

# COMMUNITY

## From living in a homeless shelter to sheltering the homeless, Bobby Casey comes full circle

By **Tamara Kaufman**  
For Washington Gorge Action Programs

BINGEN — When someone in need reaches out to the Guided Path for housing services, they may be greeted by Bobby Casey. As a program coordinator and housing specialist, Casey is part of the team that helps to manage and maintain the homeless shelter and the seven permanent supportive housing units in Bingen.

What they might not know about Casey is that he has a special history with the Guided Path. He takes exceptional care of its guests, as he knows what it is like to be in their shoes.

When Casey was a young teenager, his family suffered a bad domestic situation and he, his mom, and his sisters had to leave. Their living conditions were not good and they were pushed into poverty. They had no running water and no electricity. Then his mom learned about the Guided Path, which turned their lives around.

They were housed at the temporary homeless shelter, but it was apparent that this was a new long-term reality.

"When I first got there, I was scared," Casey said. But he was really excited about electricity and showers again, and he was happy that they were safe. At the

time, Diane Murphy ran the program and she was a huge influence on Casey, showing him a lot about compassion and community. He soon became comfortable, to the point that he was like a mascot for other new kids who came to the shelter. He tried to get them involved in activities, like basketball and the annual Easter egg hunt, so they felt included in the community. He realized, "It's not the end of the world to be at a shelter. You're still a person and you deserve to be happy."

Casey's family transitioned from the shelter into the permanent supportive housing units and stayed for almost three years. During that time, his mom was able to network and eventually found a good job, and they were able to be independent again. He added, "We made a bunch of friends and we never looked back."

Fast forward, he graduated from high school and now is a proud father of a 6-year-old son. A couple of years ago, Casey was looking for work and was encouraged to apply to the Youth Center in White Salmon by his friend Autumn Williams, who thought he was great with kids. The center is run by Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP), the same organization that runs the Guided Path where he had spent his teenage years

with his family.

"Then, I saw the bigger picture," Casey said. "I didn't even realize they (WAGAP) ran the shelter." When he made that connection, he looked for an opportunity to transition to working for the Guided Path. "That place changed my life and I wanted to work there," he said.

Now that Casey is working as a housing specialist, he helps other families process into the shelter and spends time over paperwork talking with them and shares his personal experiences. Casey said, "To see the people loosen and relax and look at me and say, 'Really, you stayed here?' and be able to say, 'Yes, I've been in your exact shoes and from this place I was able to move to a much better place for myself and my family.' To relieve that fear is my favorite part of the job."

This work is not always easy, but Casey has found support in his mentor Kevin Summa, who runs the program. "He has been a wonderful addition," Summa said. "I really appreciate him being here. He has some wonderful ideas and relates really well with the people here and they relate with him. He has a tremendous amount of compassion."

Now, Casey focuses on making other people's lives better. He shared a story of a gentleman, previously from



**Bobby Casey, pictured with son Oliver, spent almost three years in a homeless shelter with his family as a teenager. Casey is now program coordinator and housing specialist at the same shelter in Bingen. Tamara Kaufman photo**

the complex, who needed a ride to the bank because he had no transportation and was struggling with his situation. Casey helped him out, listened to his frustrations, and had a heart to heart with him. He encouraged him to not give up and shared that there was support available and he could get through it. Casey bumped into him again recently and asked how things were going. Now the gentleman has a job, a house and is supporting his family. Casey smiled and said, "He told me that I really helped him through a rough moment in his life, and that was exactly why I got the job."

Casey encourages people to remove the stigma of

accepting help to bridge the gap between poverty and self-sustainability. Of the Guided Path, he said, "It's a magical place, if people come with the right mindset. The community of people who live here are really great people, hardworking, kind and they really look out for each other." He plans to keep giving and to teach his son how important it is to share and have compassion for other people. He said, "I've been so blessed and want to give back as much as I can."

If you, or someone you know, are experiencing homelessness, contact WAGAP at 509-493-2662 or email info@wagap.org to be referred to one of their programs in Klickitat County,

or a partner agency in Skamania County. To reach the Guided Path directly call 509-493-4324.

Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP) is a 501c3 non-profit community action agency that helps individuals, families, and communities. WAGAP addresses basic human needs, including food, shelter, energy assistance, and more, in Skamania and Klickitat counties. For more than 50 years, WAGAP has helped people help themselves and reach self-sufficiency.

Learn more at wagap.org, or contact WAGAP at 509-493-2662 or info@wagap.org.

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**Kid Scoop PUZZLER**

**SECRET SUGAR CODE**

Did you know that there are more than 50 names for sugar that can be found on food labels? Use the Secret Sugar Code at right to reveal some of the most common.

24 = A	16 = I	8 = R
23 = B	15 = J	7 = S
22 = C	14 = K	6 = T
21 = D	13 = L	5 = U
20 = E	12 = M	4 = V
19 = F	11 = N	3 = X
18 = G	10 = O	2 = Y
17 = H	9 = P	1 = Z

7 5 22 8 10 7 20 21 20 3 6 8 10 7 20

17 16 18 17 19 8 5 22 6 10 7 20

22 10 8 11 7 2 8 5 9

12 24 13 6 10 7 20 18 24 13 24 22 6 10 7 20

22 24 11 20 15 5 16 22 20 21 20 3 6 8 16 11

**Kid Scoop FIT & FUN**

**Exercise Story**

Have a parent or friend read this story aloud. Each time one of the fruits below is mentioned, do that motion for 30 seconds. Then, trade places as you read the story aloud.

- = hopping in place
- = stand on one foot
- = jumping jacks
- = run in place
- = sit ups
- = somersault
- = touch your toes

Mr. Citrus' food truck was very popular. The truck was designed to look like a giant orange and each day he'd drive to business parks at lunch time. People would buy fresh watermelon slices, bunches of grapes, apples and more.

One day, Mr. Citrus parked on a steep hill. When he opened the truck's customer window, fruit began rolling off the counter and down the hill.

Strawberry after strawberry rolled alongside oranges and apples. Luckily, Mr. Citrus was able to catch a large box of grapes before it also tumbled away.

The rolling fruit picked up incredible speed. At the bottom of the hill sat Officer Stan, enjoying a slice of watermelon at the park.

Suddenly, poor Stan was pelted with strawberries, lemons, apples and oranges, knocking him off the park bench.

As he wiped smashed apple bits off his uniform, he called his sergeant on his radio.

"You're not going to believe this, Sgt. Pear, but I was just attacked by an escaped fruit salad!"

Standards Link: Physical Education: Use a variety of basic and advanced movement forms.

**Double Double Word Search**

DETECTIVE DOUGHNUTS SWEETENED MAXIMUM AVERAGE TOMATO LABELS SUGAR HEART GERMS BLOOD SYRUP CELLS SOUP SICK

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

D	D	C	S	M	R	E	G	D	D
E	S	E	R	B	L	O	O	D	M
N	Y	L	T	A	H	U	K	E	A
E	R	L	E	E	G	T	C	G	X
T	U	S	A	H	C	U	I	A	I
E	P	R	N	P	E	T	S	R	M
E	T	U	C	T	U	I	E	U	
W	T	O	M	A	T	O	V	M	
S	L	E	B	A	L	E	S	A	E

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

**FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY**

**Sweet Story**

Find a newspaper article about something happy or positive. On a piece of paper, write down the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* in the news story.

Standards Link: Language Arts: Understanding meanings from context clues.

**Write On!**

**Healthy Snacks**

Write an advertisement for a healthy snack. Why should kids choose this instead of chips, candy and other unhealthy snacks?

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow written directions.

**You are sweet enough!**

The average American eats about 17 teaspoons of added sugar every day. This adds up to over 57 pounds of sugar a year!

Eating too much sugar makes it harder for your white blood cells to kill germs. That means that eating too much added sugar can lead to getting sick more often.

Drink unsweetened tap, bottled, or sparkling water, unsweetened low-fat milk or tea, or 100% fruit juice in limited amounts\*.

\* Depending on age, children can drink 1/2 to 1 cup, and adults up to 1 cup of 100% fruit juice.

A lot of the added sugar people consume can be found in sweetened drinks.

Eating more sugar leads to weight gain and obesity. This can cause serious health problems such as heart disease and diabetes.

Source: angelinstitute.edu

**SUGAR SMART**

PARENTS: New government guidelines say that no more than 10% of our daily calories should come from added sugar. For kids that is less than about 6 teaspoons per day.

The American Heart Association recommends a maximum of 6 teaspoons (25 grams) of added sugar per day for kids.

Use Nutrition Facts labels to track the amount of sugar your kids are consuming. Note: food labels do not distinguish between natural and added sugar.

**Do the math to find out the amount of calories each drink contains and how many minutes of walking it would take to burn off the calories in each drink.**

Drink	Volume	Sugar Packets	Calories	Minutes of Walking
Chocolate Milk	8 oz (237 ml)	9	160	34
Juice Drink	20 oz (591 ml)	23	150	33
Soda	20 oz (591 ml)	22	160	20
Sports Drink	20 oz (591 ml)	12	70	15
Energy Drink	16 oz (473 ml)	17	140	15

**Be a sugar detective!**

Did you know that some brands of canned tomato soup have 20 grams of sugar? That's as much as two doughnuts!

Always read the Nutrition Facts labels before taking a bite or sip.

Look at these examples. Which food has the most sugar per serving?

Item	Total Fat	Cholesterol	Sodium	Sugar
Peanut Butter	16g (24%)	0mg (0%)	135mg (6%)	3g
Soup	0.5g (1%)	0mg (0%)	480mg (20%)	12g
Macaroni & Cheese	1g (25%*)	0mg (1%*)	720mg (37%*)	6g
Chocolate Mousse Yogurt	4g (6%)	15mg (5%)	105mg (4%)	22g
Frozen Waffles	6g (8%)	5mg (2%)	360mg (16%)	2g
Crackers	9g (14%)	0mg (0%)	250mg (10%)	2g