



WINTER 2010

## Wasco CRB Book Drive: “200 Books for 200 Foster Children”

Wasco County Volunteer Board Members, Connie Christensen, Anne Frazier, Sandra Fritz, Claudette Potter, and Herman Ziegler, have again worked hard this year to collect books for children in foster care in Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler Counties. New or like new books for children of all ages, from toddlers to teens, were collected in November and December to give as holiday gifts this year. The goal was to collect 200 books for 200 children.

We are proud to announce that with the help and partnership of local businesses, Klindt's Booksellers and New York City Sub Shop, this year's goal was not only reached, but far surpassed, as generous community members donated a total of 308 books!

Great job, Wasco County!

If you are interested in organizing a book drive in your county, contact your [local field manager](#) or [Darcy Davidson](#), the Volunteer Resource Coordinator for assistance or more information.



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## A Message From Our Director

Dear CRB Volunteer Board Members,

Happy New Year! I love the beginning of a new year. It is after the hustle and bustle of the holiday festivities, that I have the opportunity to reflect on the past year and make plans for the year ahead. It is this time of year that I notice the days are beginning to get longer and the crocuses are starting to break through the earth. I feel grateful, hopeful, and eager for the year ahead. As the new year begins, on behalf of the Oregon Judicial Department, I thank you - our loyal CRB board members - for supporting our juvenile court review efforts. We rely on your participation in monitoring that the services are in place to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being for Oregon's most vulnerable children.

As I reflect back on 2009, it is apparent that despite the state budget challenges and many staff changes, the CRB accomplished much. Due to budget reductions, we have said goodbye to Michaelle Bienvenu, Volunteer Resource Coordinator, Rachelle Herbert and Nadine Pressley, support staff, and Mark Harris, CRB Field Manager. We also said goodbye to Maria Chavez-Haroldson, Benjamin Hazelton, Jennifer Hartung, Tracey Lerner, Toni

Lehman, and Molly Steinbacher due to new career opportunities and life changes. On the other hand, we have been able to say hello or, in some cases, welcome back to Christina Jagernauth, Nadine Pressley, and Erinn White. Even I am serving the CRB in a new way in the aftermath of our State's budget crisis. While change is difficult, our challenge is that we must be at our strongest during these difficult times because the families we serve are the hardest hit by them.

During the last four months of 2009, I spent a lot of time on the

## Foster Care Rate Redesign Update

DHS has recently redesigned the way they reimburse foster parents for the care they provide to children. On September 1, 2009 new base rates and the rates for levels of care took effect for all foster parents and relative care givers. This also includes a new daily rate for family shelter care.

For more information on the rate redesign, or to sign up to receive e-mail alerts as new information is available, please visit the website:

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

## A Message From Our Director (cont.)

road, observing reviews and meeting board members in Clackamas, Clatsop, Crook, Douglas, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, and Marion counties. I was truly impressed with our board members' knowledge of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, competency and effectiveness in reviews, and willingness to make a difference. In 2009, you conducted more than 5,500 reviews or OYA briefings involving nearly 6,500 children and youth. Your individual and collective efforts were recognized by Governor Kulongoski when the CRB was awarded the 2009 Governor's Volunteer Award in the Statewide Volunteer Program category!

The CRB is currently engaged in a number of initiatives to improve the program itself and Oregon's larger child welfare system. Some of these initiatives will be discussed later in this newsletter. I do, however, want to briefly mention one. Three months ago, DHS convened a rapid-response Foster Care Safety Team to review the issue of safety in foster care and report back with preliminary recommendations. I was part of this team along with representatives from law enforcement, CASA, foster youth, foster parents, and DHS program managers. We are in the process of vetting and finalizing our findings and recommendations. Of particular interest to the

CRB is a recommendation that DHS partner with community stakeholders like the CRB to increase interdisciplinary training opportunities for DHS staff and foster care providers. We will be working closely with DHS to implement this recommendation as well as the others.

I hope you are grateful, hopeful, and eager for the year ahead. I look forward to meeting with you when I visit your county or seeing you at the CRB statewide conference April 23-24, 2010. Thank you for all you do each and every day.

- Leola McKenzie, CRB Director

## CRB Receives Governor's Volunteer Award



Cynthia MacKay of Linn County receives the Governor's Award on behalf of the Citizen Review Board.

The Citizen Review Board was selected to receive the 2009 Governor's Volunteer Award in the Statewide Volunteer Program category. These awards are given to recognize individuals and organizations in the state for their dedication, commitment, and determination in promoting and supporting volunteerism in our state.

The CRB was honored at the 2009 Governor's Volunteer Awards Luncheon on Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Salem Conference Center. This event was held in conjunction with the Oregon Civic Engagement Conference. Citizen Review Board members, staff, and juvenile judges were in attendance to accept the award and honor the work of Citizen Review Board volunteers who dedicate themselves to some of the most vulnerable children and families of the State of Oregon.

Congratulations to all of our volunteers for this recognition of the wonderful and inspirational work you do!



CRB Volunteer Board Members: (from left) Mary Hill, Nora Schliske, Susan McAnulty, Bill Distad, Toni Phipps, Carl Christman, Jean Cauthorn, Jann Sparks, Catherine Leary, Heather Eason, Cynthia MacKay



Cynthia spoke about the CRB's commitment to Oregon's children and families, and our volunteers' dedication to seeking permanency for children in foster care.

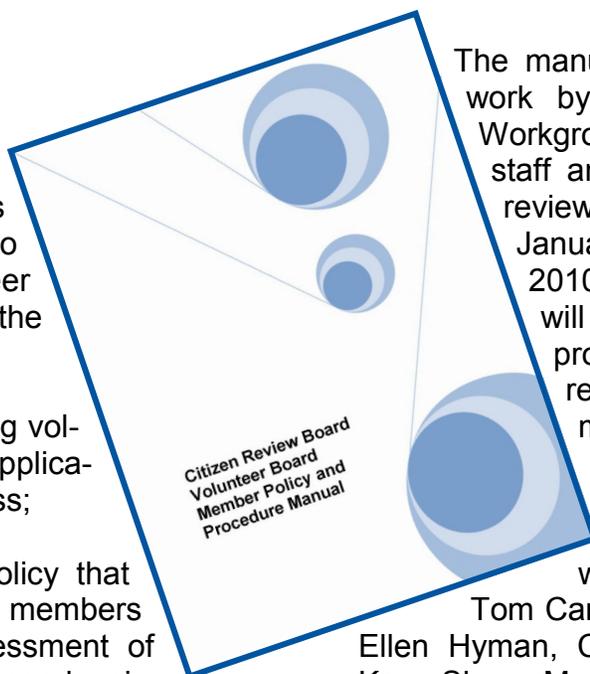
# CRB Volunteer Board Member Policy and Procedure Manual

In the next few months, the CRB's administrative office will send out a proposed new policy and procedure manual for volunteer board members. Before it is officially adopted, all volunteer board members will have an opportunity to review the document and provide comments or concerns.

The new manual includes:

- A more comprehensive policy for recruiting new volunteer board members that directs coordinators to involve existing volunteer board members more in the process;
- Clarification of the existing volunteer board member application and screening process;
- An expanded training policy that requires volunteer board members to complete a self assessment of their skills and training needs nine months after they are first appointed and every year thereafter;

- A newly created list of professional standards for volunteer board members in the areas of advocacy, commitment, competency, dependability, demeanor, effectiveness, ethics, objectivity, relationships, and training.



The manual is a result of almost a year of work by the CRB Policy and Procedure Workgroup, which is composed of both CRB staff and volunteer board members. The review and comment period will begin January 8, 2010 and end January 29, 2010. Most volunteer board members will receive an email with a link to the proposed manual. Those who have requested not to be contacted by email will receive a paper copy in the mail.

The CRB's administrative office wishes to thank Suzanne Callahan, Tom Carranza, Darcy Davidson, Walt Gullet, Ellen Hyman, Christina Jagernauth, Cynthia MacKay, Shary Mason, Leola McKenzie, and William Wagner for their hard work and dedication during development of the manual.

## UCAN Teen Report Card on Adults

*Article courtesy of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)*

Created and sponsored by the Uhlich Children's Advantage Network (UCAN) in Chicago, the Teen Report Card is an annual measure of adult progress on issues affecting teens, as graded by teens themselves. A representative sampling of 1,000 youth ages 12-19 are asked to grade adults in 22 key subjects, such as protecting teens from violence and abuse, terrorism, drinking, and drugs, to education, creating job opportunities, and spending time with their children. Teens are also asked what media most influence them in regard to world, national, and local events. Teens receive the ques-



tions in the form of a mail survey, with the results weighted to reflect regional, ethnic, and gender distribution across the United States. CWLA's research division provides long-term trending analysis

of the grades received by the adults. The report card grades and teen focus group recommendations are released at the close of the school year--the same time millions of our nation's youth are receiving their own report cards.

Through the Uhlich Report Card, UCAN and CWLA are giving a voice to America's youth, who desperately want to be heard and who have exceptional ideas and opinions about the issues affecting them.

For more information, please see the [CWLA Website](#), or go directly to the [UCAN website](#) for detailed information.

# CRB Case Notes Supplemental Sheet Under Revision

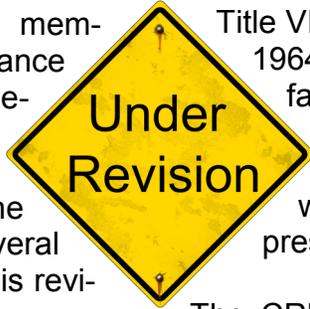
One of the most valuable tools CRB staff and volunteer board members have available is the Case Notes Supplemental Sheet. Consistent reference to this document significantly impacts the Board's ability to conduct consistent and effective reviews.

The Case Notes Supplemental Sheet is currently under revision to provide volunteer board members with additional guidance in making findings and developing recommendations when cultural needs must be addressed in the case plan. There are several factors which prompted this revision.

Research has found that:

- Children from some cultural populations enter foster care at higher rates;
- Some cultural populations are referred to child welfare more frequently due to reports of abuse or neglect;

- Children from some cultural populations remain in foster care for longer periods of time;
- Children from some cultural populations are adopted at lower rates; and
- Children and families of color experience disparate and inequitable service provision and outcomes.



Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 also requires child welfare agencies to provide services in a culturally competent manner when cultural needs are present in the case.

The CRB is taking a leadership role in joining with the courts, DHS child welfare, and foster care system partners to reduce racial disproportionality and disparate treatment in Oregon's child welfare system. The CRB's Cultural Responsiveness Committee is in the process of:

- Modifying the Case Notes Supplemental Sheet by adding points of cultural competence to consider with each finding;
- Developing case scenarios to be used in cultural competence training for boards and staff; and
- Providing training on laws, policies, programs, and initiatives that seek to reduce the disproportionality and disparate treatment shown in the research.

The Committee plans to distribute the revised Case Notes Supplemental Sheet to volunteer board members by the end of March 2010.

**If any volunteer board members are interested in serving on the Committee, please contact Committee Chair, Tom Carranza, CRB Field Manager, at 503.986.5851 or [tom.c.carranza@ojd.state.or.us](mailto:tom.c.carranza@ojd.state.or.us)**

## 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!

**Baker County:**  
Elizabeth Bordeaux

**Benton County:**  
Joann Zimmer

**Curry County:**  
Carole Meuret

**Douglas County:**  
Kristi Anderson, Mary Mathews

**Jackson County:**  
Leesa Henselman

**Josephine County:**  
Michael Sellars

**Klamath County:**  
Cindy Nellipowitz, Lori Mahan,  
Wanda McKoin

**Lincoln County:**  
Don Chapin

**Linn County:**  
Chelsea Pearsall

**Lane County:**  
James McCarthy, Dolores Anderson,  
John Fischer,  
Barbara Griesel, Joy McDowell,  
Lee Larson

**Marion County:**  
Doug Bailey, Dottie Delk, Sharon

Jenkins-Payne,  
Kay Knott, Tara West

**Multnomah County:**  
Kay Johnson, Mary Michael, Kit  
Thompson, Sheila Wildfeuer

**Tillamook County:**  
Sue Jelineo, Annemarie Funk

**Umatilla County:**  
Joe Zoske

**Wallowa County:**  
Jean Grandi, Karen Kearns

**Washington County:**  
Kendall Burton, Michele Scholl,  
Velma Springer

**Welcome!**

# Judges' Thoughts About Termination of Parental Rights

Article courtesy of *Children's Bureau Express*, November 2009

Some judicial and child welfare professionals have raised concerns that the shortened timeframes for termination of parental rights (TPR) mandated by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) have, in some cases, led to the creation of "legal orphans," that is, children who no longer have legal ties to their birth families, yet have no adoptive families. To address these concerns, Child Trends sponsored a study in which telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of 20 judges representing 18 States. In the interviews, the judges shared their perspectives and experiences with TPR and the challenges they face when making TPR decisions.

The findings suggest that some judges are concerned with creating legal orphans, and the absence of an identified adoptive family for a child does make some judges apprehensive about terminating parental rights. Other concerns included the opposition to adoption by some older children, the objection by some potential adoptive parents to



take on the care of a child whose birth parents' rights were still intact, and the potential loss of ties between the child and birth family. Some judges noted that recent changes in case practice have provided the opportunity to make better, less divisive decisions.

The Timing of Termination of Parental Rights: A Balancing Act for Children's Best Interests, by Raquel Ellis, Karen Malm, and Erin Bishop, is available on the Child Trends website:

[www.childtrends.org/Files/Child\\_Trends-2009\\_09\\_09\\_RB\\_LegalOrphans.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_09_09_RB_LegalOrphans.pdf) (378 KB)

## CRB Electronic Case Materials Project

The current budget crisis has prompted the CRB to begin exploring options for reducing the quarter of a million dollars the program spends each biennium copying and mailing CRB case materials to volunteer board members. Volunteer board members may recall a survey that was sent out a few months ago to assess their ability and willingness to receive case material electronically. Incredibly, almost 68% of Board members responded to that survey (this is a very high response rate for a survey).

Results from the survey indicated that the vast majority of respondents had a computer in their home and many were willing to try electronic case materials. With that said, about half cited concerns, including inconvenience of reading large documents

on the computer, shifting of printing costs from the State to volunteers, security of confidential material, and technical difficulties.

A workgroup of CRB staff and volunteer board members was assembled to recommend the most cost effective and secure means of transmitting CRB case materials electronically. Over the course of three meetings, the workgroup reviewed and observed demonstrations of various online document applications. In the end, it was found that sending electronic case material on a disk though the mail was a more cost effective solution.

Starting January 1, 2010, the CRB's administrative office began sending electronic case material on a disk to 19 Board members that graciously volunteered to test the technology. Over the next few months, the administrative office will be working

out any kinks in the process. After the testing phase, the technology will be available to all volunteer board members who no longer want to receive paper case materials. It is important to note that receiving case materials electronically will be voluntary. The CRB's administrative office wants to remain sensitive to those who expressed concern in the survey and those that do not have access to a computer.

A special thank you is due to Jenifer Chamberlain, Kevin Coulson, Darcy Davidson, Tina Ellenwood, Linda Farrington, Christina Jagernauth, Cynthia MacKay, Leola McKenzie, Melissa Miller, Lisa Pappalardo, and all the volunteers who agreed to participate in the testing process for their time and effort in making this cost saving technology possible.

# 2008 Volunteering in America Report

*Oregon Ranks 7th for Average Volunteer Hours Per Capita Annually.*

## *Portland Takes 2nd For Large Cities*

On July 28, 2009, the Corporation for National and Community Service released its annual Volunteering in America Report which looks at volunteering trends across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as 50 large and 75 mid-sized cities.

### **Oregon's Rankings and Information:**

Climbing three spaces to the 13th spot in the state rankings, Oregon's overall rate of volunteers was 33.9 percent. In 2008, 1.015 million volunteers in Oregon dedicated 120.5 million hours of service to their state.

Oregon also benefited from the intensive service of more than 46,000 people of all ages and backgrounds who are helping to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and increase civic engagement through 153 national service projects across the state. Serving through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America, these citizens tutor and mentor children, coordinate after-school programs, build homes, conduct neighborhood patrols, restore the environment, respond to disasters, build nonprofit capacity and recruit and manage volunteers. This year, the Corporation for National and Community Service will commit more than \$36.1 million to support national service programs in Oregon communities.

### **Here's how three selected Oregon cities ranked:**

#### **Eugene:**

- Ranked 17th on the list of the nation's 75 largest mid-size cities for volunteer rate in the country – 36.6 percent of the city's residents volunteer, compared to the 2008 national average of 27.0 percent.
- Ranked 7th for volunteer hours per capita, having an average of 49.8 volunteer hours.

#### **Portland:**

- Ranked 2nd in the list of the nation's 51st largest cities for volunteer rate in the country – 36.7 percent of the city's residents volunteer, compared to the 2008 national average of 27.0 percent.
- Ranked 4th for volunteer hours per capita, having an average of 47.1 volunteer hours.

#### **Salem:**

- Ranked 24th in the list of the nation's mid-size cities for volunteer rate in the country – 33.0 percent of the city's residents volunteer, compared to the 2007 national average of 27.0 percent.
- Ranked 23rd for volunteer hours per capita, having an average of 41.1 volunteer hours.

**Financial Impact of Volunteering in Oregon:** On average (between 2006-2008), residents of Oregon annually contributed

almost 120.5 million hours of volunteer service totaling \$2.7 billion.

Of this total:

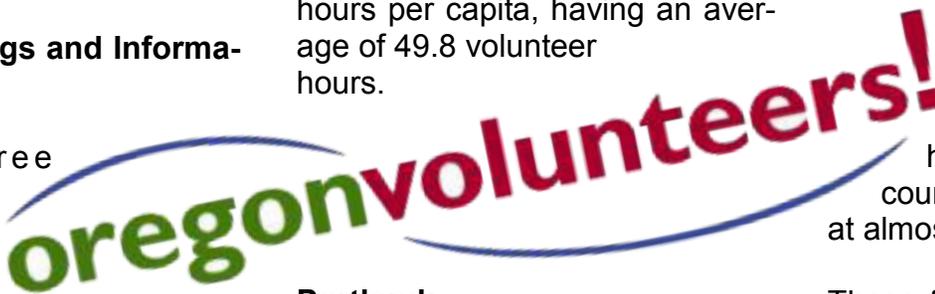
- Portland contributed almost 75.1 million hours, accounting for service valued at \$1.6 billion for 2008.
- Eugene contributed more than 13 million hours, accounting for service valued at \$263.25 million for 2008.
- Salem contributed more than 14 million hours on average, accounting for service valued at almost \$283.5 million for 2008

These figures are based on the Independent Sector's annual estimation of the dollar value of a volunteer hour for 2008, which is currently \$20.25.

### **Volunteering In America Study Information:**

Based on data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, this report presents an overview of formal volunteering at both the national and regional levels, as well as state and city rankings determined by volunteering indicators such as volunteering rate, intensity of volunteering, total hours donated, the types of activities volunteers perform, the types of organizations where people volunteer, and civic engagement. All volunteer rankings are based on a three-year average (using data from 2006-2008).

For more information, please see the Volunteering in America website at: [www.volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov):



# Suicide Prevention Among Tribal Youth

Article courtesy of Children's Bureau Express, July/August, 2009.

Studies show higher suicide rates and attempted suicides among Native American youth compared to the general population. To better prepare Tribal child welfare workers to prevent and respond to suicidal behavior among the youth they serve, the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) recently released a new resource, *Ensuring the Seventh Generation: A Youth Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Tribal Child Welfare Programs*.

The toolkit includes information on warning signs for suicidal behavior, risk and protective factors, and prevention and intervention methods in the context of working with Tribal communities. Some strategies for child welfare work-

ers to consider when working with youth at risk for suicide are:

- Partner with parents and caregivers to gain valuable insight into a child's suicidal behavior and mental health history.
- Prepare foster parents and other care providers by informing them of the risks of suicide and referring them to community resources for support.
- Mobilize family and community support networks around youth at risk for suicide.
- Understand the cultural protocol for talking about suicide and connect families to faith-based and spiritual leaders for additional guidance.
- Encourage youth to participate in cultural and community activities; studies show

youth with a strong cultural identity are less likely to commit suicide.

The toolkit also encourages child welfare agencies to create a suicide crisis response team by assigning a designated response lead and establishing collaborative protocols with other service providers, such as law enforcement, mental health professionals, and school personnel.

Download the toolkit on the NICWA website:

[www.nicwa.org/YouthSuicidePreventionToolkit/YSPTToolkit.pdf](http://www.nicwa.org/YouthSuicidePreventionToolkit/YSPTToolkit.pdf) (3,040 KB)



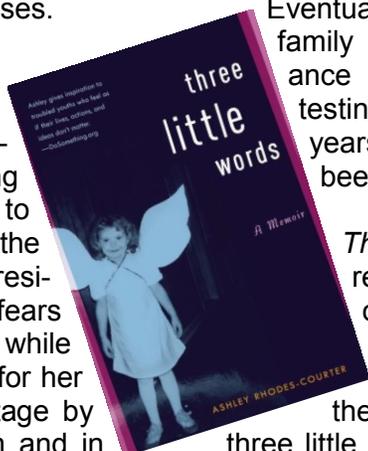
## NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association

## Book Review: *Three Little Words*

*Three Little Words* by Ashley Rhodes-Courter is the memoir of a child growing up in the foster care system in the state of Florida. Her entry into care with her charming yet very disturbed younger brother follows the all too familiar pattern of drug use, abandonment, and broken promises.

Rhodes-Courter shares the experiences of failures in the functioning of the social services system; from faulty case planning and case worker disinterest to abusive foster placements and the depersonalization of living in residential care. She shared the fears and guilt of being in care and, while expecting not to be responsible for her younger brother, was held hostage by his actions, both by the system and in the homes in which the children resided. Each move from one placement to another took a bit more of her childhood, in addition to her possessions, always stuffed into black garbage bags; with promises of retrieving toys and mementos later.



The description of families coming to the treatment facilities to 'shop' for children is especially insightful into the lives of foster children, trying to look their best to be selected.

Eventually, Rhodes-Courter finds a family with the will and perseverance to work through her many testing periods, which continue for years after her adoption has been finalized.

*Three Little Words* is easy to read in that it is the narrative of one person's childhood written as a young adult, but it is also very difficult due to the story that is being told. The three little words may not be what you would expect to hear; giving even more insight into the difficulties facing foster care children.

-Submitted by Marilyn Smiley, Umatilla County Board Member

## A Little

### Inspiration

"There is no greater joy nor greater reward than to make a fundamental difference in someone's life."

*Sister Mary Rose McGeady*

"Unselfish and noble actions are the most radiant pages in the biography of souls."

*David Thomas*

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to

improve the world."

*Anne Frank*

*Save the Date!*



*2010 Annual Training Conference*

*"Every Day Counts"*

*April 23–24, 2010*

*Embassy Suites*

*Washington Square*

*Tigard, Oregon*

*More details coming soon...*

