



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

## From the Executive Director, Larry Eyer



I had the opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. for two national conferences last month, and the major topic of conversation was the economy and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Initially we had anticipated substantial new resources to serve the much larger numbers of residents we are seeing. But as time progresses, each day we hear of different plans to use stimulus funds to supplant state funding for locally-based programs. Complicating this are the additional expectations and restrictions on the ARRA funds in terms of allowable uses, production goals, increased reporting requirements and timeframes. 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.

As of today our biggest ARRA opportunity appears to be the Weatherization program. This program particularly addresses the President's priority of energy conservation and creating new "green" jobs. KCR has been weatherizing homes of Kitsap residents for 30 years. If all goes as expected, KCR could potentially double the number of homes completed this year.

## KCR Succeeds in Providing Employment Services in Tough Job Market

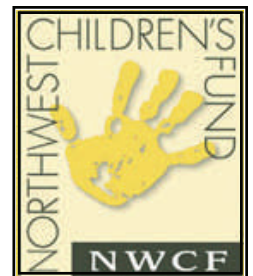
With unemployment rates increasing at an alarming pace, KCR is seeing an increase in requests for assistance. KCR's South Kitsap Family Service Center in Port Orchard is a WorkSource affiliate, providing a variety of free employment services to the public. In addition to a computer lab and access to a telephone, copier, and fax machine, KCR offers computer classes and training targeted to preparing attendees for employment. The Center also offers services through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program, funded by the Department of Labor to provide a range of self-service and staff-assisted services for those seeking employment.



KCR staff continue to exceed contract expectations for enrollments and exits into unsubsidized employment. Last quarter, KCR reported one of its highest average hourly wages for those that completed the program: \$15.21/hour.

## The Parenting Place Receives \$15,000 from the Northwest Children's Fund

KCR's Parenting Place has received a \$15,000 grant from the Northwest Children's Fund. The goal of the Northwest Children's Fund is to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect through a focus on healing abused children, helping at-risk youth, and strengthening fragile families. In addition to providing classes to those in the community interested in improving their parenting skills, the Parenting Place provides classes for parents who are in recovery from alcohol or substance abuse and those who have experienced domestic violence in their families. By providing classes for parents to learn new parenting skills, the work of the Parenting Place is vital in reducing the incidence of child abuse and neglect in our community.



## Renters Need to Know Their Rights and Resources Available in Situations of Foreclosure

Tenants are often the last to find out that the home they are renting is in the process of foreclosure. In order to avoid homelessness and other crisis situations, renters should be aware of resources available to them in case their landlord faces foreclosure. First, they should continue paying rent. Second, they can research self-help information online at [www.washingtonlawhelp.org](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org). According to the web site, in many cases, renters are entitled to 90 days notice before a foreclosure sale. Finally, low-income residents may contact the Northwest Justice Project at 1-888-201-1014 for legal advice. Other residents can contact an attorney referral service at 360-373-2426 to set up a 30-minute paid session.

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



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**Volunteers Needed in April and May**  
We have a need for folks with great handwriting to hand-address some letters for us. We'll have punch and cookies on hand to keep you energized. Contact: Kathleen Hackney, 360-473-2003, khackney@kcr.org for info.

## Parents Benefit from Involvement in Head Start Program

Parental involvement is the foundation for success in KCR's Head Start and ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance) programs. In addition to being involved in their family's goals and development, parents serve on Policy Councils to review the day-to-day operations of Head Start sites.

Head Start staff also encourage parents to set and meet goals of their own, including education, literacy, and employment. Jackie Lensico returned to school and obtained her nursing degree after receiving resources, encouragement, and support from KCR staff.

At the last joint meeting of KCR Board of Directors and the Head Start/ECEAP Policy Council in March, members voted to continue to serve 238 Head Start and 60 Early Head Start children and their families in the coming year.



Jackie Lensico with her son, who attends Head Start at the Silverdale Community Center, and three daughters, also Head Start graduates.

## Community Service Worker Program Allows Those with Misdemeanors to "Work it Off"



Work Day at Blueberry Park

The KCR Community Service Worker (CSW) Program has seen an increase in applications from folks who are opting to work in their community rather than pay fines or undergo jail time for minor offenses.

The CSW Program provides labor and manpower on a daily basis to Kitsap County, the City of Bremerton, and other non-profit organizations, saving taxpayers thousands of dollars. On any given day, a community service crew, led by KCR AmeriCorps members, takes on projects such as picking up litter, maintaining parks and roads, graffiti removal, and more. The city saves about \$350,000 per year and the county achieves savings of about \$180,000 each year, considering the cost of housing someone in jail and the costs of paying for upkeep to local parks and public areas.

Many CSW Participants continue community service on their own after completing the program and seeing the value in giving back to their community.

## Early Learning Conference at Fort Worden Boasts Highest Attendance Rate Ever



Barbara Malich  
CEO, Peninsula  
Community Health  
Services

Each year, Head Start teachers and support staff gather at Fort Worden State Park to hear about the latest approaches and strategies in early learning education. KCR coordinated this year's event in February, which experienced its highest attendance rate and included representatives from five Indian tribes, many of whom had not attended in the past. The 250 people attending the conference represented 13 Head Start, Early Head Start, and ECEAP programs from Region 10.

Debbie Wooten, a comedian who has struggled with Spina Bifida and Polio, set the stage in the opening keynote address for the conference theme of Overcoming Adversity. Barbara Malich, CEO of Peninsula Community Health Services, also shared her thoughts with the group on access

to health care in her keynote address.



Conference attendees practice fire prevention techniques and learn about emergency preparedness at Fort Worden on Feb. 20.