

HEALTH

Toran Leads Fight Against Child Abuse Calls for public support of programs protecting children

BY KAY TORAN

April is child abuse prevention month and unfortunately, we need it.

In fact, we need to keep raising awareness every month and to do more to reduce this cancer that plagues Oregon.

According to a Dept. of Human Services report, child abuse and neglect is a major problem. In 2001, 8,232 children

were victims of abuse or neglect. We're failing to adequately protect our children and this is one category where a failing grade is absolutely unacceptable.

In a time when we know more about how to prevent child abuse and neglect and how to intervene when it does occur — we're falling short in the smart, necessary and moral investments to protect our children. Child abuse and neglect is not something we must endure. No, this isn't just the way life is. We know from research how to prevent most abuse, and when it does occur, we know how to intervene in a way that stops it from happening again.

Crisis and Relief Nurseries are a great example. Children ages zero



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— Kay Toran, chief executive officer and president of Volunteers of American Oregon

to five are identified as being at risk of abuse or neglect by a social worker, healthcare or childcare professional or other means.

One of Oregon's seven Crisis and Relief Nurseries enrolls the child and parents in a set of programs such as developmental care, parent education and mental health counseling. The child and family are served, which provides the entire family the skills they need to succeed and avoid abusive or neglectful behaviors.

Unfortunately for all of us, Oregon is making choices that can lead to the dismantling of the state's funding for the very programs that work effectively and efficiently. Crisis and Relief Nurseries, home visitation programs,

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) programs and child abuse intervention centers have all experienced dramatic cuts in state funding, and all anticipate more to come, unless we do something now.

I know Oregonians care. Recent child abuse tragedies drew an enormous public outcry along with pledges to get involved in preventing abuse and neglect. All of us can help prevent and stop child abuse. You can make a difference.

First, contact your state legislators (www.leg.state.or.us) or call 1-800-332-2313 and urge them to support smart investments in child abuse prevention and intervention. Crisis and Relief Nurseries, CASA's home visitation programs and more.

Letters and calls from constituents matter to our elected officials. Second, get involved with child abuse prevention or intervention efforts in your community by volunteering or making a donation. Oregon still has a major budget crisis, but we must demonstrate our commitment to children and have the will to fund effective, proven child abuse prevention and intervention programs. With your help, state leaders will recognize that an early investment in child abuse prevention saves taxpayers in the long run, as well as saving our children's lives. Programs protecting our children from abuse shouldn't have to beg and borrow to get the job done.

All if them depend on state funding for a portion of their services. This support will make certain our most precious Oregon resource — our children — have the chance to grow up safe and happy and become productive, thriving Oregonians. I encourage you to get involved in your community's child abuse prevention and invention efforts, this month and all year.

Kay Toran is the chief executive officer and president of Volunteers of American Oregon and the former director of the Oregon Office for Services to Children and Families.

Sickle Cell Drug Extends Life

The first drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration to ease the pain of severe sickle cell anemia also extends life, according to a Boston University School of Medicine study led by Dr. Martin H. Steinberg and published in the April 2 Journal of the American Medical Association.

The study found that sickle cell anemia patients who took the drug hydroxyurea over a nine-year period experienced a 40 percent re-

duction in deaths.

This latest research has important implications for the treatment of sickle cell anemia.

"Presently only a minority of eligible patients are taking hydroxyurea. Our study strongly suggests that adults with sickle cell anemia and complications, like frequent painful episodes and the common pneumonia-like events, take hydroxyurea under the supervision of a knowledgeable physician," said Steinberg.

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Convention Center Throws Expansion Party

continued from Front

turing some of Oregon's top companies all in one room. Featured pavilions include home and garden, travel and tourism, arts and entertainment, lifestyle, health and fitness, home electronics, festivals and attractions.

Local sports enthusiasts will also be able to keep busy at the bash. For only \$1 a swing, golfers get a chance to win \$35,000 in the Hole-In-One-Golf Challenge, presented by Pacific Power. Northwest Adventure Sports experts will demonstrate and help the public participate in activities such as windsurfing, kayaking, rock climbing and more.

On Saturday only, the Department of Skateboarding and Checked Flag Events will conduct demos, stunts and interactive fun games for the whole family in the Convention Center's Action Room.

Kids will enjoy the Burgerville Amazing Maze and The Children's Activity Center. The two venues

will feature educational activities, performances, a maze and a Lego train display with an area where tiny tots can construct masterpieces of their own.

While kids play in the Activity Center, parents can enjoy adult beverages at the Spring Beer and Wine Fest or browse the Center's \$1 million internationally acclaimed public art collection.

Musicians to perform following the PCC Jazz Band on Friday will be the Scott Fisher Project with Lea Krueger, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., then the Jazz Allstars from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. From 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. the Bobby Torres Ensemble will take the stage and Pink Martini will finish off the evening from 8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

On Saturday, the music starts with Little Sue from noon to 1 p.m. followed by local drumming legend Obo Addy, who will showcase his beats from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. From 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Portland Taiko will precede the Blues Allstars, who will play from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Then

at 6:30 p.m., Quarterflash will open for the Cherry Poppin' Daddies, who will wrap up the festival with a performance from 8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The Oregon Convention Center

will be open to the public both Friday and Saturday from noon to 10 p.m. For more information, visit the event web site at www.oregoncc.org.

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Postwar Iraq Plans Begin

continued from Front

a free Iraq and a democratic Iraq will begin today?" said Garner, who turned 65 Tuesday and wore a twin American and Iraqi flag pin on his blue shirt.

White House envoy Zalmay Khalilzad told delegates that the United States has "no interest, absolutely no interest, in ruling Iraq."

"We want you to establish your own democratic system based on Iraqi traditions and values," Khalilzad said. "I urge you to take this opportunity to cooperate with each other."

Participants included Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites from inside the country and others who spent years in exile. U.S. officials invited the groups, which picked their own representatives.

U.S. officials hope more Iraqis join the process and stressed that this was just the first of many such meetings in Iraq. The meeting concluded with the delegates voting by show of hands to meet again in 10 days.

A national conference is planned to select the interim administration, perhaps within weeks, a senior U.S. official said on condition of anonymity.

The interim administration could begin handing power back to Iraqi officials within three to six months, but forming a government will take longer, said Maj. Gen. Tim Cross.

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SPIRIT MOUNTAIN MUSIC STAGE

Friday April 18

- ◆ PCC Jazz Band
- ◆ Scott Fisher Project with Lea Krueger
- ◆ Jazz All Stars
- ◆ Bobby Torres Ensemble
- ◆ Pink Martini

Saturday April 19

- ◆ Little Sue
- ◆ Obo Addy
- ◆ Portland Taiko Drummers
- ◆ Blues Allstars
- ◆ Quarterflash
- ◆ Cherry Poppin' Daddies

OTHER EXCITING ACTIVITIES

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