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Andrew Donald (from left) and friend Mary Sullivan bring gifts to Chris Powell at his family's Columbia Villa apartment as part of Volunteers of America's 'Adopt a Family' program. PHOTO BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volunteers of America adopt families in need

Giving Back

BY DAVID PLECHL

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Despite what has been reported as a season of lackluster support for local charities, the holidays offer many a chance to give back.

For long-time friends Mary Sullivan and Andrew Donald that meant reaching out to a family in need.

"The holidays really are about the children," said Donald, a mortgage loan officer.

He and Sullivan, who works with at risk youth, contacted the non-profit charity Volunteers of America to see what they could do.

They were quickly introduced to Dana Mahoney, the agency's volunteer coordinator. Mahoney matches up families in need with charitable hearts for the 'Adopt a Family' campaign.

"Instead of exchanging gifts, sometimes a group of friends all go in together and adopt a family," explained Mahoney. "There were 250 adoptions last year alone."

In this case, Mahoney helped Donald and Sullivan find a young family in need of a little extra help this holiday season.

Judith Smith and fiancé Chris Powell have lived in Columbia Villa for a year with son Zachary 9, and 2-year-old daughter Destinyrose.

Smith's ability to work is limited. Powell is employed part-time as a custodian. This is the first year they have participated.

"This will help us out a lot," said Smith. "I can't afford to buy gifts for my kids."

Through the application process recipients have a chance to ask for everything from toiletries to toys. The 'adoptees' review the needs of the family and shop accordingly.

Top it off, Donald and Sullivan delivered the gifts themselves to Smith and Powell's apartment.

Zachary spun in circles as Donald and Sullivan brought present after present into the living room and under the tree.

Destinyrose stared in amazement. The young family really was going to have a great Christmas.

"Well, there you go," said Donald after setting the last big box beneath the tree.

"Thank you so much," replied Smith, smiling widely.

"Merry Christmas," said Sullivan.

"Merry Christmas," said the kids.

Donald and Sullivan then slipped into the night like Santa and his sleigh. There was still more work to do. They were heading downtown to fill hungry bellies at the soup kitchen.

To contact Volunteers of America Oregon call 503-235-8655

Holidays Intensify Guilt of Addiction

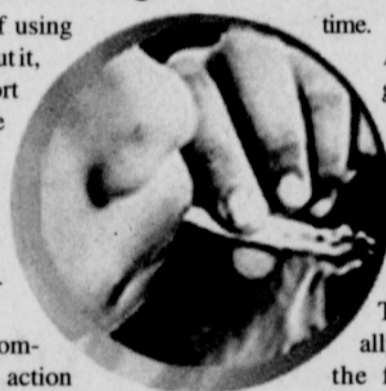
Substance abuse often peaks after family time

Guilt is a major component in the life cycle of addiction.

As addicts become dependent on the chemical, they begin experiencing situations where they are doing and saying things they know deep down aren't right. They begin to lose their ability to control themselves. They become trapped in a

vicious circle of using drugs, lying about it, stealing to support more drug use and at each turn the addict is accumulating memories of each these negative incidents.

The addict commits a negative action and he records a memory of that moment, which includes whom ever he was involved with at the



time. Addicts also begin to withdraw more and more from friends and family as the transgressions committed increase in number. They will eventually pull away from the family, seclude themselves and/or become antagonistic towards those they love.

This is a scene that is far too often played out during the holiday season, which is when families usually reunite. The display of negative emotions and the guilt from the past transgressions typically drives addicts to use drugs heavily directly after time spent with family, attempting to chase away the guilt.

According to Luke Catton, Presi-

dent of Narconon Arrowhead, we see a substantial increase in number of people reaching for help during the immediate weeks after the holidays. Narconon Arrowhead is one of the nation's largest and most successful residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers and uses the drug-free social education methodology developed by American author and humanitarian L. Ron Hubbard, achieving a success rate many times higher than the national average.

To get help for a loved one battling the dwindling spiral of drug or alcohol addiction, contact Narconon Arrowhead today. You can reach the organization through the Internet at www.stopaddiction.com or call 1-800-468-6933. Drug addiction can be overcome.

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Violence-Proofing Kids

A special program on violence against youth will be held at Augustana Lutheran Church, 2710 N.E. 14th Ave. on Jan. 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

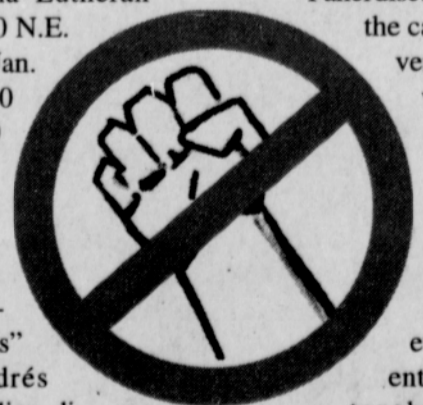
Keynote speakers include "Violence-Proofing Our Kids" author Andrés Soto, the policy director for the Pacific Center for the Prevention of Violence at San Francisco General Hospital; and "The Road Ahead" author Eric Gorovitz, public health lawyer and policy director of the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, a national

grassroots organization based in Berkeley, Calif.

Panel discussions include the causes and prevention of youth violence, community solutions, and where do we go from here?

The free event is for parents, counselors, teachers, public safety officers, social workers, clergy and young people.

For more information, contact the Oregon Consumer League at 503-493-3588 or on the Internet at www.orconsumer.org.



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