



SPRING 2009

## New Volunteer Board Members

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest board members. Thank you for your dedication to Oregon's children and families!

- **Coos County:** Phyllis Love, Tammy Trost, and Ashley Zender
- **Douglas County:** Maria Elena Bianchi, Lynne Falgout, Jeannie Onikama, Juniper Schneider, and Joanne Ward
- **Harney County:** Kay Campbell and Georgia Marshall
- **Jackson County:** Susan Bomberg, Wayne Brethaupt, David Dials, Marlene Olson, and Anne Westerman
- **Lake County:** Ray Hopp
- **Lane County:** Peggy Bellinger, Judith Dellar, Christine Hurst, Richard Jones, Susan Joyce, Arlene Marshall, Robert Ogilvie, Eleanor Russell, Nance Searle, Marci Vonfurstenberg, Phillip Walker, and Chad Williams
- **Linn County:** Mary Anne Kirk, and Ann Miller
- **Multnomah County:** Eva Menger-Hammond and Damon Pryor
- **Marion County:** Stephen Alexander, Kimberly Coven, Suzie Heringer, and Julie Kahn
- **Polk County:** James Castle, Kate Fear, Marcia Hudson, Judy Jeffreys, and Karen Kolb
- **Umatilla County:** Scot Jacobson
- **Washington County:** Katie Durrant and Katherine Napolitano
- **Yamhill County:** Carole Joa

## Welcome!



## A Message from Our Administrator

April and May are marked by events directly related to the work you do as volunteer board members at the CRB. It is, in part, because of this confluence of events that we moved the annual conference to April beginning in 2008. Unfortunately, our state's current economic crisis is requiring us to skip this year. I know I speak for all of the staff when I say that we will be missing all of you this weekend, the time we were scheduled to be together for the conference. We look forward to getting back on track next year.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and May is National Foster Care Month. While Oregon has seen decreases in abuse rates and foster care placements in recent years, we still have higher than average rates of foster care. We all know that foster care is no place to grow up. This is highlighted in the name of our annual conference "Every Day Counts." We must continue efforts to safely reduce foster care and ensure that children grow up in safe, permanent homes. In doing so, we improve the future of our state's most vulnerable children and lay the groundwork for safe and healthy communities.

I know this is not news to you. Many of you have worked tirelessly, and

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for years, to advocate improvements for individual children and for the foster care system as a whole. Across the state, in any given month, you complete an average of 500 cases and donate an average of 4,000 hours toward this effort of improvement. The theme of National Volunteer Week is "Celebrating People in Action." I am hard pressed to think of any more impressive action than the work you all do every month for abused and neglected children, and for that, the staff at the CRB celebrate you in honor of National Volunteer Week (April 19-25).

## The CRB's New Online Resources

Check out our new "Resources" page on our website at [www.ojd.state.or.us/crb](http://www.ojd.state.or.us/crb) to access helpful supplemental resource materials for volunteer board members, staff, and community partners. Included on the page are materials and links to: DHS's "Choices Chart," the OYA Flow Chart on Oregon's Juvenile Justice System, a very helpful list of common acronyms (created by Clackamas County board member Lois Ann Colianni), and information on reasonable and active efforts, among others. If you have any other requests or suggestions for helpful information or links, please send them to Shary Mason at [shary.k.mason@ojd.state.or.us](mailto:shary.k.mason@ojd.state.or.us).

# OFPA Presents: Walk Me Home

The Oregon Foster Parent Association (OFPA) is organizing a "Walk Me Home," 5K fundraiser for foster children and is inviting you to be a part of this "First Annual" event in Salem on Saturday, May 30th.

"Walk Me home...to the place I belong" is sponsored by the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) as well as state and local affiliates. This event is designed to raise awareness of foster care issues, promote fostering and raise funds for foster care organizations. This is the first time that this nationwide event is being held in Oregon. There are more than 50 other communities and 24 states participating.

You can participate by walking, sponsoring or volunteering. In doing so, you will be supporting more than 7,000 children in foster care in Oregon. The money raised is targeted for recruiting foster par-

ents, facilitating support groups, and helping older teens prepare for and enter college.

**To register you or your team, or to donate, or for more information, please visit the Walk Me Home website at:**

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



## John Begin

The Tillamook County CRB is mourning the loss of fellow board member, John Begin, who died February 26<sup>th</sup>. John was well known in the community for his work as a volunteer. He was also an associate pastor with the Nazarene Church where he developed a recovery program based on the tenants of AA. The CRB was fortunate to have John join the Board in December of 2006. His knowledge of recovery was an asset to the work of the Tillamook Board given the number of cases that involve substance abuse. John also used his skills in communicating with the young people who attended the reviews. John is survived by his wife Tami, five children, and nine grandchildren.

John, you will be very missed.

-CRB Staff and Volunteer Board Members

## Highlights from CRB Program Improvement Efforts

In this addition of the newsletter we are highlighting program efforts to improve the delinquency (OYA) reviews and increase the participation of youth and older children in their reviews.

Steve Lindeman (Multnomah) is managing the strategy on improvements to our delinquency reviews. Working with him are board members Judy Jeffreys (Polk), Julie Brown (Union), Teresa Tucker and Bob Pearson (Douglas), and Tara Davies (Lane). This work group is looking at all aspects of the delinquency review through the lens of the statutory parameters of public safety, youth accountability, and reformation.

In their work they are also considering: how reviews are scheduled, the use of briefings, design of the case note and supplemental guide, training board members, the role of race, and assisting the OYA in meeting their Key Performance Measures passed by the

legislature.

A second work group is using the survey regarding youth participation to increase the number of older children and youth who are participating in their reviews. This work is being done in partnership with the Juvenile Court Improvement Project's effort to ensure "age appropriate" consultation with all chil-

dren in regard to their case plan. The work group, managed by Toni Sloan (Umatilla) also includes Cynthia MacKay (Linn) and a child who is currently in foster care (Umatilla). Additionally, they are collaborating with Foster Club, and the Youth Advisory Council at DHS. A child/youth specific letter of invitation to a review and a child/youth brochure about the CRB are currently being developed and should be available in the very near future. The next project for this work group is developing a training plan for effective communication with youth and older children who participate in their review.

# Child Welfare Legislation

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 amends titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act to provide support to some relative caregivers, provide for Tribal foster care and adoption access, and improve incentives to promote adoption.

Major provisions of the Act applicable to CRB reviews include:

## Permanent Placement with Relatives

- Guardianship assistance is available for grandparents and other relatives who have been licensed and served as foster parents for 6 consecutive months for a child that is IV-E eligible, and who have agreed to become the child's legal guardian.

The State must determine that:

- 1) being returned home or adopted are not appropriate permanency options for the child; 2) the child has a strong attachment to the prospective relative guardian and the guardian has a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child; and, 3) a child 14 years or older has been consulted regarding the kinship guardianship arrangement.
- States must notify grandparents and other adult relatives within 30 days after the child is removed from the home.
  - The law clarifies federal licensing standards for relative foster family placements. It will allow states, on a case-by-case and child specific basis, to waive standards that do not jeopardize the child's safety, such as the number of bedrooms, square footage, etc.

## Maintain Connections with Siblings and Family

- States are required to make reasonable efforts to keep siblings together in foster, kin, or adoptive

placements, provided it is in the child's best interest.

## Improve Outcomes and Transition for Older Youth (effective Oct. 1, 2010)

- At state option, IV-E funding is available for foster care maintenance for youth beyond age 18 (up to age 21). The youth must be enrolled in high school, post-secondary or vocational school or equivalent, an employment preparation program, employed at least 80 hours/month, or unable to engage in such activities because of a medical condition. The youth may be living in a supervised independent living situation, foster family, or group home.
- Child welfare agencies must work with the youth, and other representatives as appropriate, at least 90 days prior to emancipation, to develop a personal transition plan. The plan should be as detailed as the youth requests, addressing housing, health insurance, education, mentoring opportunities, continuing support services, work force supports and employment services.
- The law also amends the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program to permit vouchers for youth who after attaining age 16 enter into kinship guardianship or are adopted from foster care.

## Improve Education Stability and Coordination of Medical Needs

- The child welfare agency must ensure that a child remains in the same school at the time of his/her placement in foster care, if in the child's best interest. If enrollment in the school of origin is not in the child's best interest, immediate enrollment in the new school, with records, is required. If the child is subsequently removed to another placement, the state may

access IV-E funds for transportation costs to the school of origin. This can range between 50% - 83% of the costs, depending upon the federal allocation for locales.

- Requires states to develop a plan for ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for every child in foster care, in collaboration with pediatricians and other experts. The plan should address: 1) initial and follow-up health care screenings; 2) treatment for needs identified in the screenings; 3) how medical information will be shared, which may include development of a health care passport; 4) continuity of health care services; 5) oversight of prescription medicines; and 6) how the state actively consults and collaborates with physicians and other appropriate professionals to assess the health and well-being of children in care to determine appropriate medical care.

The full-text of P.L. 110-351 can be found online:

[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110\\_cong\\_bills&docid=f:h6893enr.txt.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:h6893enr.txt.pdf) (109 - KB)

**2009  
Shoulder to  
Shoulder  
Conference  
Save the Date  
November 10, 2009**



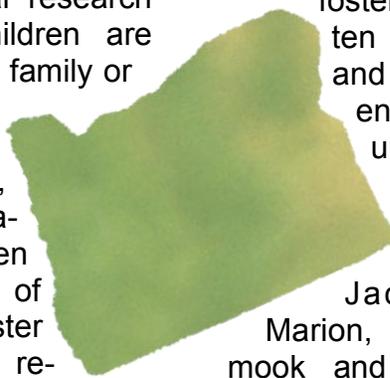
# Oregon Launches Plan to Safely Reduce the Number of Children in Foster Care

The Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Commission on Children and Families have partnered with national foundation Casey Family Programs to support Oregon's efforts to safely reduce the number of Oregon children in foster care.

Foster care placement in Oregon continues to be one of the highest in the nation. National research shows that when children are safe at home with their family or in another permanent placement option, they have better social, emotional and educational outcomes. Even though the number of children entering foster care in Oregon has recently declined, state leaders believe the rate can be further reduced by as much as 20% by the year 2011.

In 2007, more than 10,000 children in Oregon were confirmed victims of child abuse and ne-

glect. On any given day, more than 9,000 kids are served in Oregon's foster care system. Most of those children (64%) eventually return home to their parents. Nevertheless, national research shows that children who experience foster care are more likely to struggle with behavioral health issues, are less likely to be successful in school, and those youth who age-out of foster care at age 18 often face unemployment and homelessness, or end up in low-wage, unsteady jobs.



The pilot counties (Coos, Deschutes, Jackson, Malheur, Marion, Multnomah, Tillamook and Washington) were chosen based on the number of children in foster care and their ability to assist in expanding the work statewide. Each local plan will include six statewide goals to achieve by 2011:

1. Safely reduce the number of children in foster care by 20%

2. Increase relative placements by 50%
3. Reduce children entering care by 10%
4. Increase foster care exits by 20%
5. Reduce the disproportionality index for Native and African American children
6. Maintain or reduce current child abuse/neglect recurrence rate of 7.9%.

Many CRB staff are partners in the local efforts, including Shary Mason who was appointed by the Governor to be the convener of the effort in Tillamook County. We encourage you to engage with us in making this project a priority in your community. Please share your ideas on how to meet these goals with your Field Manager.

## Foster Care Rate Redesign

There are significant changes coming for foster parent reimbursement rates that will affect all foster families, from relatives who care for one child to long-time foster homes that house up to seven children. The goal is to create a system of reimbursement that is more consistent, fair and transparent and is tied to current estimates of the actual costs for raising a child.

The new design is based on three main categories: base level, enhanced supervision level, and personal care services level.

Some foster care reimbursements will decrease, just as some reimbursements will increase and others will stay about the same.

For more information regarding the Foster Care Rate Redesign Project go to:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/children/fostercare/rates/>



## A Little Inspiration

“There is no such thing as permanent foster care – foster care is temporary”

*Hon. Deanne Darling  
Clackamas County*

“The absence of a committed permanent home can't be treated by medication or residential treatment.”

*Pat O'Brien, Executive Director  
of You Gotta Believe! The Older  
Child Adoption and Permanency  
Movement, Inc.*

“Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another.”

*Erma Bombeck*