

REACH
Community Development

Home Front

March - April 2008

Volume 13, Issue 4

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Support, Stability and Success.

Affordable housing is just one item on a long list of needs that low-income people must address. REACH's Resident Services Program supports families and individuals living in REACH housing as they improve the social, economic, and environmental conditions that affect their lives. The program provides better access to community services, skill building workshops, this newsletter, and programs for youth and adult residents of REACH housing.



Members of one of REACH's Financial Literacy classes.

The majority of tenants earn less than 30% of the area median income - that is \$14,250 or less for an individual and only \$20,350 for a family of four. We want these individuals and all of our residents to find the support, stability, and success they deserve.

The Resident Services Program is based on the assumption that people are actively working to improve their lives. Our staff works individually with residents to help identify goals and provide the resources needed to meet them. We are here to help people access the resources they need to stay in their housing, raise their standard of living, meet personal goals, and encourages the development of leadership skills.

The specific activities of the Resident Services program include:

Financial Health for Adults: REACH's financial education programs assist residents at various income levels to improve your standard of living, focus on spending and saving strategies, how to build your credit, and features an Individual Development Account (IDA) Program to assist with long-term goals.

Youth\$ave: A matched savings program that teaches kids money management skills and assists them in saving for a specific goal.

Start School Right: Assistance with school supplies and materials for kids who live in REACH housing.

Adult Activities: Building meetings and workshops, social activities, and an annual holiday party.

Career Services: Assistance with resume writing, networking, interviews, job applications, and access to free computer classes in our computer labs.

The Closet: Residents can access emergency food, clothes, and many other household items.

Information and Referrals: Residents can call for assistance in accessing other services and resources in your community. ***For residents needing rent assistance, please call us as soon as you know you won't be able to pay the next month's rent. The sooner we know the more chance for assistance.***

HomeFront: Bi-monthly resident newsletter with information, resources and community events.

If you are interested in any more information about some of the programs listed above, please call **503-231-0682** and we'll direct you to one of our Resident Services Coordinators.

Financial Success

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Stimulus Checks: Are you Eligible for the Rebate?

Congress just passed a bill approving the distribution of “stimulus checks” to help boost the economy. There are a lot of rumors out there about what this money is about and who it’s for, so let’s learn more.

Who is eligible, and how much will I get?

Individuals with earned income will be receiving \$600, and couples with earned income will receive \$1200. A family will get \$300 for a child under 17. People who earned less than \$3,000, who wouldn’t normally file or pay taxes are also eligible for a \$300 rebate.

If your main source of income is government benefits, you will receive a check if your income is Social Security or disabled veteran’s benefits. If you are living on SSI or SSDI you will not get a rebate.

When are checks going out?

Checks should be going out as early as May.

How do I get my check?

Most people who file their taxes won’t have to do anything differently. People who are eligible but who might not file, such as people living solely on Social Security, or veteran’s disability benefits, must file this year in order to get the check.

Is help available?

Yes. If you need help filing so you can get your rebate, there is a free Tax Aide site at the Ritzdorf on Saturdays from 8:30-1pm until the end of tax season—the last day is April 12. Alternatively, you can go online to https://locator.aarp.org/vmis/sites/tax_aide_locator.jsp and find out where the closest site is. You can also call **Erin at 503 231 0682 x136**, and she can help you.

Free Tax Help, It’s Your Money - Go Get It!

Tax season is upon us once again. REACH hosts a free Tax Aide Site on Saturdays until April 12. Come to the Ritzdorf Court Apartments, 1225 SE Belmont, and sign up on the waitlist from 8:30-10am. The site is first come first served. Trained volunteers will be on hand to complete your taxes by e-file.

What to Bring

- your W-2’s
- Any 1099’s
- Your picture ID and Social Security card
- A copy of last year’s return (if you have it)
- If you have children, bring their Social Security cards
- and any info about child care expenses from 2007

There are several special credit programs available to low-income households

Earned Income Tax Credit: If you earned income last year, you may be eligible for a larger refund. Families with two or more children get the largest amount of money back, but single people are also eligible.

Child Tax Credits: Your child care expenses may offset the tax you pay and/or increase your refund. You also get

a tax credit for taking care of your children.

Education Credits: Student in 2007? There are several different credits you are eligible for, or you may be able to deduct the tuition and other expenses you paid, resulting in lower taxes.

Credit for the Elderly or Disabled: If you are over 65, or under 65 and receiving taxable disability income, you may be eligible for this credit.

If this time is not convenient, call **Erin Kelley** to find a site and time that works for you, **(503) 231 0682**.



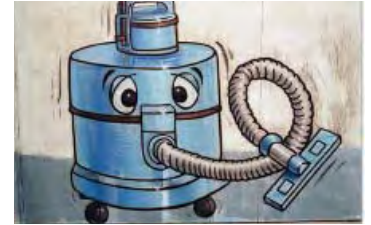
Family Connections

HomeFront March - April 3

Free Events
from



Go,
Dog. Go! to



Summer Camp Guide 2008



Do your kids get bored in the summer?

Do you want to provide them with more fun opportunities?

REACH's Summer Camp Guide will be available in the beginning of April! A copy will be sent to every REACH household with children under the age of 18. REACH researches and partners with a variety of camps in the area to help provide different summer opportunities. This guide is designed to help you find fun and interesting summer camps at low costs for your children.

Some camps are only \$10, including Tryon Creek Day Camp, Rock & Roll Camp for Girls, and the Oregon College of Arts & Crafts Day Camp. Other options include Ethos, OMSI, Camp Namanu, Camp Caldera, and Camp Westwind. These are just a few of the many choices that your child could have for fun this summer! Once you receive the Camp Guide, call or email **Peter Blanchard** at (503) 231-0682 x.132 or pblanchard@reachcdc.org to get help with choosing a camp and filling out the paperwork.

REACH has free tickets available for families

Free tickets to the preview nights of the Northwest Children's Theatre and School's performance of **Go, Dog. Go!** Like a pop-up book that comes to life, these dogs delve in with gusto! This rollicking free-for-all is a musical world of doggy fun with crooning canines that can dance and drive! A barking cast and howling tunes make this show a 'tail-wagging' good time! Woof! Most enjoyed by ages 4 and up.

Preview night is Tuesday, March 18th. The show begins at 7:00 pm at 1819 N.W. Everett St. To reserve your tickets, contact Peter at (503) 231-0682 x132 or pblanchard@reachcdc.org and then come to the REACH main office on SE 12th and Salmon during normal business hours, to pick them up. *Priority given to families with young children.*

Historic Belmont Firehouse

Bring the whole family for a fun and educational opportunity to get up close and personal with the staff and equipment at this Historic Firehouse. Slide the pole and see the inside of a fire-truck!

Held on the second Saturday of each month at (except July & August. New Summertime hours coming) 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. The Historic Belmont Firehouse is located at 900 SE 35th Ave (at Belmont)

Portland Police Museum

Free museum dedicated to the history of policing here in Portland, Oregon. The museum contains many pictures and artifacts depicting the life and work of Portland Police over the last 150 years. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

The Portland Police Museum is open to the public Tuesdays through Fridays from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Please call in advance, (503) 823-0019.

Stark's Vacuum Cleaner Museum

Quirky but free, this museum highlights the history of vacuum cleaners from the 1800s to the 1960s. Located at 107 NE Grand Ave, call (503) 232-4101 for hours and information.

Resident Services

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Meet the People Behind Our Resident Programs

Peter Blanchard

Youth\$ave, School Supplies, Holiday Party, Summer Camps, and other Youth Programs

I am a people-person at heart, and love to help you and your children succeed. I have a B.A. in Psychology from Lewis & Clark College, as well as a great deal of experience helping kids to succeed both academically and socially. As the Youth Development Coordinator I am here to help make sure that your child has every opportunity to achieve all of their goals. When I have my way, I am outside having great adventures; hiking, camping, climbing, playing, cycling, LIVING!



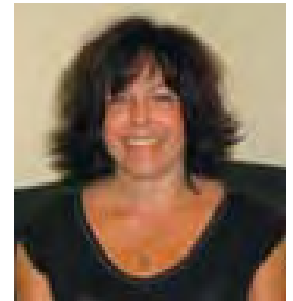
The Adult Financial Education program helps residents achieve their vision of financial stability. What I enjoy most about my job is hearing about residents' goals and helping them make progress toward them. When I am not working, I like to read, exercise, travel and bake yummy foods for my friends.

Debbie Lowder

Ritzdorf Court, Grand Oak, Wilshire and Rex Arms

Formerly Homeless, Alcohol and Drug Addiction and Treatment, Domestic Violence Survivors

I attended SUNY Purchase and CUNY Queens in New York, and studied Early Childhood Education and Alcohol and Drug Addiction at PCC. I began working at REACH when the Ritzdorf Court moved in their first residents in August 2000. I offer on-site information and referral, promote positive communities by offering informational and recreational workshops and gatherings, and advocate for my residents to achieve their goals. What I enjoy most about my job is watching the joy of a formerly homeless person move into their very own home, and listening to the very interesting life stories they have. When I am not working, I enjoy being a mother of two boys, listening to local bands, watching football, reading and spending time outdoors.



Austin Erdman

Scattered Sites, Westshore, Powell Blvd., Dresden, Beacon, Marion, Taylor, McCuller and Albina Corner

Eviction Prevention, Food Closet, Information and Referral

I help residents access the services and resources they need to ensure stable housing, and I facilitate communication between residents and property managers. Previous to joining REACH, I spent seven years working with refugees in Portland. I most enjoy those aspects of my work which help build confidence and create connections. I speak Spanish. I studied fine art and photography at Arizona State University and earned a B.F.A. Outside of work I read, play soccer, hike, bike, self-educate and sip espresso.

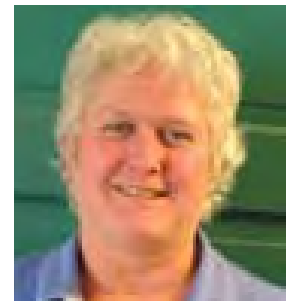


Hazel Schnider

Station Place Tower

I Graduated from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology in 2000. I have been providing social services in the Portland area for 7 years and have been with REACH since 2006.

What I like about the work I do is being around elders with a vast amount of knowledge, wisdom and ideas. When I am not at work I enjoy spending time with my 3 dogs, watching the birds around our bird feeders and playing with my three Grandsons when they visit.



Erin Kelley

Budget, Buy & Save, STARTS, REACH's IDA program, Computer Labs

I studied ethnic conflict at Mount Holyoke College, in western Massachusetts, and earned a B.A. in International Relations in 2004.



Resources

HomeFront March - April 5

Are You Or Is Someone You Know Struggling with Depression or Thoughts of Suicide?

Help is Available for You During this Difficult Time, Please Use These Resources Now

by Debbie Lowder

If you need help right now please call one of these hotlines. Call for yourself, or someone you care about. Your call is free and confidential:

National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1.800.273.TALK

The Hopeline Network 1.800.SUICIDE

A few years ago, I volunteered for the National Suicide Hotline. We fielded calls from all over the country from people who were emotionally distraught and were having thoughts of suicide. During the cold, damp, dark winter months the hotline was especially busy. It is difficult to ask someone if they are having thoughts of suicide, even over the phone to a stranger. It's even harder to ask for help.

When should you be concerned? Some thoughts and behaviors associated with suicide are increased sadness, crying, alcohol or drug misuse, feelings of worthlessness, withdrawal, recklessness, sleeplessness or sleeping too much, feelings of hopelessness, and changes in school,

work or relationships resulting in poor performances. Giving away cherished possessions and putting affairs in order are red flags. Sometimes people who are thinking about suicide do not directly say the words. However, a person who talks about suicide almost always attempts suicide.

To find out if a person is thinking about suicide, ask directly—"Are you planning to kill yourself?" Talking about suicide does not increase the risk. It reduces it. Avoidance leaves the person at risk of feeling more alone and more anxious about asking for help. When someone identifies as feeling suicidal, respond calmly. Acknowledge the negative feelings they have. Identify positive personal traits. Explore the stressors and the ways they were handled in the past. Help them to think of the positive aspects of their life. There will always be something—because if there wasn't, this conversation would have never begun.

There are many resources available for people who need help. Counseling can be effective in identifying what causes emotions and feelings and healthy ways to cope with them. Some places that offer low cost or sliding scale fees are:

- Portland State University-503.725.4620 \$15 a session or lower.
- William Temple House-503.226.3021 \$10 a session
- Rivers Way Clinic-503.222.3436 sliding scale fee
- YWCA Counseling Center-503.294.7440 sliding scale
- Psychological Service Center-503.352.2400



Harvest Share from Oregon Food Bank

The Oregon Food Bank recovers fresh fruit and vegetables from farmers and wholesalers and makes the produce available at no cost to low-income people. Below are some of the sites in our area. For more food sites, call the **Oregon Food Bank at 503-282-0555**.

Second Mondays

FISH Emergency Services, Inc.
1335 S.E. Hawthorne, Portland
9 a.m., first come

Fourth Thursdays

Nazarene Ministry of Help
5805 S.E. Gladstone, Portland
10 a.m., first come

Fourth Thursdays

St. Andrew Community Center
806 N.E. Alberta St., Portland
3 to 5 p.m.

Second Wednesdays

Northwest Portland Ministries
1816 N.W. Irving, Portland
10 to 11 a.m.

The Round Table

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Voter Registration

Be the change you want to see

This year is an exciting time for elections. In the upcoming months we will be voting, amongst many things: for a Mayor, a Senator, Congressmen, City Council, City Commissioners, and, of course, a President.

To be eligible to vote in Oregon, you must be a registered voter. To be eligible for registration, you must:

- be a resident of Oregon
- a U.S. citizen
- 18 years old by Election Day

You will need to provide proof of identification. An Oregon Drivers License or ID card number is sufficient identification. If you have neither one, you will have to write the last four digits of your social security number on your registration form. Your registration form must be post-marked no later than the 21st day before an election to be entitled to vote.

You can print the online form at <http://www.sos.state.or.us/elections/votreg/sel500.pdf>; fill it out and mail it in, or you can go to the Multnomah County Elections office at 1040 SE Morrison. You can also bring the form into the office in person. If you have any questions call 503.988.3720.

Voting does make a difference. As Gandhi so eloquently put it, "be a part of the change you want to see in this world".

Prevent Food Borne Illness

Follow 4 Rules Of Food Safety

Everyone should follow the four rules of food safety suggested by Multnomah County Environmental Health. However seniors may be extra sensitive to microorganisms that cause Food Borne Illness

Clean

Wash Hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water as hot as you can comfortably stand. Wash any surface that comes into contact with raw foods, such as cutting boards, sinks and counter tops with soapy water and sanitize with bleach solution (1 tablespoon bleach per gallon of water). Don't forget to clean your microwave occasionally

Separate

Avoid cross contamination, which is the transfer of microorganisms from one food or surface to another. This is done by washing hands and surfaces before and between handling different types of foods, using different cutting boards and utensils for raw and ready-to-eat foods.

Cook

Heat foods to minimum safe internal temperatures. Example: Poultry, 165 F; ground meat 155 F; fish 145 F. Whenever possible, use a meat thermometer for accuracy.

Chill

Cool cooked foods as quickly as possible. Food must be cooled from 140 F to 70F in two hours, and from 70 F to 41 F or lower in four hours for a total cooling time of six hours or less. Food can be set on Ice or in cold water to help with cooling process. Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw frozen food in



the refrigerator, under cold water or in the microwave.

When you serve food, keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot to maintain safe temperatures.

What are the symptoms of Food Borne Illness?

- Diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever, headache, vomiting and severe exhaustion.
- Symptoms vary according to the type of bacteria and by the amount of contaminants eaten

How long before I get sick from a Food Borne Illness?

- Thirty minutes to six weeks

How long will my symptoms last?

- Usually 1-10 days

For more information on the Web

Food and Safety Inspection Service
www.fsis.usda.gov

Government Food Safety Information
www.foodsafety.gov

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/foodsafety

Healthy Homes

HomeFront March - April 7

Whew – the Inspections are Over

The Property Management staff would like to thank each of you for cooperating during our annual inspections of the units. These annual inspections allow the staff to better prepare our budgets for the upcoming year. During the inspections we look at things such as windows, exterior paint, roofs and general maintenance. If things will need to be replaced in the near future, we are better able to budget and set up a work plan and time frame to have these items taken care of.

Information that can save you time when reporting repairs

The REACH maintenance department gets many, many requests for repairs. You wouldn't believe some of the "wild goose chases" they go on, simply because they didn't have good information when the repair was requested. We can get to your repair needs faster if we have the following information:

- Your full name
- Your address and Unit number
- Your current phone number (we get asked to return calls at numbers that are disconnected?)
- Will you be there when we arrive to let us in, or do we have permission to enter? (very important!)
- What is the nature of the problem? Please provide a good description of the problem.

What in the World is this Income Verification Stuff?

Each year, every resident in REACH housing is required by the terms of their Rental Agreement to participate in the Income Verification process. The process is quite simple, but can be stressful for residents who may not have their income information readily available. You are mailed a form to complete regarding your household members, date of birth, income, etc. You are asked to return this form along with your W-2, 1099 or other acceptable proof of income that will show how much money your household made for the previous year.

We then enter the information into our database. This enables us to provide accurate and updated information needed for yearly reports required by our funders. We must ensure funders and other government oversight agencies that we are renting to households with the required income levels. They also require us to collect and report the ethnicity and disability status of our residents.

We appreciate that everyone tries very hard to obtain the information and return the forms within the time frame allotted. Luckily this process is done at the beginning of each year when everyone is receiving tax forms. This helps make the process a little smoother.

Just remember
Beginning of the year – Income Verification time
It's as fun for us as it is for you!

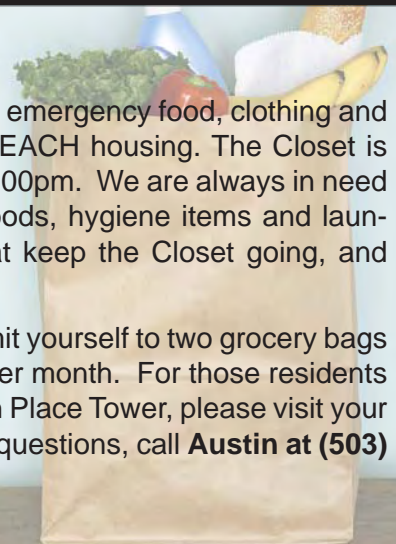
off the mark.com by Mark Parisi



The Closet

REACH provides a limited supply of emergency food, clothing and household items for residents of REACH housing. The Closet is Open on Tuesdays between 2:00-4:00pm. We are always in need of donations, especially canned goods, hygiene items and laundry detergent. Donations are what keep the Closet going, and demand is high.

When you visit the closet, please limit yourself to two grocery bags or less. Food may be taken once per month. For those residents living at the Ritzdorf Court or Station Place Tower, please visit your on-site food closet. If you have any questions, call **Austin at (503) 231-0682 ext 129.**





REACH

Community Development

Building A Better Community

1135 SE Salmon Portland, OR 97214

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Another Chance to Win! Submit your Ideas for Activities with your kids, or for the kid in all of us

With each edition of the HomeFront, we strive to bring you useful information about fun, interesting, family-oriented activities and events that are happening all around Portland. Now it's your turn to share your favorite cheap-or-free activities to keep the kid in all of us entertained, and you can even win a gift certificate for doing so! Here are the rules for this month's contest:

- Activities must be kid- or family-oriented.
- Activities must be free (or very cheap).
- Activities must be open to the public, here in Portland.

Beyond that, the sky is the limit! While it

could be your favorite fair or museum, these do not have to be organized events – it could be your favorite game to play on a rainy day, or your favorite park to picnic in – just so long as they are activities that will be interesting and fun for others in your community.

The three best activities will be published in the next Home Front and the winners will receive \$25, \$20 and \$15 gift cards to Fred Meyer.

Your property manager or resident services coordinator will have submission forms that you can use to send your ideas to us. You can also call or email **Peter at 503-231-0682 x132** or **pblanchard@reachcdc.org**.