

**Kitsap Community  
Resources**

845 8th Street  
Bremerton, WA  
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Phone: 360-478-2301  
www.kcr.org



**KITSAP COMMUNITY  
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*A Community Action Partnership. Helping people. Changing lives.*

**Inside KCR**

**Spring 2009**

**From the Executive Director, Larry Eyer**



The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), also known as the federal stimulus package, will likely impact KCR and the people we serve in Kitsap County in a number of ways.

Initially, we anticipated receipt of substantial new resources to serve the much larger numbers of low-income residents we are seeing. But each day we hear of a new plan to use stimulus funds to supplant state funding for our locally-based programs. Other complicating factors include the additional expectations and restrictions on the ARRA funds in terms of allowable uses, production goals, increased reporting requirements and timeframes.

Many ARRA programs limit funding to 18 months to two years with half the funds available to the states after receipt of an acceptable plan and the other half available upon proof of satisfactory performance.

For the new funding that makes it to the local level, all these factors raise interesting challenges for how we plan,

ramp up, meet performance requirements, ramp down and avoid the many pitfalls that could put our organization at risk.

Our biggest ARRA opportunity appears to be within the Weatherization program. We know that KCR's Weatherization program has saved residents up to 30% in fuel usage and cost; has corrected mold, lead, carbon monoxide and accessibility issues; and has actually saved lives by replacing faulty wiring and heating systems.

KCR has been weatherizing homes of Kitsap residents for 30 years. We have the certified staff, technology, and systems in place to identify eligible families, audit homes, coordinate installation of energy and safety measures through our trained contractors, and inspect the work to ensure all standards are being met. We are part of a statewide network of community action partnerships that receives training and support from the state department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. If all the pieces come together as expected, KCR could potentially double the number of homes weatherized this year.

**Super Saturday Financial Information Fair Hosted by Asset-Building Coalition of Kitsap**

The Asset-Building Coalition (ABC) of Kitsap, chaired by KCR Executive Director Larry Eyer, hosted its first Super Saturday Information Fair on Feb. 21, 2009 at the West Park Community Center. Free tax preparation services helped 39 families, free credit reports and credit counseling were offered to 32 families, 18 people signed up for Kitsap Credit Union financial education classes, and many more services

were available to assist over 60 people who attended.



Marie Menard from American Financial Solutions.

**Celebrate a Special Mother in  
Your Life this Mother's Day**

Be looking in your mail for an opportunity from KCR to honor a special mother in your life.



## Annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count Completed in Conjunction with Operation:Connect

On January 29 and 30 the Annual Point in Time Homeless Count was conducted in locations around Kitsap County by members of the Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition and volunteers to measure the number of homeless individuals and families in Kitsap County. Overall, the Count identified 822 homeless individuals, which represents an increase from 715 individuals counted in 2008.

“Point in time” survey forms were distributed at various locations throughout Kitsap County, including all food bank locations and at several meal sites accessed by the homeless.

Concurrent with the event, the Continuum of Care Coalition also organized for the first time “Operation: Connect” which provided an opportunity for homeless persons to meet with representatives from various social service organizations for information and free services.

Located at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds, this event was even more successful than anticipated. Over 100 households attended to obtain free services such as flu shots, haircuts, clothing, employment referrals, and much more. Representatives from many local services agencies were on hand to distribute information about the Veterans Assistance Program, WorkSource Center, Kitsap County Health District, food banks, and more.

While the economy continues to worsen, its effects are already evident at this year’s Homeless Count. Almost 66 percent of those interviewed cited job-related issues, such as loss of a job or under-employment as the major reasons that caused them to become homeless. Housing issues also played a role in homelessness this year, with 31 percent of those interviewed naming reasons such as an eviction for non-payment and the inability to pay the rent or mortgage as the cause of their homelessness. Another large contributor to homelessness in our county was medical and healthcare related issues such as medical costs, medical illness, and mental illness.

This year’s Homeless Count also revealed a significant shift in the demographics of the homeless. In

2008, there were 132 homeless children and youth under the age of 17 counted in Kitsap County, or 18 percent. This number was nearly double in 2009, with 262 homeless children and youth reporting. This age group now represents 32 percent of all homeless individuals in our community.

Although these new numbers appear daunting, the Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition recently updated its Homeless Housing Plan and will implement new strategies to combat homelessness in our community.

The Coalition, currently chaired by KCR’s Housing Director Darlene Cook, was founded in 1994 by a network of service and housing providers, to coordinate support services for homeless and low-income families and individuals in Kitsap County.



Leihuanani Strause receives a haircut from Brenda Winslowe at Operation: Connect on Jan. 30.



A KCR AmeriCorps member sorts clothing donations. Hygiene kits, children’s toys, and camping gear were also available.

## Community Jobs Participant, Jason McMillan, a Key Player in Severe Weather Shelter Program

Since age 16, Jason McMillan has been involved with emergency services in some fashion, from serving as a volunteer firefighter to assisting in relief efforts at the World Trade Center and Hurricane Katrina.

A self-proclaimed Mama's Boy, Jason moved to Kitsap County to assist his mother take care of a terminally-ill family member. When he had a hard time finding work in the radio business, his past career, his family urged him to seek assistance.

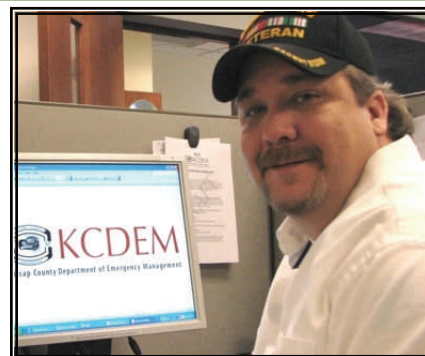
Through KCR's Community Jobs Program Jason was placed at Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Severe Weather Shelter program. He reviewed applications of over 150 volunteer candidates, scheduled volunteer shifts, managed logistics of the shelter, and developed a volunteer training course.

"This experience has given me a unique opportunity. I have access to training that you can't get anywhere else. I am working with amazing people who are

dedicated, smart, and love coming to work. You don't find that everywhere."

Since it has been instituted, the Severe Weather Shelter has been open more than 15 nights in times of freezing temperatures and heavy snow. Its current location is at the

Communitas Building in Bremerton. "Communitas has been very gracious in allowing us to use their building," said Jim Stowers, KCR Housing and Homeless Services Manager. "There has been an average of about 8 people staying in the shelter each night. We are very grateful to those who volunteered or donated supplies to keep it running."



Jason McMillan at Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management

## Community Service Worker Program Saves Big Money and Enables Civic Engagement

Kitsap Community Resources AmeriCorps' program has contracted with the city of Bremerton and Kitsap County to provide much needed manpower to support local parks and maintain miles of sidewalks of city streets through its Community Service Worker (CSW) program.

The CSW program allows those convicted of minor offenses to avoid fines or jail time by giving back to their community through local community service projects. When you consider the cost of housing someone in jail and the costs of paying for upkeep to local parks and public areas, the city saves about \$350,000 per year and the county achieves savings of about \$180,000 each year.

Once in the program, CSW participants have the opportunity to learn about resources that KCR offers, such as the DRIVE program, which can help them avoid future tickets by getting their driver's license reinstated through a negotiated payment plan.

Since AmeriCorps members supervise the program,

participants learn from them the value of service and the satisfaction that helping others can bring.

One such participant, Chris Gantz, has since volunteered over 1000 hours above and beyond his original stint in the CSW program to help rid the local area of graffiti. As a young person who was often guilty of spreading graffiti, he now wants to give back and donates his time to repainting buildings that have been vandalized.

CSW Participants and AmeriCorps volunteers work at Blueberry Park in Bremerton to ready it for a spring opening.



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Go online to [kcr.org](http://kcr.org) to sign up, or email [khackney@kcr.org](mailto:khackney@kcr.org)

Our mission is to create hope and opportunity for low-income Kitsap County residents by providing resources that promote self-sufficiency.

## Kitsap Regional Library Feeds Kids' Imagination with Santa Shoppe Donation

Last Christmas Rachele Deininger, Technical Services Specialist at Kitsap Regional Library, immediately thought of her fellow co-workers when she saw that KCR's Santa Shoppe was in need of books for its Christmas Angel program. Deininger approached the KRL Staff Association, an employee-led, non-profit organization, to see if they would be willing to donate funds towards the purchase of books.

The Staff Association voted to donate \$400, and staff members from across the library system participated, bringing the total amount raised to \$857! Deininger then enlisted the help of Young People's Librarian, Lynn Stone, to help her hand-select



books from the Scholastic Warehouse in Auburn. 254 books were acquired with the donations they received.

"We were delighted to participate. We feel that the library is the heart of the community," Deininger said. "This was another way we could connect children with books, which is always a winning combination. Books feed the mind, soul, and imagination."

Suzanne Christman, from the Poulsbo branch, created gingerbread house donation receptacles for each KRL branch.