

Oregon Governor's Volunteer Awards

Congratulations to all the Statewide and Regional Awardees!

Statewide Awardees 2009

Outstanding Adult Volunteer (ages 19-54)

Jamie Hinsz

Oregon Foster Youth Connection

Eugene

As Chair of the newly formed advocacy group Oregon Foster Youth Connection (OFYC), Jamie has worked vigorously for the past two years to give voice to the over 15,000 Oregon children in foster care. Not so long ago, Jamie was a youth in foster care herself, moving from home to home in a system where it is easy to fall through the cracks. Now that she is out of foster care, Jamie leads OFYC on its mission to improve the foster care system through advocacy, activism and leadership.

Recently, under Jamie's leadership the OFYC was able to draft a bill that empowers foster youth to take control of the process in obtaining their driver's education and license. Testimony by Jamie and other OFYC members to various legislative committees has also helped advance legislation that would give health care to youth aging out of foster care until age 21. Outside of the legislature, Jamie has worked closely with the Oregon Department of Human Services to ensure that there is a youth voice within all boards that affect the foster care system. Furthermore, Jamie is dedicated to teaching others to advocate for themselves and conducts youth trainings statewide to ensure that all members of OFYC have the tools and encouragement to be powerful advocates in their own communities.

Outstanding Youth Volunteer (age 18 or under)

Andrew David Stork

Do Good Gang, SMART

Klamath Falls

Andrew David Stork had such positive experiences volunteering with his family in the community he wanted to do more. The Do Good Gang is a group Andrew created for his peers to share the joy he was experiencing when he volunteered. This group asks its high school age members to choose a cause that inspires them and then to go and build community any way they can. Andrew is actively involved in guiding this group and has spearheaded an ongoing essay contest for area children, done in a day service projects and five main efforts to benefit SMART.

In addition to Andrew's effort with the Do Good Gang, he also sits on various decision making boards in the area, volunteers with senior centers, serves as a camp counselor for preschoolers and works with SMART as a reading partner. For Andrew, the summer of 2009 was spent creating a summer science camp for underserved youth and reigning as Klamath Union High School's Mr. Pelican 2009. As Andrew's nominator said, "Andrew has indeed stepped up to a mighty challenge time and again."

Outstanding Senior Volunteer (age 55+)

Graham Covington

Minds Matter

Portland

Every weekday morning at 7:30, Graham Covington heads to a local cafe to sit in his "office," a special table in the front of the establishment. There, he works tirelessly to support every aspect of Minds Matter, an organization

he founded and now directs. Minds Matter provides tutoring and mentoring for highly motivated, economically disadvantaged high school students who aspire to attend four-year colleges and universities. As a volunteer himself, Graham has recruited more than 90 mentors and tutors to support over 45 students from their sophomore year through high school graduation. Even in Graham's director role, he still actively mentors students, writes letters of recommendation and freely gives advice and support to all the students.

As an accomplished jazz pianist Graham hosts the Minds Matter annual fundraiser and plays for the guests with his band. He also leads the organization's grant-writing team and regularly develops new partnerships with local entities to benefit the students. Through Graham's efforts, lives are being permanently changed. One mentee shares, "No one is capable of choosing their circumstances, but through Minds Matter and the inexorable determination and compassion of Graham, they are given the power to sculpt their future in a way that will give back to the community."

Outstanding Volunteer Program

Levé, Inc.

Portland

Levé Inc. was born from the desire of a group of women wanting to actively make a difference in their local community. They were passionate about keeping Oregon's most vital resources vibrant and sustainable. For each of the past six years, Levé Inc. has selected a different local non-profit to support through volunteerism, outreach, fundraising and capacity building efforts. Each Levé Inc. board member commits to volunteering for the partnered organization throughout the year both individually and as a group with the specific goal of sharing their professional skill sets and experience to support and advocate for the partner organization. In addition to their board member efforts, Levé Inc. engages their own group of over 20 volunteers, who provide support to Levé Inc. and their partner organizations.

Levé Inc. also organizes an annual low cost Charity Ball aimed at engaging college age, twenty-something individuals in outreach, volunteerism and philanthropy. Through this incredible effort, the amount of unrestricted funds raised for their partner organization has quadrupled in just four years. By maintaining relationships with businesses and managing its own set of volunteers, Levé will continue to expand to further its mission to serve Oregon communities.

Outstanding Youth Volunteer Program or Group

Forest Grove Youth Advisory Council

Forest Grove

The Forest Grove Youth Advisory Council (FGYAC) played a critical role in gaining community support to build a school-based health center in their community and later marketing the center to all district students. FGYAC members have been involved from the beginning of the two-year process to study the proposal, gain community support and School Board approval, obtain a grant to build the center and finally to build the center. Once their vision became a reality, the group began promoting the center by designing shirts, wristbands, and creating a film. By meeting twice a week or more, the FGYAC organized a school-wide assembly for the grand opening of the center – bringing together all 2,000 Forest Grove High School students, plus more than 100 community partners to who helped make the center a reality.

FGYAC members have also been involved with statewide efforts to promote school-based health centers at the "School-Based Health Center Day" rally at the Capitol. Members talked with their Washington County legislators about the critical need for accessible, affordable health care for students. The hard work of the FGYAC has built the foundation for a health center that now, provides accessible physical and mental healthcare for more than 8,000 students in Forest Grove and neighboring communities.

Outstanding Lifetime Volunteer Achievement

Sharon Straus

Sunshine Pantry
Beaverton

Sharon Straus is the founder and director of Sunshine Pantry – a nonprofit food recovery and redistribution center. She has been in this volunteer role for more than 25 years, working out of her garage for the first 20. What started as a needy family project for her son’s Cub Scout pack has now grown to an immense operation with over 150 volunteers donating 600+ hours to serve more than 900 families each month. Since it began, Sunshine Pantry has helped feed thousands of Oregonians without support from the government or the Oregon Food Bank. Those who visit Sunshine Pantry quickly find out no one is turned away because there is no selection criteria for those who visit. As Sharon says, “Nobody chooses to come to a food pantry.”

Sharon’s efforts have helped thousands of individuals and families throughout the years including young families, single mothers, veterans, seniors and immigrants, along with those who are disabled and/or homeless. In addition to food, Sunshine Pantry provides items not covered under the Oregon Food Stamp Program such as toilet paper, paper towels, detergents, feminine hygiene products, baby formula and diapers. The Sunshine Pantry serves its clients by salvaging inventory from supporting businesses that would otherwise go into landfills. Sharon’s 26 years of dedication and service has helped the lives of thousands of Oregonians facing a critical need.

Outstanding Employee Volunteer Program

Portland Trail Blazers “Make It Better” Employee Volunteer Program

Portland

Since 1998, every member of the Trail Blazer staff, as a part of the “Make It Better” volunteer team, has rolled up their sleeves to truly make a difference in their community. From serving meals to those who are most in-need during the holidays to hosting a free tree lot, to adopting a Head Start Class, a large impact is being made. In addition, each member of the “Make It Better” team receives one hour a week of paid volunteer time to serve at a non-profit or school of their choice. In fiscal year 2008-2009 Portland Trail Blazer staff have logged almost 2,200 hours of service and raised more than \$33,000 to benefit local organizations serving families and children.

The Trail Blazer-“Make It Better” Program also seeks to engage and support fans and corporate partners in volunteerism. Through their social networking site Trail Blazer perks are offered to those who engage in local service. This engagement directly benefits the local volunteer center, which is a strong partner and ultimately supports organizations throughout the community. Corporate partners are also engaged and these partnerships have resulted in new enhancements to learning communities throughout the local area.

Outstanding Statewide Volunteer Program

Citizen Review Board

Statewide

Established in 1984, the Citizen Review Board (CRB) plays a key role in assisting local courts to provide oversight of over 7,000 Oregon children and youth in foster care. All, but three counties in Oregon have work being done by volunteers on behalf of CRB’s. These trained citizen volunteers review the case plans of children and youth in their community to ensure that a plan is in place, and that services within the plan are adequate to improve the children’s conditions and circumstances. The CRB can conduct reviews for the court and make recommendations to the judge about the placement, plan, and services for the child or youth offender and their family.

As a result of volunteer efforts, many counties are seeing the rates of adoption finalizations rise because of

advocacy efforts. In fiscal year 2007-08, the 363 volunteer board members across the state contributed a total of 50,149 hours of service and were able to conduct case reviews for 7,240 children. In addition to reviewing individual cases, the CRB also organizes various service projects and activities such as collecting and distributing new books to foster children; more than 4,000 new books were distributed last year. The CRB provides critical insight to what is happening with the children in foster care and is able to make critical judgments regarding the support provided to the parents and the children.

Regional Awardees

Dan Stein

SE Works
Portland

Marion Reynolds, M.D.

Salem Free Medical Clinic
McMinnville

Heidi Harper

Perrydale School District
Amity

Sofia Schwarz

City of Salem Parks
Salem

Ready to Learn Ready to Work

A partnership of the Salem-Keizer School District, E3, Salem Chamber of Commerce & Keizer Chamber of Commerce
Salem

Dallas Jessup

Just Yell Fire, Inc.
Portland

Barbara Ray

Greenhill Humane Society
Eugene

Marjorie Hislop

OASIS Education Center
Eugene

McKenna Brown

Girl Scouts of Oregon and SW Washington
Harrisburg

AARP Tax Aide of Douglas County
Roseburg

Tony Parrish
Brookings Park and Recreation Commission
Brookings

Shirley Craig
Curry County RSVP
Brookings

John Aho
Heart of Oregon Corps
Bend

Norma Funai
Deschutes Land Trust
Sisters

Verna Pettyjohn & Mildred Fine
SHIBA
Burns

Eleanore McCasland
Redmond High School
Redmond

Ready, Set, Zoom
Hermiston Public Library
Hermiston

Jessica McCallister
Oregon State Department of Human Services-Children and Families-Child Welfare
Stanfield