

# Community Action Connect

## From Wishing to Winning

A publication of  
Oregon Coast Community Action

### Hunger is Never 'Bear'-Able Share Bear Snack Pack Program

A program of Oregon Coast Community Action

"At mealtimes, I see a kind of panic in some children that I didn't see before. On Fridays especially, children are not only eating all the food on their own tray, but they are asking all the other students around for their spare food," said Mary Schoen-Clark, CEO of Oregon Coast Community Action. "They are rushing back in line for seconds, and have to wait there – impatiently – while all the other students get a first chance to eat, even though these kids are still hungry. Then they smuggle their grilled cheese sandwiches into their coat pockets, in case they're hungry later."

A groundbreaking food relief program for children in need, the Share Bear Snack Pack program, a part of Oregon Coast Community Action, is designed to meet the needs of hungry children at times when other food is not available, such as weekends and school vacations. At schools served by the Snack Pack program, children's backpacks are filled with child-friendly, nonperishable food each week for children to take home.

The first program of its kind in Oregon, Snack Pack has provided food to 150 children in need in three school sites since it began two years ago. Due to the success of the Share Bear Snack Pack program on the South Coast, other backpack food relief programs have been developed throughout Oregon, to provide food for hungry children.

"Watching local children fight the hunger that came with them to school, and struggle with going back to a home that might not have food, is a terrible thing," Schoen-Clark said. "Making sure children have the food they need is not an optional thing – it is vital."

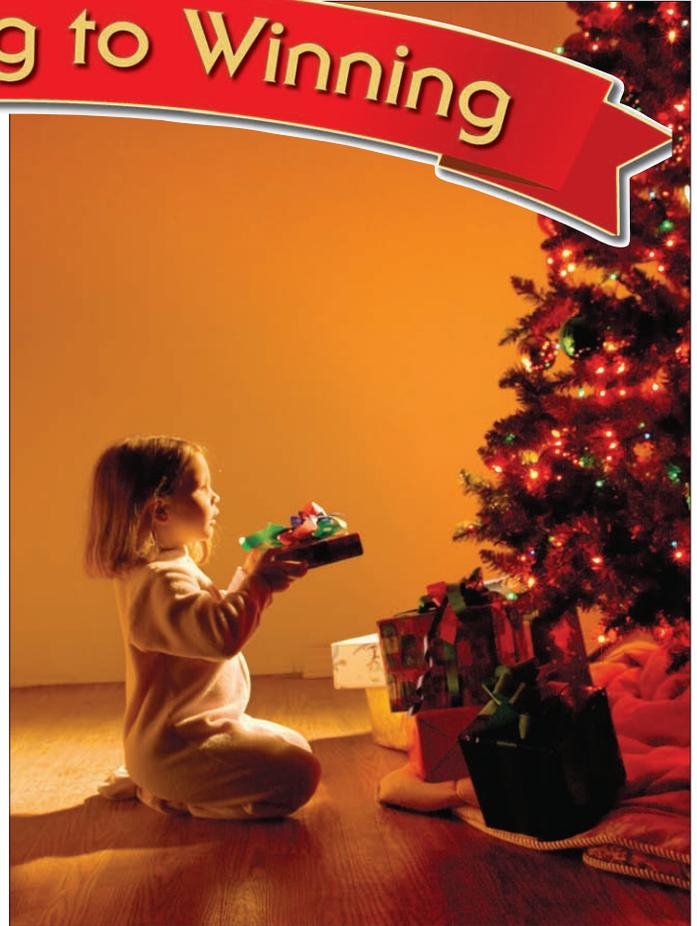
Three local schools support Oregon Coast Community Action's Share Bear Snack Pack program. Participating schools include Hillcrest Elementary in North Bend, Madison Elementary in Coos Bay, and the Great Afternoons Program at

Highland Elementary in Reedsport, with each school site receiving food for 50 children each week. Many children on the South Coast need the food the Share Bear Snack Pack program provides, and Oregon Coast Community Action is currently seeking funds to expand the program and will be serving new schools in Coos and Curry counties in 2009.

Oregon Coast Community Action provides the regional food bank for Coos and Curry counties, South Coast Food Share – which contributes food and administration for the Share Bear Snack Pack program. All food programs at Oregon Coast Community Action are supported only by regional, state and local donations and funding.

The Snack Pack program has been supported through grants and donations from: Mr. MHS – Marshfield High School, Bay Area Sunrise Rotary Club – Coos Bay/North Bend, The Zonta Club of the Coos Bay Area, Bay Area Rotary Club, the Coos Bay Elks – Lodge No. 1160, and the Coos Bay-North Bend Rotary Club, in addition to many community donations. Major funding has been provided through the Oregon Community Foundation, the National Elks Foundation, Umpqua Bank, Wal-Mart, Bay Area Hospital, Fred Meyer, and Northwest Community Credit Union, in addition to the great support of many private donors.

Volunteers have been a vital part of the Snack Pack program over the last two years – and will continue to be a critical element in the effort to provide more food to hungry children on the South Coast. The employees of Northwest Community Credit Union



and Umpqua Bank, in addition to the members of many local clubs and groups, have provided volunteer support to this program, in addition to many community volunteers. As Oregon Coast Community Action expands the Snack Pack program, more volunteers will be needed to help pack, sort and deliver the food to the schools.

"At a time like this, when we're seeing more layoffs and greater need for help with food, energy or housing costs and much more, it's important we do all that we can to

help each other," said Community Action CEO, Mary Schoen-Clark. "From Reedsport to Brookings we're helping families every day to live in a better world, and to create a brighter future."

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# To our readers

## Serving Coos, Curry, and Western Douglas Counties

Recently I had the opportunity to spend time with volunteers from the Walter Graham Myrtle Point Food Pantry. During our time together one of the volunteers said to me, "Every Sunday after church we go to Figaro's and get the latest newspaper, and there is almost always a story about what Oregon Coast Community Action (ORCCA) is doing to help out the community. It feels good to be a part of ORCCA... to be a part of something bigger than ourselves."

That's what is so special about Community Action Connect... it's about being a part of something bigger than ourselves. It's a way to support our neighbors and to widen our circle of compassion. It's a way of knowing that your efforts, even if they do not benefit your family or business, can help someone else. It's just like reaching out and helping someone to stand up on their own two feet.

Community Action Connect is a new grassroots initiative of Oregon Coast Community Action that works to help more local families in need through a partnership with many local businesses organizations and individuals.

As a part of our Community Action Connect initiative, we're proud to introduce the first annual Oregon Coast Community Action holiday publication: Community Action Connect - From Wishing To Winning. This publication is part of our effort to help the South Coast come together in support of local families and organizations that make a huge difference in our communities, at a time when those in need in our region need help the most.

It is our long support of organizations and groups that work to help families in our region that prompted us to include four of our partners in this Community Action Connect publication, so the community could have another opportunity to see how vital these local organizations are to those in our region. Although Oregon Coast Community Action does not administer these agencies, we provide some financial support to their mission to help our neighbors create a brighter future on the South Coast.

We help support the work of several local organizations and food pantries in our region, including: Women's Safety & Resource Center; Bay Area First Step;



SHAMA House; Coos County Foster Parents Association; Coos Crisis Resolution Center; Salvation Army; T.H.E. House; Oasis Shelter; Star of Hope; Bandon Good Neighbors; North Bend Presbyterian; Ecumenical Emergency Food Cupboard in Coos Bay; Seventh Day Adventist food pantries in Coos Bay, Coquille and Gold Beach; Confederated Tribes; South Coast Garden Association; Brookings-Harbor Community Helpers; Charleston Food Bank; Gold Beach Christian Help; Langlois Community Church; Walter Graham Food Pantry in Myrtle Point; The Common Good in Port Orford; The Joseph Project in Powers; AARP Pantry in Reedsport and others.

Oregon Coast Community Action has been a part of the fabric of the South Coast community since 1965 - working to help local families thrive, and live with dignity, security and hope. ORCCA is not only serving the region through vital programs, but expanding. Last year ORCCA added 22 jobs to the community, and in 2009 construction on the Community Campus will begin, with the Head Start Classroom Building and the South Coast Food Share Central Food Warehouse going up. ORCCA also will be working in partnership with the Walter Graham Food Pantry and the Myrtle Point Ministerial Association, to remodel and expand its current building into a small warehouse, which will be a part of South Coast Food Share's distribution network and provide food to Coos County pantries in Myrtle Point, Coquille, Powers and Bandon. These projects will release several million

dollars in construction funds into our region, and employ dozens of community members in support of our mission.

In these difficult economic times, where many people are coming to Oregon Coast Community Action for help for the first time, helping our programs and partners in the community to help those in need is a vital way to support this community. Consider how you can help ORCCA, our local partners and pantries by volunteering, donating or finding out more. Go to [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us) to find more information or call (541) 888-1574.

Thank you for helping us to make a big difference in the lives of those in need. We wish you a happy holiday season and hope you and your family, stay warm, well-fed and safe this winter.

Sincerely,  
Mary Schoen-Clark,  
CEO of Oregon Coast Community Action

## From Wishing to Winning

ORCCA programs:

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Non-ORCCA programs:

Each of these organizations operates independently. The funding of each program is created by donations made directly to each of their organizations.

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Please visit their page for information on how you can make a contribution.

### Community Action Connect

Oregon Coast Community Action's new grassroots initiative, Community Action Connect, is helping more local families in need through a partnership with community leaders, local businesses and organizations. This initiative will provide a way for families on crisis to get specific items or services they need, such as a haircut, new clothes for an interview, a bicycle for transportation or a warm meal.

**Oregon Coast Community Action would like to thank the founding members of Community Action Connect:**

|                                       |                                        |                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Bay Area Chamber of Commerce        | • Books by the Bay                     | • Department of Human Services Clothing Closet and Community Outreach |
| • K-DOCK radio                        | • Shaklee                              | • Salvation Army                                                      |
| • Senator Joanne Verger               | • Awesome Cuts                         | • Epiphany and Co.                                                    |
| • Rep. Arnie Roblan                   | • Roger's Zoo                          | • My Yarn Shop                                                        |
| • Coos Bay Mayor Jeff McKeown         | • Whoozit's Whatzit's Gadgets          | • Knutson Towboat Company                                             |
| • Yellow Cab                          | • Bi-Mart stores                       | • Benetti's Italian Restaurant                                        |
| • Colette's: Good Food + Hungry Minds | • McKay's Fresh Mart                   | • Smith Barney                                                        |
| • Goodwill Industries                 | • Bay Area Enterprise Appliance Center |                                                                       |
| • Curl Up N Dye                       |                                        |                                                                       |

**Please support businesses, organizations & individuals that are taking action to help those in need!**

**Get Connected! Help support your neighbors during these tough economic times, and know you're making a big difference for those in need. To join Community Action Connect call 888-7171 or go to [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us).**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Community Action Connect

### From Wishing to Winning

**Make checks payable to:**  
Oregon Coast Community Action

Please include this coupon and indicate which of the following "From Wishing to Winning" ORCCA programs you would like your contributions to support.

|                                                          |                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Action Connect        | <input type="checkbox"/> CASA       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Housing & Weatherization | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Afternoons                | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Share |

The money collected through Community Action Connect: **From Wishing to Winning**, will be used to fulfill the needs of the organizations and programs showcased in this publication. All contributions to Oregon Coast Community Action programs, or its community partners - Women's Safety & Resource Center, Bay Area First Step, SHAMA House and Coos County Foster Parents Association - will make significant contributions on behalf of those in need in our community.

**All donations are tax-deductible.**

**Credit card or debit card contributions may be made by visiting [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us)**

**Mail your contribution to:**  
Oregon Coast Community Action  
2110 Newmark Ave., Coos Bay, OR 97420



# Connecting to Those In Need

## Community Action Connect



Jessica and Jerry at their cafe - Colette's Good Food and Hungry Minds.

Jessica Lloyd-Rogers knows how to feed a family of two on \$30 a month – which means no condiments, no frivolities, living on beans and rice, and \$3.99 boxes of chicken thighs. Cheese was a luxury, but Jessica made sure her family always had milk, even if it was powdered milk.

Although Jessica hasn't lived in poverty for many years, her struggle to make ends meet is an experience she won't soon forget.

"I was temporarily hungry, I was hungry for hours at a time or for a couple of days, but never for days and days, and I felt lucky that I could make it work. I would work for room and board, or in a grocery store," said Jessica.

Living in poverty leaves many people unable to think beyond the next paycheck, the next bill that will go unpaid, or the empty shelves. Struggling through that time in her life, Jessica made the

sacrifices she deemed necessary to take good care of her daughter.

"I can't imagine what it must be like living in poverty with more than one child," Jessica said. "I grew up the oldest of nine kids and I knew we were living under the poverty line, but we lived on a farm, raising our own meat, milk cows and vegetables. I never felt poverty until I left home at fourteen."

Due to her uneasiness with navigating the state assistance programs, such as welfare or Food Stamps, Jessica largely did without the sort of programs that might have helped her and her daughter when they were living in poverty. Even though she was a single mother, Jessica never applied for welfare – but she did receive Food Stamps twice – for six months each time.

But admitting she needed help also meant sacrificing the one thing Jessica always had no matter how desperate things would get – her pride. Accepting Food Stamps was a blow to her pride, but Jessica said she wouldn't have sought the help to pay for food if she hadn't been desperate.

"When I went on food stamps, I got the help because I was caring for my daughter and I didn't want to worry about her going hungry. It's hard to watch your children go hungry," Jessica said. "I got off of the food stamps as quickly as I could," she said.

Things began to change when Jessica's daughter moved out and began to live on her own. Jessica was able to make some different choices, and took a job as a live-in caregiver. The biggest turning

point in her life came in connecting with her husband, Jerry. In their partnership, the two found a new way of life, and discovered a shared desire to help those living in poverty in our community.

"When we were setting up our business – Colette's: Good Food + Hungry Minds, we visualized what we wanted," Jessica said. "We knew we wanted to support community, and decided on some specific aspects: those suffering abuse, homelessness and hunger were at top of list."

That's when Colette's began working with local organizations that fight poverty – including Oregon Coast Community Action. Hosting food drives and fundraisers to provide more resources for local organizations was one way to help, but Jessica wasn't satisfied she and Jerry were making a big enough impact on those in need in our community.

That changed when Oregon Coast Community Action began its new grassroots initiative to help local families – Community Action Connect. An effort to work with local businesses and organizations to provide items and services to those in need in our region, Community Action Connect offers our everyone in the community a way to provide those in need a hand-up – not a hand out. The program relies on gift certificates from local businesses, or donations, which can help Community Action provide items or services to local families that other programs can't – such as a new suit for a job interview, a warm meal, or a bicycle to get to work.

Colette's was the first business in the Bay Area to become a supporter of Community Action Connect. Jessica provided several certificates for soup, bread and a beverage to ORCCA, which will allow staff members to offer the certificates to families in crisis who have no access to weekly or monthly food pantries.

"We might not see some of these small offerings as important, but they can really make a difference in someone's life," said Jessica. "Having money, comfort, warmth or shelter doesn't make us morally superior, it obligates us. We need to be compassionate with those who are struggling to make ends meet."

Jessica believes it speaks well of our community that people recognize the needs of others and their own responsibility to meet those needs.

"If everyone does the little bit they can, it all matters and it all helps," she said. "We're all in this together."

### Wish List

- Gift certificates for thrift stores, restaurants, taxi rides, bus passes, gas vouchers, hygiene items, and more.

- Or become a member making a cash donation. Information about membership can be found at [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us)

### Community Action Connect

Community Action Connect is a new grassroots initiative of Oregon Coast Community Action that works to help more local families in need through a partnership with many local business, government and individuals. This initiative will provide a way for families in crisis to get items or services they need, such as a haircut, new clothes for an interview, or a warm meal. Sponsors and members of Community Action Connect are helping Oregon Coast Community Action to provide a hand up, not a hand out. With this program, the community can help us create a brighter future for all of the South Coast. For more information, those interested can go to [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us) or to become a member call (541) 888-7171.

# Staying Safe and Warm

## Oregon Coast Community Action's Energy Services Division

After 62 years in her family home, Helen McGraw's furnace was breaking down. The machine was spilling soot out of the registers and leaking poisonous gases – and producing little heat.

A great-grandmother of 33 and a great-great-grandmother three times over, Helen called All Weather Heating for help – but once the repairman arrived it was clear the situation wasn't good. A cracked heat exchanger on the furnace was making the appliance dangerous to use and could potentially fill the house with poisonous gas fumes.

Helen was facing going without heat because she couldn't afford to repair the

furnace, as a retired widow she was living on a fixed income. Trying to repair her longtime Coos Bay home or face the consequences was very upsetting to Helen.

"I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't have the money to get every thing done that needed to be done. I needed a new window for the front of my house, it was falling out, I needed a heater, and I needed to have a new roof put on," Helen said. "I didn't know what I was going to do to stay warm. I just didn't know what I was going to do."

But Rick at All Weather Heating wasn't willing to let Helen face her troubles alone. He returned to his office and contacted

Oregon Coast Community Action's Energy Services Division and asked the Weatherization staff to review Helen's situation and see if there was any way to help.

"When we heard from Rick and he told us about Helen's situation, we knew immediately that we could probably help her – but we just weren't sure how much help we could offer. After we completed her energy audit it was clear to us she was in a really bad situation," said Shawna Souza, Energy Auditor for Oregon Coast Community Action.

Community Action's Weatherization staff performed an energy audit on Helen's house and determined she was not only living in a poorly weatherized house that was leaking valuable heat and energy, but also that Helen qualified for assistance to weatherize her home.

Through the Weatherization program Oregon Coast Community Action was able to provide Helen with a new furnace, insulate her floor and attic, replace several windows and installed a CO detector to help keep her safe.

"Because of the work Community Action did I was able to fix my roof. I could never have afforded any of the repairs on my own," Helen said. "The neighborhood children got together and saw all the work being done on my house, and I guess they thought I was short on money because they brought me \$2.23 in pennies, nickels and dimes to help out. They said it was money they didn't need. I keep it right here by my chair to remind me of what great kids we have in this

continued page 4



neighborhood."

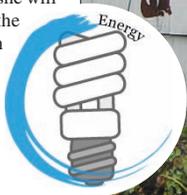
Having Community Action services available on the South Coast means many families receive the help they need to get through tough times. The Energy Services Division at Oregon Coast Community Action provides a variety of services to the South Coast community, including the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) for help to pay utility bills, free education and tips on saving money on electricity or heating bills, as well as assistance in weatherizing homes to save energy and help families save even more in energy costs. All Energy Services programs assist local families that meet state or federal income qualifications.

"Making a big difference in the lives of people in need in our community makes me feel inspired," Shawna said. "It's so rewarding to work with people like Helen, who just need a little help to make it through. Seeing the way our help can make a big difference in someone's life, and give them hope, is amazing."

Knowing there's help for those in need lightens Helen's heart. Although she had never used Community Action programs before, she said receiving help from ORCCA's programs was a wonderful experience. Knowing there are organizations in our region that are focused on helping those in need and making things possible for everyone - no matter where they live or how they live - makes us all really blessed, Helen said.

"It makes me think we live in a wonderful place, it makes me ask what I did to deserve all this help. I can't think of enough words to say 'thank you'," she said. "It has also shown me that there is still some good in the world. The help we can get from Community Action can really make the difference between losing someone's home, and finding new hope for the future."

Instead of worrying about staying warm and safe in her home, which was built by her family more than 60 years ago, Helen has been able to use the services offered at Oregon Coast Community Action to repair, weatherize and improve the use of her home - where she will continue to do the things she loves in the home she loves, with her cherished cat Misty for many years to come.



## Finding Happy Endings



Dee Stull has touched the lives of many people over the last 10 years. A great-grandmother of eight, Dee has helped many children in her life - but one of the biggest impacts has been as a

Court Appointed Special Advocate in Coos County.

Working to improve the lives of abused and neglected children and represent their best interests in court, CASA volunteers have the ability to keep children from falling through the cracks of the foster care system. Dee has been a CASA since 1999, not long after the program began serving Coos County children in 1993.

"There was only 20 or 25 volunteers when I started, and now there are about 50 of us," Dee said with a smile. "There are many people in our community helping children."

CASA of Coos County is a program of Oregon Coast Community Action and financially supported by the Coos County Commission on Children and Families. The program provides training and support to about 50 local CASA volunteers, who advocate for children in the foster care system. Volunteers represent the best interests of vulnerable children in Coos

County, and work to make sure each child is placed in a safe, caring and permanent home. Prospective CASAs are asked to complete 30 hours of initial training before taking on a case. These dedicated volunteers make a significant difference in the decisions made on behalf of children by the Coos County Juvenile Court.

After retiring from her career as a book-keeper, Dee said she became a CASA in order to help the most needy children in our community. A warm, caring woman, Dee has helped not only individual children find a safe, caring permanent home - but is also helping some children for the second time. Although she is always glad to see the children she helped, seeing them back in the system isn't the outcome she hopes for as a CASA. But at least now she knows the children will have someone on their side once more, someone to stand up for their best interests - which they will need now more than ever.

"These kids live every day waiting. They live with the constant disappointment of inconsistency - inconsistent parents, inconsistent schools, and inconsistent lives. All a CASA can do is try to make sure that medical appointments are kept, that the child is kept in school, as well as keeping sure that they are in a loving safe environment," Dee said. "There are lots of ups and downs, but you're just there to try to help the kids."

CASA volunteers are privy to medical records, school records, meetings with

family members, encouraged to meet friends, neighbors or clergy members. CASA's contact nearly everyone in the children's lives in order to advocate for their best interests.

Helping families come back together, or seeing a child adopted by a new family, is the best outcome for CASA children. Dee has seen six of her CASA children adopted by foster parents over the last 10 years, and two more are in the process of being adopted.

In order to help more children in need in our community, Dee encourages community members to become a CASA volunteer or help support the CASA program.

"Every kid needs somebody, and every vulnerable child needs a CASA," Dee said. "There are lots of retired people in this community who have the experience that could help lots of children. If we only had 50 more CASAs, we could help all the needy children in Coos County - and make sure our local kids have a much brighter future."

The preliminary 30-hour training to become a CASA volunteer is offered twice a year, and there is on going in-service training. While the tasks ahead of a CASA can seem a little daunting, Dee said she received excellent training and staff members at the CASA program are very supportive.

"You just have to remind yourself when things get tough, it's all about the children - and what is best for them," Dee said with a smile. "CASAs help children find a happier ending, and there's no better feeling than that."



- Become a CASA volunteer
- Help raise funds for CASA as a member of the Friends of CASA
- Volunteer in the CASA office
- Promote CASA at your social events and clubs
- Purchase CASA jewelry and wear it proudly
- Shop at Albertsons with your Community Partner Card - and a percentage of the purchases will go to support CASA!

\*Find out more on how to support CASA, the Community Partner Card program and where to purchase CASA items, at [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us)



### Energy Services

Oregon Coast Community Action's Energy Services provides support to help households deal with increasing energy costs both in payments and methods to lower energy usage, including the weatherization of over 100 homes a year. Energy Services offers the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), which provides a one-time utility payment to families in need; other services include crisis utility payments, free energy education workshops that can save households as much as \$200 a year on electric bills, free energy saving products (for those that qualify), low-income weatherization services and more. For more information, those interested can go to [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us) or call (541) 888-1574.

### Wish List

- Volunteer to assist with office work, reception and data entry
- Firewood for clients dependent on wood-heat
- Subscriptions to parents' and children's magazines (Parenting, My Big Back Yard, Ranger Rick, Highlights, etc.)
- Gift certificates for food at WalMart or Burger King



# Growing a Healthy Community

While many organizations and community efforts focus on helping low-income families or vulnerable children in a variety of ways, only one national organization has been dedicated to “Fighting Poverty with Passion,” for more than 40 years. The Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) program has worked to relieve poverty around the world, empowering volunteers of all ages to step up and make a difference for those in need. Now a part of AmeriCorps, VISTA members work for the best of communities all over the nation.

On the South Coast, VISTA and AmeriCorps volunteers have helped schools, organizations and local churches to provide new services for families in need. Through the efforts of VISTA workers, Oregon Coast Community Action has been able to reach out into the community and change hundreds of lives.

Great Afternoons has made a direct impact on the entire community of Reedsport through its VISTA service project – the Great Garden. This effort was focused not only on helping to teach local children about food sources, science, and provide hands-on-learning opportunities, but also to grow fruits and vegetables for Reedsport food pantries.

“Fighting hunger and offering children new opportunities is one of the most important goals of the Great Garden,” said Community Garden Coordinator VISTA Sarah Turner. “Without VISTA, it would have been almost impossible to get the Great Garden started.”

Many families in the Reedsport area live below the poverty level and rely on the food provided through local food pantries. Offering more fresh produce for local families in need ensures more children and families can benefit from good nutrition, and children in Reedsport have a chance to see how food is grown first hand.

Dedicating a year to VISTA is a big commitment, but Sarah said she wanted to make a meaningful difference in the world.

“I was eager to help educate youth, individuals, and families about the importance of nutrition and healthy eating,” she said. “But the real surprise, the real joy is in seeing the community adopt the garden as their own – seeing volunteers of all ages working together and coming together in the garden.”

Great Afternoons, an Oregon Coast Community Action program in the Reedsport area, provides a sliding-scale daycare and after-school services. The safe, caring and educational environment of the Great Afternoons program means students have somewhere to go after

school, a place to learn, a place to volunteer, a place to help others or just find some homework help.

By working in partnership with the AmeriCorps VISTA program, Great Afternoons Director Chris Marsh and the Great Afternoons staff have worked to create some exciting changes in the Reedsport community. The Great Garden, and other VISTA projects are just some of the ways that dedicated volunteers helped to bring about great change – and watched it grow.

“The most inspiring thing about working with VISTA members have been their self-motivation and their deep convictions,” said Chris Marsh. “Each of the VISTA members who helped to create the garden has really inspired this community. They all brought back idealism to our area in a positive way – to the community, to the Great Afternoons students, to our staff and to me personally. And that is a gift.”

The Great Garden has grown hundreds of pounds of vegetables for the benefit of low-income families, and a sense of community spirit has taken seed in the garden and bring many different people together. Volunteers not only plant or weed the garden, but also teach Great Afternoon students and encourage others to try new foods. The garden also unites the Reedsport community, providing a communal space for people of all backgrounds to come together in the name of service and commitment.

Although in January Sarah Turner will leave Reedsport and branch out into the world, the Great Garden and its community spirit will continue. Garden volunteers will carry-on the teaching, planting and growing, continuing to unite the community in the great hope of eternal spring.

## Great Afternoons

Great Afternoons is a program of Oregon Coast Community Action that provides an array of services on a sliding scale to children ages 6 weeks to 12 years and their families in Reedsport, Winchester Bay, Gardiner and the surrounding area. Great Afternoons is an essential component of the Reedsport Community, providing safe and affordable childcare and educational experiences for children, the majority of whom come from low-income households. The programs serve over 100 children and include Great Beginnings, infant and toddler care for birth to three, Great Afternoons Pre-school and

Childcare, for ages 3-12, Great Times after school and summer school activities for grades K-6 as well as family night events, Great Opportunities- parenting classes, exercise, credit retrieval for high school students and the Great Garden, a community garden project that provided nutrition education, food security and multigenerational activities. In this small rural community the link between this program and the school district as well as the hospital and local agencies is a strong one. Together we work to provide a good positive environment for our children.

### AmeriCorps & VISTA

AmeriCorps volunteers and Volunteer In Service To America members (VISTA), represent the national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. VISTA members commit to serve full-time for a year at a non-profit organization or local government agency, working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, strengthen community groups, and much more. For more information, those interested can go to [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)



### Wish List

- Two large 4-seat strollers
- New board games, watercolors, paints and assorted arts and craft supplies.
- Two large compost bins for the Great Garden.
- Volunteers to rock and feed babies in the daycare program.
- Volunteers to read and play with preschool age children.
- Volunteers to provide homework help to children of all ages.
- Volunteers for weeding, planting, building beds, harvesting and more.

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# Getting a Head Start on Health

South Coast Head Start is a preschool program for low-income children, ages three to five, provided by Oregon Coast Community Action. Head Start offers activities for children that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally and physically, and provides a safe environment for children of low-income families. South Coast Head Start also provides comprehensive social service for the families of their students, providing support in emergencies and assisting parents in securing resources to benefit their family as a whole. The Head Start program encourages growth and development of children and families through classroom experiences and home visits.

Even for children in rural communities, playing outside or around the neighborhood is becoming a thing of the past. Often, keeping children safe may mean restricting them indoors, and less physical play has become one of the reasons behind the growing epidemic of childhood obesity and poor nutrition.

But South Coast Head Start, a program of Oregon Coast Community Action, is giving young children and their families a head start on developing healthy habits.

"Every Head Start program in the nation has seen more children in our age group, from three to five years old, suffering from childhood obesity or at risk for health problems," said Dale Helland, Director of South Coast Head Start. "We're very concerned that without taking the initiative to help our local families understand healthy eating and activity, even our young students will be facing a health crisis."

Creating a safe and healthy environment for children is part of the mission of South Coast Head Start, and promoting healthy eating, physical play and family fun is the latest way Head Start is looking out for children and creating a brighter future for families in our region. South Coast Head Start and Head Start programs throughout Oregon have taken action to address some of the root causes of childhood obesity through the new Health in Action initiative.

Focusing on the entire family, Health in Action promotes healthy eating, physical play and family fun, by providing free activity kits for Head Start families, featuring active toys, games for the whole family and information on good nutrition.

"The games and information in the Health in Action kits are designed to get children moving, and provide the family with something to do together," said Helland. "The kits come in a series of five, with each one providing a lesson on nutrition that children can really enjoy, such as step one, which is called Jump into Dairy and Moo've into Milk! We believe the family focus of the free kits will allow us to help families form healthy eating and activity habits, and keep our local kids healthy and happy."

Health in Action was developed by the Child Development Center at Oregon State University and is supported in Coos and Curry counties by donations from Wal-Mart and Coquille Valley Fitness Center. Volunteers are a crucial part of the success of the Health in Action program within South Coast Head Start, and Umpqua Bank

has been an avid supporter of the Health in Action program.

"We got involved in Oregon Coast Community Action's children programs by helping out with the Share Bear Snack Pack program, which touched our hearts," said Sherry Yarbrough, Vice-President at Umpqua Bank. "Knowing the big difference we were helping to make in the difference of the lives of local children really motivated our employees to volunteer for the Health and Action program as well."

Involvement in the communities served by Umpqua Bank branches is an important tradition for the company, said Yarbrough. Currently, Umpqua Bank provides its employees with 40 hours of paid volunteer time every year to devote to youth focused organizations, schools, and community development programs.

The community focus of Umpqua Bank has helped many Community Action programs to assist more families in need, and help create a brighter future on the South Coast. Umpqua Bank's dedication to helping local families in

their community, which include vulnerable families, in addition to their own employees, friends and families – has been the crucial support needed to make sure several Community Action programs were able to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

"We believe Umpqua's volunteer program could be a catalyst in stimulating other businesses to think about how they can interact with their communities," Yarbrough said. "We couldn't think of anything more important in our community than working to keep children healthy. We hope others will join us in working to protect our most valuable resource – our children."

The associates at Umpqua Bank believe it is vitally important to educate today's youth in the areas of nutrition and physical activity, which can help young people to live a healthy lifestyle.

"Our community is greatly affected by the current economy. There are many families that do not have the option to eat a healthy meal, simply because they lack the knowledge or funds for healthier foods," Yarbrough said. "Health in Action is an excellent step to help our local families develop the skills they need to be healthy and raise healthy children, and Head Start's holistic family approach means more families will receive this important edu-



Umpqua Bank volunteers help children through Health in Action Initiative.

cation while also receiving services they need, such as food."

Head Start realizes the value of educating their students and families, and the value of community support in creating change. In partnership with Umpqua Bank, and through the Health in Action program, Head Start is actively helping local students incorporate healthy foods and physical activities into their lives, and hopes to increase the number of happy, healthy families on the South Coast.

## Wish List

- Funding for Family Food Boxes for Head Start programs (\$6 a box)
- Children's reading books for ages 3-4 (especially Dr. Seuss!)
- Learning toys for ages 3-4, such as wooden puzzles (10-15 pieces), crayons, balls and more.
- Donations of time from local dentists & doctors for children's checkups

# The Road Out Of Poverty

For some families, it seems no matter how hard they work things only get worse. Bills continue to pile up, money never seems to stretch far enough – and trying to choose between heat and electricity and food to feed their family is a common decision.

Even though she was working three jobs, when "Margaret" came to Oregon Coast Community Action for help she was facing a huge electric bill and caring for her disabled father in addition to three children. Her family had been living without necessities in order to pay for their utilities, but even with the sacrifices they were already making – it just wasn't enough.

"I was trying to pay my medical bills, care for my family and then my ex-husband up and left me with a \$900 electric bill," Margaret said. "I paid and I paid, but just couldn't catch up. No matter what I did, it just kept getting worse."

In trying to pay their bills, Margaret and her family tried to make do without any help. They went cold without their heat and quickly learned food was a luxury – going hungry

had become a part of their daily lives.

"When I was young, my dad told me 'No one helps someone else for free.' So, I felt like I couldn't reach out for help even when I really needed it," Margaret said. "Plus, I thought if I did, people would think that I wasn't trying hard enough. But in the end, I just couldn't let my kids go hungry anymore..."

That's what drew Margaret to seek help from Oregon Coast Community Action. She came in to the Energy Services Division for help with a shut-off notice for her utilities in her hand – and found a lot more help than she expected. Caseworkers for ORCCA's Energy Services programs enrolled Margaret's family in Energy Education and made an immediate crisis payment on their utility bill.

Margaret also was enrolled in Community Action's Home Based Tenant Assistance program, which lowered her housing costs and allowed Margaret to work on paying off her medical bills. The tenant assistance program provided Margaret with the chance she'd been looking for – to get ahead and make enough money to care for her family. This change was a huge shift for the family, which had lived in crisis for so long it was

hard to imagine a different way of life.

"I was amazed to find out that Community Action is there to help, not to make you feel bad – there really are people who want to help you make it through a hard time. The people at Community Action treated me like a friend, like I was a human being, not like they were better than I was," Margaret said. "They really helped me get back on my feet and accomplish something to put my family in a better place. It was an amazing thing, to get help that made such a big difference in my life, and the lives of my children."

The Energy Services Division completed a Weatherization and Dwelling Assessment of Margaret's home, discovering a leaking water pipe and several other areas in the house that were leaking energy – including poor insulation and in-efficient energy use – which had resulted in high utility costs. Community Action negotiated with Margaret's landlord, who agreed to pay half of the water bill due to the leaking pipe.

Community Action also helped Margaret get emergency food box assistance from local pantries that work with South Coast Food Share, an Oregon Coast Community Action program. The emergency food helped keep Margaret's family from going hungry and improved the quality of their nutrition and diet.

*continued page 7*



"I was really surprised to learn there are a lot of people in town that are willing to help – a lot more than I realized. There are food pantries, the libraries, the Salvation Army, even the Fire Departments," Margaret said.

To help Margaret improve her job skills, Oregon Coast Community Action caseworkers helped Margaret enroll in continuing education courses at Southwestern Oregon Community College. She now attends a monthly focus group at Community Action, where she is learning budgeting, life skills, home safety, and how to develop her goals and dreams into a brighter future for her family.

Through her work with her caseworker at

Community Action, Margaret has a financial plan and a job that she really enjoys. Margaret also has continued to use the local food pantries as necessary and her family no longer goes hungry, and her family now has plenty of affordable heat. Margaret also recently received the good news that her daughter has been awarded a scholarship to Southwestern Oregon Community College.

With ORCCA's help, Margaret and her family have come a long way from the time when they were afraid of the cold and facing a daily struggle.

"I'm hopeful that with all the help I've

received, my family's future will be filled with success – not hunger and fear," Margaret said. "I've traded fear for the hope I always wanted, and I know there's only more good to come."

\* This is a real story. Names in this story have been changed for privacy reasons.

## Housing

The Emergency Services division of Oregon Coast Community Action aims to provide emergency rental assistance, affordable housing units (located in Coos Bay), listings of available rentals, housing counseling and more services. The Oregon Department of Oregon Housing & Community Services funds many of ORCCA's housing assistance services. Emergency Services include, the Rental Assistance Program, Home Tenant Based Assistance, and Coos Oregon Leasing + Services, the Family Transitions Program, Transitional Housing, Salmon Industry Assistance, the Northwest Dental Van, the 10-Year-Plan-To-End-Homelessness and more. For more information, those interested can go to [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us) or call (541) 888-1574

# Giving and Receiving

## South Coast Food Share



For many families in need, giving back to their community and the organizations that helped them pay their electric bills, educate their children, feed their family or stay in their home is just one way they make sure that help is there for others in need.

That's always been Geraldine Canaday's philosophy. Although Gerri's family has been in dire straits before, there's never been a time the Canaday's were unwilling to share what they had. No matter how much there was to share, the Canaday's were generous foster parents, who donated and worked on behalf of their church, and volunteered for programs such as South Coast Head Start, which educate and serve nearly 400 children and families in Coos and Curry counties.

"Since we moved to Myrtle Point from Florida, we've been a big part of this community," Gerri said. "We're always willing to lend a helping hand to others. In times like these, with the economy the way it is, we all have to be willing to help out those in need."

But a few years after the move, the family was struggling to make ends meet, and suddenly needed the support of their community. Gerri became seriously ill following a car accident. She later developed a rare, terminal



illness that required \$4,800 in medication every month – adding fuel to the fire of the fami-



Gerri Canaday and her family benefits from emergency food from the Walter Graham Food Pantry in Myrtle Point, which is a member of South Coast Food Share network.

ly's difficult financial situation.

"We were buying the medicine only a little at a time, we couldn't afford the \$4,800," she said. "But the money we spent on medicine had to come from somewhere, and it meant we were even further behind on our bills."

Before long, Gerri and her family were facing shut-off notices for almost everything – including their utilities. Despite that, Gerri wasn't ready to ask for help until one of her friends encouraged her to speak with Oregon Coast Community Action staff at the outreach office in the Walter Graham Food Pantry in Myrtle Point.

"The Canaday family had given up anything they could to afford all their necessities, they'd even given up their house – but they were still struggling to make ends meet," said John Mysterly, an Energy Services caseworker at Community Action. "It was toward the end of our Energy Services funding for the year, but we were able to provide Gerri and

her family with the last \$600 available for crisis utility payments."

While Gerri was going through her financial documents with Community Action Energy Services, the volunteers at the Walter Graham Food Pantry, which is part of Oregon Coast Community Action's South Coast Food Share program, filled Gerri's truck with food for her family. And before she could leave, the Myrtle Point Ministerial Association – that works closely with the Food Pantry, provided the Canaday family with a \$300 check to help pay additional bills.

The outpouring of support from her community made a big impression on Gerri, who hadn't expected to receive such generous help from her friends, neighbors and others at Oregon Coast Community Action, Walter Graham Food Pantry and the Myrtle Point Ministerial Association.

"I was just so grateful for the help, and I had been worried about asking for help. But the very generous support made such a great difference for my family," Gerri said. "As soon as I left there, the sickness in my gut from the power shut-off was gone. The energy assistance help was so surprising and so important, because if I didn't have power I wouldn't have my kids, and without my kids I wouldn't have a reason."

While the struggles the Canaday family has faced over the last six years are a testament to their strength, drive and great belief in hope, Gerri believes everyone in our community needs a little help sometimes. The same contributions, volunteer hours and donations the Canaday family has made to others over their lives have come back to help them through their current struggles, as others help make a difference in their lives and make sure they stay safe, warm, and fed.

"Not everyone has a big family they can turn to, some people are all alone, and no matter what went wrong or when, knowing Community Action might have a solution really makes me feel grateful," Gerri said.

The Energy Services Division and South Coast Food Share programs of Oregon Coast Community Action are just two ways the organization works to help families on the South Coast.

Making sure the Canaday family will be able to face other challenges is just one more way Community Action has made a big difference in the lives of those who need it the most.

"Community Action has always been there for me and having that helping hand when it really counts is really important. Not just for us, but for everyone – at times like we're in now, being able to count on one another could be the only thing that gets us all through," she said. "I may need assistance again, and knowing that there is help out there makes it easier not to sweat the small stuff. It makes it easier to just be here for my family, while I can."

## South Coast Food Share

South Coast Food Share is a member of Oregon Food Bank and the regional food bank for Coos and Curry counties. It is a network of more than 30 local food pantries and meal sites committed to the belief that no one should be hungry. As a program of Oregon Coast Community Action, South Coast Food Share has focused on meeting the needs of hungry families in our area and utilizes multiple food donors in order to help local families fight hunger. For more information, those interested can go to [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us) or call (541) 888-1574.

## Wish List

- Protein rich food donations (tuna, beans, peanut butter, tofu, etc).
- Refrigerators or freezers in good working order
- Computers or office equipment in good working order for SCFS's 32 local pantries
- Volunteers to work in the SCFS warehouse to load, unload and prepare food to go out to local pantries
- Volunteers to help with SCFS projects, such as making calls, writing letters, sorting food and more!



# SHAMA House

S.H.A.M.A. Equals Success!  
Self Help And Mutual Aid



Dee Strader and other SHAMA House members who work to help those in our community with mental illness challenges.

Dee left a world of fear, judgment and blame behind when she became a member of SHAMA House. The Self Help and Mutual Aid House offers a shelter in the storm of life, helping those in our community with mental health issues and working to provide a warm, encouraging and creative atmosphere.

"Due to uncontrollable events during my childhood I felt like I had more knowledge than most people my age. But I was unable to communicate. I never felt comfortable with anyone and never fit in anywhere. It was like being an alien," Dee said.

But when she first began to attend group activities and classes at SHAMA House, things began to change. There, Dee found the companionship of others with similar challenges to her own, and enjoyed the relaxed and supportive atmosphere at SHAMA House that encouraged her to find her own voice.

"Through my experiences at SHAMA House, I've been able to help others. I've been able to help with the SHAMA mission to assist each other in promoting mental health by encouragement, empowerment and education, and to assist each other in maintaining wellness and making healthy decisions and choices regarding our lives," Dee said.

In partnership with Coos County Mental Health, SHAMA House provides a professional self-help program that operates through the combined efforts of men and women recovering from mental illness and trained, dedicated staff. SHAMA House demonstrates that individuals with mental

illness are able to take an active role in their own recovery. Offering an atmosphere that encourages members to embrace their creativity and find a way to express their needs to others through a variety of services, SHAMA House is a big part of our community.

"Imagine a community setting where all contributions are valued equally. In this environment, people come together to regain self-confidence, relationships and productivity," said Cathy Pennington, Executive Director of SHAMA House. "This is a place where people recovering with mental health issues can truly find themselves."

Through the supportive and encouraging atmosphere at SHAMA House, Dee was able to take courses and graduate with a certificate in Peer Counseling. Dee went on to complete a 24-week course through classes at the SHAMA House and became a Direct Service Provider for the program. Using her sharpened communication skills, Dee helps her peers to talk out problems and improve their self-esteem.

Dee Strader is now the class facilitator of "Movin' on Through Depression," a support group for adults living with depression. A very talented artist, Dee also enjoys leading members in "Fun Raisin," an expressions class that encourages SHAMA House members to explore creativity in simple ways that can help them relax and develop deeper friendships. Much of the class artwork is shared with other SHAMA House members through the Clubhouse, a self-directed program that relies on members taking an active

Art created by Dee Strader  
(colored pencil)



role in the organizing, operation and governance of the Clubhouse.

The Clubhouse has enjoyed artwork from the "Fun Raisin" class, such as affirmation banners and greeting cards, and recently the group helped design a bulletin board for the Coos County Mental Health lobby that promotes SHAMA's two powerful programs: Peer Counseling and Supported Employment. In addition, Dee helps to lead "Takin' Charge," an orientation offered at Coos County Mental Health, which is designed to help community members understand their treatment plan.

"It's amazing to look back on my life and see how far I've come," Dee said. "To be able to work with others in need in our community is a gift – and I am so glad SHAMA House is here for those that need a little shelter from the world."

Dee plans to develop a class in American Sign Language to boost communication with members who have hearing and or speech disabilities. This is just one more way Dee plans to continue helping her peers in our community, creating a brighter future for the disadvantaged.

"It is through Dee's generosity and compassion that she has made such a significant contribution to our SHAMA House members," Cathy said. "I admire her greatly for the way she has inspired her peers, and has never shied away from meeting challenges head on. She advocates for individuality and the importance of being oneself, and ways in which our members can use that strength to work through their challenges."

SHAMA House helps local individuals navigate their way through mental health challenges and rejoin their community. Continuing dedication and support provides a safe, encouraging place for the empowerment of adults living with mental illness.

"If there wasn't a SHAMA House in our community, there would be no where for many people to find hope, inspiration and encouragement that their lives can be different, that they can change," Dee said. "Working together as a group, as an organization, as a community, I know we can be the change we want to see – thanks to our home at SHAMA House."

## Wish List

Donations are greatly appreciated.

- Firewood
- Gently used bicycles
- Fresh vegetables and high protein foods
- Art supplies

Give back to the SHAMA House by becoming a volunteer – and know your service is making a big difference in the lives of those in need in our community!

- Driver or Cook
- Office assistant
- Companion
- Motivational speaker or classroom facilitator

Find ways to benefit your business or organization through SHAMA House's Supported Employment program. Our job seekers are skilled in assembly, cleaning, cooking, customer service, computer use, office work, delivery, care giving, cash handling, teaching, maintenance, sales, and other specialty tasks.

The Mission of SHAMA (Self Help and Mutual Aid) House is to assist each other in promoting mental health by encouragement, empowerment, education and support to maintain wellness and make healthy decisions and choices regarding our lives.

The Mental Health Association of SW Oregon offers two powerful programs. Supported Employment is a program that helps individuals find jobs that capitalize on their personal strengths and motivation. The SHAMA House is a self-directed drop-in program, designed after the clubhouse model, to increase socialization and hone skills. SHAMA members take an active role in the organizing, operation and governance of the project.

To learn more about SHAMA House, its programs and how community members can get involved and help "turn on the life," go to [www.shamahouse.org](http://www.shamahouse.org) or call Cathy Pennington at 756-2057.

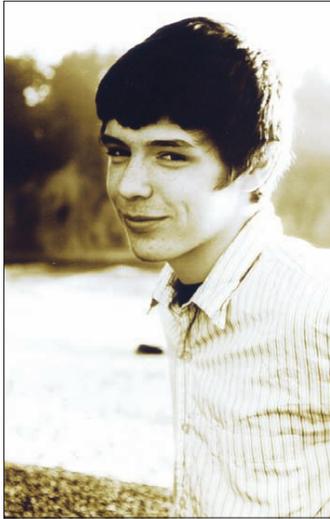
SHAMA House  
780 California Ave.  
North Bend, OR 97459

756-2057  
[www.shamahouse.org](http://www.shamahouse.org)



# A Safe and Caring Home

## Coos County Foster Parents Association



Fourteen years ago Cory was homeless. Abandoned and on his own, he was placed in the state foster system. Eventually Cory was put in the care of Becky and Jesse Banks. There, he unexpectedly found the home he'd been wishing for.

When Cory entered the Banks' lives, he was a broken child void of all joy and laughter. Cory also had suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. With lots of love and determination Becky and Jesse started changing the life of Cory and his younger brother.

It wasn't always easy, but eventually a loving, compassionate, smart little boy emerged. With six adopted children and many foster children in the Banks' home, Cory had many opportunities to be a supportive and encouraging brother. Now, 10 years later Cory has grown from a troubled child into a capable and passionate young man, through the love and support of the Banks family.

"I am very grateful for the Banks. They have sacrificed so much for me," Cory said. "The Banks have given me love and established stability in my life. They also made sure to build up my self-confidence, something I was lacking before I came to live with them."

Cory realizes first-hand how important foster parents are. He is well aware that there are a lot of children from broken homes who need a parent, someone to care for them.

"If it weren't for my foster parents I would have grown up neglected and abused. Instead I have grown up in a lov-

ing family, and for this I am so thankful," Cory said.

Seeing the difference that could be made in the lives of children in our community after her best friend began to take in foster children, Becky Banks opened her home to those in need over a decade ago. Becky aimed to create a loving and nurturing atmosphere that would impact the lives of children who were in the system and make sure they had a little shelter from the storm in their lives. Because of their willingness and good heart, the Banks have fostered many children who were lonely and without hope.

"Without families willing to take in children who need a little help, a little hope – so many children would grow up without any love or encouragement," Becky said. "Not everyone can take in children, but there's other ways to give back to children in need in Coos County through donating or volunteering."

Foster parents have the opportunity to change someone's life, to take them out of a heart-breaking situation and help children find hope. Through the support and encouragement of the Coos County Foster Parents Association, foster parents have the tools to give unfortunate children a chance to be successful in life. The association supported the Banks family throughout their work with foster children, offering tips, help navigating state services for children and much more.

Fostering a child isn't the only way to make a difference in their lives. Everyone in our community has the opportunity to help a foster child to find a safe, caring home. Donations to the association are used to help foster parents in Coos County meet the needs of the children they foster. Volunteering to work with children, host events or fundraisers, or gather items or donations for children also will make a big difference in the lives of local foster children.

This year Cory graduated from high school and he has dreams of becoming a chef. With culinary school costing \$20,000 per year, Cory is spending his time cooking pizza in a pizza parlor. He is hoping to eventually start working as an apprentice. Most of all Cory is looking forward to the day when he can begin culinary school to fulfill his dream. Thanks to the Banks, Cory is seeking his dreams and pursuing higher education. He's finding a new way of life, one that will bring him a brighter future.

# Association Devoted to Helping Families

The Coos County Foster, Adopt, and Relative Care Association works to support foster parents and families throughout Coos County by providing daycare, training, a monthly food bank, access to the Federal warehouse, a support group, low-cost products, an annual Christmas Party, a clothing closet, a harvest party, a Spaghetti Feed, and assorted other events each year. Many local organizations and entities support the Coos County Foster, Adopt, and Relative Care Association, including Blossom Gulch Elementary School, Pony Village Mall, local churches and congregations, the Green Acres Grange, HGE, Safeway, Albertsons, McKay's Fresh Mart, and many more. For more information on the association, those interested can go to [www.coosfpa.com](http://www.coosfpa.com).



**Women's Safety & Resource Center**  
**Main Office**  
**1681 Newmark Avenue**  
**Coos Bay, OR 97420**  
**541-888-1048**

[www.coosfpa.com](http://www.coosfpa.com)

## Wish List

- New car seats
- New cribs and linens
- Gift cards to Fred Meyers or WalMart
- Strollers
- New shoes of all sizes
- Gift certificates for haircuts

# COQUILLE TRIBAL COMMUNITY FUND

The Coquille Tribal Community Fund is dedicated to providing assistance to organizations that make lasting contributions to the communities we serve. We believe through the spirit of giving we allow our communities to grow and prosper.

(541) 756-8800 x1236 [www.coquilletribalfund.org](http://www.coquilletribalfund.org)



# Bay Area First Step

## About Bay Area First Step

BAFS's transitional housing facility has capacity for 16 residents at any given time. Recovering residents appreciate the facility because it is a safe place to live while they attend outpatient treatment and work toward recovery. Since opening, more than 550 clients and their families have been served.

In addition to the transitional housing, BAFS provides 12 multi-person apartment units for recovering addicts and their families, with approximately 36 individuals living in the two-bedroom apartments. The peer-to-peer support from other residents provides momentum for recovery. Some of these individuals serve as mentors or volunteers.

Bay Area First Step provides a safe, supportive alcohol and drug free environment, assisting those we serve to affect their own recovery.

Bay Area First Step, Inc. a nonprofit organization organized in 1995, operates an alcohol and drug free community-based transitional facility and apartments. The clients live in the facility and attend outpatient treatment with providers in the area.

Alcohol & Drug Free Housing + Supportive Services = Success

Providing clients with safe, alcohol and drug free housing while they are working toward recovery significantly increases the chances for a successful outcome. In addition to providing housing, we assist residents with a variety of supportive services including case management, peer support, food shopping, transportation, laundry facilities, personal hygiene items, clothing, and employment assistance. Residents must be actively involved in a program of recovery and remain drug and alcohol free.

### Our Challenge

Most BAFS clients are homeless and nearly all have no income when they arrive. While BAFS is grateful for the continuing financial support of several local agencies and churches, residents must still be responsible for their rent.

### Your Support Can Help

Your donation is tax-deductible. You can make a difference!

## Taking The First Step

My name is Samuel Benson, I started my addiction in 1972, and I was in and out of correctional facilities all my life. I grew up in the streets. My addiction lasted for 32 years.

In 2004 I started on this road to recovery; my first step was to get into Bay Area First Step program. Once there, I continued with who I thought I was, showing my bad behaviors, continuing with the old thinking. This program confronted me in ways I never have been confronted before, not only did they confront me; they made it clear that if I wanted my life to change I needed to do something about me. They also made it clear that I had to do the work. Believe me this was the hardest thing I have ever done. I was one nasty human being, with a mountain of issues.

After a few months of having my dysfunction, thinking, attitude, manipulations, and aggressive behaviors pointed out to me, I was able through this program to make changes in my views of myself, my attitude, my behavior, and how I treated others. I was able to remake me. It gave me real self esteem, real self worth, it opened my eyes to what being a man is all about. It wasn't pretty, it wasn't fun. But for me it was life saving.

Not only did this program show me what I needed to do to become a person, a real human being, it also encouraged me to seek to better myself in other ways. I started school at the young age of 44. Man was I scared of that. With continued encouragement and years of support from Bay Area First Step I have graduated from college. I also received an award for being an outstanding human service graduate. My life is what I used to envy from others. I have a wonderful wife and 2 beautiful children. I owe it all to the Bay Area First Step program. I know that without this great opportunity in our community I would be in prison, or dead.

I now work here; I have committed my life to passing on what has been given to me. To me this is a life saving program. It is one of the greatest blessings in our community.

**Women's Safety & Resource Center**  
Main Office  
1681 Newmark Avenue  
Coos Bay, OR 97420  
541-888-1048

[www.womensafety.org](http://www.womensafety.org)



## Wish List

1. Cash donations to help remodel & furnish our new facility.
2. Donations to our scholarship fund that provides the 1st month rent and food for new residents.
3. Donations of bedding, towels, and hygiene items.
4. Volunteers to provide transportation to and from appointments.
5. A utility trailer to assist residents moving into permanent housing.
6. Donations to help remodel & furnish our new facility.
7. Donations to our scholarship fund that provides the 1st month rent and food for new residents.
8. Donations of bedding, towels, and hygiene items.
9. Volunteers to provide transportation to and from appointments.
10. A trailer to assist residents moving into permanent housing.



The World is pleased to participate in producing **From Wishing to Winning** and sharing it with our community.

These organizations provide valuable services to individuals and families in our area and are funded by the generosity of folks like you.



# Women's Safety & Resource Center

There are many reasons people come to the Women's Safety & Resource Center (WSRC) in Coos Bay. Some call to get information about sexual assault or/and domestic violence. Some come to the center because they are fleeing an abusive partner and need immediate emergency shelter. Some call because they have left abusive situation and are trying to rebuild their lives, but need some emotional support. Others just call WSRC for information.

Angie's reasons for seeking help were not unlike a lot of the women living at Coddington Place, and during her time working with the Women's Safety & Resource Center, Angie has found a completely new life.

The Women's Safety and Resource Center (WSRC) is committed to promoting a violence-free community. The goal

of WSRC is to provide an environment of safety, shelter, education and empowerment for women in abusive situations. Additionally they work to educate the community about domestic violence and "life-enriching alternatives" to abuse.

Trying to navigate through a dangerous time, in a community with very few resources can be one of the most difficult challenges for those leaving a domestic violence situation, said Karen, an advocate at WSRC. Many women have left everything behind in order to come to the Women's Safety & Resource Center – and many hesitate seeking help because they are afraid to leave without children or even animals they care about.

"Before coming to Coddington I was living with a friend, I didn't have any transportation and I did not have my children living with me," Angie said. "I had low self esteem and it really looked like there was no end to my worries."

Angie now has a two-bedroom apartment at Coddington Place and her four children are living with her again. In the beginning, she began attending weekly support group meetings at WSRC and slowly Angie began to see the world in a different way, finding more confidence and seeing herself as a valuable person again.

"With the help of my Case Manager, Karen, I've been able to accomplish many things over the past year. I've been able to work on my relationship with my children, increase my self-esteem and communicate my family needs," Angie said. "I now have a positive support system, my own transportation, and I'm going to go back to college in January."

Helping a family to find their way into

a new life is part of the mission of Women's Safety & Resource Center. They are the only organization in Coos County that is dedicated to providing services to victims of domestic and sexual violence.

The Women's Safety & Resource Center offers shelter through Cloe and Jane's House, which provide a refuge for women who are fleeing abusive relationships.

"We have to be prepared to help these families become safe, help them identify their needs, and help them with access to community resources," Karen said. "We also try to have some basic things available for them, such as food, clothes, toys and many other things on hand for those who come to our shelter because they may have left behind all those things that give them comfort."

While women who find shelter at WSRC may go in many different directions once they leave Coddington Place or one of the emergency shelters, all of them began their new life in the same place. They found new strength together and discovered new hope for their future, with the help of volunteers, case workers and advocates at the Women Safety & Resource Center.

"I'm not saying that I don't still face some difficult moments from time to time, but at least now I have the tools to handle it better," Angie said with a smile. "There really are no words that can express how much gratitude I have for the advocates here at Coddington Place. These advocates believed in me when I couldn't believe in myself. And I know that I don't have to do it alone; there is always someone there willing to help."



In the late 1970's a group of Coos County women gathered to form a non-profit group focusing on women's issues. The organization was named Women Center. Seeing a need for services for battered women, a new non-profit was birthed from Women Center, and named Coos County Women's Crisis Service. Through volunteer recruitment, the agency was able to establish a 24 hour crisis line, a network of safe home providers, and crisis intervention counseling. Over the years this agency has expanded their services to include two emergency shelters, an affordable housing complex and a crisis response team that can respond at a moments notice to support victims. In 2002 the agency changed its name to "Women's Safety and Resource Center" which better reflects our mission and the services we provide.

"The Women's Safety and Resource Center exists to contribute to a violence-free community by creating a safe haven and life-building empowerment for abused women and children and inspiring the community to new levels of cooperation, thoughtful effort and action".

## Wish List

- Bathroom towels and toiletries
- Baby Items
- Clothing
- Bedding: sheets (New or "gently used" please)
- Tables, lamps rugs
- Phone cards, stationary & planners
- Grocery store gift cards (for perishable food items)

Donations can be dropped off at:  
 Women's Safety & Resource Center  
 Main Office  
 1681 Newmark Avenue  
 Coos Bay, OR 97420  
 541-888-1048



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 541-888-1048

[www.womensafety.org](http://www.womensafety.org)



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