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JIM JOHNSON,
RETIRING VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OF OREGON OPERATIONS AT INTEL,
ON SOCIAL VENTURE PARTNERS



STEPHANIE YAO/THE OREGONIAN

From left: Ariana Garfias, 6, Magdalena Galvan, 9, and Catarina Lucas, 5, enjoy the last minutes of outdoor play Wednesday before heading into the cafeteria at Cornelius Elementary School, where the nonprofit day care A Kid's Domain is located. The year-round day care is run by Community Action Organization, identified as a program that Social Venture Partners Portland wants to support. Community Action, based in Hillsboro, serves more than 500 families.

Tapping tech pockets

A nonprofit venture lets the newly rich give back more than money

By **JULIE SULLIVAN**
THE OREGONIAN

The "new economy" has stalled, but the "new philanthropy" it drove is finally hitting Portland.

This week, former high-tech workers, including the retiring chief of Intel's Oregon operations, announced a new-style nonprofit organization originally designed to tap the social consciousness of the dot-coms.

Social Venture Partners hopes to deliver \$1 million in the next three years to area programs that serve children from before birth through grade school. The money is a fraction of the more than \$47 million the United Way of the Columbia-Willamette expects to distribute over the same time. But founders say the value goes beyond — in involving expert volunteers who come

with the money and in training more Oregonians to give.

"In 10 years if we have 500 new philanthropists in town, then we've had a real impact," said Jim Johnson, retiring vice president and chief of Oregon operations at Intel.

The concept is the brainchild of Paul Brainerd, the Medford-raised entrepreneur who invented PageMaker software and the concept of desktop publishing. As an emerging philanthropist in Seattle, Brainerd wanted to tap the young, newly rich who had little experience in giving money. They wanted to give back but not necessarily hammer nails or stuff envelopes. They also wanted to know that their money was well-spent.

In the four years since, the Social Venture Partners mode:

Please see **VENTURE**, Page B6

Venture: Donors play hands-on role

Continued from Page B1

that Brainerd launched has given \$3.4 million in Seattle and spread to 17 cities in the United States and Canada. Seventy percent of the 292 software designers, physicians and attorneys participating in Seattle donate their time along with their money.

"I don't know if any of us expected that it would create such a community of people who care about these issues. The network has become a very vibrant, interesting, engaged part of Seattle," said Brainerd from his foundation's downtown office. "It's creating a new civic engagement."

The idea works like this: An individual or couple give \$5,400 a year for two years. Nonprofit groups chosen by a committee of donors receive grants of \$30,000 to \$60,000 each year for three to seven years to develop their programs.

The hook, or catch, is that the donors who "invest" their money get a seat at the recipient's table — as venture capitalists often do — where their accounting, marketing or technological expertise can build and improve the program — and hold the program accountable.

MORE INFORMATION

For information on Social Venture Partners Portland, call 503-617-6422 or e-mail info@svpportland.org. Rules for grant applications are at www.svpportland.org.

"That is new territory for us," said Angela Borden Jackson, a co-founder of the Portland venture with nonprofit experience, acknowledging that such hands-on advice may not be to everyone's liking.

In Seattle, Brainerd said there was concern that the results-oriented, analytical executives and techies could clash with the culture of nonprofit organizations, where decisions tend to be made by consensus. But he said both sides work to be respectful and trusting.

Nonprofit workers relish the chance to connect with younger givers and grants that extend beyond a year.

"We never get that kind of relationship with any traditional foundation. In nonprofits, you begin the fiscal year from scratch; there is

no carry-over, there is no surplus, there is no endowment. For many of us, it's hand-to-mouth every single year," said Sharon Bosserman-Benson, director of advancement for Community Action Organization, which serves working-poor families in Washington County.

In Seattle, Brainerd identified 55,000 households with a net worth of \$1 million as potential givers. In Portland, organizers don't know the demographics except to say there are fewer people with money and fewer people, period.

The \$5,400 is an amount that nationwide seems reasonable for professionals with young families and demanding careers.

Eli Lamb, a former employee at Intel and Sun Microsystems, and a teacher at the University of Phoenix, had been looking at creating "a giving circle" when he was inspired by the Brainerd model. He teamed with Johnson and Jackson; Jeff Grubb, vice president of U.S. Trust; and Duncan Campbell, president of the Columbia Investment Group and founder of Friends of the Children.

The group, which has attracted 25 members, hopes to grow to 50. It wants to begin awarding grants

by the end of the year to programs that serve children in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Clark counties.

Social Venture Partners Portland opted to focus on young children, based on research and expert advice on needs and the interventions that can have the most impact.

Hill Walker, a University of Oregon education professor and national expert on violence, advised them on the latest research, including a study showing that early intervention was more effective than middle school intervention in preventing such problems as delinquency and school failure.

Walker is thrilled that the partnership complements Gov. John Kitzhaber's efforts to reach young children.

"It strikes me that government and private-sector partnerships are probably the ultimate answer," he said.

Not even the crash of Internet stocks has slowed momentum. Paul Shoemaker, executive director of the Social Venture Partners Seattle, said that while recruitment has slowed in that city, the number of givers continues to grow beyond expectations.