

# 2013 Highlights

## Inner strength and support from DVERT leads to safety

While CJ Penning's job as a Domestic Violence Response Team (DVERT) Advocate is challenging, it is work that she does with appreciation each day. "I am so thankful that this program exists and that we have the opportunity to work alongside the officers. I am incredibly appreciative of all the hard work they do and thankful that I can be there to nudge them in a different direction of thinking," says Penning, referring to her part in educating police officers about the dynamics of domestic violence.

Penning works in the Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (DVERT), a program coordinated and funded by Multnomah County Department of County Human Services. DVERT is a nationally recognized model of intervention for high-risk domestic violence cases. The program provides coordinated intervention for domestic violence victims and offenders in partnership with local law enforcement agencies, victim service providers and other partners in the criminal and civil legal systems.

In her role with DVERT, Penning provides immediate response to victims of domestic violence – victims such as Janet\*. Janet was in an abusive relationship for over 15 years when an officer recognized that DVERT might be able to help her. Penning was called in to provide support and domestic violence expertise.

After the intervention Janet offered her thanks. "I really want to thank you for coming to my home. No one has ever done that for me before – just sat down and talked to me after it happened. You will never know how much that meant to me. I am usually just left there alone sitting in the living room, thinking, 'Now what?' I now have appointments scheduled with both Legal Aid and a

"I have experienced such horrible things and have seen kindness and compassion that I didn't know existed. Thank you."  
- a survivor

counselor. I am ready to hold him accountable. I would not have had the strength or knowledge to do that if you hadn't come and talked to me."

Before ending the conversation Penning reminded Janet, "It was you who did the hard work and your strength lead you to safety." ■

\*Name has been changed

- 262 primary victims and 179 family members of high-risk domestic violence received intervention through DVERT.
- 507 adults and 444 children (total: 951 survivors) were provided motel vouchers for safe, temporary shelter. 362 of the vouchers were issued to households from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- Approximately 15.5 million children nationally are exposed to domestic violence every year.



▲ Staff review domestic violence-related crimes in Multnomah County

## SUN shines brightly

Responding to growing community needs during a time of recession is no easy task for public organizations. As funding shrinks, needs in the community continue to grow. By leveraging partnerships and other community resources, The SUN (Schools Uniting Neighborhoods) Service System responded to two important needs over the past year.

Growing hunger in our community affects children most deeply. It is no secret that an empty stomach can make it hard to focus and to learn in school. For students who rely on school meals, weekends and school breaks can be a long stretch of time. The SUN Service System has partnered with the Oregon Food Bank and non-profit organizations to increase the number of school-based emergency food pantries in SUN Community Schools.

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*SUN shines brightly... continued from page 1*

According to Jon Stubenvoll of the Oregon Food Bank, "The SUN School Pantry model has been wildly successful and it is a wonderful partnership between the public and private sector charitable non-profits. The model works ... the pantries are in the neighborhoods and in the day-to-day lives of families ... we firmly believe the time to expand this effective model is now."

David Douglas High School and Cesar Chavez K-8 were the two newest emergency food pantries to come on line at SUN Community Schools in FY13. A total of eight school-based emergency food pantries serve over 8,000 households throughout the year.

Another way the SUN System is meeting community need through partnerships is with the Kindergarten Counts Early Kindergarten Transition (EKT) Program. Responding to the growing number of children who arrive at kindergarten without any preschool experience, the SUN System, school districts, and community partners launched a three-week Early Kindergarten Transition program. The program seeks to support what can be a challenging transition into kindergarten for many children and their parents.

"The EKT is about the first four weeks of school," says PSU Associate Professor Andy Mashburn. Mashburn, along with Applied Psychology graduate students, has been engaged with the EKT program for two summers, conducting on-site observations and interviews, and then offering recommendations for program

improvements. "One of the things that impresses me about EKT," said Mashburn, "is its commitment to continuous improvement. The outcomes are achievable."

In the summer of 2012 EKT was held at 12 SUN Community School sites. A total of 257 entering kindergartners and their parents participated. One parent noted, "Being that this is our first child, I knew nothing about the school. Now I feel comfortable and feel I have a good idea about how the school works and what to expect." The SUN Service System hopes to continue to grow this effort into all elementary and K-8 SUN Community Schools over time.

According to Peggy Samolinski, director of the SUN Service System Division at the Department of County Human Services, "These two examples highlight how we, as a community, can continue to support all children and families to meet their emerging and ongoing needs." ■

- 19,390 youth served in 67 SUN Community Schools in fiscal year 2013
- 150,000 meals were served during the summer lunch program at 55 SUN Community Schools
- Students engaged in SUN Community School activities attended school 94.6% of the time

▼ *Early Kindergarten Transition Program helps with transition from home to school*

## Bringing hope to families of children with developmental disabilities

Victoria is a single parent of a teenage son who is on the autism spectrum. She relates that having a child on the autism spectrum has been a difficult journey for her family, despite her efforts and the child's



grandmother's tenacious advocacy. Victoria met Andrea, a caseworker with Multnomah County Developmental Disabilities Services Division, through a link on the web. It quickly became clear that Andrea had a good understanding of what was needed to assist Victoria and her family.

▲ *Victoria reached out to Developmental Disabilities Services to find the help she needed for her son.*

"Andrea is able to see what options exist in the community. She helped to find a behavior specialist who can work with our family and he is another outstanding person our family can work with," said Victoria. Currently Victoria's son is in children's foster care and receiving specialized education and behavior consultation. The behavior specialist sees a lot of hope for Victoria's son's future development.

Victoria is concerned that people who are not familiar with the system, or are just very busy caring for their children with disabilities, will not be able to access services they need because they are simply not aware of them. "There is not enough education about the resources that are available to families. I had no idea that the county provides these services."

Victoria notes that parents of children with mental health or disability issues have a burden 24 hours a day and they need some support in dealing with the stress, managing the services, and navigating the appropriate systems. DCHS' Developmental Disabilities Services Division has 29 case managers serving more than 1,400 children and helping families to access care.

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Bringing hope ... continued from page 2

"People should not be afraid to have a dialogue with their service providers and sometimes disagree with them, as well as hearing the things that might be hard to hear," said Victoria. "It has to be OK for a parent to say that they can't do this by themselves. If I want to give my child the best chance of success, I need to know my own limits. It's not easy; I deal with it every day." ■

- 4,688 people with developmental disabilities were served:
  - o 1,432 children
  - o 3,256 adults
- 38 languages were spoken by clients with developmental disabilities

## Medicare specialist helps a caller avoid a costly mistake

The TV ads and flyers in the mail seemed to be relentless: Hillary was getting more and more worried that she needed to make a decision about her Medicare provider as the open enrollment period was coming to a close. But at 92 she had outlived the usual supports she turned to for advice.

Walking out of her supermarket, she saw the Multnomah County Aging and Disability Resource Connection Helpline poster. Hillary called the **ADRC Helpline (503-988-3646)** and spoke with a Medicare specialist who was able to review her current plan. The specialist determined that Hillary's existing plan was much less expensive than the plans she saw advertised. Hillary ended the call knowing she had made the right decision about Medicare, and plans to contact the ADRC Helpline if she needs assistance in the future.



▲ *ADRC Helpline staff: Kay Reed, Kathleen Henderson, Jan Campbell, Raquel Amaya, and Sarah Shay. Not pictured: Amie Oliver and Jessica Keiff*

- In 2013, the ADRC Helpline (503-988-3646) and district centers received 64,462 calls

## Energy Assistance Program helps keep our community warm

Every winter people around the county make difficult decisions: Heat or medicine? Heat or food? Heat or lights? Thanks to Multnomah County's Energy Assistance (EA) Program many households don't have to make these kinds of choices.

**A recent client letter may say it best: "Dear Courtney, I so loved your phone call. Yes, it went a long way to putting my heart at rest ... Thank you for keeping me calm. You are a gift to me."**

With a stagnant economy, high unemployment, and high heating costs, the need for the Energy Assistance Program is staggering. The program in Multnomah County is the largest in the state and last year 17,659 households were served, providing over \$7.3 million in funding.

But what's even more amazing is the small team who operates the program. Courtney Keating, Brenda Sanchez-Huggett, Carla Smith, and Nita Herrmann work behind the scenes to make the EA program successful. In cooperation with nine Energy Assistance partner agencies, this team ensures that applications are verified and approved for payment so utility companies are paid in a timely fashion. They also work individually with clients to complete and process applications through mail-ins, application events and, in some cases, one-on-one.

Nita Herrmann, a 13-year program veteran, agrees: "The program is very important...

for some it means their health and well-being is compromised. We see people whose heat has been shut off for days, weeks or months and then we see the relief on their faces when we tell them their lights or heat will be coming back on."



▲ *Multnomah County's Energy Assistance Team: Courtney Keating, Nita Herrmann, Carla Smith and Brenda Sanchez-Huggett*

Although the team has a heavy workload they love seeing the difference it makes when they help people. "It gives me satisfaction knowing that a little help makes a big difference in people's lives," said Courtney Keating, a staff member with the program for 12 years. "I have been in their shoes and I know how difficult it is to make ends meet, so something small can make a huge difference. It's awesome to be able to see them smile when they leave or to see that little tear of relief that comes from their eyes."

The team received a phone call from an 88-year-old disabled WWII Veteran who had no heat; his furnace was broken and he was out of heating oil. He was disabled and had difficulty filling out the application so a staff member drove out to his house to assist that same day. EA staff teamed up with the Weatherization Program, another program in the Community Services Division, to secure both a new furnace and heating oil.

The Energy Assistance Program serves a wide range of vulnerable populations, including older adults, people with disabilities, and communities of color who are disproportionately impacted by poverty. "We reach out to communities who otherwise would not receive assistance or be aware of these resources," says Sanchez-Huggett. ■

- Energy Assistance Program served 46,584 people in fiscal year 2013:
  - o 13% people with disabilities
  - o 15% seniors
  - o 44% children
  - o 42% from communities of color

## Domestic violence underreported in LGBTQ community

It was the middle of summer and Marc was in serious danger. His partner was increasingly physically abusive and was preventing Marc from leaving the house. Marc was in need of assistance, but it was a complex issue. Knowing where and how to find help can be tricky for a victim of domestic violence and as a gay man it was even trickier for Marc.

Domestic violence among those who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) is underreported and unacknowledged. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs estimates that gay and bisexual men experience abuse in intimate partner relationships at comparable rates

**“You have helped more than I can say. If I had been alone in this I would not have survived this far.”**

to women in heterosexual relationships, which is known to affect approximately one in three women. Historically, domestic violence programs have focused primarily on assisting victims in heterosexual relationships, and advocates are working to understand the unique dynamics and challenges for victims in same-sex relationships.

Bradley Angle, a leadership agency in this realm, developed a program specifically to serve the LGBTQ population. The organization provides services to survivors of domestic violence and their children and receives funding, technical assistance, and support from the Multnomah County Department of Human Services. Through Bradley Angle, Marc was able to create a safety plan, find immediate safety with an emergency motel voucher, and eventually locate stable housing. Perhaps equally important, Marc found a sense of community with others who accepted him and understood his experiences. He was also able to resolve barriers preventing him from obtaining financial stability.



▲ Staff and supporters of Bradley Angle march to celebrate pride and safe relationships for all

“I am grateful for the family-type atmosphere that Bradley Angle provided because it meant that I was part of a family group where I could heal and be myself and be heard as an individual and as a man.” ■

## School-based mental health – making a difference with youth and their families

Jasmin Harshman is one of sixteen school-based mental health consultants with the Department of County Human Services who work in Multnomah County school districts. Students are referred to Jasmin through school counselors and may suffer from a variety of conditions including depression, anxiety, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or trauma symptoms that impact their attendance and behaviors at school and home. Teachers, principals, and families request counseling or consultation services through the school counselors. Jasmin travels between the Gresham and Reynolds school districts, visiting as many as ten schools each week and making home visits.

Jasmin is bilingual and bicultural. She feels very fortunate to be able to work with the Hispanic community. “One of the strengths that I find in providing mental health services to Hispanic/Latinos is the strong value on

children and families. Mental health issues are not typically discussed within our community so I am constantly amazed at the level of openness and engagement.”

Success is measured by working with students and their families to define and accomplish individual goals based on their unique circumstances. “I am humbled every day by the families I work with and marvel at their resilience.”

Jasmin feels that the biggest struggle continues to be the lack of local mental health resources for youth and their families. “More preventative, early childhood and school-aged mental health services are needed to really make a difference in our youth and their future.” ■



▲ Jasmin Harshman is a mental health consultant with the Department of County Human Services

- School-based clinicians serve more than 89 educational settings including school-based Health Clinics
- Mental Health Call Center staff responded to more than 70,700 calls
- 5,851 prevention services were delivered to children, youth, and adults via home visits, adult and teen groups, and academic support

# Foster Grandparent Betty marks 28 years of service

In the summer of 1985, after retiring from the insurance business, Betty Messinger, a Portlander since 1943, was given her first assignment as a Senior Corps Foster Grandparent volunteer and began her service at Holladay School in NE Portland working with medically fragile children. In September of that year, Betty accepted an assignment at Vernon Elementary School's "Success for All" program. She has been a dedicated and valued Vernon Elementary volunteer ever since.

Although the programs and the teachers have changed over the years, the children's needs are still the same. Betty works tirelessly to help individual children become successful readers. Her efforts have helped hundreds of students improve not only in reading, but in social skills as well.

The mission of the Foster Grandparent Program is to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for older adults who are living on modest incomes. Foster Grandparent volunteers receive a small stipend for their

volunteer service. They serve as mentors and tutors for at-risk children and youth and also provide supportive services and companionship to children with special needs. The program in the Portland area began as a pilot project at Providence Child Center. Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services became the local sponsor in 2010.

During the summer, holidays, and other school-closure breaks, Betty also happily served at the Providence Center for Medically Fragile Children and continued doing so for over 20 years. When she realized that she was reaching her 20th year of service as a Foster Grandparent volunteer, Betty reset her goal to go for five more years. Now, almost eight years later, Betty is still going strong at Vernon Elementary. She has continued her service as a Foster Grandparent volunteer because it gets her out of the house each day and she enjoys the students. "They are great! But most of all," she says, "it is the satisfaction of knowing that I have had the privilege of helping these kids who REALLY need it!"

Vernon Elementary school continues to be amazed by Betty and her commitment to service. The students she has worked with over the past 28 years will always remember her and how she helped them. ■



▲ Betty Messinger describes her volunteer work as a privilege that brings great enjoyment.

### In fiscal year 2013:

Volunteers.....	65
Average age.....	72
Average years of service .....	five years
Children served .....	264

# Community Healing Initiative and partners team up to house homeless family

Often one of the hardest things about being a service provider is helping someone who needs additional services that your organization cannot provide. Fortunately, community organizations and Multnomah County Human Services' Community Services staff work together to get clients the resources they need. Addressing the full spectrum of family needs rather than taking a piecemeal approach ensures that families have the best chance of finding safety and stability.



One example of how these strategic partnerships can help a family in need is provided by the Community Healing Initiative (CHI). CHI, a Community Service Division program serving gang-affected youth, recently helped a homeless family plan for their son Marco's\* release from residential treatment. Unfortunately, without stable housing, Marco would be unable to return to his parents' care. When CHI counselors met

with Marco's parents, Mark\* and Mandy\*, they found long waiting lists for shelters, and CHI provided them with a short motel stay until shelter space opened up.

A few days later CHI connected the family to JOIN, a partner agency that supports the efforts of homeless individuals and families

◀ Justice Rajee works with youth who have been involved in the criminal justice system.

to transition out of homelessness into permanent housing. Since Mark had recently started a full-time job he believed that with a little help he would have the means to keep a home. He and Mandy located an apartment that they could afford and moved in successfully -- with JOIN providing move-in and deposit assistance.

One week later their son Marco was released from residential treatment and moved in with his family. They look forward to staying in their new place for a long time. ■

\*Names have been changed.

- 90 families, 113 Siblings, 100 youth served
- 175 families placed in permanent housing
  - 95% housed at 3 month follow-up
  - 90% housed at 6 month follow-up

# DCHS plans for the needs of our changing community

An important role of government is to improve the quality of life for all residents, especially our most vulnerable. Government can do this by collaborating with a community to understand its unique strengths and needs and then developing services and structures accordingly. Basic needs include food, medical care and shelter; higher-order needs include employment, education, and community participation. Both are important for a well-functioning community. Multnomah County Department of County Human Services (DCHS)

works to understand the county and its changing demographics to ensure that the right services are in place today and will be in place tomorrow.

DCHS has identified several significant changes in Multnomah County: it is an increasingly diverse place to live with an increasingly young and racially/ethnically diverse population. According to 2010 US Census data, in 2000 21% of Multnomah County residents were people of color; this increased to 23% in 2010. Youth in the county are increasingly likely to be Hispanic, with 20% of those under 18 identifying as Hispanic, compared to 12% in 2000. This increasing diversity is not uniform.

As illustrated by the map, diversity is occurring in some neighborhoods more than others. From 2000 to 2010, the percentage of residents who were people of color decreased in inner northeast and southeast Portland census tracts (those blocks in blue and gray) with the

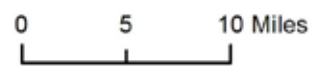
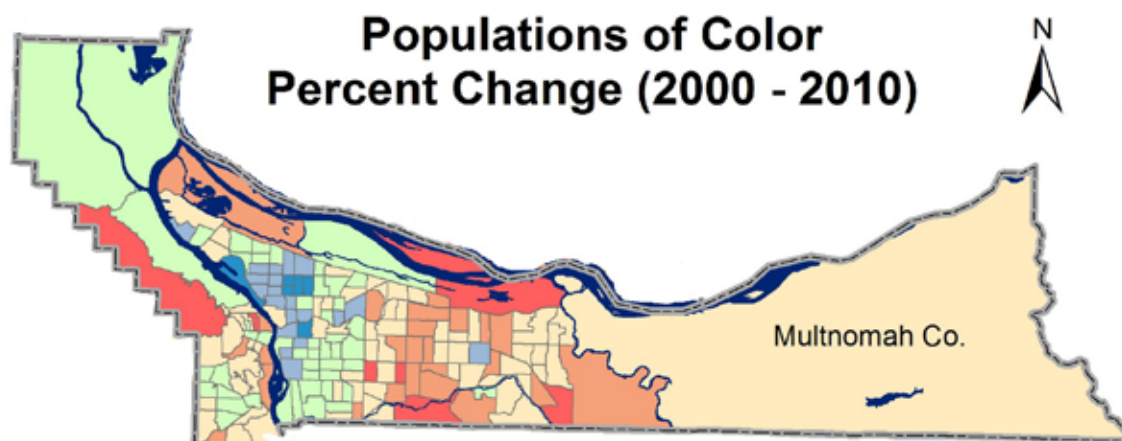
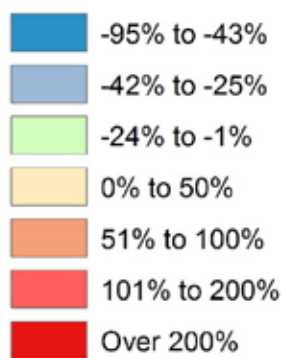
largest decreases occurring in the inner northeast. Increases occurred in outer east Portland and in inner suburban cities such as Gresham (shown in red and orange).

This information is important because it helps the county know where to locate services that will best serve community needs. Research by the Coalition of Communities of Color indicates that communities of color experience significantly higher rates of poverty and homelessness and Multnomah County is working to ensure the provision of services that are both locally accessible and culturally responsive.

An equally important change occurring in the county is the aging of baby boomers. The first boomers were born in 1946 and turned 65 in 2011; the last will turn 65 in 2029. The Oregon State Demographer predicts that the number of Multnomah County residents between 65 and 85 will more than double by 2030 when one out of every five Multnomah County residents will be over 65. The demand for older adult services will increase accordingly and DCHS is preparing for that increase. The county is focusing on efforts that enable older adults to stay in their homes as long as possible in order to maintain their independence and quality of life, manage costs, and lessen the impact on the limited number of nursing homes in the community.

Planning and community collaboration are essential functions of government. DCHS services are designed to improve the quality of life for all county residents by designing services to meet the needs of all communities and of residents across the lifespan. ■

## Legend



Data Source: US Census (2000 & 2010); mapped using 2010 census tracts. COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

# Incredible Years offered at the Ortiz Center

Not many families would be willing to give up 14 weeks of Thursday evenings to attend a parenting class. But when Incredible Years was offered at the Ortiz Community Center in the NE Cully neighborhood last spring, the turnout was far beyond staff's expectations.

Incredible Years works with parents as they learn to connect with their children and support their social and emotional development. The program assists in building routines, setting clear limits, and developing positive discipline strategies through rewards and consequences. Incredible Years creates learning opportunities for the



entire family by offering parenting education, quality child engagement, and a shared meal for all who attend.

Fernando Sanjines and Betty Espinel, SUN Service System Division staff at Bienestar de La Familia Social Services, partnered with Maureen Markey, an Early Childhood

◀ Families learn skills to support their children's positive development at Bienestar's Incredible Years series

Mental Health Specialist, to offer the class at the Ortiz Center. This is the first time the Incredible Years series was provided in Spanish at that site.

Families were engaged and enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn with other parents. Said one parent, "I learned some skills about how to engage with my children when they are frustrated and to keep communicating with them."

Bienestar plans to offer at least one 14-week Incredible Years series per year. For more information, contact Nabil Zaghloul at [nabil.zaghloul@multco.us](mailto:nabil.zaghloul@multco.us) ■

# Supported Living helps Joe thrive independently

Joe is an adult enrolled in services with the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Service Division and is making steady progress to increase his independence and participation in the community.

He spoke candidly about growing up in training centers and group homes. "Autism and Asperger's were not as well understood in the 90's, so medication and services were not so great at that time."

Joe is currently living in a group home run by Adult Learning Systems of Oregon (ALSO). Brett Turner is the CEO of ALSO which operates 18 group homes and provides support and employment services to adults with developmental disabilities in Multnomah County. "Our approach to providing services is to focus on people as individuals and to help them achieve their goals and dreams."

► Joe's family and friends are proud of his accomplishments

"Supported Living is a good thing," said Joe. Since moving to Supported Living, he has received training for activities such as riding the bus and cooking. Tonight he plans to make bacon cheeseburgers. "Sometimes someone helps, but mostly I do it on my own."

3,423 adults were served in fiscal year 2013:

- 178 in Supported Living services
- 473 in 24-hour Residential Services
- 845 in Employment Services
- 1,927 in a continuum of other support services



Joe is very close to his family who are proud of his accomplishments. "My stepmom, my mom, my dad, and my stepdad are all in my life," he says. Joe's disabilities have made it hard for them at times, but he believes his behavioral issues are much better. "Many people do not understand people with autism. My mom says that I have a heart of gold." ■

# Aging and Disability Services helps a Vietnam Vet scale a mountain of forms

Russ didn't think much about his exposure to Agent Orange while serving in Vietnam during the late 1960s. Frankly, he had more important things to consider



at the time. His job as an Army flight controller was to ensure the planes filled with GIs, equipment, and armaments touched down and took off safely in a war zone. His own well-being was secondary.

But some time after returning to the states, Russ developed a disability due to Agent Orange. Years later, he found his way to Multnomah County Veterans' Services and Officer Katie Pereault. Katie understands veterans; she served in the Army from 1993 to 1999.

"Katie had knowledge of processes and procedures I'm not familiar with," Russ reflected. "She reviewed my completed forms, making sure I had filled information out clearly and correctly. Left to my own efforts, I'm fearful the process would have been twice as long, maybe still unresolved."

Katie enjoys advocating for veterans and gets great satisfaction from seeing that her brothers and sisters who served in uniform get the benefits they deserve. The VA made Russ's case more complicated because in the middle of the application process his papers were suddenly shipped out of Portland to another location.

◀ Katie Pereault helps Russ, a Vietnam veteran, access benefits

Russ explains that the VA, like any large bureaucracy, requires waiting "in line" before your application is reviewed. The movement of his application out of Portland might have required a return to the back of the line, but Katie showed Russ how to avoid that painful outcome.

Thanks to Russ's persistence and Katie's expertise, he is now receiving the disability benefits he deserves. "Katie demonstrated compassion and a real motivation to provide information and counsel," Russ says. "Her services were instrumental in my completing the process resulting in a successful outcome." ■

- 424 veterans received assistance to obtain benefits
- \$3.6 million benefit dollars awarded
- 593 veterans in Multnomah County jails were screened for services, treatment and benefits

# Resources

## Domestic Violence

Portland Women's Crisis Line (PWCL): .....503-235-5333  
 Linea Unica (Espanol):.....503-232-4448

## Mental Health and Addictions

Mental Health Crisis Line .....503-988-4888  
 EASA (Early Assessment and Support Alliance for youth 15-25).....503-988-3272

## Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services Resource Connection Helpline.....503-988-3646

## Developmental Disabilities

Developmental Disabilities Services .....503-988-3658  
 Video Relay Service (VRS): .....503-988-3598

## Child Abuse

Child Abuse Reporting Hotline .....503-731-3100 local or 1-800-509-5439 toll free

## Energy Assistance

.....211info at 2-1-1

## SUN – Schools Uniting Neighborhoods

Call your local school or school district for more information

## Other County Resources

City/County Information and Referral .....503-823-4000  
 Department of County Human Services job opportunities.....503-988-3691

[www.multco.us/dchs](http://www.multco.us/dchs)

# Multnomah County is a great place to work

Multnomah County Department of County Human Services (DCHS) is a thriving organization fostering ongoing staff development and provides opportunities for enrichment and advancement. We offer rewarding careers doing work that makes a difference.

DCHS employs more than 770 staff, with headquarters in downtown Portland and six offices for the Aging and Disability Services Division located throughout the metro area. DCHS provides services for families in poverty, homeless youth and families, survivors of domestic violence, seniors, adults with disabilities, veterans, people recovering from mental illness and addiction, people with developmental disabilities and school-based services for children and families.



We periodically offer Career Information sessions to the public to share more about employment opportunities within our organization, the work we do, and how to apply for positions. To receive information on jobs and upcoming career sessions e-mail [dchsjobs@multco.us](mailto:dchsjobs@multco.us) or visit [www.multco.us/jobs](http://www.multco.us/jobs). We look forward to meeting you. ■

# DCHS FY13 Adopted Budget

