

Family Resource Center helps pay

by Heidi Branstator
Feature Editor

The Family Resource Center (FRC) may have a new location and a brand new building, but one thing has stayed the same; those involved are still helping pave "avenues to the future" for anyone in need of a little guidance, said Anne Pardington, instructor and counselor for the center.

In the past, the center was located across the street from Clairmont Hall with classes held in a room Pardington described as a "woodshed." The FRC is now located across the road from the new library. The facilities include child care classrooms, conference rooms, offices, large classrooms and even a small library.

The FRC combines social

support with educational needs to help people make positive changes in their lives. Classes focus on basic skills education, college credit classes, pre-employment training, career counseling, child care and support services.

"It's not just the classes by any means," Pardington said. A graduation is held for those who complete their classes, and when they are through, students "have a strong support system for going on," she said. Some choose to go on to college while others begin new jobs or careers.

There are students ranging in age from 17 to 84 involved in the FRC, with the average age being 40.

The program has been growing for 10 years. "I never thought it would last this long ... we've

had over 2,000 students now," Pardington said. She hears "tremendous feedback" from "people who feel that their lives have been changed." Pardington said graduates often refer people to them, and now they even have some daughters of mothers who once went through the program.

"We want to do more outreach to the community when we can," Pardington said. Workshops geared toward the Hispanic community is one way they will do this.

Financial aid is available based on need and fundraisers will be held to help create scholarships.

Life and Career Options Program

The Life and Career Options Program (formerly the Displaced Homemaker/Single Parent Program) focuses on providing pre-employment training, life skills and life planning for individuals in transition.

"Well over half of our students are coming out of a divorce situation," Pardington said. Others, or their spouses, have retired, been laid off or are hoping to make changes in their lives, but don't know where to begin.

"We make available every option and support possible for them to succeed," she said.

"The people that get the jobs are the ones that present themselves the best," she said.

The classes are a lot of work. Instruction focuses on building self-esteem and confidence, which Pardington says is the biggest factor for a lot of the students. Many of them go into the pro-

gram with a lack of both. The students are taught the whole job-search process including applications, resumes, interviewing and presenting their best self.

The instructors take two or three days to go over and teach each necessary process. "We help them step by step by step," Pardington said.

There are day and night classes and each holds 30 students. There is also a class held at the Harmony Center which is geared toward people from a welfare situation. Though the classes contain mostly women, Pardington said that there is always at least one man in each class. "Guys need it as much as women do," she said.

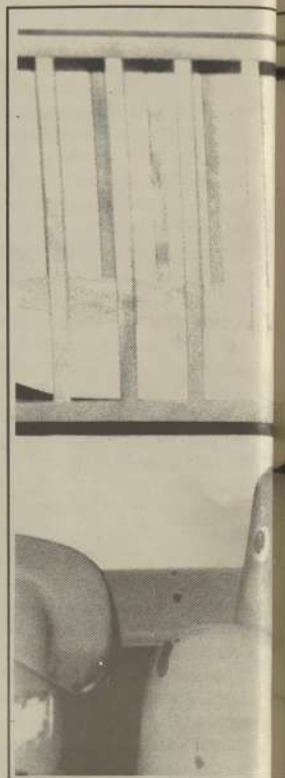
Community Child Care

Half of the FRC is used for Community Child Care. There are a number of classrooms, each for a different age group, where almost 100 children, ages 6 weeks to 6 years, are cared for each day.

A volunteer program allows graduates of the center to work in the day care. With this program, they gain experience and have a reference available when they begin applying for jobs.

When the ground breaking was held, each person attending placed their hand print on a square of fabric with their name and the year. Banners were put together using these squares and they now hang from the ceiling, lining the hallways of the FRC.

Day care hours are 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Pre-registration is required.



One child plays while in day care in Community Child Care.

Young Parent Opportunity Program

The Young Parent Opportunity Program (YPOP) provides an opportunity for young parents to continue their education while improving their parenting and life skills. The program also provides basic skills education and pre-employment training. Transportation and child care are avail-



photo by Heidi Branstator

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'You can do it' attitude, skills testing

by Melissa Freels
Co-Editor-in-Chief

"You can do it!" is a phrase that everyone needs to hear once in a while. It was this encouraging phrase from the Life and Career Options Program (LCOP) at Clackamas that led Patricia Welk and Belinda Cole on a road to success.

LCOP is a program for displaced homemakers and single parents who would like to re-enter the job market. It is offered at the college's Family Resource Center. Over the past ten years, LCOP has helped 2,000 students formulate career and educational goals.

Patricia Welk

Welk, 42, graduated from LCOP in fall of 1990 -- when the program classes were still being taught in a barn near the college's entrance on Beaver-creek Road.

"I had just gone back into the work force and realized that it was not the way that I wanted to spend the rest of my working years," said Welk, who is married and has four teenage sons. "I just couldn't stay out there in a minimum-wage job doing production work for the rest of my

life."

So she decided to come to Clackamas.

Welk admits that she was "terrified" about coming back to school. "I thought I was too old. I didn't think I'd be able to compete intellectually. I didn't know if I would be able to fulfill all the obligations of a student and a mother -- and I was still working. It was a difficult decision," she explained.

Now, Welk believes that her decision was a good one.

Through LCOP's skill and personality testing, Welk was able to find a career and educational focus -- one that she would be good at and would also enjoy. When Welk graduated from LCOP, she was awarded a \$200 scholarship, which she calls her first "kudo."

Welk is currently working on an Oregon Transfer Degree in Psychology. She will graduate this spring and hopes to move on to Lewis and Clark College or Marylhurst College. She is also a peer helper and a student assistant in the Counseling Center at CCC.

Welk was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, which is the Na-

tional Honor Society at Clackamas, Jan. 26. In addition, Welk spends some of her spare time as a volunteer at the Family Resource Center.

"I don't think that I would've continued, at least in the direction I'm headed, if it hadn't been for the support of the Life and Career Options Program," she commented.

Welk emphasizes the support provided by LCOP, which she feels is as important as the skills taught by LCOP. She especially values the self-esteem that LCOP helped her build.

"When I finally made a choice, even though it seemed like it was out of reach, it was just something that I really wanted and liked to do. All I heard from them (Lynne Maloney and Anne Pardington, the LCOP instructors) was 'You can do it.' They're so supportive and so positive.

"It's a little hard to fail when you have those kind of hopes set up in front of you," she said.

Currently, Welk is setting up a mentor program that will focus on LCOP. She hopes to match LCOP graduates with LCOP students who are planning to continue their education at Clack-

amas.

"It's a need that I would've liked to have met when I graduated (from LCOP)," she said about the mentor program. For some women, Welk explained, the mentor program would be helpful because "there are so many insecurities about coming back to school."

Setting up the mentor program is Welk's peer helper individual project for the term. She hopes to have it in progress by the end of Winter Term.

Belinda Cole

Cole, 47, graduated from LCOP last term. She is married and has two daughters. Her youngest daughter, who will be 20 years old soon, is taking LCOP this term.

"All my life I have been employed at the minimum wage. Despite whatever experience I may have had in the job, I always got the lowest position," Cole explained. She was often promised wage increases and promotions by her employers, but nothing ever came from those promises. Cole found herself "just drift-

ing." "I decided it was time to stop taking whatever job was available and go someplace where I could have the skills testing and find out what I was really good for," she said.

Cole knew that LCOP at Clackamas had a good skills-testing program, so that is where she started.

When Cole made that deci-



Patricia Welk and Belinda Cole.

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