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to folks and really help them navigate that maze of services. It's a much more comprehensive services than people realize.

J.Z.: Can you foretell what to expect in the coming year or so based on what you've already experienced so far?

L.W.: About six months ago we really looked at the data and realized that the foreclosure calls weren't going to go down, but rather they were potentially going to go up. As unemployment benefits run out, as people had tapped through their friend and family network, then people are calling and seeking help. And I think that the significance in the increase in food referrals for us, is that a lot of those people are experiencing foreclosure. They're calling asking for mortgage assistance; we can give referral for a HUD-certified counseling agency, and then we can say have you considered applying for food stamps, now the SNAP program, because they might be eligible. But people will say they don't want to do that, but that could help them free up some resources to help them pay their mortgage.

J.Z.: I can see where people dealing with a foreclosure, being told they might be able to go on food stamps or emergency food box programs, that must come as a bit of shock for them. How do your call takers deal with people who are, in a way, grieving?

L.W.: That's a great term for it. There are people, particularly around food boxes, who have said "I organized the food drive at my kids school last year. I don't want to go get a food box." Part of it is that moment of listening and letting people work through it, just to be able to talk about it.

We're not a crisis line, but it is that reflective listening. It's that softening of knowing that it's a hard time and having resources available for them. And in some ways it's taking the label off, because anyone could be in that situation. The call takers, they're on that front line. This is a moment in time and they need those extra resources, but it's also a good lesson to say it's not "those" people. It's a community issue.

I think around foreclosures, with our partners that are doing the HUD certified counseling, that's the message we're trying to get out: Don't wait until it's the 11th hour. Try to be proactive and get the help now, because you don't know what's potentially available for you because you just hadn't considered it.

J.Z.: Tell us about the expansion project with the Meyer Memorial Trust funding. What is that \$85,000 grant going to be used for?

L.W.: 211 is trying to expand services across Oregon. That grant is to help us buy a more sophisticated software system, so we can track information with local partners around the state in a more comprehensive way, and to really upgrade our web site, so it can also be that hub of information for

people. And we want to expand our statewide partnerships. Our goal is to have what we're calling data hubs around the state, so we'll have 10 data partners throughout the state who can manage all those social service information details in their local community, feed that information to us and then we'll answer those calls here at our call center. So it's a huge technical investment that will build up the infrastructure to make a statewide system really a possibility.

J.Z.: I would think that in taking on rural Oregon, you're going to open the flood gates in terms of expressed need. Is that what you think might happen in 2013?

L.W.: I think for the rural communities, and I've been traveling in the past two weeks, Newport and Benton Linn, Jackson County, Lane County, each of those areas are a little unique, but what they share in

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common is there is no one spot for information. Lane County has a web site, but those other areas either have outdated lists — Jackson County had a booklet from the 1990s, as thick as a doorstop and hasn't been updated. There are a couple of lists floating around in some of these counties. I think the leaders are hungry to know what they actually have and are those resources being tapped out. In a lot of those areas, it's building something that we all think of as pretty basic — that's a big step up. Transportation is a big challenge to get to resources.

Anecdotally we know there is need and desperation, but it's very difficult to quantify it in most areas of the state.

J.Z.: What is the work you're doing with Coalition for a Livable Future?

L.W.: They had developed a project called Equity Maps, where they looked at, in the metro region, how close were people in different neighborhoods to public transit to grocery stores to open space, things like that. And they approached us to say could we take the mapping we did with those issues and lay your social services on them. It would give metro area leaders a snapshot of where social services are across the metro area, where there clusters and where is the greater need. It could potentially layer on that economic trends as well: What are the demographics of those trends as well? Are there social services in the area where low-income people live, or do they have to take three buses to get to a food box agency, and then haul the food box back with their kids on three buses? It's pretty exciting for

us to think about livability and how we can help inform the conversation around livability.

In this region we often think of livability around transit and open space. We don't often have the conversation about livability as it impacts social services. That tends to be a separate conversation.

J.Z.: Clearly, you think it's very important to be thinking of livability in terms of social services and such. Why is that so important to the larger community?

L.W.: I think it ties into the foreclosure conversation because we're much more than basic needs in terms of what we can do. We have resources we can direct to really anybody, and particularly around the foreclosure conversation, it could be anybody tomorrow. If any of us has learned anything over the past two years, it's how vulnerable we all are and how confusing and

complicated it can be to find social services. Social services are a part of our community, and if we incorporate them more into that livability conversation we really would be a community, as opposed to people who need access to social services over there, and that's an entirely separate system. So I do think it has to be an essential part of planning. It gets to the notion that we're in this region together, and we forget that. We think about it all the time with transportation, so why not think about it in terms of transportation and affordable housing, and transportation and food? Those things are connected, and we sometimes keep them in silos, and we need to not do that.

J.Z.: Can you speak a bit about the partnership with Street Roots?

L.W.: The Rose City Resource guide is an excellent companion to what 211 Info does. Our partnership with Street Roots goes back several years, where we get a copy of the Rose City Resource guide and we check that against our data base and we make any updates that Street Roots has identified and vice versa, and I think what's powerful about the RCR guide, is its size, that's its updated a couple times a year, and that people really use it — people who don't have any other means, don't have access to the Internet or a phone, and here they can find out information about basic services. So we see it as a perfect complement to the slate of services we provide, and we each get to leverage each other's relationships with social-service providers.

Hoyt Arboretum Jack Collins

by Jay Thiemeyer

fella sitting with us said:
I was walking in that park
and saw him
It was not ten minutes
before it went down
We saw the cop
he stopped us and asked us
if we'd seen
a drunk with a knife

cop wasn't standing near us
so he couldn't see my eyes
or smell my breath

the cop had something to focus on
he didn't care about us
he had the call
and he was responding
(the good cop
on duty, cop with a gun
recon in the arboretum
serving the badge, "union"
brotherhood)
serving the call
to duty

get the bad guy
before he gets you

what could have been happening
inside that cop's skull?

we said we hadn't seen Jack
though we had
we all knew who he was
we didn't want to get caught up
in his mess

We heard the shouts
we heard four shots
we read about Jack next day
it's always next day
and way too late

this fella was still loaded
sitting with us, we had been talking
about "not yet's"
when he intruded with his news

he was sitting next to me
and his smell was a shot
in the nostrils
I mean to tell you

I wanted to move
and would soon

he said almost proudly:
loaded on Percocets
and Lysol, he told us
"Glad it was him,
not me"

"Not yet," I said
amazed at what must be
going on inside his skull

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where
you're at.

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