

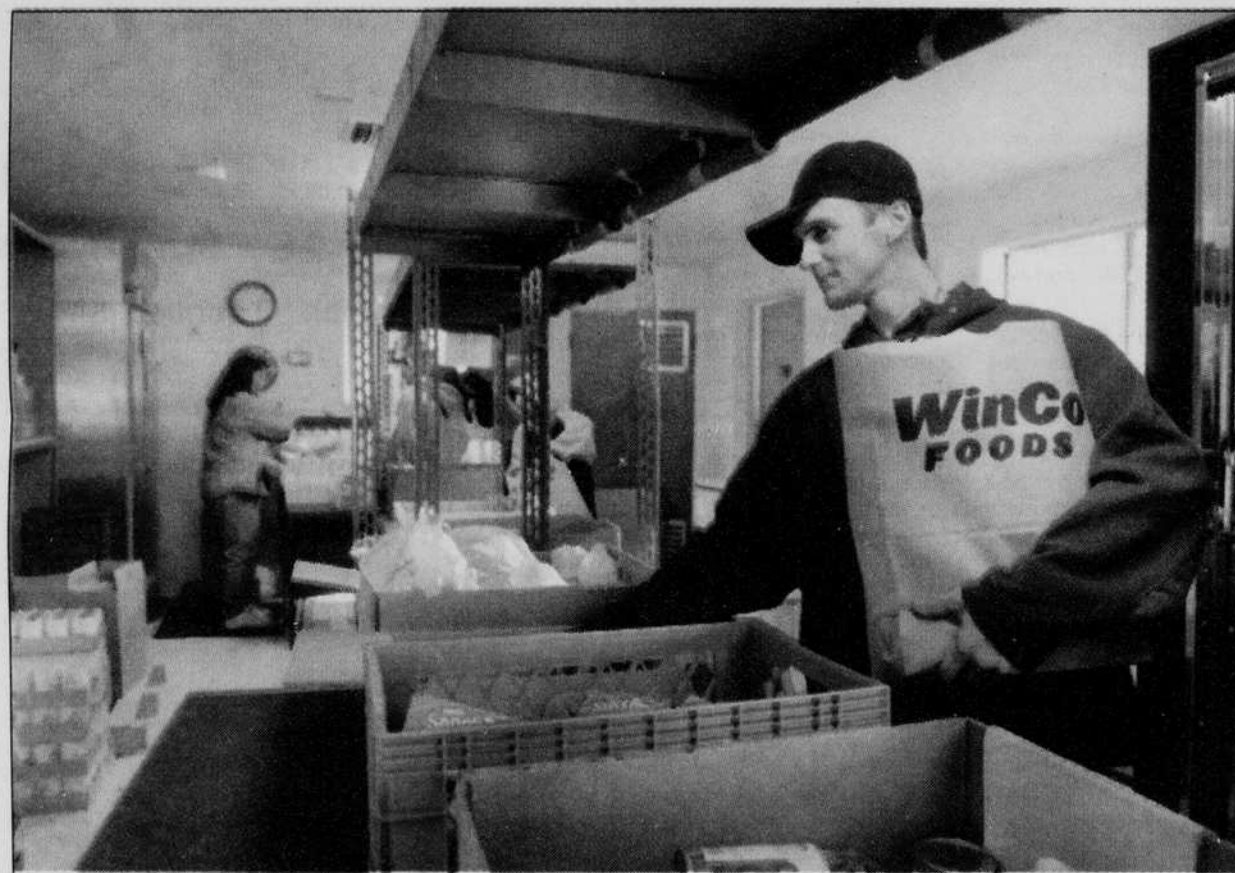
Gives the season

Local organizations give monetary aid and increase opportunities for specific groups in the community

To each his own need

Catholic Community Services helps people become self-sufficient by distributing aid tailored to each person

BY AMANDA BOLSINGER | NEWS REPORTER



LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

First time patron David Spencer, 27, grabs a bag of food at the Catholic Community Services at 1095 W. 7th Ave. on Monday afternoon. The service donates 7 tons of food each week to both Eugene and Springfield, totaling 1.4 million pounds every year.

Thirty thousand people receive aid each year from Catholic Community Services. From food and electricity to housing and parenting classes, the service center reaches out to community members in need of assistance, tailoring the aid to the individual.

"They believe that each person has unique gifts to share. Therefore, their staff works to recognize and cultivate the giftedness in every person they serve," according to the Catholic Charities Web site.

Catholic Community Services' goal is to help each person obtain self-sufficiency and become participating, healthy community members.

The organization is the single largest distributor of food in the Eugene-Springfield area. Through different distribution sites, they provide 7 tons of food each week in both Eugene and Springfield, which amounts to 1.4 million pounds of food each year. The food goes to low-income families and individuals who would not otherwise have enough food and groceries.

As well as providing food, CCS provides energy assistance to low-income community members who cannot afford to pay their bills.

"A lot of people don't have money for food, rent and energy bills," said Ed Emonks, executive director of CCS. "Most local utilities have programs to

help people pay bills and programs to encourage others to contribute to the fund for those who are unable to pay."

One program that CCS works with is the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, which helps pay the energy bills of many of its low-income clients.

For many clients, however, having bills to pay means they at least have a home. Catholic Community Services has a variety of housing options, such as the Murnane Mutual Home, located near campus. The home is for young mothers who are in substance abuse recovery programs. The home offers up to six months of stable housing while the women learn job skills, continue their education and participate in substance recovery classes.

Other housing programs help low-income families pay rent while they work on reaching the goals of self-sufficiency. As well as offering housing for young mothers, CCS has parenting classes that teach healthy parenting. Many of the classes guide young parents in nutrition and household management, as well as help them find jobs and homes.

"One class is for young fathers," Emonks said. "We teach the rights and responsibilities that come with fatherhood."

For many low-income people, one

obstacle to employment is reliable transportation; CCS helps by providing bus tokens or bus passes. They will also donate \$10 toward a Greyhound bus pass.

Other services provided by CCS are those that many people might take for granted.

"We have a free phone and can provide information," program coordinator Stephanie Talbott said. "We also help with things like getting prescription medications and ID cards that people need."

Catholic Community Services has 30 paid employees and approximately 40 active volunteers.

"We run with comparatively low administrative costs," Emonks said. "We are under 10 percent, which is pretty darn good."

Employees are dedicated to helping low-income families.

Talbott started working for CCS two years ago.

"I was in the corporate world," said Talbott, who was on the CCS board of directors for 17 years and has been the executive director for almost two. "It was all about cutting wages and saving money so the CEO could make an eight-figure salary instead of seven. I didn't want to be a part of that."

HOW TO HELP



To donate to the Oregon Youth Soccer Foundation, the TOPSoccer Program or the Soccer Start Program, visit:

www.oysf.org/donate/



Call 345-3628 for more information about Catholic Community Services or to donate.



To donate to the Black United Fund or the Ron Herndon Scholarship Fund, visit:

www.bufo.org/ways_to_give.htm

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STEPHANIE TALBOTT

Catholic Community Services program coordinator

"One of the questions we ask the scholarship candidates is what makes them unique. Taneesha had a list."

KAREN POWELL | Black United Fund operations manager

Learning beyond their means

The Black United Fund provides financial grants for driven students from low-income communities

BY MORIAH BALINGIT | NEWS REPORTER

It's not uncommon for a trauma surgeon to pull a 30-plus hour shift.

Junior Taneesha Greene, a general science major who dreams of becoming a trauma surgeon someday, is no stranger to long hours. When she was a senior in high school, she worked up to 35 hours a week at Taco Bell while attending classes and volunteering at a local hospital.

"I got used to it," she said. "Staying up all night is easy because I used to do it in high school."

Greene was one of six Ron Herndon Scholarship recipients in 2001, a scholarship funded by the Black United Fund, a philanthropic organization that provides grants to non-profit groups that serve Oregon's low-income communities. In addition to helping several students attend the University, the scholarship



NICOLE BAKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior Taneesha Greene says staying up late is easy for her now because she worked 35 hours per week at Taco Bell while in high school.

fund has helped send two students to Stanford and several more to historically black institutions.

Black United Fund Campaign Manager Adrian Livingstone said scholarship recipients need to have leadership and volunteer experience and "outstanding personalities."

Operations Manager Karen Powell, who interviewed Greene for the scholarship, said Greene impressed her.

"One of the questions we ask the scholarship candidates is what makes them unique," Powell said. "Taneesha had a list."

While Greene said the \$1000 scholarship didn't necessarily make the difference between her attending

college or not, she added that every little bit counts. "It's a thousand dollars that I don't have to worry about paying back," she said.



NICOLE BAKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Former Oregon Youth Soccer Association player Katie Abrahamson, now a junior, says she wrote to college coaches to encourage them to recruit her.

Kicking away soccer's obstacles

The Oregon Youth Soccer Association provides scholarships to cover the high costs of club soccer and helps rural and urban areas start soccer clubs

BY MORIAH BALINGIT | NEWS REPORTER

The coming of fall doesn't only mean the leaves turn colors; for some, it also signifies the beginning of the soccer season — an hour or so a week of disorganized ball chasing, a frustrated parent-coach, orange slices at halftime and, of course, end-of-season pizza parties.

But for some young players, soccer is a considerably more serious — and expensive — endeavor.

"It can cost up to \$5,000 to play on a highly competitive soccer team," said Kelly Ward, Oregon Youth Soccer Association director of Administrative Services.

For some of these players, soccer is a ticket into college. Ward said if a player wants to get the attention of a college recruiter, he or she has to be in the Olympic Development Program, the state's most selective soccer team. Besides making it through the team's highly demanding tryouts, players often have to fork over \$1,000

in membership fees just to play for the team.

"The older you get, the more expensive it gets," University soccer player and former OYSA player Katie Abrahamson said. "You have to market yourself ... and you have to play club soccer if you want to play in college."

Abrahamson, a junior from Portland, said she remembered traveling as far as Phoenix and San Diego to play in tournaments when she played for an OYSA club team. For a typical weekend tournament, she'd have to pay for hotels, airline tickets, food — "everything that goes into a four-day weekend," she said. She also spent the summer before her senior year writing college coaches to encourage them to recruit her.

Not surprisingly, many families find that they can't shoulder the burden. OYSA provides scholarships for those who find the costs too steep.

Ward said soccer can be too expensive even for those who don't have aspirations of playing in college. Some families have difficulty with the \$150 fee required to play recreational soccer in the fall. Fortunately, OYSA provides scholarships for these players as well. In some leagues, up to 80 percent of the players are supported by scholarships of some kind.

Additionally, the OYSA assists people in inner-city and rural communities start soccer clubs of their own through a program called Soccer Start. Without this program, Ward said, children in these areas wouldn't have the opportunity to play soccer.

Another program OYSA sponsors is TOPSoccer, which provides opportunities for children with disabilities to play soccer for free. The program also provides them with specialized equipment, such as larger balls, so that these children can reap the same benefits as other children.

Soccer has many peripheral benefits, even for those who don't have college aspirations, Ward said.

"The way (OYSA) looks at soccer is ... when (players) are challenging themselves, they're developing as an individual their self-esteem and their fitness," she said.

Abrahamson said playing soccer has made her a better student. "It's helped me to organize my life," she said. "I have to prioritize my schoolwork and other activities to stay well-rounded ... It's helped me be disciplined."

Soccer can indirectly help a student get into a university even if he or she will not play college soccer, Oregon United Soccer Academy President Tom Macha said.

"It's the factor that may keep them focused so they can get into college," he said.

Macha added that soccer has simply kept many players out of trouble.

"Without that they would have had a lot of free or unstructured time and that wouldn't do them any good," he said.

In the end, Abrahamson said the most valuable benefit she has gained from soccer is the relationships she has developed.

"The friendships ... have kept me in this game," she said.

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Greene said she is financially independent now, making it even more difficult to pay for her college education.

"I didn't want to depend on my parents," she said. "I figured I could do it all for myself."

Greene is currently taking 12 units of science classes while holding down two jobs: one as a receptionist at the Women's Center and the other as programs coordinator for the University's Black Student Union.

Before she cut back her work schedule at the Women's Center, Greene said her schedule was packed.

"Every time I was free I had to work," she said. "It was hectic."

In fact, after her father had quadruple bypass surgery a few weeks ago, Greene said she was on the brink of dropping out.

"I called my mom and said, 'I'm done,'" she said. "But my dad called me from the hospital and said 'You're not quitting.'"

Greene said she was inspired to become a trauma surgeon after she joined a health program at her high school and saw the television show "ER."

"It's exciting," she said of the occupation. "You never know what you're going to get."

The soft-spoken Greene said her calm demeanor will be an advantage to her when she is a surgeon.

"I think that's the best way to be," she said, chuckling. "You can't have the doctor and the patient hysterical."

Greene's mother, Bobbie Greene, said she's not sure what keeps Taneesha going.

"It's her being strong-headed I guess," Bobbie Greene said. "She made up her mind that that was what she was going to do and she's doing it."

In addition to funding the Ron Herndon Scholarship program, Black United Fund finances a number of other programs in Eugene.

Leadership, Education, Adventure, Direction is one of those programs.

"They reach out to low-income youth and provide them with opportunities to do adventure activities, like white water rafting and horseback riding, that build leadership skills," Livingstone said.

Another local program the group funds is the Juneteenth Celebration. Juneteenth is celebrated on June 19 and commemorates the day the news of the end of the Civil War reached Texas.

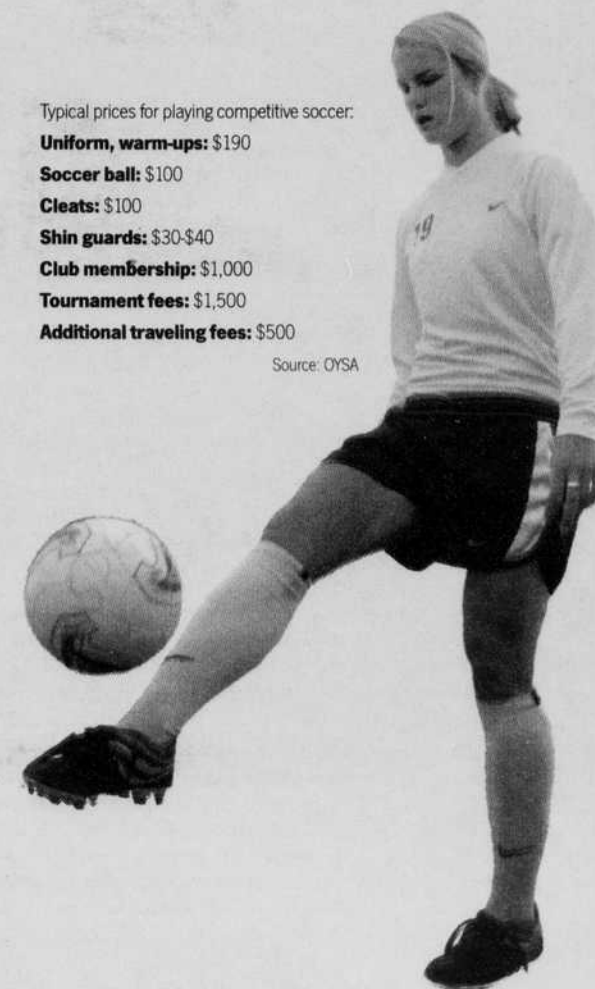
"It's a celebration of freedom," Powell said.

The Juneteenth Celebration Committee provides scholarships for high-school seniors.

The Black United Fund has provided more than 750 grants to nonprofits since 1980, Livingstone said. She further emphasized that in spite of the fund's name, the money isn't just for organizations that serve African-American communities.

"Our focus is the low-income community," she said. "We want to make sure that we are reaching out to those communities and that they don't fall through the cracks."

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEB SITE