

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

Washington County Community Action Organization



**“ Washington
County Community
Action Organization
serves the
economically
disadvantaged by
assisting with basic
needs and removing
barriers to long term
self-reliance.”**

A hand up. Not a handout.



Bob Shoemaker
State Senator

“I've been involved with Community Action organizations in Portland in the past, but WCCAO leads the pack. They have the right blend of leadership, sensitivity to needs, the ability to work with people, and the drive to get things done. They are really good!

As for the fund drive, it's definitely needed. WCCAO has been operating out of a mish-mash of offices long enough. They need a center for all their activities. It will enable them to do an even better job in the future.”

These simple words tell the story of the Washington County Community Action Organization (WCCAO). Established in 1965, it is the county's primary safety net for those in need — the homeless, the hungry, the desperate — who otherwise would have nowhere to turn. WCCAO has been assisting the county's low-income population with emergency and basic needs for almost 30 years.

When families or individuals reach out to WCCAO for help, the first step is to stabilize their situation. This could mean providing emergency shelter, or intervening to avoid having heat turned off, or providing a family food basket.

But WCCAO does much more than offer emergency aid. Once the immediate problem is met, its able professional staff take a comprehensive approach, working with clients to help them acquire the skills, the confidence and the opportunities to become self-suffi-

cient. The emphasis is on helping people to help themselves. A hand up — not just a handout.

WCCAO operates on a balanced budget, keeping its administrative costs down to only about 9 percent. It is governed by a board composed of one-third publicly elected officials; one-third representatives of the county's poor; and one-third community representatives. Thus, the board serves as a vital link between the poor and local officials and the larger community.

And teamwork is the key to WCCAO's efforts. A private, non-governmental and non-profit organization, it works in partnership with churches, private corporations and local governments, other social service agencies, and more than 500 dedicated volunteers to insure that the community's limited resources are used to maximum effectiveness.

Direct Service Programs

- Information and referral services to thousands of callers who need assistance with emergency and basic needs.
- Emergency shelter for homeless families and migrant farm workers, totalling 16,900 bed nights last year.
- Transitional housing for families moving from emergency shelters to independent residences.
- Rental assistance to low income families to prevent them from becoming homeless.
- Weatherization services to low-income families to prevent heat loss and reduce heating costs.
- Eleven Head Start Centers for low-income and handicapped three and four-year-olds at various locations in the county.
- Case management and self-sufficiency support for homeless and low-income families.
- Educational programs for low-income families on such subjects as effective parenting, energy conservation and budgeting.



Real people tell the WCCAO story best

Meet Linda Littleton:



Three years ago, single parent Linda Littleton worked as a paramedic to support herself and her three children. She never expected to have anything to do with WCCAO. After all, it was for needy families, not people like

herself. Then Linda was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

The chronic progressive disease limited her physical strength and mobility until she was no longer able to work or provide for her family. She began to withdraw, becoming more depressed and discouraged and unable to cope with family problems.

But then Linda enrolled three-year-old Kyric, who had serious language difficulties, in a Head Start class. As is usual with Head Start enrollment, a WCCAO Family Service Worker visited the Littleton's home and completed a family needs assessment. It was at this point that Linda's life began to change.

Head Start authorized extensive testing of Kyric which showed that chronic ear infections had interfered with his hearing and that his speech development was already delayed one year. With medical attention to clear up his infections and special help from his teacher and a speech therapist, Kyric's language skills rapidly

improved, measuring normal for his age by the end of the school year.

But the WCCAO worker had also alerted the Head Start teacher to Linda's symptoms of depression. Looking back, Linda recalls how the teacher slowly drew her out, first inviting her to visit school; then asking her to help chaperone on field trips.

Gradually, Linda began to feel that she could contribute despite her disability. Once again, she began to take control of her life.

Today she serves on the Head Start Policy Council, participates in cancer prevention training, and advocates for better housing for low-income people. Things are better at home, too, where she is able to fully function as a Mom once again. And she's making plans for the future, including more education so she can assist low-income people with legal issues — something she says she can do very well from a wheelchair.



Dick Stenson
President and CEO,
Tuality HealthCare

“ There's a safety net that really does exist and it's called WCCAO. In a sense, it's almost invisible. If you don't need it, you may not even know about it. But if you need help, WCCAO will be there for you.

And I like the spirit of WCCAO. Its goal is to help people overcome the challenges and adversities in their lives — not make them dependent on an organization or system for the long term. ”

The Andres Family:

Success didn't come easily for the Andres family. Recent immigrants to the United States, the large family had one piece of bad luck after another: disabling injuries and accidents, illness, problems dealing with a new language and culture, and finally, homelessness. It was then that they turned to WCCAO.

The staff addressed their problems systematically, first providing them with safe housing at the WCCAO Emergency Family Shelter. Then they began to work intensively with the family, helping them to get language training, pre-school for the young children, life-skills and job training for the adults.

Now, two years later, the family is living together in permanent, affordable housing. The adults have jobs that allow them to live modestly but securely. The children are in school, improving their English and preparing for a normal life.

The Andres are well on their way to self-sufficiency, contributing to society rather than remaining dependent on charity. Another common but inspiring example of WCCAO's philosophy of “a hand up — not just a hand-out.”





Shirley Huffman
Economic Development
Coordinator,
Hillsboro Chamber of
Commerce
Chair, WCCAO
Capital Fund Drive

“I’m very proud of WCCAO as an organization and very proud of the quality of its work. People who are at a low point in their lives become self-sufficient once again through WCCAO’s assistance.

I am committed to the capital fund drive because the new Multi-Service Center is really needed. It will result in considerable savings and will certainly make the organization more efficient. But most important, it will enable WCCAO to expand and improve its services to children and families. I care about that.”

Building foundations

WCCAO announces plans to build new multi-service center

Why does WCCAO need a new facility?

The answer comes down to lack of adequate space for its programs and escalating leasing and utility costs, which are having an increasing impact on effective delivery of services.

WCCAO now operates out of sixteen leased or borrowed locations. While some dispersal is essential to bring WCCAO programs to different parts of the county, overcrowding is a fact of life and some facilities are totally inadequate.

For example, limited space at our central office makes private interviewing and counseling virtually impossible. People are forced to share the most intimate details of their crisis where they can be easily overheard.

Some facilities are energy-wasteful, resulting in overly high utility bills, and neither the central facility nor one of the Head Start centers is handicapped accessible. Yet renovation of these facilities would not be cost effective.

In addition, leasing costs for several facilities in the Hillsboro area are rapidly becoming prohibitive.

Faced with a growing need for more space and escalating costs for housing its programs, WCCAO’s Board began exploring options several years ago.

Initially, the plan was to pur-

chase and renovate an existing facility. But after an exhaustive and unsuccessful search, the WCCAO Board decided to purchase land and construct the space needed.

What will WCCAO’s new Multi-Service Center cost?

Total cost of the new 21,000 square foot Multi-Service complex is projected to be \$2.5 million, including land and all development and construction costs. Construction of the new facility, to be located on SW Baseline in Hillsboro, is scheduled to begin in Summer 1994 and to be completed by Spring 1995.

The new complex will house WCCAO’s main facility, now located in a 6,000 square foot, overcrowded leased space, plus two Head Start centers and the Head Start central kitchen, currently located in expensive and inadequate spaces. A fifth site, located in Aloha, has already been consolidated with WCCAO’s central facility in Hillsboro in preparation for the move.

Over 70% of the \$2.5 million has already been raised. Sale of the previously mentioned Aloha site, which netted \$277,000, plus \$38,000 from the sale of another small property, covered the cost of the land for the new facility. In addition, WCCAO has been awarded \$748,000 in federal funds through Community

Development Block Grants and raised \$687,000 from businesses, foundations and individuals in the community.

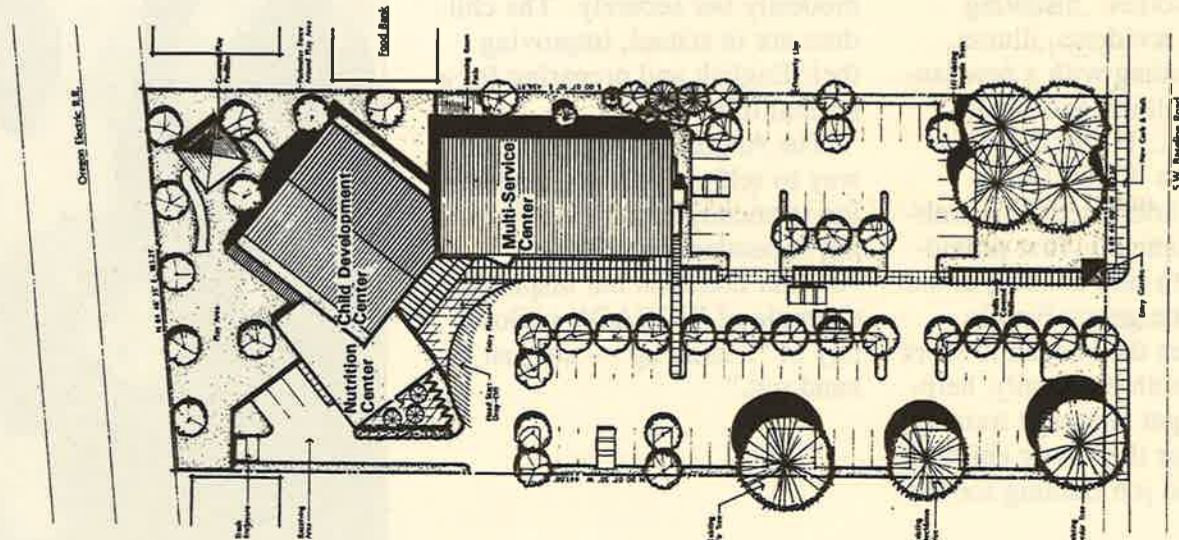
This leaves a balance of \$.75 million to be raised. The major capital fund drive now under way will be expanded to include the entire community in order to reach the goal.

And what benefits will the new center bring?

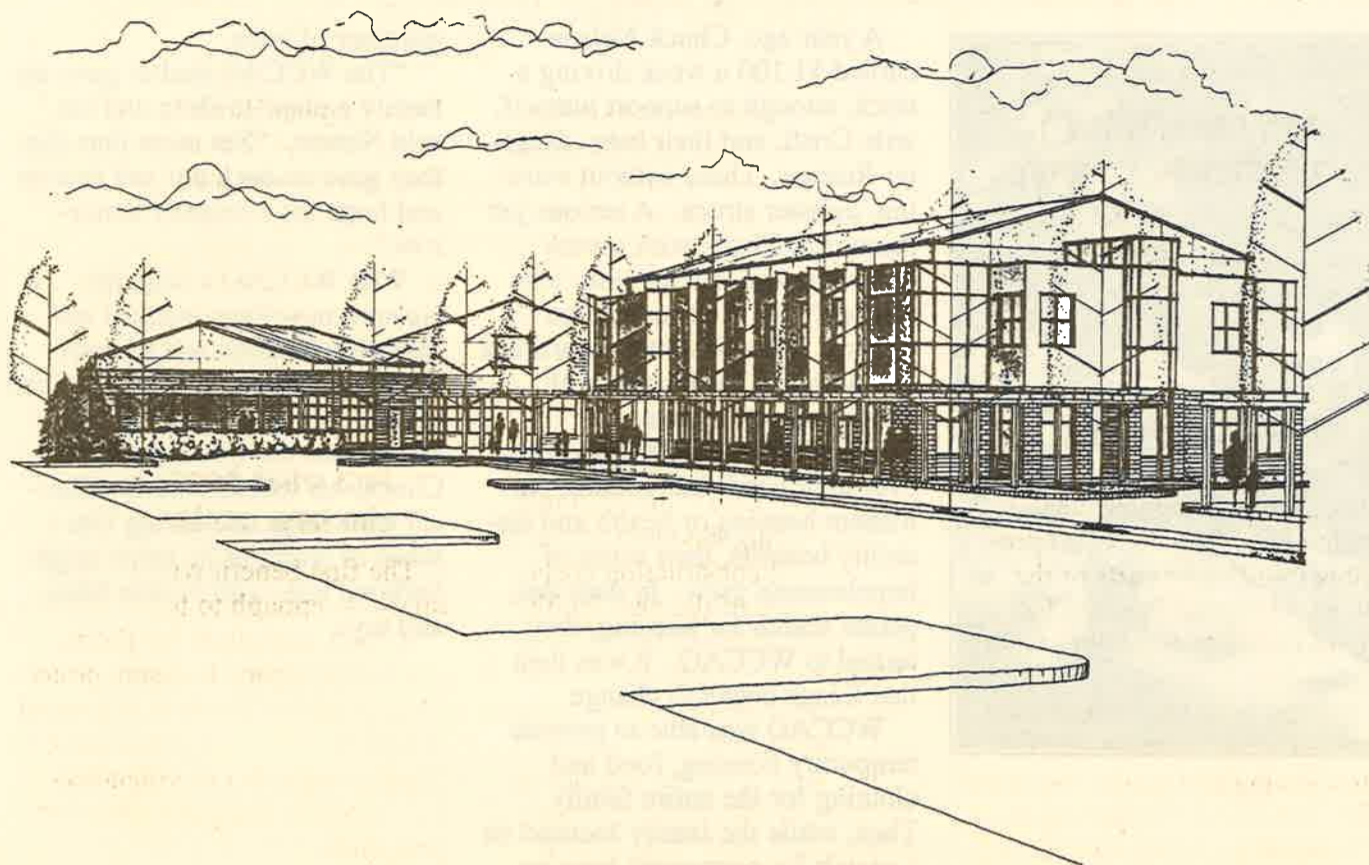
The first benefit will be more space — enough to house current programs and allow for future expansion; space to insure protection of clients’ privacy; to expand our Head Start programs; space to triple the number of volunteers and increase our adult educational programs.

The new fully-equipped, modern kitchen will be used to prepare nourishing meals for our eleven Head Start Centers and will accommodate expansion of the meals program from the current 800 per day to as many as 2,000.

The new facility will not only allow for better and more efficient delivery of services well into the future, but WCCAO is projecting real savings in occupancy costs of \$100,000 annually to be realized from reduced rental and utility costs. That means more dollars will be available for direct services to people in need.



for the future



Bob Colfelt
*President, Health Air
International*

Plans for the new WCCAO Multi-Service Center

The Multi-Service Center will be conveniently located on bus lines and near the projected MAX terminal. The Oregon Food Bank → Tualatin Valley Center, which meets emergency food needs, is located on adjoining property to the east. Handicapped accessible and energy efficient, the new facility is designed to provide services efficiently and effectively within a caring environment.

Highlights:

1. Two-story Multi-Service Center includes
 - Reception Area
 - Confidential space for meeting with clients.
 - Family Resource Center to provide self-help tools.
 - Program Offices
 - Meeting rooms, volunteer work areas, administrative offices.
2. Child Development Center includes
 - Five classrooms for Head Start and child care.
 - Health Center for health screenings and care of sick children.
 - Center Coordinator Office.
 - Teachers planning room and library.
3. Central kitchen for preparation of up to 2,000 meals a day for Head Start centers around the county.
4. Covered and open play areas for children.

“I have very strong feelings about the great benefit of WCCAO’s work in our community. That’s why I’ve become so deeply involved in this fund-raising effort.

I want to be sure that WCCAO has the right kind of facilities so that it can deliver its services effectively and efficiently — and so that its dollars will be used primarily to provide the greatest possible benefit to those in need.”



Carol Clark
Washington County
Visitors Association

“I’m really excited about building the new Multi-Service Center. It will be a real benefit to Washington County in helping to meet the needs of people who are having a difficult time.

Everyone perceives the county as being a very prosperous area, but there’s the other side that we tend to ignore. I’m just glad there’s an organization like WCCAO that’s working to address these needs.”

More real people:

The Nelson Family:



A year ago, Chuck Nelson earned \$1,100 a week driving a truck, enough to support himself, wife Cristi, and their baby daughter Reanee. Then, without warning, disaster struck. A serious job injury left Chuck with severe nerve damage and memory loss. Suddenly the Nelsons had no income. They lost their apartment and with it, Chuck’s sense of worth and self esteem.

The YMCA gave them a roof over their heads but without permanent housing or health and disability benefits, their sense of hopelessness grew. In their desperate search for housing, they turned to WCCAO. It was then that things began to change.

WCCAO was able to provide temporary housing, food and clothing for the entire family. Then, while the family focused on a search for permanent housing, WCCAO focused on previously denied medical and disability benefits. Once again, there was a

glimmer of hope.

“The WCCAO shelter gave my family a place to sleep and eat,” said Nelson. “But more than that, they gave us back our self esteem and hope for a brighter tomorrow.”

With WCCAO’s help, the Nelsons now have medical and disability benefits and recently found permanent housing they can afford. Although they still don’t know what the future holds for Chuck, his tool kit and mechanical knowledge are giving him a sense of worth as he helps neighborhood kids with broken bikes and toys.

Donna Bennington’s Head Start Class:

When Donna Bennington greets the smiling, excited children in a new Head Start class, she faces a considerable challenge. They will range in age from three to five. Many will lack the social skills to succeed in a classroom and their cognitive abilities will vary by as much as four years. At least ten percent, and probably more, will have physical, emotional, or speech and language disabilities.

Thus, she and other Head Start teachers build their curriculum around the individual child, while helping all of them to learn the social and cooperative skills they will need when they go on to school.

A major emphasis is also placed on parent involvement. Teachers make at least six home visits during the year, helping parents learn good parenting skills and how to support their children’s growth and learning.

The most rewarding part of Donna’s job is seeing the tremendous strides the children make in a year of Head Start. Most are well-prepared to enter kindergarten, but to help them make the transition, Donna and the other

teachers work closely with the schools the youngsters will be attending. They want to be certain the seeds of success they have so carefully planted will continue to flourish and grow.



You Can Help



Dear Friends and Neighbors:

On the surface, there doesn't appear to be much need for an agency like WCCAO. After all, Washington County is the fastest growing county in the state and the richest. But, as the stories of the Littletons, the Andres and the Nelsons make clear, there are times when any one of us might need a hand up. In fact, close to 38,000 county residents live on very low incomes. Many of these people work full-time at low-pay jobs — jobs that often have no benefits and don't pay enough to cover basic family needs. When things go from bad to desperate, these are the people who turn to WCCAO for help. And because WCCAO has been there over the years, it is now recognized as a major stabilizing force in our community — a reputation the agency has earned despite the overcrowded and far from optimum conditions under which it has operated.

But the time has come to do something about this situation. A new facility is imperative if WCCAO is going to continue to effectively serve the needs of our community. WCCAO is asking for our help.

Broad-based financial support is essential to raise the \$2.5 million in capital funds for the new Multi-Service Center. With \$1.75 million already in hand, that leaves \$.75 million to go. But it's a goal that is achievable with the all-out support of corporations, local businesses, community groups and individuals.

We need your help to make this project a reality. Consider making a generous gift now. Or if you prefer, make a pledge to be paid over a period of time, preferably within three years. (Contributions are fully tax deductible within the limits set by law.)

With your help, WCCAO will soon have a new Multi-Service Center dedicated to making the county a better place to live for all its residents.

Thank you for your support.

Shirley Huffman

Chair
WCCAO Capital Fund Drive
Community Action
Organization

Jerralynn Ness

Executive Director
Washington County

P.S. Mail your check or pledge today to: WCCAO Capital Fund Drive
451 South First - Suite 700, Hillsboro, Oregon 97123



Mary Tobias
President and CEO,
Tualatin Valley Economic
Development Corporation

“I'm a real cheerleader for WCCAO because it is very responsible in addressing issues that tend to be hidden from most of us in Washington County. It's important to have an agency outside of government that can bring a perspective on human service needs to the community. WCCAO is very effective in doing this.

I also appreciate the way WCCAO addresses human service issues in what I would call a holistic manner. It doesn't just look at one part of the equation and it is not locked into traditional, bureaucratic methods of problem solving.

WCCAO takes an entrepreneurial approach. They may not always succeed, but they are not afraid to try.”

YES, I/we would like to help support the WCCAO Multi-Service Center project.

I/we pledge a total of \$ _____ Enclosed: \$ _____ Pledged: \$ _____

Please bill me beginning: _____ and thereafter monthly _____ quarterly _____ yearly _____ other _____

Please charge my VISA/MC Account # _____, Expiration Date: _____ for the balance.

Please contact me/us to provide additional information on WCCAO and/or the Multi-Service Center Project.

Name _____ Telephone (business) _____ (home) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Signature(s): _____ Date _____

_____ Date _____



Steve Clark

*Chief Operating Officer
Community Newspapers, Inc.*

*Beaverton Valley Times
Forest Grove News-Times
Tigard Times, Tualatin Times*

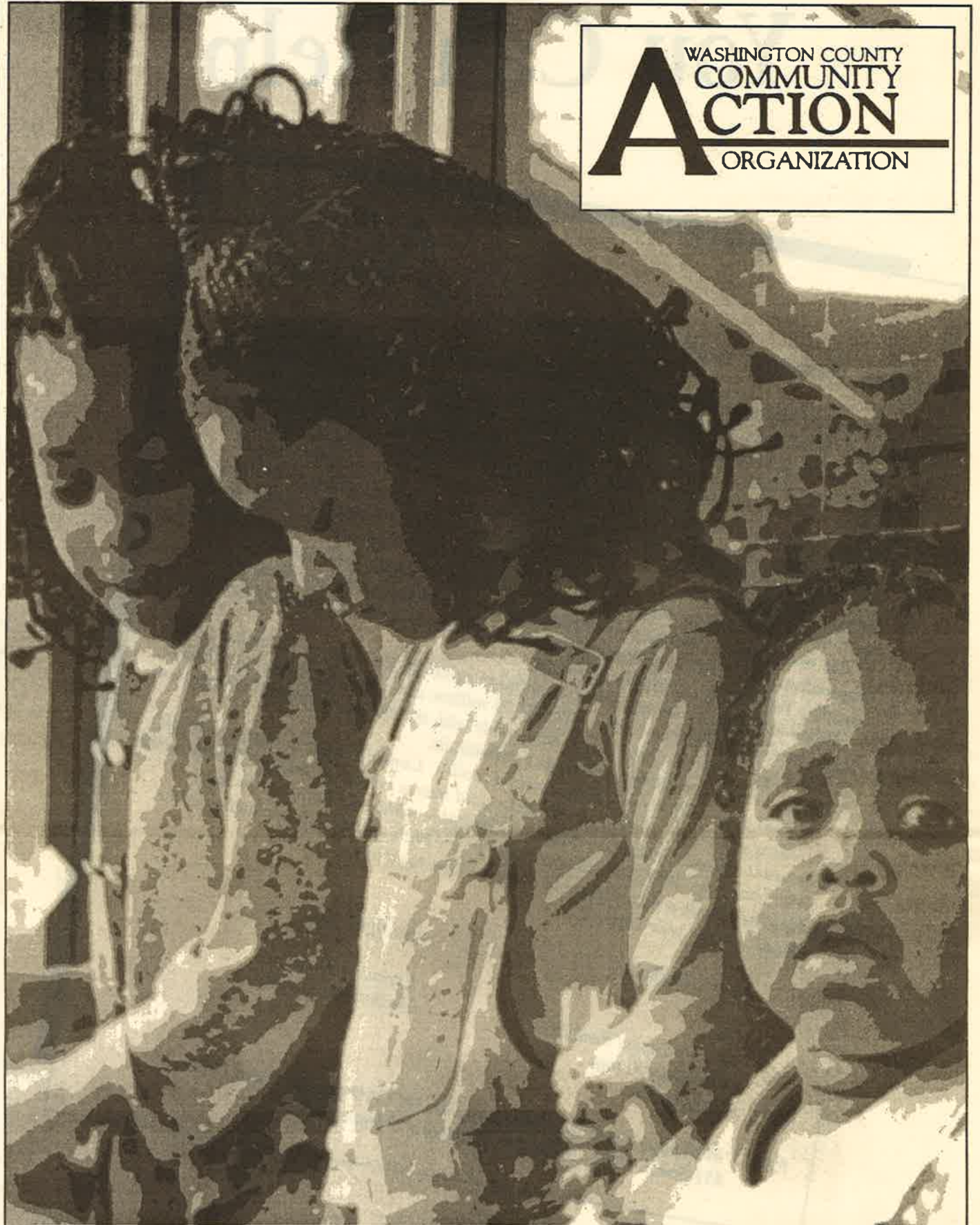
“ A proposed multi-service center for the Washington County Community Action Organization is not another pile of bricks and mortar at a time when social services are being cut back.

In fact, the center is a smart business move that will enable the community action organization to serve even more county residents who need a variety of services.

Those in need do not fit any one social class, race, ethnic background or education training. They include working poor, homeless people, migrant laborers and teen mothers who dropped out of school.

Community Action does a lot to help these people, but it can do more through its plan to build its own office and service center in Hillsboro.

Washington County Community Action is not much different than many charities trying to do their best — except that in a county-wide approach and with a serious business plan, the agency sees a way to expand its services.”



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