

Columbia Pacific Food Bank

Client quotation: “I can’t work like I used to due to a disability from my job. My three kids are fed thanks to your program. It makes our home happy and growing. This is a great program for the community.” Love –a Single Mom

Progress Center The Tracking Learning Children Program (TLC)

“Amy” was a client of the Progress Center Tracking Learning Children Program, which is funded by the United Way. Her family completed and returned developmental questionnaires to Progress Center every few months. When “Amy” was two years old, her questionnaire indicated that she may have a communication delay. The TLC staff contacted “Amy’s” mother and her mother expressed concern about her daughter’s communication skills. Amy was referred for a developmental evaluation and was able to begin receiving early intervention services to help her reach her communication milestones. Due to the safety net of Tracking Learning Children (TLC) program, “Amy” was able to access supportive services at a very early age and she met the developmental expectations for her age within one year.

SAFE

United Way has touched literally every aspect of SAFE’s work and, since the Columbia County Women’s Resource Center received that pivotal funding in 1981, has been crucial to SAFE’s ability to carry out its mission.

One area where SAFE’s support has been most valuable is in Columbia County’s civil courts. SAFE routinely supports survivors in seeking protective orders, and empowering them to utilize a legal system that is often intimidating for those not specifically trained in navigating it.

One wonderful story of SAFE’s success is from one of the last days of 2016, when a client requested moral support from a SAFE advocate at her contested restraining order hearing. Her abuser had obtained a lawyer who worked both in and out of the courtroom that day to discredit and humiliate the survivor. With no representation of her own and only her SAFE advocate by her side, the survivor remained cool and confident as she recounted the abuse she suffered and explained why she believed it would happen again without this protection. The judge believed the survivor and upheld the restraining order; keeping her safe and helping her feel more empowered to rebuild her life for herself and her children.

Our advocate noted that the survivor was overwhelmed and terrified into silence when they began working together mere months before that day in court. Now, that survivor is speaking up for herself in and assertive and eloquent way. SAFE advocates strive to empower our clients with such confidence and self-determination. Our goal is not to speak for the client, but rather to be a megaphone for the survivor’s own genuine, powerful voice.

United Way has been supporting survivors for domestic and sexual violence in Columbia County since the beginning, and can proudly take credit for the changes survivors have made in their lives with SAFE’s help and support. SAFE, in turn, hopes to continue to dutifully utilize united Way funding to empower people to live safe, healthy, non-violent lives.

Vernonia Cares

1. A female senior citizen stated the emergency food VCFB provides, along with the meal certificates provided through Vernonia Senior Citizen organization, is the basis of most of her food intake. Her vehicle is not working, so our in-town delivery of groceries was also a tremendous benefit.
2. A family of four was unexpectedly given 90 days to vacate their rented home since the owner decided to sell the home. The groceries provided through the food bank are enabling them to save funds toward their move (first, last and security deposits). An added bonus was the food bank location was the access site that day for county CAT service representatives who found other ways to assist this family.
3. A middle aged couple was thrown in desperate times when they both were laid off. They needed the food bank's assistance for the first time in their lives. It helped them make it through this unexpected and difficult time.
4. A mother with one teenager at home finds her part time income is not enough to sustain their grocery needs. Since she travels to access her job, the fuel expenses add to her budget costs. Due to the recent ice event, she missed some work, which complicated her income shortfall. We were able to assist with food.
5. A new mother had no money and ran out of baby formula. The food bank had the kind she needed.
6. A low income client was prescribed a gluten-free diet. Very expensive to maintain. The food bank had a few food items which supplemented her new diet restriction. Since these groceries are often more expensive. She was very grateful for the help. We've also helped others with dietary restrictions.
7. A couple, who live on a social security income plus a part time wage, were suddenly in need of the food bank's help when the wife fell during the ice storm and broke her arm. She will miss 2-3 month's work while she heals. She stated, "Though I only needed the food bank's help a few times last year, it will be vital to us during this recovery time."

Turning Point Community Center

We had a dad with a young child help as a volunteer. He worked with us for about a year, learning customer service skills and daily decision making. His family also received monthly food boxes. During this time he was able to learn skills that helped him obtain work in a restaurant to provide for his family. We also helped him obtain his food handlers card, which is required for these jobs. . He started out as part time employee and has since moved to a full time position and being self-sufficient.

Community Action Team – Emergency Housing

A single father with two children lost his housing and job after a bad divorce. He moved in with his brother but could stay for only a limited time. He found employment and was able to save money to move into an apartment in Scappoose. With all the deposits to cover, he needed \$1,600 to move in. CAT was able to help with \$250 from United Way, \$250 from Private funds, and \$200 in utility assistance. We also connected him with DHS to help with child care. Now his situation is much more stable and appropriate for him and his children.

Community Action Team – Transitional Housing

A single mother with two children had been living with her grandmother for over six year. When the client's grandmother died, she received a 60 day notice to vacate. She had no savings, no health insurance, no food stamps and nothing but her name on apartment waiting lists. Her employer had a rental available and was willing to work with her on a deposit and rent. He required \$800 for deposit and \$1,600 first & last month's rent. United Way funds paid \$250 toward the deposit, faith-based funds paid \$300 and the final \$250 came from private funds. We kept the family enrolled in case management for two months to make sure she was able to stay on top of her finances while she refinanced her car lowered her phone bill and credit card payments and was able to remain stably housed. We also referred her to Oregon Health plan for medical insurance, DHS for food stamps and CAT's energy assistance program.

Community Action Team – Energy/Utility Assistance

We assisted a low income grandparent who is on a fixed income and raising her grandchild. The client has an oxygen tank and had an increase in medical expenses that kept her from being able to make a payment. We were able to use United Way funds to prevent her electricity from being shut off.

We also assisted a single man with no income who had lost in income because of a recent medical condition. The client is applying for disability income. We were able to use United Way funds to prevent his water from being shut off.

Community Action Team – Respite Care

Mrs. A is a 78 year old senior living in a mobile home park. She was given notice she would be evicted unless she painted the outside of her mobile home. Mrs. A called CAT very upset not understanding how they could do "this" to her. Her husband had passed away just a month before and now she was without anyone to help her. She also had a significant decrease in her income due to the death of her spouse. Me. A suffers from COPD, neuropathy and an anxiety disorder. CAT's senior program staffed Mrs. A's situation with the community investment (CI) department to see if there was anything they could suggest. The Lend a Hand program did not have any funding at that time to help. Therefore, private funds and United Way funds were used by the senior department to purchase the paint needed. A local church provided the volunteer labor to complete the painting. Mrs. A was very grateful that her home looked nice and she would be able to stay in the place where she and her husband had lived together.

Community Action Team – Parenting Education

One of our success stories involves a single mom who moved to our county from the southern part of the United States to live with her sister. She was here to get herself clean and sober and knew no one else in the community. She left behind her five young children under nine years of age. She worked with DHS/CW from another state and eventually participated in our 17 week Nurturing Parenting education series. During this period of time she continued working to improve herself and through referrals to other services, eventually received house, the children were reunited with Mom. Much trauma had resulted for the children and additional referrals for services resulted in positive outcomes for the children. This was a difficult time for mother and children, to say the least. The eldest child, whom we had the most concerns about, is currently in treatment with the appropriate professionals.

Community Action Team – Parenting Education—continued.

When the series ended this mom wanted to take the class over as soon as another was available. I inquired as to why? Mom replied, “I was too stressed out to get enough out of it the first time.” She is attending the class with the children. She is also currently working full time, continues her treatment programs and feels positive about the future. Her children are flourishing and stable at this point in time. She surrounds herself with others that she met both in parenting classes and treatment support groups.

CAT – Emergency Housing

A single father with two children lost his housing and job after a bad divorce. He moved family for a limited time. We were able to help him move into an apartment. By combining help from CAT, United Way and private donations we were able the help. He found employment and was able to save money to move into an apartment in Scappoose. With all the deposits to cover, he needed \$1,600 to move in. CAT was able to help with \$250 from United Way, \$250 from Private funds, and \$200 in utility assistance. We also connected him with DHS to help with child care. Now his situation is much more stable and appropriate for him and his children.

CAT – Respite Care

Mrs. A is 73. Her husband who is also 73 was diagnosed with Progressive Dementia. He requires 24 hour assistance. He is not able to be left alone because he will wander off. However, Mrs. A does not feel comfortable placing him in a memory care facility. Mrs. A is also caring for her two grandsons, ages 9 and 3. Mrs. A struggles with going to appointments, shopping, and getting some personal time. United Way helps with 80 hours of respite for Mrs. A. Mrs. A stated she appreciates the hours as it allows her to take some time for herself. It is rare she is able to get away from her caregiving duties and appreciates the break.

Mrs. B is 75 and cares for her 49 year old son with developmental disabilities. Mrs. B’s husband has a job which takes him from the home for weeks at a time. Mrs. B does not want to leave her son home alone when she goes to town. She also stated she would like to take an afternoon off once in a while for some “personal time”. United Way funds were used to provide Mrs. B 80 hours of respite services.

Mrs. C is a 62 year old lady living alone. She has memory problems and has been in a situation where others were taking advantage of her. CAT case managers have been working to get her into an Assisted Living Facility, but there are many factors to overcome before she is eligible. Mrs. C is looking forward to moving. Mrs. C was being transported by a ‘neighbor’ from her home in Clatskanie to her doctor in Washington. After the appointment, the ‘neighbor’ left Mrs. C at a gas station and took her purse with all her ID and money. In order to keep Mrs. C safe, CAT used private funds to help pay for some public transportation for Mrs. C. A microwave, bath chair and a few other small household items were also provided to Mrs. C from the Rainier Senior Center so she is able to live in her apartment. Cat was finally able to relocate Mrs. C to an Assisted Living Facility (ALF) in Washington State. A rep-payee was set up to help her with bills. Mrs. C is now close to her doctor and can get to stores for food as needed. She is able to use the public transit system in Washington State to get around the area.

CAT – Respite Care continued

Mrs. D is a 69 year old lady who had been evicted from her Section 8 apartment due to non-compliance with the NOHA inspection. The landlord did not want to make the required improvements, so she lost her place of residence. Mrs. D has very little income at this time. She has been working with our housing department. Mrs. D left her place and only had her truck to live in. She called the housing department in tears because she could no longer find a place to park her truck (small Chevy pickup needed work on the motor. And her truck could not go very far due to its condition. United Way funds were used to help Mrs. D with a hot meal for the night (call came in at 4pm) with a referral to the Rainier Senior Center for lunch meals during the week. CAT's housing department is working on finding her a place to stay.

Mrs. E is a 58 year old lady who is homeless. She lives in a remote location in the woods near Scapp-Vern Hwy. She has no running water, toilet facilities, and home. She had been eating potatoes and ramen noodles when she arrived at CAT. CAT's housing department is currently working on finding Mrs. E a place to stay. Meanwhile, a Meals on Wheels (MOW) driver from the Scappoose Senior Center agreed to take her a hot meal each day on his way home. He lives near the land Mrs. E is residing on. Because she is no 60, CAT could not pay for the meals under the Older American's Act Home Delivered Meal Program. United Way funds were combined with some Faith Based funds to pay for 30 days' worth of meals for Mrs. E. The housing department is hoping to have a place for her soon.

Mr. and Mrs. F are 70 and 73 years old. Mr. F has Parkinson's disease and his mobility is diminishing as the disease progresses. Mrs. F has been Mr. F's primary caregiver for many years, however her health is beginning to decline. Mrs. F had asked for respite so she could take some day trips to visit family/friends. 40 hours of respite were provided to Mrs. F. She appreciates the flexibility of being able to take a break as she needs.

Mr. and Mrs. G are both 73 years old. Mr. G has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Mrs. G states that she has a fence going up around their mobile home to keep Mr. G safe and out of harm's way. She states that she has been in contact with Alzheimer's Association and they are going to be getting better locks for the doors in their home to keep Mr. G safe as he has a habit of wandering. Mrs. G lives in constant fear for Mr. G's safety and asked for respite so she could have some time to run errands/doctor's appointments without having to take Mr. G along. 40 hours of respite were provided to Mrs. G.