



Family Living

Parent Mentor Program receives national recognition and financial support

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A Portland-area program that helps mothers struggling against domestic violence and addictions has received national recognition as well as support from several foundations. In March, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Parent Mentor Program was awarded the Daily Points of Light Award from the Points of Light Foundation for its "positive and lasting contribution to the lives of others." The program has also received significant funding from the Fred Meyer Foundation, the Women's Care Foundation, Portland Women's Union, and the Hoover Family Foundation.

"What a perfect time for us to receive this award and funding!" said Sylvia Hart-Landsburg, who directs the program. "We are just beginning to expand our program and share its model with other agencies planning to create their own parent mentor programs. For over three years, our mentors have given a significant boost to mothers whose personal relationships with mentors anchor their efforts to raise their families as they face limited affordable housing and a shortage of opportunities for education, living wage employment, and health care services."

In 1996, in response to The Collins Foundation's request that EMO develop a program providing opportunities for volunteer work on behalf of families with serious

challenges, EMO founded the Parent Mentor Program, which has continued to receive significant support from the Foundation. Volunteers are women who have experience parenting or working professionally with children. After the program trains the volunteers to be mentors, it carefully matches them with mothers in agencies that collaborate with the program.

A mentor offers a mother companionship and practical activities that give her new opportunities to learn about caring for her children and herself, assist her in finding and keeping a job, and help her settle into a new home outside the protective structure of a residential treatment center.

"One of the most valuable gifts can offer is compassion," said Hart-Landsburg. "For many mothers dealing with addiction and family violence, compassion is a new experience. How are these moms going to nurture their children if they have never experienced this kind of attention themselves?"

Since its inception, the Parent Mentor Program has provided mentors for over 100 mothers who care for about 225 children. Because of its success with the clients of Portland's Letty Owings Center for drug and alcohol treatment for pregnant and/or parenting women, the program has begun to offer mentors to women completing the program for adolescent mothers at Salvation

Army's White Shield Center and Raphael House's Transitional Housing Program. EMO's Parent Mentor Program is also reaching out to help build similar programs in other parts of Oregon. A domestic violence shelter in Burns has consulted with the Parent Mentor Program, and the Volunteers of America Child Development Center is working with EMO staff to develop parent mentoring for its clients.

"The Fred Meyer Foundation was particularly impressed by the successful track record of EMO's Parent Mentor Program," said Robin Christian, executive director of the foundation. Christian added that she hoped the grant would help the program "continue the important work it is doing to enrich the health of the community."

The Fred Meyer Foundation helps nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping children, strengthening families, and building better communities in the markets served by Fred Meyer stores, Smith's Food & Drug Stores, and Quality Food Centers.

For more information, visit their Web site at www.fredmeyer.com. EMO is an association of 15 Christian denominations including Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox religious bodies that come together to meet the needs of Oregonians. For more information about EMO's Parent Mentor Program, contact Sylvia Hart-Landsburg at 503/231-3571 or visit www.emoregon.org.

Scholarship fundraising event attempts to fulfill young ladies dream

Hi, my name is Caron, and I'm a single parent and foster mom. I'm writing regarding my child Kiara Berry. Kiara, my third child of four, is a bright, intelligent, active seven-year-old. She's a very sweet girl. She will help me out doing whatever I'm doing around the house to show her appreciation. She goes to a very good private school, good student, Kiara is a good leader in her classroom.

Kiara has been going to Taekwondo ever since she turned five. She started out a White belt, now she is a Blue stripe. She has come a long way. She has achieved and accomplished part of her dream. Kiara has been in three tournaments:



1. U.S. National Open Championship 1st Gold - Sparring, 3rd Bronze Forum medals
2. 5th Anniversary Hollywood 2000 Championship 1st Gold - Sparring 2nd Silver - Forum 3rd Bronze - Board Breaking
3. National Qualifying Championship Oregon State Taekwondo 1st Gold - Sparring medal

Now she's a strong qualifying for the Junior Olympic in San Antonio, Texas. That's going to be on July 10th - 15th, 2000.

Kiara is a strong excellence performer. Her goal is to become a Black belt. She has strived and kept focus on her Taekwondo along with her school activity. She also loves to swim.

But now she needs help in raising funds to get to Texas, for her and her mom to attend the Olympic Championships. I have set up a fund raising donating scholarship for her at U.S. Bank. Kiara really has her heart for this trip.

And plus it will be a good opportunity for her at a young age to perform in the Junior Olympic 2000.

For more information contact Caron - (503) 539-5066 Master Dan - (503) 284-7843



HOME FOCUS



Deborah Foster
Equity Group Realtors

BY DEBORAH FOSTER
EQUITY GROUP REALTORS
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Why Do You Need a Real Estate Agent?

I'm ready to buy a home. Should I get myself a Realtor or should I drive around and visit open houses? Should I call the Realtor on the "for sale" sign? Will the listing agent represent me as the buyer? When do I look for a lender? What kind of house do I want? Where do I want to live? What makes a good Realtor? These are but a few questions you may ask yourself when thinking of buying a home. Do you really need a Realtor?

Some agents specialize in listing properties for sale. Others specialize in finding homes for buyers. Many agents prefer to do both. If you are attempting to find a home on your own, beware of the following.

- Less than 2% of available homes are advertised in newspapers on any given day!
- Driving all over town without viewing appointments can be frustrating!
- Not knowing the price, size & other important details beforehand means a lot of dead ends.
- Do you know that the Realtor holding the open house works exclusively for the seller?
- Who will negotiate the best deal for you?

What you need is a buyer's agent, who will represent and protect you and your interests with honesty and integrity. Your agent should:

- Consult with and advise you every step of the way, making the entire process run smoothly.
- Sift through the multiple listings to locate homes that best meet your needs and finances.
- Show and possibly sell you any home listed for sale in Oregon, no matter who's name is on the sign.

Your Realtor's primary goal should be finding the perfect home for you, in the

shortest possible time, and with the least convenience to you. It is important that you feel at ease to ask any question and be confident that your Realtor can represent and negotiate on your behalf.

The best way to find a good agent is through the referral process. People usually recommend a successful Realtor who have provided them with good, memorable service. Ask questions about how the sales process went. If their transaction went smoothly, there is a good chance yours will too.

Ask lots of questions. Meet with the agent and find out how he or she works.

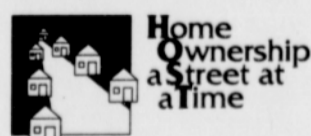
You want a Realtor you can work well with and respect. Buying a home is a big deal and probably one of the biggest purchases you will make!! It should be fun and as stress-free as possible.

So, question everything. There is no such thing as a stupid question when buying a home. For more information, contact Deborah Foster by calling 503/706-0037 or email her at deborah@equitygroup.com

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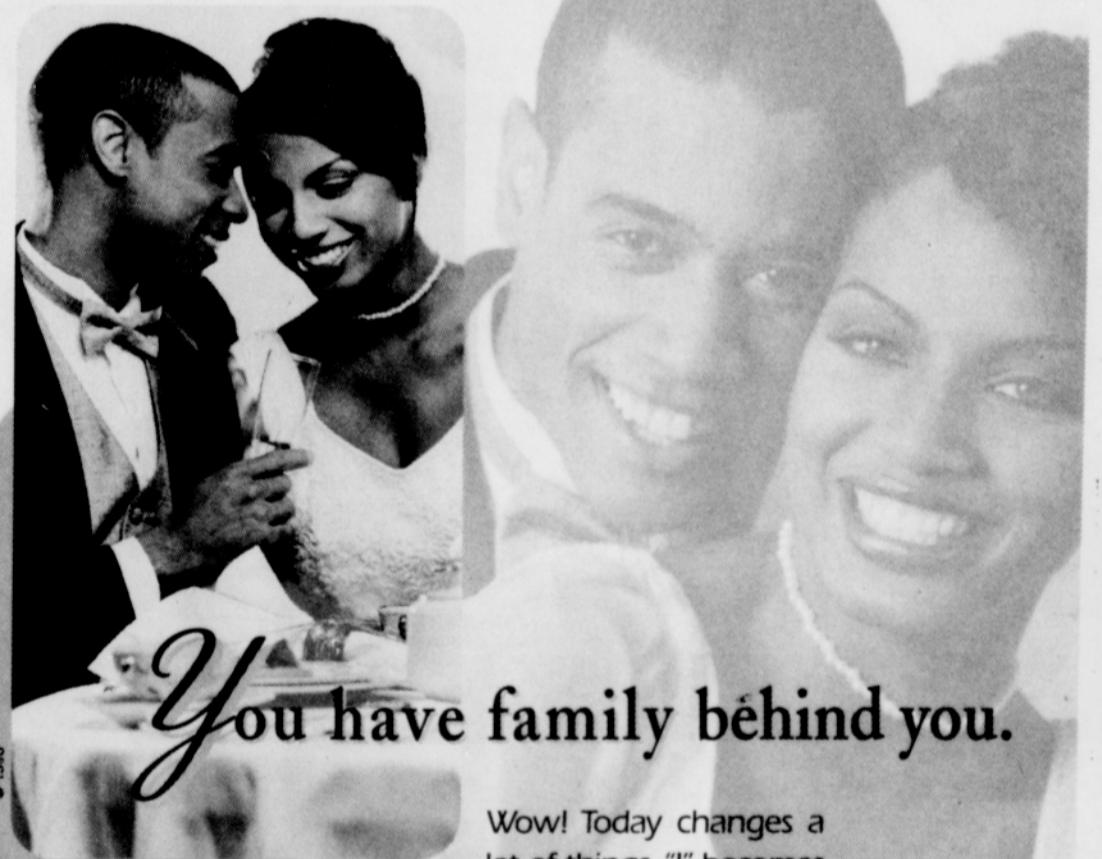
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