CAO will be celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA). This act was the catalyst for the establishment of Community Action Organizations around the country by declaring: "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. It is the purpose of this Act to strengthen, supplement, and coordinate efforts in furtherance of that policy." CAO remains dedicated to the principals of the original EOA.

Wine Lovers' Big Chance

Tickets are now available for wine lovers to try their luck in Community Action Organization's annual wine raffle. For the fourth year in a row, ticket holders can win premium Washington County wine in return for buying a ticket which support CAO's programs. Seven Washington County wineries - Cooper Mountain, Helvetia, Tualatin Estate, Oak Knoll, Laurel Ridge, Montinore and Ponzi- are donating their finest wines. The Grand Prize winner will receive six cases (72 bottles) of wine, and ten additional winners will receive three cases (36 bottles) each. Tickets are \$2.00 and are available at the wineries or by calling CAO at 693-3252. The drawing will be September 16th, 6:00 PM at Community Action.

Play The Reserve

Here's your chance to play the same course that hosts the Fred Meyer Challenge pros and help support Community Action's homeless family shelter at the same time. On Friday, September 17th, the 9th Annual Celebrity Invitational Golf Tournament will be held at The Reserve Vineyards and Golf Club. The Sunrise Rotary Foundation has annually hosted this event, demonstrating great support for our community. To reserve your spot and get more information call CAO at 693-3255.

Shelter to Reopen!

A shelter facility in Tigard, formerly known as The RITE Center, was built to serve homeless people in east Washington County. The former program operator closed the shelter in February due to lack of capacity to operate. Community Action Organization, in collaboration with the newly formed East Washington County Shelter Partnership Council and the Washington County Office of Community Development, will re-open the shelter this September. The County will lease the facility to CAO and provide about half of the first year's operating funds. The cities of Beaverton, Tigard and Tualatin have committed to funding support. CAO will be responsible for program operations for the first year. The Council will raise the funds needed for future years and will establish a non-profit organization to take responsibility after the first year. They will also provide volunteers to help operate the shelter program. If you are interested in volunteering, please call 693-3254.



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