



EASTERN WASHINGTON
& NORTHERN IDAHO

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working wonders

A NEWSLETTER OF VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

OF EASTERN WASHINGTON & NORTHERN IDAHO

13th Annual HOPE HOUSE CELEBRITY FASHION SHOW

Friday, October 28th
Doubletree Hotel

Wine Tasting: 11am-12pm
Luncheon & Fashion Show: 12-2pm

CELEBRITY MODELS

- Mark Agee
- Rep. Andy Billig
- Sen. Lisa Brown
- Joyce M. Cameron
- Kalae Chock
- Officer Teresa Fuller
- Lori & Jeff Humphries
- Sheriff Knezovich
- Rebecca Nappi
- Sister Sue Orłowski
- Dr. Tom Tiffany
- Chief Van Leuven
- Officer Mike Yates



FALL FASHIONS

- Chatter's Salons
- David's Bridal
- Finders Keepers
- The Gift Shop @ Sacred Heart
- Jewelry Design Center
- Jos. A. Banks
- Lolo
- The Makeup Studio
- Mr. Tux
- Pounder's Jewelry

Table of Eight: \$300
Individual: \$40

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2011 Annual Report: Celebrating 115 years serving the Inland Northwest

We began serving Spokane's homeless and hungry in September of 1896. When social reformers Maud and Ballington Booth thought of names for their new organization 115 years ago, one word remained prominent: "volunteer." In those days, a volunteer was anyone who was committed to a mission or cause.

Since its earliest days, when Volunteers of America brought food, medicine and comfort to people not served by other charities, volunteering has been instrumental in every aspect of our ministry of service. While our programs have grown and changed to meet the changing needs of the region, our services are still delivered through a partnership of professional staff, volunteers and other community supporters committed to helping those who need our help the most.

From the Great Depression to the Great Recession, our 115 years have included many ups and downs. In the past twelve months, we have had some significant downs. It is a frightening time to be poor or disabled, and while the demand for our services grows, we continue to suffer budget cuts. We know that more cuts are coming—not just one big bite, but tiny mosquitoes coming at us from all directions.

The good news is, we were able to expand housing opportunities for people of all ages. In fact, we've grown to be Spokane's largest provider of permanent housing with support services for the chronically homeless, with a total of 112 units. Despite cuts, most of our funding has remained stable, including our number of donors, who continue to give, even if the size of their donation has to be a bit smaller.

We are thankful for your steady support. You are the reason we've been here 115 years. We know we can count on you for 115 more.

Marian K. Koloff
President/CEO

ANNUAL REPORT: YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

About Face transitional housing for veterans leaving incarceration

This year, we joined forces with Goodwill Industries to take on the issue of Veterans leaving incarceration who also face issues of homelessness. Through a three year grant, the About Face team helps men and women address the underlying issues that led both to their incarceration and to their life of homelessness. Goodwill provides occupational assessments, training and job placement. Volunteers of America then helps individuals find permanent housing.

Through partnerships with Health Care for Homeless Vets and other V.A. programs About Face also helps these men and women to find medical and mental health care as well as substance abuse treatment.

"This is a true collaboration," says Jon Carollo, who oversees the Volunteers of America aspects of the program. *"Goodwill has brought its strength with employment to the table and we bring our expertise with housing. The result is that these vets get a much better chance at success than they would with either agency alone."* ■



This July, ultramarathoner Lisa Bliss ran 146 miles through Death Valley to raise \$10,000 for Crosswalk. Read all about it at www.voaspokane.org/LisaBliss.

Alexandria's House for pregnant or parenting teens & their babies

Alexandria's House served 15 pregnant and parenting young women this year. Each mom receives prenatal care and parenting training before they deliver. When the child is born, both mother and baby benefit from attachment and bonding training.

"The program has created so much good this year," says Jill Staples, Alexandria's House manager. *"The babies in these fragile new families have seen their mothers go to school and work. Most have gained enough stability to have Child Protective Services cases closed. The young women at Alexandria's House actively seek services—like medical care or counseling—to strengthen*



Each year, just 40 kids in the state receive Governor's Scholarships. This year, eight of the scholarships went to foster youth from our Independent Living and SETuP programs (pictured above with staff Alene Alexander, center). This year, 92% of our foster youth seniors graduated from high school and 91% of them enrolled in college.

their babies and themselves. And they offer their children a sense of community through group service projects, cooking and budgeting classes, even movie nights or a trip to the fair. All these things add up to the girls demonstrating real security to their young children." ■

Aston-Bleck Apartments for young women, parenting & nonparenting

The Aston-Bleck transitional apartments served 17 young women and 12 children this year. Tenants work with case managers to build strong attachments in their families and to develop concrete skills that prepare them for self-sufficiency and independence. This year, two of the young women in the program graduated from college and three from high school. Nine found full-time employment. All attended parenting or independent living classes.

"When 'Ashley' came to us, she was involved with Child Protective Services," explains program manager Marilyn Nelson. *"She didn't have a job. She wasn't in school. And she was at risk of losing her son. In her time here, not only did she attend a year of parenting classes, she also got her CPS case closed. She graduated from Spokane Community College on the Dean's List. She even volunteers in the community."* ■

Crosswalk shelter, school & multi-service center for homeless teens

Our teen shelter and its support services helped more than 1,000 youth in the past year, with shelter use increased by 22

percent. Volunteers served nearly 12,500 meals. The kids we feed, shelter, hug and educate come to us as runaways and throwaways fleeing physical and/or sexual abuse, parental substance abuse and other family conflict.

"I was speaking with one of our Crosswalk alumni the other day," says Bridget Cannon, director of youth services. *"I asked her what impact Crosswalk had on her life. She said 'It showed me there was a whole other world than the one I grew up in. You know when you say the grass is always greener on the other side? Well, Crosswalk is the other side.'"* ■

Emergency Services rent & energy assistance to prevent homelessness among low-income families

We distributed nearly \$37,000 in emergency assistance this year—helping more than 1,300 people in 546 households. It's more than just help to pay the rent, keep the heat on, fill the gas tank, pick up a prescription, or get a bus pass for a job interview. For many, these simple favors actually prevent homelessness.

"I wish there was some way to include the gratitude of the recipients in this set of statistics," explains Tracey Hirt, who administers the program. *"I wish donors could see the face of the man who was able to get to work so he could keep his job and apartment or the tears in the eyes of elderly woman who received gas to take her husband to his medical appointments. A single mom who was trying to keep the heat on in the dead of winter and had nowhere else to turn. They won't ever meet the people who provided these funds, but to them you're heroes."* ■

Flaherty House for young men transitioning out of homelessness

Flaherty House is really the only place in Spokane where at-risk young men between 18 and 21 can finish growing up. This year, the Flaherty House transitional living program housed 20 young men. Most have childhood and adolescent years marred by homelessness, family conflict, neglect, abuse and problems in school. It's no wonder they have trouble adjusting from adolescence to adulthood—something young men struggle to do even in the best circumstances. Our “guys” learn how to hold a job, cook, garden and get along with house mates.

In the past year, program manager Colleen Perron has seen more boys committed to finishing high school and continuing on to college. *“I attribute it to having more staff and volunteers who are currently in college. Being around them and hearing about their lives allows the boys to imagine themselves in college. That’s the first step to changing their lives—imagining it’s possible.”* ■

Homeless Outreach Team mobile resources for homeless men & women

For twelve months, our mobile Homeless Outreach team met with homeless men and women where they were—on the street, under an overpass, in an alley.

Their mission? To educate homeless individuals about local resources and connect them to services that can help get them off the streets for good. The program helped 538 people with referrals to resources for food, rental assistance and transportation. They helped 67 families and individuals



Volunteers of America is Spokane's largest provider of permanent housing with support services for chronically homeless and disabled adults—with 112 units throughout the county.

find housing and helped 41 families with rental assistance so they could keep their housing to avoid homelessness.

Unfortunately, the program was closed in June due to lack of funding. *“It is sad to lose this program, especially when it was doing so much good,”* says Rusty Barnett, who helped manage the program. *“I’m just glad to know that we helped a lot of people while it was up and running.”* ■

Hope House emergency shelter & long-term housing for single women

The Hope House shelter served 255 different women and offered 11,469 bed nights this year, with the shelter at capacity most nights. Women continue to report domestic violence, lack of health insurance, mental health issues, physical disability, sexual assault and substance abuse as causes for their homelessness.

Our 25 on-site apartments continue to be full with just four women moving out this year. *“That means women may wait up to eight months before a unit at Hope House becomes available,”* says Hope House director Rusty Barnett. *“However, we were able to successfully move 28 women from the shelter into transitional or permanent housing in our other programs or in the community.”*

Volunteers generously contributed nearly 3,500 hours to help answer phones, staff the clothing bank, support emergency shelter staff and even lead a quilting group and BINGO each week. ■

Independent Living services for teens “aging out” of foster care

We served more than 200 foster kids through our Independent Living programs this year—helping them get ready to “age out” of the foster care system by offering skills, resources and support from age 15 to 21. In addition to providing dozens of classes each year—from budgeting to career planning—Independent Living offers programs that support youth as they live in their first apartment, prepare for college and learn to advocate for themselves in the real world.

“Less than one third of foster youth graduate from high school and less than one percent graduate from college,” says Sara Mack, Independent Living’s program manager. *“That’s why it’s so amazing that 24 of our 26 seniors graduated this year. Six additional youth received GEDs. Every one of them got financial aid and 22 are now in their first year of college. Especially given the statistics, 22 foster youth in college is a really big deal.”* ■



This year, 914 volunteers contributed more than 24,000 hours throughout our programs!

Maud’s Houses for men leaving incarceration

This year marked the closing of our two Maud’s Houses, which offered housing and employment education to men coming out of incarceration who would otherwise be homeless. These two houses provided a safe and sober place for men to live while they located employment, found housing and addressed their mental health needs. In three years, the two houses served 113 men.

In total, this three-year partnership between Volunteers of America, Goodwill, Transitions and Spokane County provided Responsible Renter training to 458 men. 974 men and women received employment readiness help. 364 found jobs in the community and 282 men and women received help finding a permanent place to live.

“We were able to give so much more than if we’d just put them into individual apartments and checked up on them once a week,” says Jon Carollo, who served as director of the program. *“The program allowed us to welcome these men into our home until they were ready to go out and make their own homes.”* ■

Project Safe Place for at-risk youth in Spokane & Coeur d’Alene

This year, the Project Safe Place drop-in center in Coeur d’Alene served nearly 60 youth, providing more than 2,000 meals and snacks and offering everything from homework help to dental clinics and rafting trips.

“Our emergency host home program continues to grow as well,” says Brandi Smitherman, director of Project Safe Place in Coeur d’Alene. *“We were able to provide more than 100 nights of shelter for local kids who needed*



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a safe place to stay.”

The Safe Place public awareness program serving both Kootenai and Spokane counties continues outreach in local schools—reaching more than 5,000 youth in the past twelve months alone—making kids aware that the yellow Safe Place sign means they can access help immediately. In Spokane, more than 90 businesses have become Safe Places. Our Coeur d’Alene program has grown to well over 150 sites throughout North Idaho. ■

**Rapid Re-housing
preventing homelessness
through housing resources &
assistance**

We understand that just a little assistance can prevent an individual or family from becoming homeless in the first place. That’s why this year, our Rapid Re-Housing program, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, provided help with initial move-in costs and short-term assistance with rent to 78 individuals in 28 households who would have otherwise faced homelessness.

“This program is for families who are generally stable but have fallen on hard times,” explains Jon Carollo, who directs the program. *“What makes this program different is that not only do they have to demonstrate need, the family also has to show that they can keep their*

apartment on their own once the support ends with a job on the horizon or more hours coming in a job they currently have. This program is meant to bridge the gap and prevent homelessness until folks can get back on their feet.” ■

**Scattered-Site Housing
for disabled, chronically
homeless adults**

We added 14 new units for chronically homeless, disabled individuals this year as well as 10 units for chronically homeless and disabled veterans. Combined with our existing units in the community and the 25 apartments at Hope House, we are the largest provider of permanent housing with support services in Spokane with 112 units.

These additions expand our ability to assist men and women as they transition from the streets to stability by providing the support and services they need to remain in their homes and progress toward their chosen goals.

“This year we have tried to involve the residents more in improving the facilities where they live,” says program manager Heather Taylor-Thomas. *“Clients put in more than 125 volunteer hours and coordinated monthly social gatherings for the tenants of all our apartments. It has really built a sense of community among them.”* ■

**Veterans’ Housing for
chronically homeless veterans**

Our Eagles’ Rest home for homeless veterans is now in its second year of operation and the Rest & Recoup house is in its third year. The two houses have helped a total of 68 veterans to overcome chronic homelessness. This year the two houses served 29 veterans with 78% of them “graduating” into apartments of their own.

This year the program also saw a larger age range among the veterans—from Korean War veterans in their seventies to a 22-year-old recently returned from Afghanistan. In the past twelve months, both houses received a covered outdoor area and new barbeque to encourage gathering and socializing among residents as well as raised beds for “dirt therapy” (growing their own food).

The program also purchased five mountain bikes this year to provide the veterans with transportation, exercise and help reducing anxiety and depression.

“It was a huge success,” reports Jon Carollo, director of the program. *“The bikes gave them a really important means of independence.”* In response, we have started a “Bikes for Homeless Veterans” program designed by the formerly homeless vets in our two houses. They hope to gather and refurbish 100 bikes in the coming year. ■

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