

Impact Stories_ 2019

Progress Center:

Support from the United Way has assisted the Progress Center Tracking Learning Children program to transition to an online format. Providing online access to caregivers will allow the program to reach more families, and will reduce the response time for caregivers to receive survey results. Children will receive developmental services sooner when a developmental delay is identified, and primary care providers will have results immediately, allowing them to intervene as needed. The online Ages and Stages program will provide rich data to guide future program development and service delivery.

Columbia County funding **\$2989**-Columbia County clients served **83** cost per client in 2018 **\$36.03**

SAFE of Columbia County

The first story is a story of how advocacy works to better and change a person's circumstances. United Way funds help SAFE provide advocacy throughout the county.

1. A woman came to SAFE for assistance after her parenting time with her children had been taken away. Her partner was seeking sole custody of the children and accusing her of alcohol and drug usage and addiction. At first glance, this does not look like a domestic violence case, but as our advocate worked with the woman, it was apparent that the woman was not using alcohol or drugs, had submitted to regular urine testing which was provided to the courts, and the partner was using the courts and false reports as a means of continued power and control over her in order to keep the children from their mother. When SAFE started working with her, she was frantic and upset, unable to focus or get an attorney to help her, SAFE assisted her to get an attorney for free to help her with the legal challenges, the advocate went to court with her to offer support, the advocate worked with her and DHS, and the woman was assisted to get her parenting time back. She was also able to gain independence through finding a job, and feeling secure in her housing situation. With a parenting plan in place through the course, she was no longer at the mercy of an abuser who was punishing her by attempting to find ways to upset her and keep her from seeing her children.

The second story is about how United Way funds assist SAFE to have prevention programming in the county schools. SAFE's Prevention Educator provides a variety of prevention programming in all communities in the county. This is a story from one of the alternative schools with high risk children.

2. The Prevention Educator provided a class on building empathy to a group of middle school students who were skeptical of the program. As with all the SAFE's prevention programming, this program was experiential in nature. The students engaged in a partner exercise of active listening. After listening, not only to the words, but to the body language, facial expressions, and feelings of their partner, students were asked to repeat what they had heard back to the person who had told the story. Then they changed places and the listener became the talker and the exercise was repeated. When they were finished and everyone had a chance to both listen and talk, they discussed the concept of empathy. The students were excited and energized by the process! Some were even able to identify self-compassion as a result of hearing their story told back to them. At the end of the session, the entire class took part in a loving kindness meditation. These exercises are part of a trauma-informed, evidence-based curriculum on compassion and empathy building. The students gave the class 2 thumbs up in their evaluations, and asked if they could do it again sometime. This is an example of how prevention works in subtle ways opening up a brain to new possibilities, and hope for building compassionate relationships with other.

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Community Action Energy/Utility Services

1. One household we assisted was a low-income couple who had just lost their newborn. This loss prevented the wife from being able to go back to work. At the same time her husband lost his job. Simultaneous with this loss of income there were the additional medical expenses to the hospital, payments which they became unable to make. We were able to utilize United Way funding to prevent their electricity from being shut off.
2. Another household we assisted was comprised of a mother and daughter. The mother had lost her income due to health issues. In order to take care of her mother, the daughter had to work fewer hours. Due to these unexpected medical events and loss of income, these clients were unable to make a payment which put them at risk of having their water shut off. United Way funds were used to prevent their water from being shut off.

Community Action Homeless Prevention/Rapid Re-housing

1. An 18 year old, single male was connected to our office through counselors at his school. His main goal was to obtain his high school diploma through Columbia County Educational Campus (CCEC). In speaking with a counselor, his need for more stable housing was identified. He was living out of a backpack – jumping from sofa to sofa – because he was unable to live with his own family. At the time, he had no income and was trying to get on waiting lists for subsidized units such as Woodland Trails. CCEC assisted him in finding supplies to survive – such as pants, socks, and underwear – but in the meantime, he was in a holding pattern with housing waiting lists and little luck finding employment. In March of 2018. We received notification that he had been bumped off of an almost two and one half year waiting list! He was heartbroken and very discouraged. However, he communicated with CAT workers, and we were able to advocate with management to have him reinstated. Eventually, he was able to complete high school and receive his diploma, after which he began working at a local restaurant. In September of this year – almost three years later – he was selected at a subsidized complex where he will be paying only 30% of his income for his rent. Community Action Team was able to utilize United Way funding to pay his move in deposit. The young man had saved his own earnings and was able to pay his first month's rent. He applied at Columbia River PUD for assistance with his utility deposit. This young man has long term goals of continuing his education and working toward a management position at his current job. After a long process and a lot of hard work by all involved, this man is now on the path to success, thanks in no small part to the support of United Way resources.

Community Action Parent Education

Our ability to use United Way funding blended with other funds helps change lives.

1. One dad with disabilities – nearly blind – rode his bike to class every week. He and the child's mother worked on their own issues separately and together with community-wrap-around services from other agencies like CAT Housing, Iron Tribe, and community members. They are now in an apartment of their own and doing very well. Again, the community has helped them in so many concrete and emotional ways to stay clean and sober, and raise their son to the best of their ability.
2. We still partner with the same church for the "Birth to Three" parenting education classes. The congregation and the classrooms provide the appropriate space and an understanding of the important parenting education work we do for families with very young children. Using blended funding, Parenting Education provided "First Three Year" programming to provide parenting sessions to 10 families with "Nurturing Parents" Program and "Every Child Ready to Read" for 16 families.

Columbia Pacific Food Bank

A note received from a client:

"I can't work like I used to due to a disability from my job. My three kids are fed thanks to your program. It makes our home happy and growing. This is a great program for the community." Signed Love- a single Mom

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Community Action Senior Respite Services

1. Sixty- six year old Mrs. F cares for her 81 year old husband who is a military veteran. Approximately 18 months ago, Mr. F suffered a stroke which resulted in a diagnosis of vascular dementia as well as partial paralysis of his lower extremities. Since then, Mrs. F has been her husband's primary caregiver. She provides assistance with every "activity of daily living" (ADL). For Mr. F to move about safely, he uses either a walker or a wheelchair. To make way for safe utilization of these assistive devices – whether inside or outside the home – Mrs. F must keep pathways wide and clear. The restlessness Mr. F experiences at night continue to prevent both parties from getting food rest. As it is, Mrs. F's health is already complicated by diabetes and arthritis. The lack of restorative sleep – combined with the added demands of 24/7 care – has culminated in Mrs. F being exhausted. Mrs. F used to have a flower business. She also enjoyed swimming and walking. Now, she is no longer free to participate in these activities. That said, she states that caring for her husband is very rewarding. She enjoys talking with him and listening to his stories. Mrs. F was granted 20 hours of Respite for the year.
2. Mrs. B is 71 years old. She continues to provide care for her husband following a 2017 fall, which resulted in a fractured hip. Eighty seven year old Mr. B has experienced multiple setbacks in his recovery from this incident, including recent hospitalization for congestive heart failure. He continues to require significant care and support from his wife. Due to his need for assistance in transferring, ambulating, bathing and dressing, he is not able to be left alone for more than 10-15 minutes at a time. Preparing meals, shopping, managing his medications, and completing housekeeping tasks also fall solely on Mrs. B. Although she does have an adult son who helps when able, he unfortunately lives several hours away. He is not easily available to assist with Mr. B's Care. Mrs. B reports that caregiving and attending to the home have combined to make it very difficult to get the proper rest she needs for the preservation of her own health. Respite Care allows her time to rest, refresh and recharge and maintain her health so she can continue to care for her husband.

Vernonia Cares

1. A female senior citizen stated the emergency food VCFB provides, along with the meal certificates provided through the Vernonia Senior Citizen organization (Home Delivered Meals program), is the basis of most of her food intake. Her vehicle is not working, so our in-town delivery of groceries was also a tremendous benefit.
2. A recent widow, despite tears in the process, came to the food bank and was able to keep herself fed while she moved through the transition of living alone. The caring attitude of our volunteers provides a listening ear to those who need it as well as providing food.
3. A client utilized the food bank as she passes through a path indicating dialysis will be needed soon. Our simple foods allow her to reduce her salt intake and maintain her health.
4. As a volunteer, a woman found helping others lifted her spirits and kept her from descending into depression. She has also developed new friendships with other volunteers at the food bank.

Emergency Support Shelter

We provided services to a family who came to our shelter after experiencing years of abuse.

The mother was hesitant to come into the shelter and leaving everything behind. She also had fears about her and her children's safety. She had two very young children and didn't want them to continue witnessing domestic violence.

While the family was in our shelter, mom learned more about the cycle of violence. Her case manager safety planned with her and came up with a plan of action to help her build life skills and get back on her feet. Her children were able to access supportive services in our children's program. Little by little her determination grew and she knew that she needed to go forward with this change to be safe and make a better life for herself and her children. She is so thankful that they are safe today.

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Turning Point Community Services

A client who needed to complete 100 hours of community service , as well as, parenting in order to get their children back – came to us and signed up for community service. Once the hours were complete and the parenting classes done, this client had learned so much about being compassionate and helping others that they went on to take college classes specializing in social humanities and is now a motivational speaker at various venues sharing how to turn your life around.

Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Columbia County

This program was started in June 2018 with seven children enrolled and donations of \$500. This qualified the Columbia County Readers Advisory Group for a 50% Match for all books for the next three years from the James and Shirley Rippey Family Foundation. United Way of Columbia County agreed to be the fiscal manager for this program (the registered 501 c 3) and volunteers from Friends of the Libraries of Columbia City, St. Helens, Scappoose and Vernonia, Lions Club, Kiwanis Day Breakers, Kiwanis Noon Club, Rotary, Columbia County Coalition and many others began working to raise funds to sustain this program.

Dolly Parton Imagination Library has been in existence for 20 years and has a proven record of helping children learn to read and be ready to enter school to learn.

With the help of volunteers writing grants and many donations from the community individuals, civic organizations and United Way of Columbia County, approximately \$39,000 was raised thus insuring the program could be sustainable for the first two years. This group must continue to raise funds to sustain this program for the children in our community.

In September it was announced that open enrollment was available to all children from birth to their fifth birthday in Columbia County. Columbia County enrollment covers the zip codes of 97051, 97053, 97054, 97064, 97018 families who live within these zip code areas can enroll the eligible children online at <https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/affiliate/ORCOLUMBIA> or they can visit any public library, fill out a paper form and mail it to:

UNITED WAY OF COLUMBIA COUNTY

P O Box 538
Rainier, OR 97048

967 enrolled as of 5/09/2019

90 aged out

1057 enrolled since June 2018

All forms accepted at this address regardless of zip code. They can be entered into the database and transferred to the appropriate affiliate program in our County.

Total books mailed for 2019 January through June 1= 5090

This program is free to all families residing in Columbia County with children birth to fifth birthday.

The Following two zip codes have different Affiliates (funding organizations)

In the **97016** zip code area parents must fill out a **paper form** and mail it to:

CLATSKANIE HEADSTART

PO BOX 2
CLATSKANIE OR 97016

36 enrolled as of 5/09/2019

13 graduated

49

Paper enrollment only

In the **97048** zip code area parents must fill out a **paper form** and mail it to:

RAINIER CITY LIBRARY

PO Box 100
Rainier, OR 97048

56 enrolled as of 5/09/2019

Paper enrollment only