

crb network news

december 2014

newsletter of the citizen review board



Strengthening
Preserving
Reunifying

A message from the director

Citizen Review Board members,
The end of the year is a good time to look back, reflect on achievements, and to look forward and consider what we still need to accomplish.

In 2014, the CRB focused attention and resources on recruiting volunteers in areas with high board member vacancies and improving the overall quality and accessibility of board member trainings. In an effort to reach as many potential volunteers as possible with limited staff resources, we began regularly offering orientation training through videoconferencing in multiple parts of the state.

The CRB program also developed new online training modules which enable prospective volunteers to complete parts of the orientation training at home and at their own pace, greatly reducing some barriers to service, especially for prospective volunteers from rural communities.

The year 2015 will mark the 30-year anniversary of the CRB. We will be

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SPRF services help stabilize and empower families

By Suzanne Callahan
CRB Field Manager

Senate Bill 964 was signed into law in June 2011, creating **Strengthening, Preserving, and Reunifying Families** Programs, commonly referred to as SPRF services. The bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide specialized services to children and families throughout the life of the case, beginning from the point of initial contact through the time of case closure. The legislative intent was driven by research that severe trauma occurs when children are removed from their families and that preserving existing family bonds during the entire course of child-welfare involvement is essen-

tial to achieving positive permanency outcomes.

This trauma, as well as costly and unnecessary placement of children in substitute care, can be avoided with appropriate and early application of services.

The average monthly cost per child in foster care? Approximately \$2,200, according to DHS/Child Welfare/Child Safety.

A majority of cases that prompt Child Welfare involvement are due to allegations of neglect and threat of harm — largely drug/alcohol abuse and domestic violence.

Neglect/threat of harm representing over 60% of all founded cases, DHS/Child Welfare/Child Safety data shows.

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These are our kids.
They are my kids.

By Molly Johnson
CRB Field Manager

Kristina Knittel, center, with Dream Center participants Xavier and Manny. Photograph courtesy of Kristina Knittel.

CRB volunteer Kristina Knittel is improving lives for youth in Los Angeles

I have a confession to make: I love my board members.

I love them for their unceasing commitment to give of themselves to the bigger cause. I love that they are busy people, who often stay up late at night to prep their cases so they can arrive on time and be prepared to lead a review, no matter how inconvenient the weather makes it. I love that they willingly attend extra Citizen Review Board trainings, or arrive in court to stand with an incoming member as he or she is being sworn in by their local judge. I love that they cover for each other gracefully and without judgment, even when they are not expecting to.

I love that they can be a team and support each other, that they struggle openly in front of each other, and they disclose what they need to disclose knowing they are accepted. They cheer each other on with encouragement, and congratulate each other with every little accomplishment. I love that even though they are emotionally exhausted at the end of a long review day, they always look forward to seeing each other again soon. I love that they — that “we” — are a family of sorts.

This is the time of year that underscores the depth of

sharing and selfless giving. And it is with these thoughts that I share the goings-on with one of the “family” we are all so proud of in Deschutes County: **CRB volunteer Kristina Knittel**, a young woman focused on a purpose-driven life.

Kristina is currently on leave from the CRB while she volunteers full time at the [Dream Center](#) in Los Angeles, Calif. She and her husband, Brian, own and operate a martial arts school in Bend where they live. Kristina is a 5-foot-2-inch powerhouse, who, at the age of 30, is not only a 1st- and 2nd-degree black belt, but a “pro volunteer” as well!

In Bend, Kristina regularly volunteers at the KIDS Center, a medical/psychological evaluation and treatment center for survivors of child abuse, where she is a certified instructor for the Darkness to Light child sexual abuse prevention trainings and is part of the office team. She is a Fairy Godmother with Mountain Star Family Relief Nursery, and volunteers with OATH (Oregonians Against Trafficking Humans). And she is a mentor with the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office's COPY (Central Oregon Partnerships for Youth) program for children with incarcerated

See “Knittel,” p. 4

SPRF: each county has developed an individualized service array

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These safety concerns can often be mitigated without requiring removal (i.e., treatment, crisis housing, and in-home safety service providers).

SPRF programs are intended to stabilize families at the point of crisis and to empower sustained change. They are designed to strengthen families and to prevent further abuse/neglect from occurring. SPRF programs require collaboration with community resources, and are an extension of, and enhancement to, **In-Home Safety and Reunification Services (ISRS)**, which are designed to provide short-term immediate protection without necessitating removal.

The legislature mandated DHS to implement this program by October 1, 2012.

In order to execute this law, DHS developed contracts with community partners to provide an array of timely, specialized, culturally appropriate, and individually-tailored services. These services are designed to both prevent unnecessary removal and to promote and support reunification. It is important to have an understanding of all available services within your county when considering reasonable efforts.

Each county has developed their individualized service array with county partners and program staff. The following list provides an overview of the available SPRF services in contract with the DHS/Child Welfare:

- * **Agency/service navigators.**
- * **D&A treatment (inpatient/outpatient services with multi-dimensional focus).**
- * **Family/relationship enhanced visitation.**
- * **Front end interventions (mental health/drug treatment providers in partnership with CPS assessment).**
- * **Housing (treatment, crisis, short-term).**
- * **Life skills coaches/home visitors.**
- * **Parenting classes (intensive, gender and culturally specific).**
- * **Parent mentoring/coaching.**
- * **Reconnecting families/family finding services.**
- * **Relief nurseries (daycare, education and parenting/family support).**
- * **Trauma specific/therapeutic and mental health services.**

As of November 2014, 34 of 36 counties have fully implemented the SPRF program in their community by entering into direct client-service contracts. Grant and Harney counties expect to have contracts executed by December, bringing the statewide total to 119 individual contracts.

Budget and Evaluation

SPRF outcomes are closely measured on a quarterly basis for each county. Statistical data is collected on: the removal rate; in-home plans; rate of reunification; length of stay in substitute care; re-entry/re-abuse; and disproportionality.

DHS has made some of this data available through its [Results Oriented Management \(ROM\) website](#). When SB 964 was passed and the three pilot counties were selected, the initial intent was for counties to conduct a thorough assessment of service needs, identify gaps in the service array, and to fill those gaps; no predetermined budget was set. This financial approach was endorsed in order to predict the cost of statewide implementation.

Because the need far exceeded the predicted budget, all subsequent counties have been given a budget based on the number of families served by Child Welfare (50% total families served; 25% of children in substitute care; and 25% of assigned referrals/open assessments).

Child Safety Programs

The primary initiative of Child Welfare is to safely and equitably reduce the number of children in care through Differential Response (DR) in combination with statewide implementation of the SPRF Programs, application of the Oregon Safety Model (OSM), and the hiring of additional Child Welfare staff. Additional information on these various work efforts are described on the [DHS website](#).

More information can also be found on the [Juvenile Court Improvement Program \(JCIP\) website](#) which includes conference materials from the 2014 Model Court Day: Summit on Child Abuse and Neglect. The Powerpoint presentation on [Oregon Safety Model/ SB 964 \(SPURF\)/and Differential Response](#) provides a framework of how SPRF relates to the DR and OSM various practices are related. SPRF services are an integral piece of Oregon's vision to create "Safe Children – Strong, Supported Families."

Tell me and I forget.

Teach me and I may remember.

Involve me and I learn.

~ Benjamin Franklin

Knittel: “grace and restoration” for individuals and families

Cont. from p. 2

parents.

Currently, Kristina is in the middle of a six-month live-in internship at the Dream Center in Los Angeles, where she is officially assigned to the organization’s mobile food distribution program and the Angelus Temple media team. She’s also significantly active in the program’s addiction recovery program and emancipated youth shelter, Freedom House.

Freedom House provides housing, educational opportunities and employment training for youth who have aged out of foster care. Kristina recently shared that “Emancipated youth are the children who are our collective responsibility as Americans. These are our kids, they are my kids. They deserve every chance that every human being deserves, plus an extra measure of grace, patience, time, assistance, and love based on their past abuse by both their biological families and the “system.”

In describing her experience there, Kristina said “I love the Dream Center because it is a place where grace abounds. It’s staffed almost entirely by volunteers who have such an intense passion for what they are doing that they are willing to PAY to volunteer, live in small cramped rooms in Los Angeles filled with rats and bedbugs, and work six days a week in the path of their personal calling.”

Kristina has had the unique opportunity to meet and talk with adults going through their residential rehabilitation center who have had their children removed, and has seen “life from their perspective as well.”

“If we think of the human hierarchy of needs, particularly

when it comes to traumatized kids and people, we learn that the most effective and most compassionate way to create healing, restoration and change in someone’s life is to give them BELONGING first,” she said. “Only then will they will begin to BELIEVE who they are has value.”

“And the BEHAVIOR will follow.”

When applying this to her current work with the emancipated youth, Kristina said “This is what I have been learning about at the Dream Center, and that is how I have been treating the boys I work with. First off, ‘I accept you and you belong here because you have value and I’m not trying to fix you.’ They believe that, and they finally have stable ground to stand on to do the work of fixing themselves.”

When her work concludes with the Dream Center, Kristina, who has bachelor’s degree in history/political science, will attend law school at the University of Oregon, where she has received a near-full scholarship. She plans to study in the family- and child-advocacy track, and continue to work with foster children and biological parents after law school, advocating for them and representing them “with an underlying philosophy of grace and restoration” both for individuals and for families.

After witnessing how overlapping diverse services available on one campus can be a crucial asset to the kids and their parents and families, Kristina is interested in working for a youth homeless shelter or emancipated youth shelter, possibly as part of a larger social services agency like the one at the Dream Center.

Message: “Thank you for all of your efforts throughout the year.”

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taking the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the CRB at our annual conference April 17-18, 2015 in Salem, Oregon. Additionally, in 2015, we will be inviting our advisory committee, staff, and volunteer board members to engage in a process to develop our next five-year strategic plan. By taking the time to set our direction and establish priorities, we will be able to position the CRB to carry out our mission in the coming years while working to safely and equitably reduce the number of children in foster care.

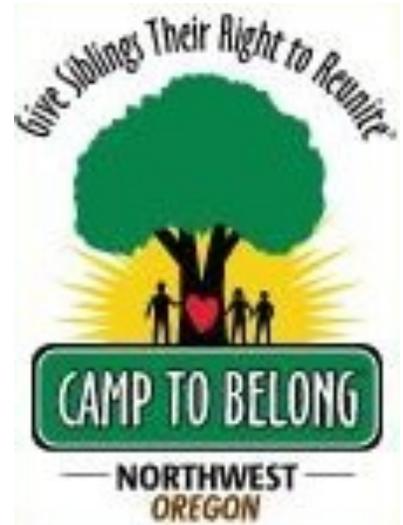
You are among the 377 Oregonians who served as CRB board members last year, reviewing the cases of 4,533 children who were in foster care for six months or longer. Thank you for all of your efforts throughout the year, especially your commitment to move children in state custody to permanent and safe homes as quickly as possible, benefiting children and families across Oregon.

On behalf of the Oregon Judicial Department please allow me to extend my personal and genuine appreciation to each and every one you for your valuable contributions to the CRB! Working with you this past year has been a pleasure, and we’re proud to have you with us.

Your service on the CRB helps our trial courts ensure that children and families involved in the foster care system get the services they need, and that every child lives in a safe, secure, healthy and permanent home, preserving families whenever possible.

Best wishes and happiness to you and your families in 2015!

Leola McKenzie
Juvenile Court Programs Director



Congratulations to Camp to Belong Northwest – Oregon for another successful year! The nonprofit organization, which reunites siblings living in separate foster care homes in a summer camp setting, hosted a combined 114 youth this past June and August at Silver Falls State Park. Attendees came from 30 cities in Oregon and five Western states – including Hawaii! What awaits in 2015? Children will get the opportunity to create lasting memories at CTB’s new camp site — Camp McGruder, near Rockaway Beach on the North Oregon Coast!

Hiking, singing, dancing
lots of love.
This
Camp Rocks

Citizens review board,
Thank you so much for donating!
Camp has been amazing for me
and my siblings! I heard about the baskets you
sold to help in come to camp! Thank you so
much for generously giving up your time and efforts
to make the most amazing week of my life
possible.
Sincerely,
David!



CRB BULLETIN BOARD

Members of the Oregon Foster Youth Connection plan to lobby state lawmakers in 2015 to make it easier for children in foster care to take part in after-school activities, and to open their own savings accounts, according to a story on the **Public News Service** website.

Rachel Vandecoevering, who's part of OFYC, says there isn't always enough money in foster families' budgets to pay for activities and transportation. She says members of the OFYC have already discussed drafting the bill with some lawmakers

"I felt pretty good – nervous at first, because I've never talked to a representative before – but I felt pretty good, and felt pretty hopeful that it will happen," she says.

Another proposal is allowing foster children to have their own savings account. James Barta, outreach director with Children First for Oregon, says their situation just doesn't fit the traditional banking rules because many youth move to multiple homes during their years in care. And because they're minors, they can't enter into a legally binding agreement, he adds.

To read the entire story, click [HERE](#).

College students at the University of Oregon opened up about their experience in foster care and their quest to transition to independence in a feature story published in **Oregon Quarterly** magazine.

The article touches on how students have accessed higher education through the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver (House Bill 3471), which supports teens who've spent at least 180 days in foster care after age 14. Eighteen students at UO have received a total of nearly \$31,000 in tuition and fee waivers since 2012, according to the article.

"These students deserve the same opportunity to learn as other students – to succeed and to go on to make contributions to Oregon and the greater global community," said Sheryl Eyster, UO associate dean of students.

To read the entire story, click [HERE](#).

A group of children with experience in Florida's foster care system have banded together – literally – to "share their love of music while serving as a voice for other kids who yearn for loving homes," reports the **Orlando Sentinel** newspaper.

The children, a mix of youth from foster care, adopted children, and the biological children of foster parents, have formed the band **NexGen**. The group is supported by the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association and performs at events around the state.

Band members range in age from 10 to 19, and many didn't know how to play instrument before joining the band. Donations, however, allowed the association to purchase instruments and pay for music lessons.

"From the first start, it's like we have been a band for years," said 19-year-old Ethan Johnson, a former foster child. "

To read the entire story, click [HERE](#).

Foster and homeless teens in Georgia are receiving a helping hand to a better life through the Orange Duffel Bag Initiative. The program, profiled in a recent issue of **Atlanta Magazine**, offers life coaching to at-risk teens during a 12-week curriculum. While most sign up to receive a free laptop distributed at the conclusion, the most meaningful result for participants is finding out "I am not alone."

The Atlanta-based nonprofit was founded by Sam Bracken, a Franklin Covey executive and former linebacker at Georgia Tech. Bracken, who overcame a difficult childhood, uses the orange duffel bag as a symbol of hope because he carried one to college.

To read more about the Orange Duffel Bag Initiative, click [HERE](#).

Thank You!

The following individuals ended their service as volunteers for the Citizen Review Board in 2014. We thank them for their professionalism, hard work and sincere dedication in making a difference in the lives of children!

Benton County

Amy Baird - 8/8/12 to 3/19/14
Whitney Smith - 8/8/12 to 12/15/14

Clackamas County

Diane Austin - 8/9/07 to 12/10/14
Jodee Barnes - 1/15/10 to 10/16/14

Columbia County

Iris Makinson - 2/13/13 to 7/21/14
Leslie O'Donoghue - 11/25/13 to 7/21/14

Coos County

John Eckerman - 11/10/09 to 9/29/14

Deschutes County

Kathrine Edwards - 7/10/13 to 7/24/14
Yevgeniy Gerasimenko - 6/21/13 to 12/15/14

Douglas County

Mary Matthews - 4/6/09 to 3/12/14
James Peterson - 6/7/11 to 11/12/14
Keith Wilson - 3/19/12 to 3/12/14

Hood River County

Catherine Donnelly - 2/28/07 to 12/15/14

Jackson County

Wayne Breithaupt - 1/6/09 to 11/21/14
Martha Ann Bull - 7/15/10 to 8/7/14
Julie Crites - 2/14/12 to 9/15/14
Linda Henderson - 7/1/99 to 11/6/14
Antoinette Higgins - 1/11/13 to 12/15/14
Genevieve Smith - 2/7/07 to 1/22/14
Carolyn Stieber - 11/8/13 to 11/6/14
Tina Timmons - 4/4/13 to 12/15/14

Jefferson County

Linda McCoy - 6/22/10 to 5/8/14

Klamath County

Florence Abend - 10/10/12 to 3/28/14
Joyce Hardman - 2/22/02 to 9/29/14
Jerry Levizon-Hughes - 1/10/03 to 4/2/14
Kaleo Schroder - 6/8/06 to 1/13/14
Debi Winchell - 1/25/13 to 12/15/14

Lake County

Sharon Faulkner - 10/29/12 to 12/15/14

Lane County

Marjorie Biehler - 5/8/02 to 2/14/14
Cynthia Conrad - 10/17/13 to 5/15/14
Ruth Duffield - 7/13/12 to 11/3/14
Ava Elong - 10/17/13 to 6/5/14
Barbara Griesel - 4/23/09 to 11/19/14
Eugene Jackson - 8/7/13 to 12/16/14
Susan Johnson - 8/7/13 to 6/10/14
Jamie Lent - 10/17/13 to 2/14/14
Lou Ann Martin - 9/4/03 to 12/12/14
Mary Meyers - 7/15/10 to 4/16/14

Lincoln County

Dr. Edward Brittain - 11/29/07 to 12/15/14
Jacqueline Wolfe - 8/19/03 to 12/15/14

Linn County

Deborah Dixon - 3/14/13 to 12/15/14
Christine Storm - 9/3/13 to 12/15/14

Marion County

Danielle Bethell - 3/4/10 to 5/22/14
Katherine BigEagle - 6/21/13 to 12/16/14

Deborah Damico - 3/7/13 to 12/16/14
Pamela Housholder - 3/7/13 to 5/16/14
Salome Johnson - 10/10/12 to 11/14/14
Ardis Knauf - 10/10/12 to 12/16/14
Judith Ruscoe - 5/31/02 to 4/3/14
Anna Sikel - 7/30/08 to 3/11/14
Beverly Silveira - 4/12/01 to 2/20/14

Multnomah County

Sandra Garland - 5/26/99 to 5/13/14
Michelle Leeper - 12/1/11 to 12/16/14
Nicolas Petersen - 2/14/11 to 12/16/14
David Schreiner - 1/28/13 to 12/16/14
Martha Simpson - 11/26/01 to 12/16/14

Polk County

Kate Fear - 4/18/13 to 5/22/14

Umatilla County

Scot Jacobson - 12/26/08 to 3/21/14
Tiffany Knight - 11/25/13 to 12/16/14
Rosemarie Murphey - 12/27/04 to 9/23/14
John Nichols - 5/8/02 to 7/8/14
Nancie Paxton - 5/18/07 to 12/16/14
Tami Wong - 11/25/13 to 3/20/14

Washington County

Shannon Dupee - 5/21/12 to 12/16/14
Heather Eason - 12/6/05 to 8/25/14
Mary Lou Hardy - 4/15/05 to 12/16/14
Michele Scholl - 11/18/09 to 3/20/14
Gail Schroeder - 1/25/13 to 2/25/14

Yamhill County

Carole Joa - 12/9/08 to 2/28/14

Citizen Review Board

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www.ojd.state.or.us/crb

New volunteers!

LANE COUNTY

Gwendolyn Bolden

MARION COUNTY

Amanda Patterson

LINCOLN COUNTY

Pamela Bryson

Sheronne Justesen

Conrad Lacy

Save the Date!

Every Day Counts...

**2015 marks the 30th Anniversary
of the legislation that created the CRB!**

Topics Include:

Aging Out of the Foster Care System ♦ Using Assessments in Determining a Child's Safety, Health, and Well Being ♦ Ensuring Services are Culturally Appropriate ♦ Crossing the Border: The Unaccompanied Minor Crisis ♦ Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act ♦ Attorney Standards in Dependency Cases ♦ And much, much, more...

APRIL 17-18, 2015

**Salem Convention Center
Salem, Oregon**

More information coming soon!

