

Together For Children

A publication of the Washington County Commission on Children & Families



WASHINGTON COUNTY
COMMISSION ON
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Update From Commission Chair



Christine Murray has been Chair of the Commission since 2006 and a member since 2004.

I often use this space to give a broad overview of CCF activities, pro-

The Somali Refugee Experience

The Washington County Somali Resources Network, which is staffed by the Commission, drew a crowd of over 75 people to their May training, "Bridging the Gap: Our Somali and Washington County Communities."

Dr. J. David Kinzie, MD, Halima Mohamed, QMHP, and Crystal Riley MA, QMHP, staff from the Intercultural Psychiatric Program of OHSU, presented.

The training agenda included information and

grams or events that took place during the quarter prior to publication.

This time I would like to highlight *The Outpost* at Shute Park, one of 37 summer foods sites across Washington County this summer.

The summer food program is an effort to address hunger by providing meals to children while school is not in session.

Sunny Ross, program coordinator for the Washington County summer food program, has reported to me that the number of children being

case studies about trauma the families have experienced in Somalia, challenges and misconceptions they face in the United States and how these experiences continue to affect their lives.

The training was a big success, drawing people from diverse organizations, who gathered to better understand the Somali refugee experience and how their organizations and resources can be of help to Somali families.

It was heartening to

served lunch continues to increase at *The Outpost*.

In 2006 the first year of operation an average of 100 meals were served each day. In 2007, the number doubled to 200 each day, and in 2008 in the first week of operation over 400 children received lunch each day.

Rarely has a project shown such significant success and exceeded expectations in such a spectacular way. I want to thank everyone who has or who will contribute to this outstanding program.



learn of the groups who have worked to bring refugee Somali families into the country, but a wake up call to learn that these groups are able to provide only 8 months of assistance.

It is unlikely that a family dealing with post traumatic stress, culture shock, role reversal, the loss of the head of household, and the economic necessity of providing for family left behind will be stable in such a short time.

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Kelly Jurman, Health Department
Janet Kretzmeier, CCF Coalition
Karin Kelley-Torregroza, VAN
Tom Vlahos & Shirley Vollmuller, DHS/Child Welfare

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Family Resource Centers Gain AmeriCorps



We are happy to announce that two local Family Resource Centers have been approved the placement of an AmeriCorps volunteer from the Oregon State Service Corp.

Each volunteer will provide 1,700 hours of full-time service as Resource Specialists with the Hillsboro and Tigard-Tualatin Centers.

The Specialists will work directly with families, youth and community partners to increase enrollment of eligible children and families in the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), enhance service delivery, and to expand volunteer programs at the Centers.

These sites represent two out of the state's 47 full and part-time AmeriCorps positions.

AmeriCorps is a National Service movement with roots in Peace Corps and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

It provides thousands of Americans of all ages and backgrounds with an opportunity to address pressing community needs by completing a year of service.

In exchange for their service,

AmeriCorps members receive a small living allowance and earn an education award.

The Oregon State Service Corps provides nonprofits, community and faith-based organizations, government agencies, and schools with the opportunity to sponsor an AmeriCorps member with the majority of funding coming from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The remaining portion, approximately one third to one half, is raised locally through place site cash match and in-kind match.

Interested applicants for these positions may contact Catherine West at cwest@ttsd.k12.or.us or Victoria Pevzner at pevznerv@hsd.k12 by July 22, 2008.

Strengthening Families

The Strengthening Families Program for parents and youth 10-14 is a nationally recognized, science-based, best practices program. This family education program is designed especially for families with pre-teens/early teens to provide guidance and support as children transition into adolescence.

Washington County CCF received state funding this year to replicate the Strengthening Families 10-14 Program at several sites throughout the county.

This program boasts impressive prevention outcomes. Studies show Strengthening Families 10-14 cuts drug use, alcohol use, smoking, aggressive behavior, conduct disor-

ders, and antisocial personality disorders in half, with results continuing throughout middle and high school years. The program also improves middle school engagement, and improves high school academic success.

During seven weekly sessions, parents build on their strengths in showing love and setting limits, youth develop skills in handling peer pressure and building a positive future, and families grow together.

Two booster sessions are held three to 12 months after the basic sessions to reinforce skills and give families the opportunity to problem solve challenges and share successes.



The groups are offered in both English and Spanish. Meals and child care (for younger siblings) are provided to make it easier for families to participate.

The Strengthening Families 10-14 Program will be offered in Hillsboro, Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin, Sherwood, and Forest Grove in collaboration with school districts, family resource centers, faith groups and other community agencies.

To watch an introductory video click here www.extension.iastate.edu/sfp/video/promo.html

CCF Intern Says Goodbye

~ Kate Gigler

For the last nine months a cubicle next to the commission staff members has been my home two days a week as I complete my final year of Masters of Social Work study at Portland State University.

This was the first year since finishing undergrad that I was not working directly with youth and it has opened my eyes to all of the different and exciting ways that social workers can serve as change agents at the macro level.

I've shadowed commission staff members while they attend work groups studying homeless and run-away youth issues, early childhood issues, and gang prevention.

I've also had the opportunity to participate in the writing of the 2008-2014 Community Comprehensive Plan and the resulting decision

making process around funding priorities and budget allocation.

My biggest area of responsibility was managing the Students Move work group – a small group of staff from the Hillsboro School District working to write a manual that will give schools many tools to help highly mobile students.

I have also been able to make solid connections between what I observed occurring at the commission and my course content.

This placement has been a fertile ground from which to pull material for term papers and other projects. I wrote about youth activism and the Youth Summit, the Reconnecting Families movement in child welfare, the challenges facing migrant students in achievement of academic success in Hillsboro, and



designed a program evaluation for social norms marketing campaigns in the Hillsboro School District.

During this time I've encountered both commission staff and members who were supportive and enthusiastic in my journey to learn about how the CCF system responds to a quickly changing Washington County

A big thank you to all for this opportunity!

Karin Kelly-Torregroza New Ex-Officio Member

Karin Kelly-Torregroza, new executive director of the Vision Action Network has agreed to become an Ex-Officio member of the Commission on Children and Families.



Ex-Officio members contribute their expertise in areas such as education, health, and social services but are non-voting members.

According to the *Hillsboro Argus*, "Karin holds a master's degree in counseling psychology from John F. Kennedy University.

She has presented at conferences on developing authentic, multi-sector collaboration.

She previously served as director of School-Community Partnerships for the Redwood City School District and staffed "Redwood City 2020," a cross-sector community

visioning and improvement project.

She also developed and directed collaborative school-based family resource centers for that area.

Most recently, she served as director of children, youth and family services for a metro area nonprofit."

We look forward to working with Karin on our shared mission: to improve the lives of the children and families of Washington County.

Children of Incarcerated Parents

A great example of collaboration is the team of professionals who gather monthly to develop programs that support children whose parents are involved in the criminal justice system.

These partners include schools, law enforcement, mental health, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), juvenile, community corrections, adult and family courts, district attorney's office, DHS- child welfare, and your Commission on Children and Families.

Our current projects include developing and creating a short video that will be presented to parents who become incarcerated in the county jail. The video will share information about programs and services for their children and family. The goal



is to educate parents and at the same time provide support to children at a very difficult time in their lives.

Our second project is a written pamphlet that will provide information to parents and extended family members on services that are available to support the children.

Both the video and pamphlet will be translated into Spanish.

For more information or to join our collaboration, please call Mary Nunnenkamp at 503-846-4918.

Somali Refugee Experience Continued

A key resource for Somalis and providers in Washington County is the Oregon Somali Family Education Center.

If you are aware of resources that could assist this population, or if you would like more infor-

mation please contact Kaltun Caynan at 503-577-7032.

For more information about the Somali Resources Network meetings please contact Betty Merritt, with the Commission on Children and Families at 503-846-4547.

The Comprehensive Community Plan for Children and Families documents the work of more than 250 individuals and organizations who gathered in small and large groups over the past year and a half to develop a plan to support the positive development of children and families in Washington County.

Washington County Commission on Children and Families worked to assure that the planning process was broad-based and inclusive.

With the economic downturn in the first part of this decade, resources for social services have declined, while population growth has continued unabated. The result is that the county is losing ground.

To learn what the community feels are the most pressing needs and how best to address them the following five questions were posed to every community group:

- How has the community changed in recent years?
- What are the major issues/ concerns facing children and families?
- What are some strategies that could help resolve these concerns?
- What has been going well, what are your community's strengths?
- Who is working on these issues in your community?

To view the results and read or print the Comprehensive Plan and profiles of each community click on this link to the CCF website www.co.washington.or.us/ccf

Parenting Class Schedule

Washington County
Summer 2008

is now available on the Commission on Children & Families Website

www.co.washington.or.us/ccf

To add classes please contact Sunny Ross at

sunny_ross@co.washington.or.us or 503-846-8031

The calendar will be updated and distributed seasonally

The Washington County Commission on Children & Families meets

7:00 - 8:30 PM

July 10, August 14, September 11

Room 1411 E

Capital Center, 18640 NW Walker Rd.
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