



A Community Action Partnership. Helping people. Changing lives.

From the Executive Director, Larry Eyer



The brief stories in this KCR Reports highlight KCR activities that rely heavily on our community partners, AmeriCorps team members, and volunteers. For example, 18 full-time AmeriCorps members greatly extend our service capability. Kitsap Youth in Action and our Community Service Worker programs are staffed entirely by AmeriCorps. At Christmas these team members are joined by hundreds of donors and volunteers to provide gifts to more than 2500 low-income Kitsap children.

The ribbon-cutting photo and story reflect several great partners: Leadership Kitsap who has trained 14 KCR Management staff and board members over the years, our wonderful early learning partner Bremerton School District, and our supportive elected officials from the Legislature, Bremerton, and Kitsap County. We have appreciated and will really miss Mayor Cary Bozeman and Superintendent Bette Hyde as they move on to new positions. Stories on page 2 highlight: one of our Asset-building Coalition partners, American Financial Solutions; the Kitsap district courts who support our DRIVE program; and our WorkFirst partners at DSHS, Kitsap County, Olympic College and WorkSource. All of these are vital to our mission and our community.

Serve America Act Triples the Size of AmeriCorps and Introduces New Benefits

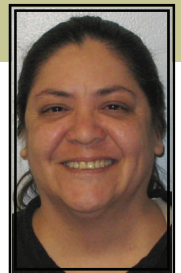
President Obama signed the landmark Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act in April, which is expected to significantly expand AmeriCorps over the next eight years. In addition to effectively tripling the size of AmeriCorps over that time period, the legislation also includes new benefits for those that serve, such as increasing the education award and expanding age and income eligibility for Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions. A Summer of Service program for 6th-12th graders was also introduced in the bill.

Last year, KCR's AmeriCorps program received 675 applications for 36 positions, making it the most popular program in the state.



KCR Employee Receives Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Service Award

Dubbed the "Santa Claus of Kitsap County," Kandi Balandran may actually perform a more miraculous feat than the big guy in the red suit accomplishes each Christmas season. As the coordinator of KCR's Christmas Angel program, Kandi has worked with volunteers and AmeriCorps members to solicit, collect, organize, and distribute over 25,000 gifts during the past eight years to more than 17,000 low-income county children. Kandi's tireless work was recognized this year at the Governor's Mansion on April 20 where she received the Governor's 2009 Outstanding Volunteer Service Award.



KCR Head Start Student Cuts Ribbon to Open Born Learning Trail

Members from Leadership Kitsap and the community sponsored a Born Learning Trail at Naval Avenue Early Learning Center. The trail features interactive activities families can do together while visiting the park, including learning about shapes, colors, letters, and numbers to improve literacy and thinking skills. Hannah, a Head Start student was a guest of honor at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on May 6.

From Left to Right: Representative Jan Angel; Dr. Bette Hyde, Director of the Washington State Department of Early Learning; Principal John Welsh; Hannah, KCR Head Start student; First Gentleman Mike Gregoire; Mayor Cary Bozeman, Kitsap County Commissioner Charlotte Garrido



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United Way Day of Caring Wednesday June 24, 2009

Sign up for the Day of Caring by registering online at
www.volunteerkitsap.org
or call 360-377-8505

Free Financial Education Classes Offered By American Financial Solutions

American Financial Solutions is offering free monthly financial education classes on the second Wednesday of each month in partnership with KCR. On June 10, the topic is Understanding Credit and Credit Reports, where participants can learn how to improve credit scores. On July 8, AFS will offer a Financial Awareness seminar, that reviews several financial topics including understanding borrowing and loans, interest rates, and credit cards. Finally, on September 9 AFS will feature an Identity Theft and Predatory Lending class. For more information, contact Kristi Basse at (360) 473-2126.



AMERICAN FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS

DRIVE Program Puts More Low-Income Families On the Road to Self-Sufficiency

Many of KCR's clients find that the lack of a driver's license is a significant impediment to finding or keeping a job. KCR assists low-income individuals who have had their driver's license suspended due to unpaid traffic tickets through a negotiated payment plan with Alliance One. By arranging low monthly payments, typically in the \$25-40 range, clients are able to stop interest accruals, have their driver's license quickly reinstated, and improve their credit standing.

A recent addition to the program is a Drive Awareness class which also contains a financial education component. The goal is to educate drivers on how to maintain their cars so that they drive efficiently and safely, prepare drivers for financial obligations of car ownership, and drive responsibly in order to avoid future traffic tickets.



KCR's WorkFirst Programs Experience Unprecedented Number of Clients in Job Search

In April 2009, the unemployment rate in Kitsap County increased to 9.2% from 6% in December 2008. Sectors with the highest unemployment include construction, office and administration, management, and sales-related occupations. As a result of economic conditions, KCR's WorkFirst programs are seeing an unprecedented number of clients.

KCR is a WorkFirst partner that manages employment and training programs for TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) recipients. KCR's programs provide employees with "real life" work experience and job training for soft and hard skills.

For eligible non-profits, there are no costs associated with hiring a WorkFirst participant. KCR pays labor and industry insurance, while employers qualify for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. Employers can host one of our participants for as many as 20 hours per week for any project up to six months. We also offer similar programs to for-profit companies. Contact us for more information at 360-473-2141.

Jobs Our Clients Perform:

- General Clerical
- Phones
- Scheduling
- Correspondence
- Copying/scanning/filing
- Data entry
- Cooking and Food Preparation
- Customer Service
- Computer Lab Technician
- Driver
- Labor (skilled or unskilled)
- Painting
- Landscaping
- Building Maintenance

Welcome to KCR New Board Members:

Dave Colombini, South Kitsap School District
Brian Rose, Head Start/ECEAP Policy Council
Barbara Stephenson, Kitsap County Treasurer