

Pay It Back, Pay It Forward

Our Giving Guide for hard times

By Paula Hoemann and Suzi Steffen

Times are tough. Layoffs, month-long furloughs, whole industries taking a dive. It's also the time of year when people give to nonprofit organizations in order to help save on taxes — don't forget to give before Dec. 31! — but giving is down across the country, with FOOD for Lane County among those in dire need.

We cut our Giving Guide to focus on things that matter the most: food, shelter, safety, medical care. But we do want to mention that through Oregon Cultural Trust (www.culturaltrust.org), you can give to arts organizations like theaters, museums or youth writing and arts programs and reduce your state taxes in a rather major way. Generosity, rewarded in Oregon! We hope that you'll consider treating your community and yourself to year-end cheer in the midst of this bleak time.



FOOD FOR LANE COUNTY

A hungry belly gets in the way of everything — thinking, working, peace. FOOD for Lane County is a private nonprofit food bank dedicated to eliminating hunger. It runs a variety of programs including emergency food boxes, shelters, meal sites, gardens, gleaning and nutrition education. FFLC advocates for strengthening the local food economy and improving access to food. The nonprofit serves a diverse population of people living on limited incomes, including children, families, seniors and single adults, and this fall and winter have seen a combination of a dramatic increase in need and a decrease in donations. Giving to FFLC helps your neighbors and friends in need, and even a small monetary donation goes a long way at FFLC. Extra double-your-money bonus: Between now and Jan. 31, 2009, the Eugene City Council will match any gift up to a total of \$25,000. Visit www.foodforlanecounty.org or call 343-2822.

WHITE BIRD

For sheer volume of opportunities provided, it's hard to beat White Bird. The institution provides support and services to low-income individuals and families and responds to more than 60,000 service requests annually. These services

come in a variety of forms: mobile crisis intervention, outpatient drug treatment, low-cost dental and medical services, counseling services and a 24-hour crisis intervention center. White Bird offers classes and training in crisis intervention, counseling and drug treatment. White Bird staffers are also familiar with local service options and will refer folks they can't help directly. This cold winter, they are particularly eager for cold weather wear, toiletry items, backpacks, boots and blankets for the homeless. To donate, to volunteer or for more information, visit www.whitebirdclinic.org or call 342-8255.



LOOKING GLASS

Each year Looking Glass serves more than 7,000 of Lane County's at-risk youth and families, offering a wide variety of support and resources including a counseling program, an outpatient substance abuse program for youth 20 and under, a 24-hour crisis intervention and emergency shelter for youth 11-17, transitional and independent services for homeless youth 16-21, an alternative school and vocational training for out of school youth, academic and therapeutic services for youth with mental health issues, a short term shelter for girls, and alcohol and drug treatment programs for male juvenile offenders. Looking Glass also works to address the issues that create adversity for youth and families. Call 686-2688 or visit www.lookingglass.us for more information/donation/volunteer opportunities.

WOMENSPACE

Working to end domestic violence by empowering women and children and changing community standards, Womenspace offers peer counseling, support groups and training as well as shelter in a safe place for any woman who is dealing with issues of domestic and/or sexual violence. By giving presentations in local elementary, middle and high schools, staff members work to prevent sexual and domestic violence through education. Womenspace gladly accepts monetary donations and could also use the following items: diapers/wipes, dish and laundry soap, toiletries such as shampoo, toothpaste, razors, lotion, feminine hygiene products, toilet paper and Kleenex, pajamas (adult and youth), kitchen and bath towels, hand towels and washcloths, pots and pans with lids, dishes and silverware, mattress pads, bedding of all sizes, school supplies, nonperishable foods and dedicated volunteers. Call 485-8232 or visit www.enddomesticviolence.org to donate or learn more.



WILLAMETTE ANIMAL GUILD and GREENHILL HUMANE SOCIETY

Lane County folks really would love to have no-kill animal shelters, and one way to help that happen is to fund spay/neuter services for the animals already alive. WAG estimates it has prevented the births of about 16,500 unwanted animals this year. You can help WAG provide low-cost spay/neuter services by donating at www.wagwag.org and find more info at 345-3566. Meanwhile, animals waiting for their "forever home" often hang out at Greenhill, where volunteers help walk, feed and take care of many furry creatures. Greenhill isn't no-kill, but it offers education and adoption services, fosters animals out (more volunteers) and helps seniors and people in domestic violence situations with safe pet care. Notable items on the Wish List (aside from money, of course!) include bedding for dogs, cats and small animals like rabbits; toys; scrubs; and clean towels and blankets for the animals to snuggle. To donate or volunteer, head to www.green-hill.org or call 689-1503.

SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT SERVICES

SASS provides community education and outreach, advocacy and support for

survivors of sexual assault, abuse or harassment. SASS offers bilingual support groups for all ages for both male and female survivors of abuse and operates a 24-hour crisis and support line and a drop-in center open 9 am to 4 pm weekdays. SASS's 24 hour advocacy supports abuse survivors with healing, medical and legal information, with transportation and accompaniment to medical care, an emergency shelter or the police. It offers a 40-hour volunteer training program three times per year; the next one starts Jan. 16. Call 484-9791 or visit www.sass-lane.org to donate, to volunteer or for more information.

AMIGOS

Formerly known as Amigos de los Sobrevivientes, Amigos was originally created to assist Latin American families who came to the U.S. after having experienced political violence and torture. Through education and advocacy, Amigos works to protect the human rights of immigrants — insuring their protection, security, just treatment and inclusion in U.S. society. Amigos' youth program, Juventud FACETA, serves Latino youth ages 14-24, encouraging personal growth, civic engagement and development as community leaders through advocacy and training on immigrant rights as human rights. Amigos also runs a Human Rights Education Program, offering speakers and panel participants on human rights topics. Call 746-6022 or visit www.amigosmsc.org for more information.

COMMITTED PARTNERS FOR YOUTH

By matching caring volunteer adults with at-risk youth for mentoring, Committed Partners for Youth connects kids with their community, focusing on positive reinforcement, trust building and achievement of goals through one-on-one outings and group adventures in the community. Most of the youth on CPY's waiting list are boys, and the staff would love to match them with caring adult men, so if you're a guy, step up! Both women and men can mentor or offer support in other ways, and donations are welcome. Visit www.committedpartners.org or call 344-0833.

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