

CRB NETWORK NEWS



A Quarterly Publication of the Citizen Review Board Program - Winter 2005

CRB 2005 Book Drive Results Outstanding!

By Kelly Merrick, CRB Volunteer Resource Coordinator



Thanks to the dedication and generosity of CRB members, the CRB was able to provide more than **4000** new books to children in foster care in time for the holidays!

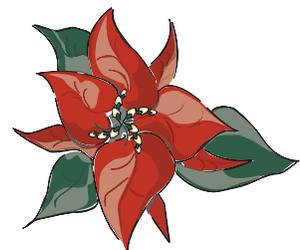
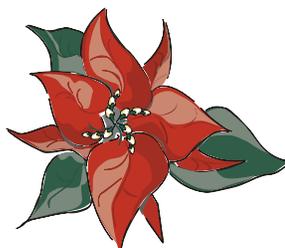
Robin Holmes, CRB Member from Multnomah County (and Book Drive Coordinator Extraordinaire), developed the process for collection of books early on, encouraging those interested to bring books to the 2005 Educational Conference, and to collect books in their own communities.

By the end of the conference, 2,723 books had been collected, marked and distributed to CRB State Advisory Council members and CRB Field Managers. They in turn took them back to their local communities and presented them to the Department of Human Services for distribution to foster children. Thanks to all of you for your enthusiasm in this process.

In addition, **LouAnn Martin** of Lane County, **Jan Conklin** of Washington County, and **Brenda Ponichtera** and **Sandra Fritz** of Wasco County headed up local book drives. With the help of their board members and members of the community they were successful in collecting more than 1,500 books which were donated to DHS on behalf of the CRB to be added to holiday baskets for foster children.

Nel Ward of Lincoln County worked throughout the year to provide input on book lists, and secured discounts at the local book store in Gleneden Beach for conference participants. Nel also volunteered to help with book collection and distribution at the conference.

The success of this year's book drive is a result of generous CRB members and staff who donated books throughout the year, community support, and special donors outside the CRB program. The latter included **Jerry Isom and Willamette Writers**, the **Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators**, and **Joan Hibbs** of Clackamas County, who donated more than 1,500 new books for distribution around the state. Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!



A Holiday Message -

By Shary Mason, CRB Program Manager



On the bulletin board in my office hangs a yellowed copy of an article that was published in the Oregonian years ago. It is entitled “Longing for Christmas with ‘real’ family” and was written by Judith Craddock. In it she recalls nine Christmases spent trying not to miss her real family, while hanging ornaments on strangers trees and thinking of those that she had grown to love at home. She tells of saving all of her money to buy a special gift for her foster mother in the hope that it would make her love her. Instead she continued to belittle and abuse her. There were some holidays in caring foster homes and somewhere she was molested by foster brothers and a foster “grandfather.” She never kept hoping that someone would help her family get well so she could go home to her “heart-source.” At the end of the article, she asks “when will people understand that children need above all to be with their loved ones. When will we provide options where damaged children and their families can be kept together, taught social and emotional skills and awarded real family value?”

You, as Citizen Review Board members, understand the importance of family to children. Your program vision is that “Citizens will shape public policy and actively promote conditions which ensure every child lives in a safe, secure, healthy, permanent home, preserving families whenever possible.” In reviews you ask questions to ensure that reasonable efforts have been made to provide services to keep families together. You question whether relative resources have been thoroughly explored. And when a child cannot safely return home, you press to find a permanent home where they can grow up and create new memories.

However you celebrate the holiday season, family is a huge part of that celebration. Cherish time with your own family and continue your work to ensure that every child has a safe permanent home to grow up in. Never doubt that your gift of time and caring makes a huge difference in the lives of the children you review.

I wish you the very best holiday season and a wonderful New Year.

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Harney County CRB Member Receives Oregon Children's Award -

Submitted by Kelly Merrick, CRB Volunteer Resource Coordinator

On December 1, 2005 at the Governor Hotel in Portland, Oregon, the second annual Oregon Children's Award Committee presented an award to **Norma Jean Johnson**, CRB Member from Harney County. Nominated by her local board, Norma Jean was selected as the winner in the "Local Leader" category.



The Oregon Children's Award is intended to be the premier statewide acknowledgment of those visionaries whose determinations and bold action have produced significant change for the children of our state. The "Local Leader" category is described as a local hero who has had a significant impact on children - that special person in the community who stands out.

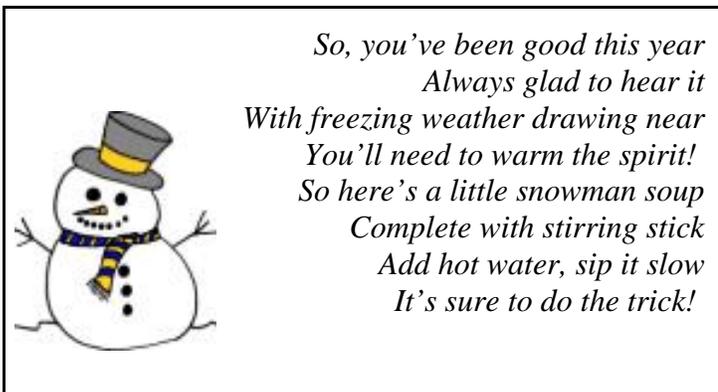
In submitting the nomination on behalf of Harney County, Anne Vloedman, CRB member wrote that Norma Jean Johnson's service to the children and their families in Harney County is well known to those working with children. This eighty-year-old woman volunteers many, many hours on their behalf. Norma Jean has been a voice for children as she works as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) and as she chairs and participates in the Harney County Citizen Review Board.

In 1985, Norma Jean was the first CASA in Harney County, and helped set the standards for child advocacy. Over the years, she has been appointed by Judge William Cramer as the CASA to act on behalf of specific children who have been taken out of their homes for their own safety. She works with Harney County's Department of Human Services, Mental Health Department, schools, counselors, and others to ensure that the best care and decisions are made for the child.

When the Oregon Judicial Department established a CRB in Harney County, it tapped Norma Jean Johnson to be its first member, and she continues as its chair today. In addition, she served on the CRB State Advisory Council, representing Grant and Harney Counties for many years. She was also a CRB Volunteer of the Year.

Norma Jean is one of those people who quietly goes about her work, seeking no payment nor public acknowledgment, but when she sees injustices or inaction on the part of individuals or agencies charged with protecting and helping children, she has a loud and effective voice in the local and state courts and agencies. It is a fortunate child who has Norma Jean as his or her CASA, or hears his or her case reviewed by the Harney CRB.

We are so very proud of you, Norma Jean! Congratulations!



Snowman Soup

Place 10-12 mini white marshmallows in a zip lock bag.

Type up the card on the right, or cut out.

Place in a cellophane bag:

- A package of hot chocolate
- A package of mini marshmallows
- Two chocolate kisses
- Small candy cane
- Tie with ribbon and give as a gift!

CRB Program Manager Named as Congressional Angel in Adoption

Submitted by Judith Spargo, CRB Member, Josephine County

Shary Mason, Program Manager for the Oregon Citizen Review Board, has been an outstanding advocate for abused and neglected children in both her professional and private life. She and her husband Don, a former city manager and municipal court judge, are also adoptive parents of their niece and guardians of their grandson. Both children have special needs. Throughout the many challenges, Shary and Don devote considerable energy and passion providing a loving home and meeting the needs of their children.



Representative Greg Walden presenting the award to Shary Mason, her husband Don, daughter Brianna and grandson Random

Shary is also a leader in adoption reform in Oregon. She co-chaired Oregon's Adoption Task Force, bringing together advocacy groups, providers, agencies, and courts to expedite the adoption process. The Task Force worked diligently for over a year to develop comprehensive recommendations directed to all entities involved in the adoption process. Volunteers from the Citizen Review Board, under Shary's capable and energetic management, are now following up on the recommendations. Their implementation will result in every child being placed in a stable and loving home as quickly as possible.

Guaranteeing that the adoption process is healthy and expeditious is a life work for Shary and Don. The CRB is proud to call them our own.

New Information on Oregon Adoption Performance - September 8, 2005

(Submitted by Kathy Ledesma, DHS Adoption Services Program Manager to the September 14, 2005 Child Welfare Advisory Committee)

- ★ All 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have now had a federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), and all have either completed their Program Improvement Plan (PIP) or are in the process of doing so. In a preliminary report about the states' progress toward meeting the national standards, the following has been reported by the Children's Bureau's CFSR team:
 - No state has passed Permanency Outcome # 1: Children will have permanency and stability in their living situations. This outcome includes number of moves in foster care, time to adoption and time to reunification.
 - Only seven states have achieved the national standard (32% or more in 24 or fewer months) for time to adoption. Each of these states has unique characteristics and used unique strategies to achieve the standards.
 - Oregon has achieved the third best improvement in relation to the national standard for time to adoption.

- ★ For its PIP, Oregon negotiated a secondary outcome measure for time to adoption: Median time of 36 or fewer months from removal to adoption finalization for all children exiting foster care to adoption. Oregon has met this standard for the past ten consecutive quarters.
- ★ In a comparison of the federal fiscal year (ffy) 2004 preliminary federal AFCARS (Adoption and Foster Care Administrative Reporting System) data with the ffy 2004 AFCARS data submitted by Oregon, between ffy 1998 and ffy 2004:
 - Nationally, the average time from removal to adoption finalization has declined by six months. ***Oregon's average time from removal to adoption has declined by nearly eight months.***
 - Nationally, the average time from removal to TPR declined by ten months. ***Oregon's average time from removal to TPR declined by only two months.***
 - Nationally, the average time from TPR to adoption finalization has remained flat. ***Oregon's average time from TPR to adoption finalization has declined by two months.***
 - Nationally, the time from TPR to adoption is 12 months longer for children who are adopted across state lines than for children who are adopted in state. ***Oregon's time from TPR to adoption for children who are adopted across state lines is 4.7 months longer than for children who are adopted in state. In ffy 2004, nearly 24% of all Oregon foster children whose adoptions finalized, were adopted by families in other states.***
 - Nationally, the average age of children waiting to be adopted has increased by 12 months since ffy 1998, while the average age of children who were adopted has remained flat. ***In Oregon, the average age of children waiting to be adopted has declined by nearly a year (from 4.8 years old to 4.1 years old) since 1998, and the average age of adopted children has remained flat at 5.9 years old.***
 - Nationally, both the percentage of children waiting to be adopted and the percentage of children adopted who are white has steadily increased since 1998. ***Oregon's data demonstrated a similar trend between 1998 and 2002 for children waiting to be adopted, but has declined from 83.5 to 78 percent since 2002. 67% of children adopted from Oregon foster care in 1998 were white, while in 2004, 79.4% were white.***
 - Nationally, the proportion of children whose parental rights have been terminated who exited care without being adopted or exited care to non family settings has remained constant, at about 6%, since 1998. ***The proportion of Oregon children whose parental rights have been terminated who exited care without being adopted or exited care to non family settings declined from 4.6% in 1998 to 1.9% in 2004.***
 - Nationally, the percentage of adoptive families who are the child's relatives appears to have peaked at slightly under one-fourth. ***Oregon's relative adoptions represented 33% of all foster care adoptions in 2004, down from a high of 37% in 2002.***
 - Nationally, 1 in 5 Black children and White children are adopted by relatives and 1 in 3 Hispanic children is adopted by relatives. ***In Oregon, 1 in 2 Black children, 1 in 3 White children, and 1 in 3 Hispanic children are adopted by relatives.***
 - Nationally, two-thirds of adoptive families are married couples, 30% are single females, and 2% are single males. ***In Oregon, 78% of adoptive families are married couples, 16% are single females, 2% are single males, and 4% are unmarried couples.***



Do you know someone in your community concerned about child abuse and neglect? The CRB is recruiting for new board members around the state. Limited funds are available to assist with certain expenses related to serving on the board for new applicants meeting eligibility requirements. Contact your local Field Manager or Kelly Merrick, CRB Volunteer Resource Coordinator at (503) 731-4578 or by e-mail at Kelly.M.Merrick@ojd.state.or.us for an application packet.

Welcome, New CRB Staff Members!

Submitted by Kelly Merrick, CRB Volunteer Resource Coordinator

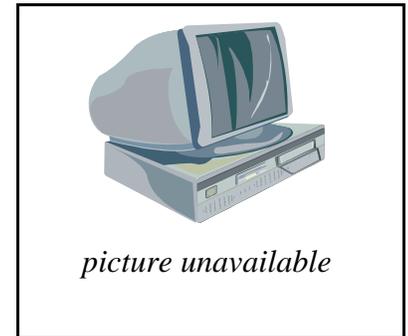
Jenifer Chamberlain, Court Operations Specialist II, is housed in our Salem office. She supports CRB members and staff, and comes to us from the Oregon Tax Court.



Her lifelong journey started in a small village of Follifoot, North Yorkshire, England. Jenifer says you can actually visit Follifoot on the internet (www.follifoot.org.uk) and see exactly where her roots are planted. While Jenifer has lived in England and Zurich, Switzerland, she calls Clatskanie, Oregon her hometown in the United States. She has lived in the beautiful Willamette Valley for close to six years, and calls it “her living destination of choice.”

Jenifer has three grown children and enjoys gardening, knitting, reading, and singing in church. In Clatskanie, she belongs to a small theater group and enjoys acting. Jenifer can be reached at (503) 986-5904 or by e-mail at Jenifer.Chamberlian@ojd.state.or.us Welcome, Jenifer!

Melissa Wade, CRB Field Manager for Polk and Yamhill Counties, was born in Sacramento, California. She was raised for most of her life in Keizer, Oregon, where she attended McNary High School. Melissa graduated from California Lutheran University with a degree in Business Administration.



After graduation, Melissa promptly returned to Oregon (“I missed the rain!”) where she was employed in a small family business in a sales capacity. Her first exposure to the world of child advocacy was in 1998 when she worked with the Portland State University Child Welfare Partnership. Melissa worked as part of a research team that developed the Cohort Study, an in-depth research project of the families served by DHS offices in the state of Oregon.

Melissa then turned to politics, working with the State Elections Division and as Congresswoman Darlene Hooley’s Finance Director. In 2003, Melissa and a friend started the Oregon Campaign Finance Solutions. At the same time, she served in numerous capacities including Assistant Director, Volunteer Liaison, and Coordinator for the Morning Star Community Church in Salem.

Due to legislative changes in filing laws, Melissa decided to leave the field of campaign finance and return to child advocacy. She became employed by the CRB on September 14, 2005 and says “I am loving the job!”

Melissa’s hobbies include cooking, dancing, horseback riding, reading, politics, and playing cards late into the night with friends! Melissa can be reached at (503) 986-5906 or by e-mail at melissa.wade@ojd.state.or.us Welcome Melissa!

Theresa Naylor, Court Operations Specialist II, is housed in our Portland office. She is often the first friendly voice you hear or face you see when you call or visit us in Portland.



Theresa was born in Cleveland, Ohio. Her family relocated to Oregon in 1978, where Theresa attended Aloha High School and Portland Community College.

Prior to joining the CRB, Theresa owned and operated an Adult Foster Care home for eleven years. She kept busy managing the care of four full time residents between the ages of 21 and 65 who were either mentally or physically disabled. Theresa says “it was a very rewarding experience, but consumed the majority of time I had available for my family.” She recently made the difficult decision to close the business, and joined the CRB earlier this year.

Theresa has a nine-year-old daughter named Kassie and a 22-year-old stepson named Jessie. Their two pets, Rosco and Daisy (a dog and a dwarf hamster), complete their family.

Theresa enjoys hiking skiing/snow boarding, and camping with her family. Theresa can be reached at (503) 731-3338 or by e-mail at Theresa.A.Naylor@ojd.state.or.us.

Emily Reiman, CRB Field Manager for Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties, is a native Oregonian. Born in Portland and raised in Eugene, Emily is an avid duck fan!

Emily moved to Massachusetts to attend Mount Holyoke College, where she studied comparative politics and history. After college, she lived in Montana for a short while, but returned home to Oregon to live near her extended family.

Most recently, Emily was employed as a guidance counselor at an alternative high school and as the leader of an AmeriCorps VISTA team through the Umpqua Community Action Network. She recently moved back to Eugene, and is very excited to be back in her hometown.



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When not on the road for reviews, Emily enjoys taking advantage of the theater and music in town, and has taken up sewing to help occupy herself during the next six months of rain. Emily is quoted as saying “I’ve very much enjoyed my introduction to the CRB, and want to send a special thanks to the volunteers of Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties for their patience while I’m learning my job!”

Emily can be reached at (541) 686-7853 extension 3, or by e-mail at Emily.Reiman@ojd.state.or.us

Quarterly report for the Chairs’ Committee

Submitted by Benjamin Hazelton, CRB Field Supervisor

The main function of this committee over the last quarter has been and will continue to be coordination of the action items of the strategic plan. The next meeting is scheduled for December 29, 2005. At this meeting, the committee will develop the strategies to implement the objectives that were selected as priorities during the strategic planning session between staff and the SAC Executive Committee.



Kudos Corner - *special recognition for recent CRB efforts and/or advocacy*

CRB Resource Manual Project -

CRB volunteers worked hard in November and December to complete the assembly of more than 300 CRB Resource Manuals. These are being distributed by CRB Field Managers to all conference attendees as a belated volunteer appreciation gift and educational tool. Special thanks to the following for their hard work, determination, and enthusiasm in getting this huge project completed:

Alice Kinzer, Washington County
Carla Swanson, CRB Clackamas County
Christy Hurt, CRB Multnomah County
June Lenihan, CRB Multnomah County
Lois Ann Colaianni, CRB Multnomah County
Patricia Everett, CRB Washington County
Vicki Linnman, CRB Multnomah County

Angela Peene, CRB Multnomah County
Cecelia Carlson, CRB Multnomah County
Janet Parsons, CRB Multnomah County
Lois Newton, CRB Multnomah County
Noel Wright, CRB Multnomah County
Robin Holmes, CRB Multnomah County

CRB History Project -

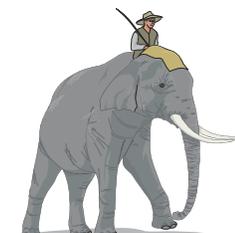
Those who attended this year's 20th Anniversary CRB Educational conference had a special opportunity to view a large display reflecting the last twenty years of CRB's growth, history, and impact. Many hours were spent by Susan McDaniel, CRB Field Manager in Klamath and Lake Counties, in interviewing, coordinating, and finalizing this project. Our special thanks to the following people for their work on this project:

Ann Rudd, CRB Klamath County, retired
Bill Linden (former State Court Administrator)
Jean Cauthorn, CRB Multnomah County
Joan Melquist, CRB Lake County
Martha Dougherty, CRB staff, retired
Ruth Davidson, CRB Clackamas County, retired
Ted Abram, (former Klamath County Presiding Judge)

CRB staff who lent support to the project includes Nancy Miller, Shary Mason, Benjamin Hazelton, Kelly Merrick, and Kelly Moore. Special thanks to Mark McDaniel, Susan's husband, for his help in the outstanding video presentation at the CRB welcome reception!

Mission to Africa -

Michelle Poli, CRB Member from Multnomah County, asked for a brief leave of absence so she could volunteer in an orphanage in Africa for a month. We miss you Michelle - keep up the good work!



“Volunteer Voice” - 1000 Books for 1000 Kids

Submitted by LouAnn Martin, Lane County CRB Member

The Lane County CRB volunteers successfully reached their goal of providing a brand-new book for every child in Foster Care in Lane County. What started out as just a conversation about “what are we doing with the book drive,” became a countywide project to collect enough books for every foster child in Lane County. With the help of our local media, Eugene and Springfield Dutch Brothers’ coffee locations, Three Rivers Casino in Florence and Brad’s Chevrolet in Cottage Grove serving as collection points we were soon on our way with our drive during the week of October 31 to November 6, 2005.

This truly was a community effort. KVAL, our local CBS affiliate and several of the local radio stations donated air-time to get the message to the community about this worthwhile project. By holding the drive before the holidays we were not competing for other agencies needs. Time and time again we heard from people who didn’t realize foster children have very little items they can call their own and the sheer number of 1,000 children in care in their own backyard was alarming.

The local Dutch Brothers coffee locations not only served as drop off spots but also for every new book donated you received a drink of your choice for only a dollar. Likewise, Three Rivers Casino in Florence awarded a one-time \$5 slot for every donation of books. These businesses not only gave something back in return for serving as collection locations but have agreed to help out again next year. Our local Active 20-30 Club provided us with a grant to purchase books to fill in the need for Spanish books. **Pat Wasmundt**, a CRB board member, collected more than 300 books on her own with help from her friends and church group.

We enlisted the help of O’Hara Catholic School’s second grade classes to make posters for each of the drop off locations. The most effective communication tool we had in addition to the TV and Radio coverage was our own email network. We sent emails out to all our friends and relatives and asked them to forward it onto all their friends. I had so many calls asking how to get involved. We even received books donated from a friend in Ohio.

The books, which were sorted and boxed by CRB volunteers, were distributed on Saturday, December 10, 2005 at the Lane County Foster Parents Christmas party. The books in their brightly wrapped boxes were the first thing the kids saw as they walked in the room and everyone was delighted to be able to choose their very own book to take home.

As I watched all these wonderful children enjoying their time at the party, I was sad to realize there really are many children in care of the state, and not with their own families. My sadness left as I listened to the laughter and witnessed the face painting, lines waiting for a moment with Santa, and big pizza smiles. This group of children were surrounded by foster parents, volunteers and DHS workers, who were able and willing to put the needs of these children before their own. How honored I felt to be at this party and see these children. These children that we only read about on paper, and hope our recommendations get them services or a permanent loving home was an affirmation of what we accomplish as Citizen Review Board volunteers.

System of Care Flex Funds – *Meeting Needs Creatively*

By Mark McKechnie, MSW - Juvenile Rights Project, Inc.

Beginning in 1995, the System of Care agreement between the Oregon Department of Human Services and Juvenile Rights Project, Inc (JRP). sought to increase and expand the tools that the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) has to meet the needs of children and families. This included flexible funds that can and have been used to better meet the needs of children and families in hundreds of ways over the last decade.

After the Legislature restored the flexible funds in August 2003 (following their elimination brought about by the economic recession and failure of Measure 28), DHS worked with JRP to establish categories under which flex funds could be requested. These broad categories include: *Housing and Food; Transportation; Assessment, Testing & Evaluations; Therapeutic and Rehabilitative Services; Skills Training and Support; Support Services for Caregivers and Well-Being & Developmental Needs.*

The use of flex funds is driven first and foremost by the needs of an individual child and family, and agency policy sets broad parameters for using these resources to meet individualized needs. The funds must be tied to the safety, permanency, attachment and/or well-being the child. The funds are not to be spent, however, if there is another resource available to meet the need.

Inaccurate information has been one of the greatest barriers to utilizing flex funds to their fullest potential. While these funds have suffered more than their fair share of cuts in the past few years (including their total elimination for eight months in 2003), the fear of cuts that haven't materialized has prevented some case workers from requesting flex funds to meet children's individual needs.

Right now, in fact, DHS has *more* flexible funds than they had last biennium. The 2005 Legislature appropriated \$8,661,469 for 2005-07. DHS proposed and the Legislature's E-Board agreed in the last biennium to shift money away from flex funds to fill holes in DHS' budget. This money was an easy target, in part, because branches had not been spending the money. The final appropriation after rebalances for 2003-05 was \$5,085,890.

It is important for DHS staff and community partners to understand that the funds are available now to meet child and family needs, but they could start to disappear again if they are not used. Because these funds exist, DHS is better able to meet children's needs. Without them, more needs will go unmet.

JRP has seen branches use their flex funds for a number of plans that respond directly to children's individual needs, which are too numerous to list here. These are a few notable examples. Two foster children who have notable talents received sewing machines so that they can better pursue recreational and vocational interests in fashion, including one who used the machine to create her application to fashion school.

Foster families have also been able to purchase health club, swimming pool or museum memberships so that their foster children can participate in family activities that are healthy and enriching, which promotes their bonding with caring adults.

Flexible funds allow relatives to be able to afford to care for children who are taken into DHS custody by helping them rent larger houses or apartments or obtaining additional furniture, such as beds or dressers. This is particularly important in Oregon, since we do not pay relative foster providers when the children do not meet the federal IV-E eligibility requirements, even though we pay “stranger” foster parents regardless of the child’s eligibility.

Flex funds also allow children to visit and keep in touch with relatives around the country and beyond, even when those family members aren’t resources as foster parents, guardians or adoptive parents.

Education is another key need related to the well being of children and their chances of becoming successful, self-sustaining adults. A new law passed in 2005 (HB 3075) provides an additional avenue for some children in foster care to continue attending the same school even if they have moved into foster care or to a foster home in another district. When the court finds it is in the child’s best interests to continue attending, DHS will spend up to \$700,000 in flex funds which have been designated for this purpose to provide transportation, if needed. School districts typically are not obligated to transport children outside of their districts.

Many foster children have missed school due to abuse, neglect, homelessness and/or movement within the foster care system. Schools may not be obligated to provide the help these children need to catch up, particularly if the child does not have a disability that qualifies them for special education. In these cases, tutoring can directly address these children’s needs, and flexible funds may be the only resource available to meet that need.

Flex funds also help fill in the gaps to remove safety risks or barriers to permanency. Recent budget cuts have drastically reduced the number of adults eligible for OHP Standard. Flex funds may be the only available resource for helping parents struggling with drug addiction or mental illness regain the stability needed to parent their children safely. Flex funds have also been used to craft individualized supports for parents with special needs, which may not be available otherwise.

Research conducted by Portland State University has shown that the use of flex funds has yielded different and better outcomes for children compared to cases where no flexible resources are used. They help enhance visitation and contact between children and their parents or other relatives. Children are more likely to go home or be adopted sooner. They help make children safer and increase the capacity of parents to care for their children. And they help meet the educational needs of foster children, who often lag behind their peers academically.

Despite numerous efforts at the state and national level, some children are still spending substantial portions of their life in foster care. A goal for each child is to leave foster care and find a permanent home, whether with their parents, relatives or adoptive families. Flexible funds are one important tool Oregon has developed to achieve those goals more quickly for more children and to make their lives a little better while they are waiting.



CRB Alcohol and Drug Checklist

Provided by Jay Wurscher, Alcohol and Drug Services Coordinator, Department of Human Services

(The following information was provided at the 2005 CRB Educational Conference in the "Drug Endangered Families" workshop. Thanks to Joan Hibbs, CRB Clackamas County for providing this information for reprint. The information has been slightly edited to fit this newsletter format)

The goal with each adult parent or adolescent client is to determine:

- ✓ do they have any drug or alcohol related problems, and if so,
- ✓ are they appropriately and quickly responding to those problems?

If they are not responding to those problems, ask about the barriers to treatment and recovery, and question whether the barriers are real.... or..... is there denial and avoidance of treatment.

Remember - If they've never been assessed for alcohol and drugs, they need to be. If they have been assessed, they need to be following the recommendations of the assessment. If they are following the recommendations, their efforts must be monitored and documented for the caseworker/file. Keep in mind that urinalysis tests that are **not random and monitored**, are questionable.

Questions to ask during reviews might include:

- What is the **current status** of your relationship to alcohol and drugs?
- Have you received an alcohol and drug **assessment** in the past year? If yes, when? Where? What was the recommendation? (Residential/outpatient/nothing) Did you **follow through**?
- If no recommendations - are you attending **Al-Anon** in support of your partner's recovery?
- If they haven't followed through, ask for specifics - Why haven't you?
- Are there any current **legal charges** related to your alcohol or drug abuse?
- Are you currently attending any **12 step meetings**? If yes, does the caseworker have **signed slips** from the meetings? If no, why not?
- Do you have a **sponsor** to assist you with your 12 step recovery?
- Has the caseworker actually met your 12 step sponsor?
- If **urinalysis tests** are being done, are they monitored and random?

2005 CRB Blue Ribbon Awards



CRB Members from around the state awarded 27 CRB Blue Ribbon Awards to local community members who have made a difference in the lives of the children, youth, and families we review. This years list included DHS staff, Juvenile Judges, CASA volunteers, Foster Parents, and Tribal Members. For a complete listing, please visit our website at www.ojd.state.or.us/crb and click on the "News" link.

Reflections on the 20th Anniversary of CRB

Submitted by Kelly Merrick, CRB Volunteer Resource Coordinator

On October 28 & 29 2005, approximately 250 CRB members, staff, and special guests gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Citizen Review Board at the 2005 Educational Conference in Gleneden Beach, Oregon.

Conference attendees at Salishan Lodge were greeted by the following CRB staff who helped with registration and conference logistics: **Jennifer Hartung, Kelly Moore, Cathleen Rangel, Tiffany Lamberth, Kelly Robison, Theresa Naylor, Elaine Gay, Michelle McClaghry, and Jenifer Chamberlain.** Thanks to all of you for helping our conference this year be such a success!

The 2005 conference opened with a riveting keynote address by **Denise Barker**, Director of South Carolina's Foster Care Review Board, followed by Session 1 & 2 breakouts and **Foster Care City.** Our special thanks to the generous donors who helped make the Foster Care City simulation possible:

**Chinook Winds Casino
Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
CJR, Inc. - Moji Momeni, CRB Washington County
Gail & Reba Adams Trust - Gail & Reba Adams, CRB Jackson County
Salishan Spa & Golf Resort**

At the welcome reception, Friday evening, attendees were treated to a display of CRB history and a PowerPoint presentation, which was very moving. CRB members and special guests enjoyed a buffet dinner, elegant decor, and dancing as the night wore on. Special thanks to **Alice Kinzer, Carla Swanson, and Diane Greenman** for the beautiful decorations! Our sincere appreciation goes to the following donors who helped make this such a fabulous event:

**Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
Alice Kinzer, CRB Washington County
Carla Swanson, CRB Clackamas County
Diane Greenman, CRB Multnomah County
The Grand Papery - Lake Oswego**

The Saturday session opened with **Dr. Jack Stump**, Keynote presenter, whose topic "*Methamphetamine - Whose Problem Is it Anyway?*" produced a standing ovation from the audience. **Shary Mason**, CRB Program Manager, recognized staff and volunteers who have been with the CRB since its inception. **Deb Martson** of Clackamas County, **Jean Cauthorn** of Multnomah County, **Jean Pierce** of Multnomah County, and **Maxine Crites** of Multnomah County were recognized for their twenty years of continued service to the CRB. **Martha Dougherty**, former CRB Field Manager who retired earlier this year, was also recognized as the CRB's first Coordinator. In a thank you note to the fall conference committee, Marty wrote "*Thank you for organizing such a great 20-year celebration. It was joyous, very educational, and a great reunion for me. The visual presentations, lectures, and workshops were tops! It was OVER the top! I'm very glad I was encouraged to go. You did a fabulous job!*" Conference evaluations echoed Marty's sentiments.

Conference attendees reunited for lunch, and were treated to the "Daze of Our Lives," a keynote presentation by the **Honorable Katharine English**, former Multnomah County Juvenile Court Referee, and Chief Judge of the Confederated Tribe of the Grand Ronde. Katharine's presentation was received with a standing ovation.

Day two of the conference wrapped up with the ever popular CRB Table Talk, an exercise organized by **Alice Kinzer**, CRB Washington County. CRB staff and State Advisory Council (SAC) members facilitated three, 25 minute segments of “table talk.” They discussed key points from workshops and generated recommendations about how CRB members could use the information in their reviews. Thank you to all staff and SAC members who helped to facilitate this process. Summaries from each of the workshops are provided in this newsletter.

Additional thanks to those who helped to provide an outstanding conference this year:

Hibbs Consulting-Joan Hibbs (logo)
Coco Graphics, Inc. d.b.a. LazerQuick, Inc. (resource manual printing)
Wes Stevens (photography)



Alice Kinzer’s starfish portrait presented to Chief Justice Wallace P. Carson, Jr.



CRB Members listen to opening remarks during Friday evening welcome reception



CRB Field Managers Susan McDaniel and Jennifer Ashcraft dance to “YMCA”

CRB members were treated to candle light, dinner, and dancing at CRB’s 20th Anniversary welcome reception



Nancy Miller and Moji Momeni join others dancing to “Celebration”

At the end of the CRB 2005 Educational Conference, board members met in a general session to engage in three “table talks.” These “table talks” allowed board members to experience workshops they did not attend or to provide information for those that they did attend. Each table talk had a recorder who summarized the information presented in the workshop and captured ideas generated to utilize the information. A summary of these discussions is presented below.

Identification and Management of Child Molesters

According to the speaker, false reports by children are very low as is the number of children reporting. It was the speaker’s recommendation that contacts between the offender and victim should be non-existent or very limited and based on the age of the child. The non-offending parent may not be the best person to supervise visits. Treatment should include pre and post polygraphs. Board members can determine whether the psychosexual evaluation was administered by a qualified professional and can recommend a penal arousal test, if one has not been done.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

The speaker stressed that FASD is an invisible physical disability that most often has only behavioral symptoms rather than physical indicators. As a result, FASD is severely under diagnosed. Most children who have FASD will not display the facial features associated with the disorder, because those characteristics are based on the mother’s consumption of alcohol during a specific three day window of the pregnancy. The speaker stated that one red flag to look for is children who have been given several of the following diagnoses, for which FASD is commonly mistaken: Failure to Thrive, Pervasive Developmental Delay, Autism/Asperger’s, Speech or Language Delays, ADD, ODD, Reactive Attachment Disorder, and Conduct Disorder. To identify FASD, both a neuropsychological evaluation and an occupational therapy evaluation should be completed. Boards should recommend that evaluations be completed by a specialist with knowledge of FASD.

An IEP may be necessary to accommodate the primary characteristics associated with FASD. These include the following: reduced visual processing abilities, slow auditory comprehension pace, developmental levels at one-half to two-thirds of age level, difficulty transitioning between tasks, quick overstimulation etc. Special education resources can be utilized, including an Educational Service District (ESD) evaluation. Independent Living Services for children, and training for foster parents regarding FASD can also be helpful.

Foster Parent Certification

Potential foster homes are assessed for safety, the motivation of the potential foster parent and the future well being of foster children placed in the home. DHS identifies potential foster homes when a citizen contacts DHS requesting to become certified or a relative resource is identified by the parents at the time of removal. Both options require a completed application which includes basic historical questions, household composition and financial status. Each member of the household is assessed for involvement or connection with any incident of child abuse. DHS runs a criminal records check on all potential foster parents. If the applicant has lived in Oregon for five years, DHS will only run a check in Oregon unless the applicant divulges a criminal record in another state. In that instance, DHS will run a full background check. Convictions of homicide, sex abuse crimes or torture automatically disqualify the placement. Convictions of felony assault and drug distribution are evaluated on a case by case basis.

The home and property must be free from hazards, all medications must be inaccessible to children, there must be adequate space, the home must be equipped for fire safety and firearms must be locked. Potential foster parents must have the ability to meet their own financial needs without foster care monies. A medical evaluation is also conducted to determine the potential foster parents’ physical health, family health history,

current medications and drug and alcohol use/history. If there are two potential foster parents in the family, each is interviewed separately. If there are adult children or teenage children in the potential foster home, DHS will also interview them.

DHS completes the same application and screening process for relative placements. If an immediate placement is necessary and the parents have identified a relative resource, DHS will waive the requirement for four references and accept only two with the understanding that two additional references will be required.

The ideal foster parent will have good communication skills, patience, empathy, teaching skills, personal management and the ability to utilize community resources. Once certified, foster parents must complete 10 hours of ongoing training each year before the certification expires. Boards can recommend that foster parents receive training in areas that match the child's needs. DHS will visit the home to ensure nothing has changed that would disqualify the home and interviews the parents and the children before re certification occurs.

All allegations of abuse in foster care placements must be investigated by a Child Protective Service Worker.

Oregon Youth Authority (OYA)

This workshop offered an overview of new legislation related to OYA, the legislatively approved budget for OYA, and their risk/needs assessment and case planning process. OYA received funding for 850 beds and believes they will need 116 more beds for this biennium.

The workshop also offered information about OYA Sex Offenders. As of 10/3/05, there were 581 youth offenders ages 12-24 in OYA custody who are required to report for sex offender registration. Of those 568 are male and 13 are female. OYA uses an instrument called the Estimated Risk of Adolescent Sexual Offense Recidivism (ERASOR) to assess risk of re offense. The rate of re offense for those who receive treatment is low (5-14%). This is important information for reviewers who see OYA cases.

Many adolescent sex offenders were not abused as children and there is no specific profile or unique family pattern for their families. Most do not have other major psychological problems, but some do have serious issues. They often fly under the radar because they do not present as kids with problems. Adolescent sex offenders differ from adult sex offenders in that they have lower recidivism, engage in fewer abusive behaviors over short periods of time, have less aggressive sexual behavior and are more responsive to treatment. Boards can monitor compliance with treatment recommendations

CRB Findings Driven Review

This workshop provided a history of how the findings driven review format was developed. The presenters discussed this new process and the new opening statement. Tips were given for gathering information for the review including: highlighting important areas in a particular color; using sticky notes to highlight or address important information, and reviewing the previous case notes' sheet. It was also suggested that board members place questions under the appropriate finding, remembering that issues and information may apply to more than one finding. It was suggested that boards should begin the review by stating a brief summary of the case as they know it.

Some boards make their findings as they go along and others wait until the end of the review. One strength of the new process is that it helps to focus the review. A weakness is that if the case is assigned to a board who has not reviewed it before, there is not as much background information. Another weakness is that parties and attorneys have felt that they do not have an opportunity to speak. For example, at the beginning of the review, most of the questioning and discussion are with DHS because the first four findings apply to DHS. To address

this issue, boards should provide all parties and attorneys the opportunity to speak to each finding. After hearing from DHS regarding reasonable efforts, allow the parties and attorneys to provide input regarding the efforts made by DHS. For boards that make each finding as they go, it is essential to provide all parties and attorneys the opportunity to speak to the finding.

Assessing the Special Needs of Children in Foster Care

Foster children are three times as likely as the general population to have medical, dental, developmental and/or learning needs. This is due to parental substance abuse, poverty, and abuse and neglect. All children entering care are required to be referred for a mental health assessment within 60 days and a medical and dental evaluation within 30 days. These assessments need to be completed by qualified professionals. An “Ages and Stages” evaluation is not a substitute. The DHS caseworker is responsible for assuring that the assessment occurs and that the results of the assessment are received.

Behaviors that are often observed in younger foster children are: school problems, anxiety, hyperactivity, sleep problems, aggression, temper problems and constant movement. In addition to school problems, older children are often at risk for drug and alcohol use, have physical ailments, fear obesity, are depressed, and have peer problems, nightmares and anger issues.

Additional reimbursement for foster parents is available to provide intervention for children with exceptional behaviors. To qualify for a special or personal care rate, the child must have an assessment by a registered nurse and/or a diagnosis of a behavioral problem. A reassessment must occur annually. Boards can monitor that this is occurring and that the additional rate is still warranted. Sixty-five percent of the children in care have a personal care rate in addition to the regular foster care rate. These children often have multiple caregivers, health care providers, and services. They often have a lack of available health information. Availability of health care providers is also a problem. Adoption subsidies often do not match the special or personal care rates, which can be a disincentive to adopt. There is a committee looking for better solutions to address issues surrounding these higher foster care rates. CRB is a participant on the committee.

Board members can ask questions about immunizations, hearing and vision screening and comprehensive medical, dental, developmental and health assessments. If the lack of an assessment negatively impacts the board’s ability to make a finding, the board can continue the case. Board members should consider a negative reasonable efforts finding if an assessment is not completed. A board can recommend that the assessment or a referral be completed within a specific time frame, i.e., within the next ten days. DHS policy I.c.4.1 is an excellent reference and can be accessed on-line through the DHS Child Welfare Policy site. The board can also make use of additional findings to highlight concerns, make recommendations to the court, and indicate statewide system issues to present to DHS administration and work toward system change.

Methamphetamine Effects from Pregnancy through Adulthood

In an adult, methamphetamine usage can cause mental inflexibility, permanent brain trauma, depression and heightened sexual desire. In children, it can cause irritability, poor feeding, depression, hyperactivity and learning disabilities. Children may not be able to self soothe and may suffer effects similar to those occurring through neglect.

It's important to know the parent's history and duration of use to fully understand the level of impairment and impact on the children. Treatment modalities should be long term, include random u/a’s and parenting classes. Mental health counseling and medication management are often crucial components of recovery. The user’s previous peer group and environment need to change in order for treatment to be successful. It is estimated that it takes two years for methamphetamine users to successfully resolve their substance abuse problem; relapses

are usual in this time frame. Due to heightened sexual desire and the risk of sexual abuse, it is important to assure that there is no pornography in the home. Drug Courts are very successful and should be utilized when available. DHS needs to coordinate efforts with the parent's parole or probation officer.

Board members should recommend DHS actively work the concurrent plan; that medical, psychological, developmental and learning assessments are completed for children, and that services are continued even after reunification. Preteen and teenage children should be monitored for signs of depression and substance abuse. Board members should also consider a negative reasonable efforts finding if treatment is not accessible. More frequent CRB reviews may be necessary.

Psychotropic Medications

This table talk focused on the objectives of: learning the law regarding psychotropic medications, best practice, general information and differences between foster children and the general population.

There is a specific statute (ORS418.517) that addresses the use of psychotropic medication with foster children. This is a very important issue as: many psychotropic medications are given "off label" (not recommended by the FDA), long term side effects are not known regarding use with children, the known side effects of psychotropic medications and interactions with other medications can be very serious, and the use of medication with foster children is increasing and is already significantly higher than the general population. Unfortunately, the statute is little known or implemented and often the prescription process is not well monitored.

Feedback from the board members attending the presentation, and during the table talks, was that both knowing the law and the general information regarding medications, risks, warnings, etc. were the most important aspects of the training. Some suggestions included: giving the psychotropic medication training to all counties/boards; sending all boards a copy of the psychotropic medication statute and general information regarding medications; ensuring that reviews don't center too much on the parents and that they include an appropriate focus on the children; and developing questions for boards to ask during reviews to address concerns and best practice regarding psychotropic medication. Red flags regarding foster children on psychotropic medications were presented. These include: children five and under, children on three or more medications, children with multiple and frequently changing diagnosis' and medications. It should be noted that a red flag does not necessarily mean something is wrong, just that it should be closely evaluated and monitored. The process of getting second opinions and where to find information regarding a child's medications was also discussed (310A).

Tribal Barriers

Board members can invite representatives of tribes they see most often in their reviews to meet with them. This is a good way to obtain information about services available through the tribe as well as any cultural differences within the tribe. They can also ask the tribal representative if the local tribe has services that are available to members of other tribes.

It is helpful to include the tribal social service contact in the review either in person or by phone to help identify services that might be available through the tribe. Boards should ask the Indian Child Welfare worker when he or she last visited the child in the home to assure that they are meeting minimum contact requirements. There is a list of all of the tribes and their social worker contacts available through DHS. Field Managers can get the Board a copy.

Transitioning Teens and Programs That Help Them

DHS must develop a transition plan for all children in substitute care who are 16 years of age or older. This must be approved by the court. The plan is generally developed at a Youth Decision Meeting and differs from an Independent Living Plan (ILP) and services, which assist in the implementation of the transition plan. DHS cannot dismiss custody on a child age 14-21 without certain conditions being met. Unless the child is returning to a parent, placed in a permanent home, or committed to the custody of OYA, the court must find that case planning to transition the child from foster care has been completed, that the child has safe and stable housing and is unlikely to become homeless. Chafee Housing and educational funds are available to help the teen in the transition. CRB can assure that the child has been referred to Independent Living and can request that school counselors, ILP managers and Developmental Disability (DD) Managers are added to the blue sheet to receive notification of the review.

Educational Needs of Children in Care

Sixty percent of children in foster care have special educational needs and are on an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Children lose four to six months of schooling in each move. An IEP is a legal document which addresses a child's disabilities or behaviors affecting his or her education. It is illegal to ignore the need for an IEP. An educational surrogate is a person appointed to act in place of a parent and to make decisions for a child who has a disability or is a ward of the court. The court appoints the surrogate who must be a person who knows the laws. A caseworker cannot serve as the surrogate. It is important that a surrogate be appointed because a surrogate has access to records that the caseworker does not. Board members can ask to see the child's grades, ask for progress reports, and recommend DHS assist the surrogate to obtain needed assessments.

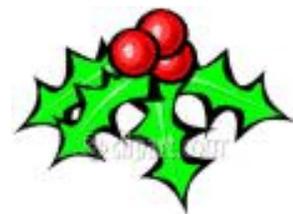
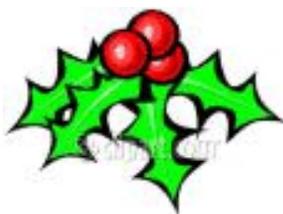
Legislation was recently passed that allows foster children to remain in the same school even if they move from one school district to another, if it is in their best interest. DHS must provide transportation.

Drug Endangered Families

Drug and Alcohol assessments need to be completed in a timely manner. They are usually not relevant if they are over a year old. Board members can make sure that the recommendations of the assessment are being addressed with adequate services. There is always hope with treatment, but the need for treatment is greater than accessibility of treatment. Services should also be provided to incarcerated parents with substance abuse issues

Board members can track the effectiveness of services by asking the parent how services are helping, if they are attending NA or AA meetings, and if they have a sponsor available to them. They can also ask the parent if their spouse or partner is supportive of their recovery. Board members can ask DHS if u/a's are monitored. A template of specific questions to monitor whether recovery is progressing is on page **12** of this newsletter.

It's important for parents to attend CRB reviews. If a parent has been abusing substances, this may affect their cognitive ability and simply sending a notice of the review may not be enough to get them to attend. If parents are not attending CRB, DHS and the parent's attorney should be encouraging them to attend. Boards can recommend that DHS assist in eliminating barriers to make CRB reviews accessible to them.



Welcome New CRB Members!

*April Coiteux
Gertrude Hunt
Kelsey Tucker
Joan Pratt
Karri Gallagher
Hope Hansen
Larry Thomas
Sally McLennan
Gerald Portnell
James Sullivan
Janet Forster
Sue Thomas
Cheri Killam-Bomhard
Angela Kime
Francine Willison
Fred Thomas*

*Clackamas County
Clackamas County
Clackamas County
Clatsop County
Clatsop County
Curry County
Curry County
Curry County
Douglas County
Jackson County
Jackson County
Jackson County
Jackson County
Lane County
Lane County
Lane County*

*Frederick Meyer
Jan Gabbert
Karen Wisenor
Laura Hinrichs
Margo Belden
Mary Reynold
Sheri Lynn Awbrey
Suzanne Bell McManus
Benjamin Hildner
Frances Heffernan
Maggie Shaw
Marie Sowers
Patricia O'Brien
Mattheus Schoonbee
Silvia Bean
Rhonda Andrews*

*Lane County
Lane County
Multnomah County
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Multnomah County
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**Citizen Review Board
123 NE 3rd Ave Suite 280
Portland, OR 97232**

return service requested