

Dentists Give Head Start Kids Something To Smile About

At an age when most kids worry about how much the tooth fairy will leave under their pillow, five-year-old Eliazer Alvarez Avila had bigger dental concerns. When a routine dental exam required by Community Action's Head Start program revealed that Eli required extensive fillings and restorations, her parents worried about how to afford the treatment. Having both recently lost their jobs when a retail food store closed, their dental insurance was cancelled. The \$550 it would cost to do Eli's dental work was not within their means. Fortunately, Gentech Dentist stepped forward to help Eli.



Dr. Theresa Doan of Gentech Dentist and Eli Alvarez during a recent visit.

Gentech's solution is particularly creative. When someone pays for dental care at Gentech, they are asked "what nonprofit would you like to help?" Gentech then gives 5% of the bill in the form of dental services to that organization. As more Gentech patients say "I support Community Action Head Start," more children receive dental care.

"With the help of our patients and local charities, we are finding and helping people who cannot afford needed dental care, in the communities where we live and work," said Dr. Dany Tse, founder and owner of Gentech Dentist. In Eli's case, Dr. Theresa Doan provided her fillings and restorations pro bono.

Dental issues in young children are nothing to be taken lightly. A 2000 study by the Washington State Smile Survey revealed that dental decay is thought to be the most common chronic disease of childhood. It affects approximately 41% of 3-5 year olds. If left untreated, the pain and

infection can lead to problems in eating, speaking, and the ability to learn. Which is why Community Action asks parents to have their children's teeth examined as a requirement of application to the Head Start program. For many children, this is the first time they have seen a dentist. According to Jan Ostby, Community Action's Head Start Health and Nutrition Coordinator, "Through dental screenings, we identify Head Start children most at risk, help them locate a dental 'home', get needed treatments, and arrive at school healthy and ready to learn."

This strategy certainly paid off in Eli's case, whose smile has become more frequent since her treatment. According to her Head Start teacher, after Eli's dental work was completed, she bounded into her classroom and with a big grin announced: "Teacher, I got my smile fixed!"

To donate dental or other healthcare services, call Jan Ostby, 503.693.3266.



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Community Action's
**People You Should Know
Fundraising Breakfast**
November 19, 2003

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helping people and changing
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For more information 503.693.3255

**Everyone needs a helping
hand every so often.**

**I am glad to have the
opportunity to help.**

—Dr. Richard Hsu,

The Shoebox Pediatric Dentistry

Gentech, along with several other dentists provides much-needed dental care to Head Start children. **Local dentists who provide free and reduced cost services include: Dr. Richard Hsu of The Shoebox Pediatric Dentistry; Dr. Eric Downey of Murrayhill Pediatric Dentistry; Dr. Charles Staley & Willamette Dental Group; Virginia Garcia Dental Clinic; Dr. Michael Goodman; Dr. Patricia Ridgley, Dentistry for Teens and Children, Dr. April Love and Dr. Scott Bibben.** These generous dental care providers have partnered with Community Action to give back to the communities in which they practice.



Jerralynn Ness
Executive Director



Dick Stenson
Board Chair

A Letter to Our Friends—

March 17, 2003 marked my 30th anniversary at Community Action. It's been a privilege to watch the agency grow over thirty years, made bittersweet only by the fact that its relevance has not diminished. Poverty in Washington County is still very present. It has changed faces, genders, ages and languages. And as the county has grown, so has the relative number of those living in poverty.

The landscape of poverty has indeed been changing. As have the efforts to address it. Thirty years ago, for example, business and social service agency partnerships were informal at best, and unheard of at worst. This has perhaps been our greatest area of

growth in recent years. Drawing on the expertise and resources of businesses and the information of Community Action, many people are receiving critical services that weren't previously available to them.

In this issue of *Community Connections*, you'll read about Legacy Meridian Park Hospital, who has partnered with Community Action to provide direct service to at-risk pregnant women through a program called Opening Doors. You'll read about local dentists who also have partnered with Community Action to provide dental treatment for our Head Start children. Volunteers from Intel are mentoring children, whether through play or science fairs. You'll see names of new corporate

sponsors, such as Nike, who joined the ranks of support for Community Action through our annual Celebration of Community Spirit dinner.

Partnerships are an effective way to reach the most vulnerable residents of our county. In thirty years, I've seen the agency help many people overcome obstacles. And despite the fact that poverty in our county remains a reality, the increasing synergy between Community Action and its partners continues to show that we are on the right path to building a stronger community.

Warmly,

Jerralynn Ness

Local Heroes Support Community Action Programs

The economy may continue to struggle, but the generosity of local business partners hasn't slowed. Through good times and bad, our friends in business and industry continue to support our mission. **Murphy's Kids**, the foundation of **Papa Murphy's Pizza**, donated over \$800 to Community Action's shelter. **Verizon** gifted \$7500 for technology capacity building. **Jerry Luna** of **Alpha Building Maintenance** donated a year's worth of landscaping, resulting in a savings of over \$6,000. **Bety Building Services** donated \$1,200 worth of carpet cleaning and **EVault Northwest** provides ongoing on-line storage services, a \$5,400 value. **Portland General Electric** donated \$5,000 to support the work of employee volunteers who are participating in a wide-scale weatherization project in partnership with Community Action. **Reedville Catering** provided boxed lunches for the annual board of director's retreat. **Rite Aid Corporation** generously provided over \$32,000 in school and office supplies. An

outstanding gift! **Stagg Properties** donated \$7,200 in storage space, **Welch Allyn Protocol**, a first-time donor, gave an unrestricted gift of \$350. **Hines Nursery** donated several beautiful plants that decorated the stage for a free children's concert hosted by Community Action.

Tigard Head Start enjoyed a visit from **Household Finance** volunteers. The kids weren't the only ones excited by the craft projects. Teachers commented that they enjoyed the change of pace that a volunteer group brings to the classroom. **Intel** made a trip to Cornelius to play with 40 excited children enrolled in A Kid's Domain. The volunteers divided the classroom into stations and kept the children busy with games, reading, and painting for the afternoon. Another **Intel** group helped Hillsboro Head Start children practice their reading skills. Several corporations continue to match their volunteers' hours with a cash donation. Thank you to all our friends in the business community!

Innovative Early Head Start Program opens at Coffee Creek

In partnership with the Oregon Department of Corrections, Community Action is pioneering an Early Head Start program at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville. The innovative program began in September, 2002, and serves incarcerated women and their very young children.

The project allows mothers to create healthy bonds with their children and increases parenting skills prior to release. The program ensures that children aren't victimized by their parent's incarceration because nurturing the existing parent-child attachment allows the child the opportunity to succeed even though the parent is struggling.

Thank you to our friends at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility for including us in this important partnership.

2003 Celebration of Community Spirit Dinner

Community Spirit Celebrated at May 1 Event



Derrick Len Span, Community Action Partnership National President, Keynote Speaker

Sponsored by 21 area businesses, the 6th annual Celebration of Community Spirit dinner was the best attended in recent years. The event raised \$37,000 for critical services for low-income families and was attended by nearly 200 people from over 50 businesses.

Legacy Meridian Park Hospital was named Outstanding Business Partner for its work with Opening Doors, Community Action's maternity outreach and pregnancy support program. The hospital was a founding partner of this program, in which 95% of babies are born healthy despite numerous risk factors.

Isabell (Chavela) Mendoza was honored as Outstanding Business Leader. Mendoza and her husband own Su Casa Imports, a multi-million dollar business employing 96 people. Mendoza lives the values of Community Action in the manner in which she runs her Hillsboro business: Treating her employees with respect while helping them achieve economic opportunity and security.

Other highlights of the evening included Community Action client speaker Kamel Al-Baiaty, who fled Iraq ten years ago to escape the hunger and tyranny which had become part of his daily life. Al-Baiaty spoke compellingly about his journey to America, the importance of help and support others gave him in building a new life, and of Community Action, which recently assisted his family.

Thank you to our sponsors, guests and speakers, who made our 6th annual Celebration of Community Spirit Dinner one to remember.



The Al-Baiaty family poses for a picture with executive director Jerralynn Ness at the Celebration of Community Spirit dinner.

Faith Organizations Celebrate National Community Action Month



Several representatives from faith organizations (from left to right, John Cook, Father Les Sieg, Barbara Chapman, Stan Miller, and Len Miller) met with Derrick Span (front) to talk about poverty in Washington County.

In addition to being the date for the Celebration of Community Spirit dinner, May 1 marked the beginning of National Community Action month. What better day to host a reception for community partners? Guest of honor Derrick Len Span, Community Action's national president, welcomed leaders from several Washington County churches, parishes, synagogues and other faith organizations. The event provided an opportunity to network and share ideas for expanding service partnerships that benefit the low-income community. Thank you to all the faith organizations that help make our community strong!

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In partnership with the community, Community Action
assists low-income people to achieve self-determination.

For further information contact Resource Development
503.693.3255, or see our website: www.caowash.org

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*100% of the proceeds support Community Action services.
Call Jodi Davis for tickets, 503-693-3254.*