

Spirit Awards Honor Market, Health Advocate, Homelessness Leader

Blustery weather outside the Oregon Zoo Ballroom on the evening of April 1, belied the warmhearted gathering at Community Action's 11th annual Celebration of Community Spirit banquet. Nike served as the presenting sponsor for the event, which attracted 180 guests. In all, \$45,665 was raised through table sponsorships and guest donations.

The Community Spirit Award honors a community partner, business leader, and corporate partner demonstrating exceptional support for the mission of Community Action and for making an exemplary commitment to strengthening our community.

New Seasons Market in Orenco Station received the Outstanding Corporate Partner award. New Seasons has been an active Community Action partner, generating nearly \$35,000 in customer donations through the Orenco Station store since 2005.

Wendy Watson, Senior Director of Primary Care for the Kaiser Permanente Northwest Division, received the award for Outstanding Business Leader. As a member of the Community Action Board, Wendy has worked hard to strengthen Community Action's partnership with



Award winners, front row: Wendy Watson (left), Brian Robter (center), Eric Canon (right). Community Action Board and keynote speaker; left-right: Lynn Baker, Tom Hughes, Leroy Bentley, Leslea S. Smith, Scott Gardner, Dana Galaxy, Kevin Aguirre, Doug Stamm, Jerralynn Ness (front), Ron Sarazin, Ralph Brown, Christy Barker, Dick Stenson, Dick Schouten, Maria Lopez, D. Craig Kinnie, Cathy Stanton.

Kaiser Permanente.

Eric Canon, leader of the Interfaith Committee on Homelessness, received the Outstanding Community Partner award. Eric has been an advocate for the "invisible poor," as well as a driving force in the local effort to end homelessness. His leadership has been essential to achieving goals of the Ten-year Plan to End Homelessness.

Keynote speaker, Doug Stamm, CEO

of Meyer Memorial Trust, and a Washington County native, acknowledged the challenging economic times. He encouraged businesses to remain committed to organizations such as Community Action for the benefit of the entire community.

Board member Christy Barker described how her family's economic challenges, illustrate the need for Community Action programs.

Award Recognizes Opening Doors Program for Prenatal Health Care Outreach

Community Action's Opening Doors program received the 2009 Washington County Public Health Recognition Award, presented April 9 during a ceremony at the Shirley Huffman Auditorium in the Charles D. Cameron Public Services Building in Hillsboro.

Opening Doors provides prenatal health care outreach to low-income pregnant women in Washington County.

During 2008, 100-percent of babies born with the support of Opening Doors had healthy birth weight, with 100-percent enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan.

In a letter to Community Action, Kathleen O'Leary, Public Health Division Manager wrote: "Let me congratulate you personally on Community Action Opening Doors program's nomination



(Left to right) Renee Bruce, Director of Family and Community Resources, Sabrina Hernandez, Intake Specialist, Joan Brown, Program Coordinator, Diana Lu, Outreach Worker, Beth Dasber, Supervisor.

and the 2009 Washington County Public Health Recognition Award for your agency's commitment to improving

healthy birth outcomes in Washington County." Opening Doors staff are grateful for the county's recognition.

Dear Friends,

Challenge. Opportunity. These two words really sum up what we are currently experiencing at Community Action. Our **challenge** is to meet the rapidly growing need for assistance from families hard hit by the recession, while at the same adapting to flat or even decreased program funding. Our **opportunity** is to maximize the impact of resources made available through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (otherwise known as the *Economic Stimulus Package*), as well as funding generated locally by concerned residents and local initiatives such as the *Community Relief Fund*.



Jerralynn Ness
Executive Director



Kevin Aguirre
Board Chair

First to the challenges: Our phones are ringing, our lobby is full, and our shelter waiting list is long. People from all walks of life are finding themselves facing financial challenges that just a few months ago were unimaginable. They are turning to Community Action for help and for hope. At the same time, we have been watching anxiously as the State of Oregon wrestles with closing the funding gap on the current budget and adopting a balanced budget for the next biennium. With the economy still in decline, the budget will most likely be balanced by significant funding cuts to critical services. These are difficult decisions and there are no easy solutions. There is no doubt that some of our programs will be affected. In addition, many of our private donors have had to scale back, reducing our ability to plug the holes in the safety net. With resources diminished by the current crisis, it is painful to imagine how families in need of health and social services will get by. Yes, these are definitely challenging times.

Now to the opportunities: As challenging as these times may be, Community Action has never been more relevant to our community. We are uniquely positioned to deliver *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* services intended to help families hardest hit by the recession. In fact, Community Action is already geared up to accommodate supplemental funding and well positioned to stimulate our local economy through job retention and growth. In particular, expansion of our home weatherization program will create new jobs, pushing dollars into the economy as vendors are contracted to undertake the home improvements associated with this program. Carpenters, electricians, and other trades people who have struggled to find work in recent months will be employed. As supplies are purchased, manufacturers and retailers will see sales increase and they, in turn, may be in a position to bring people back to work.

At the same time, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette has joined forces with local Community Action agencies in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas and Clark counties, along with the Oregon Food Bank, to launch a special initiative. The *Community Relief Fund* will help families in the four-county area who have been hardest hit by the economic crisis, by raising dollars to immediately provide for basic needs, and helping families to get back on their feet. As the Washington County partner, Community Action will utilize these funds to provide much needed rent assistance to local families with 72-hour eviction notices. We are committed to maximizing every opportunity to grow the safety net to help struggling families and strengthen local communities.

There is no question that these are extraordinary times of challenge and opportunity that will demand much of our organization. If ever there was a time to step forward to lend a hand, the time is now. In spite of the impact the economy is having, so many concerned neighbors have generously donated to Community Action knowing the difference our services are making to those who have even greater needs. We hope you will join them in making a financial contribution today, at whatever level you can. We know that with our community behind us, we can provide the right mix of services to help people through the difficult days ahead. Thank you for caring.

Sincerely, Jerralynn & Kevin

As Economy Falters, New Poverty Population Emerges

The Westside Economic Alliance recently reported that Washington County is shedding 53 jobs each day. Growing unemployment and under-employment have created a new population of economically insecure families in Washington County. Many are seeking assistance for the first time, hoping for help with basics like rent, food and utilities, and they have no idea how to navigate an over-burdened social services system. They are turning to Community Action for both guidance and direct support. In the words of one family recently assisted by our organization: "If not for Community Action, our family would be living in our car or on the streets. Community Action has been our lifesaver."

Young At Art - Budding Artists Learn, Create, Stage Show in Orenco



Karla Castillo, Community Action Head Start Teacher at Orenco Elementary, believes that children learn a lot from creating art and studying artists' work. She said her Young At Art project "took on a life of its own" after she introduced students to artists such as Russian Expressionist Wassily Kadinsky, Abstract Expressionist Jackson Pollock, French Impressionist Claude Monet, Chinese disabled artist Xi Fu, and others. Students painted using techniques the masters used, Castillo said. Kadinsky listened to music while he painted, and he preferred primary colors, so students followed suit. Xi Fu painted with a brush held between his feet, so students tried that, too. The result was an art show at Orenco Elementary on March 5. "Parents were amazed," Castillo said. "Never under-estimate children's ability. They grasped everything and then some." At left, examples of students' art work.

Community Volunteers help us assist people in many special ways ...

For more than six years, the Women's Ministry of Beaverton Christian Church hand-crafted quilts, layettes, scarfs and more for children in the Early Head Start and Opening Doors programs. Their donations have been very special to hundreds of infants, toddlers, and their families. Thank you Women's Ministry! Left-to-right: Linda Keeley, Linda Bradburn, Gail Reimann, Sharon Gilson and Roberta Carpenter.



... from helping children feel special, to making sure homeless families have food



Kathy Gomez (left) and Debbie Lovegren (right) delivered 25 Easter baskets to families at Community Action's Hillsboro Family Shelter. The women work for Baker Rock Resources, which supports their effort. Money for the baskets comes from the sale of snacks in the Baker Rock office. Debbie is enthusiastic. "It's our favorite, and it's become a tradition," she said. "Everybody should have something, it doesn't matter your situation, you should feel just as special as everybody else - and it's really fun!"



Staff from Marriot's Residence Inn, Courtyard and Towneplace Suites hotels delivered food donations to the Hillsboro Family Shelter. Marriot's CARE Committee gathered the donations from the three hotels west of Portland during Marriot's national "Spirit to Serve Our Communities Day." The food will help sheltered families, as well as people requesting emergency food boxes. Marriot also donated roll-away beds, lounge chairs and other furniture. Shelter Manager Patrick Rogers calls the donation "A huge help."



1001 SW Baseline St. • Hillsboro, OR 97123

Conserve Resources!

If you are receiving this newsletter by postal mail, we would be happy to send it to you by e-mail.

Please e-mail your request to:
contact@caowash.org.

Please be assured, our list is confidential.

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Community Connections

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

For further information, contact Resource Development 503.693.3255, or visit our website:
www.communityaction4u.org

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Jerralynn Ness

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United Way of the Columbia-Willamette has joined forces with Community Action agencies throughout Greater Portland, and the Oregon Food Bank, to launch a special initiative.

The Community Relief Fund will help families throughout the four-county area who have been hardest hit by the economic crisis, by providing short-term emergency relief focusing on basic needs such as rent, utilities and food.

Please give \$10 to the Community Relief Fund and tell 10 friends to do the same. 100% of donations will help families in need. Community Action has already received \$50,000 for rent assistance during May. More help is needed.

PLEASE DONATE NOW

www.give10tell10.org

... or mail your check to:

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette
Community Relief Fund
619 SW 11th Ave., Suite 300
Portland, OR 97205