

REPORTS

SPRING 2006

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3411-A Willamette Street
Eugene, Oregon

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 51360

Eugene, Oregon 97405-0906

Voice: 541-686-5060

TDD / Fax: 541-686-5063

www.directionservice.org

■ **Counseling Center**

576 Olive Street
(The Heron Building)
Suite 307

Eugene, Oregon 97401

Voice: 541-344-7303

Fax: 541-686-6283

From The Director's Corner

Time marches on! January 3rd was the 29th anniversary of the ribbon-cutting at the Direction Service office. Back in January, 1977 we were a program at the University of Oregon's Center on Human Development. Family Support and Service Coordination, our only service at that time, occupied unassuming (some things haven't changed) space on the ground floor at 1736 Moss Street. We had the luxury of a federal grant that allowed us to figure out what we were doing at a manageable pace. The first families we worked with were patient and generous in their willingness to teach us what was helpful and what wasn't. Many of those families continue to be friends of the organization and it's been a real pleasure to watch their children grow and become part of the community.

Much has changed for me and the organization since those early days. A pound here, a pound there, and the few remaining hairs have lost (according to the Department of Motor Vehicles) their brown. The organization has matured and added two highly regarded programs, the Direction Service Counseling Center and CADRE, The National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education. We've had the opportunity to learn from and partner with thousands of families since those early days.

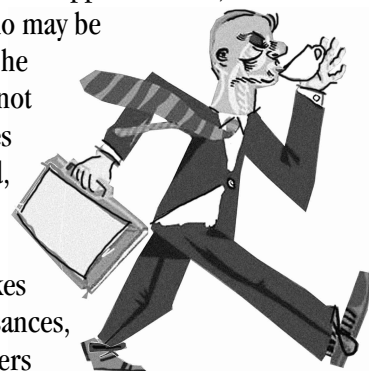
What has remained true over the years is that a remarkable consortium of public and private partners has continued to voice their strong support for the organization's work and its value. A list of organizations that fund Direction Service can be found on the back page of this newsletter along with recent individual donors. We're very grateful for their support.

Best wishes for the summer season.

Marshall

Top o' the Mornin'... Starting the Day with Life Affirming Rituals

Walter Bublin wakes up with the weight of the world pressing in on him. He is immediately composing e-mails, wondering what awaits him on voice mail, dreading the day's meetings. Before Walter gets into the shower he is rehearsing what he will say to underlings who will have disappointed him, to those with power who may be displeased with him. If he eats breakfast he does not notice. Usually he leaves earlier than he planned, way before his wife and kids get up. On his drive into work he makes lists of predictable nuisances, potential pitfalls, disasters looming on the horizon. He wonders how his life got away from him. If you asked Walter if he enjoyed his early morning at home he would look at you and say, "What?"

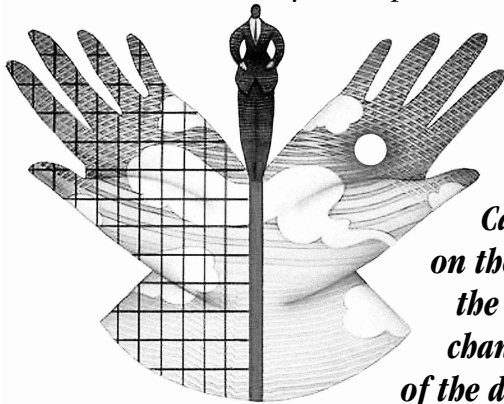


Bunny Thorpe has her CD player programmed. The day's musical selection starts exactly two minutes before her alarm goes off. It might be Bill Evans or Tracy Chapman or Dawn Upshaw or Van Morrison. Bunny moves into the kitchen and stops for a minute to look out at the bird feeders. She greets her local nuthatches, chickadees and juncos. She inhales deeply and enjoys the aroma of fresh coffee. Bunny is very particular about coffee. It has to be French Roast and it has to be from Café Mam. She says she enjoys her coffee more if she knows it is organic, good for song birds and equitable for the indigenous coffee growers. She eats a bowl of oatmeal with dried cranberries and roasted filberts every day. Bunny spends a few minutes each morning selecting beads and antique costume jewelry to accessorize



her wheelchair. “*My ride has to look as good as I do,*” she’ll tell you.

Inez Levi loves breads and muffins. To Inez, the morning is a celebration of baked goods. She has favorites that sample the best of Eugene’s artisan bakeries. She is just as happy, however, if either her son or daughter has baked muffins. While her bread selection of the day is warming up, Inez brews a cup of English Breakfast tea. She always uses a cup that belonged to her great-grandmother in Hungary before the war. Inez takes her tea and stands out on the back deck for two minutes. She holds the cup in both hands and breathes in the cool damp morning air. Inez saves enough time after eating, showering and coordinating kid stuff to sit at the kitchen table and read one Billy Collins poem.



Does the manner in which you begin your day matter?

Can it have an impact on the overall quality of the day? Could it even change the way the rest of the day unfolds?

Inez and Bunny would answer these questions in the affirmative. They would tell you that their particular morning rituals are not accidents, that they are not optional, and that the real value of these life affirming rituals is that they remind each of them to find meaning and value throughout the remainder of the day. If you asked Walter about the value of life affirming rituals, he would look at you and say, “*What?*”

What are life affirming rituals? A reasonable definition might be that they are small but meaningful activities a person performs to experience mastery or pleasure. They are person specific. They remind us of what we find valuable, and that what we find valuable is important — important enough to build into our day.

How do you make this happen? How do you begin the process of starting the day (every day) with life affirming rituals?

1. Think of one small thing you would enjoy, something you would look forward to. It might be a comforting beverage or a tasty treat. It might be a strange activity, something you haven’t thought of doing as part of your weekday routine. You could work in your garden for five minutes in the early morning. You could read a short story or you could find a recipe you’d like to try. You could plan a hike for the weekend. Pick one thing. This is your first ritual.

2. Decide when you might fit the ritual into your morning routine. You need to decide that the ritual is important, that it is as important as bathing or shaving or ironing or whatever else you think you have to do. Make your decision a commitment.

3. Come up with another ritual. If the first one involved activity, try another that concerns your morning nutrition. Enjoy and look forward to what you eat. This might mean changing what you eat or it might mean changing the way in which you eat. If you eat standing up leaning over the sink, you might try sitting down in a favorite spot with a plate and a napkin. How much time could that take? Make this second ritual a commitment, too.

4. Practice. It might surprise you that life affirming activity is not always easy. We get used to going through the motions. We get used to putting ourselves second (or third). We don’t think of enjoyment as a priority. So, you have to practice. You have to practice performing the rituals you have chosen and you have to practice allowing yourself to really enjoy the moment.

5. Make changes to improve the overall routine. It is very reasonable to think that your morning routine could consist almost completely of life affirming rituals. That would mean you were really paying attention to quality, to enjoyment and to mastery. Never be afraid to try something new.

How important is all this? If you choose to basically get through some segments of your day (the early morning for instance) without paying too much attention, what do you actually lose? But if you choose to embed two or three or four small but meaningful rituals into your morning, what might you gain? It may be worth finding out.

Jay Buckley, Ph.D.

Clinical Co-Director, Direction Service Counseling Center

Cultivate Curiosity and Listen to Understand

The most useful skill to have in an important conversation is effective listening. Listening gives us information we can only get from the other person. It is natural that we understand ourselves better than we understand others. We see the world through our own lenses. Even what we do understand about others is usually from our own point of view, not theirs. Real communication between human beings requires a bridge across the gap between our two experiences.



Become genuinely curious about the other person's experience. Invite the other person to share how he sees the situation. *"I'm interested in what you think of the current plan."* *"I'm wondering what your*

experience has been." Without knowing her side of things, you will never have enough information to find a solution to a problem, make a decision that requires her input or resolve a conflict that involves her.

Ask questions in a way that helps her share her perspective, not confirm yours. And then listen. Don't cross-examine. Make more space, not less, for new information. *"What are you worried about?"* *"How are you being affected by these changes?"* Demonstrate respect in your tone and attitude.

Focus on truly understanding the other person's concerns, preferences, values and beliefs before you turn your attention to explaining your own. Once the other person believes you understand him, he may be willing to listen to you in a similar way. Don't be surprised, however, if this does not happen right away. Don't give up. With persistence and practice you can narrow the gap that contributes to the misunderstandings that cause us pain, cost us money and waste our time.

Anita Engiles, J.D.
CADRE Mediation Specialist

Board Changes

Direction Service was sorry to see Laura Yergan depart from the Board of Directors after years of exemplary service. We're grateful for Laura's many contributions and wish her well in her future endeavors.

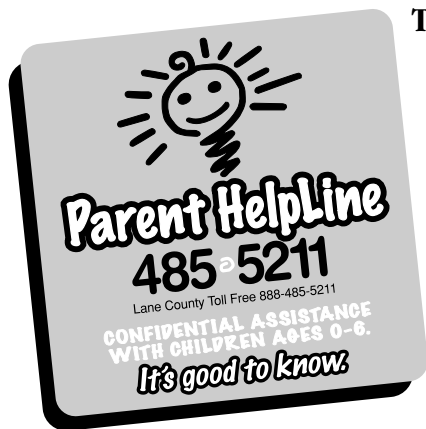
We're happy to welcome Mike Vermillion onto the Board. Mike has worked in public education for over 30 years in both Oregon and Colorado. Although he retired in 2003 from Lane ESD, he finds himself back in the trenches in his former position as superintendent. However, he is quick to add that he is only an interim and will return to full retirement when this school year ends. Mike is married, has two sons attending the University of Oregon, and is very eager to become an involved, contributing Board member of Direction Service.

Staff Changes

The Direction Service Counseling Center is pleased to welcome licensed psychologist, Craig Steinberg, Ph.D. to the clinical staff. Dr. Steinberg has been in clinical practice as an individual, family, and group therapist for over ten years and also provides consultation, training, and workshop presentations in the areas of childhood trauma and attachment disturbance. Before coming to Direction Service in March of 2006, Craig worked at Jasper Mountain Center. He received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology through George Peabody College at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1996. Dr. Steinberg is an avid amateur photographer, outdoors enthusiast, and overall sports nut.

The Summer Program Directory contains seasonal resources for children with special needs. In addition to being posted at www.directionservice.org, it has been published and distributed to every school and many agencies that work with families in Lane County. The Directory contains a brief description and contact information for Advocacy, Camps, Diagnostic and Treatment Services, Educational Services, Employment Programs, Recreation Opportunities, Respite Care and Support. A Web Site section offers additional resources for families, including a guide for how to choose a camp. *Please call Sybil Ford at 284-4732 for further assistance.*

The Information and Referral Team has received over 100 calls in the last few months. Parents, educators, and agency personnel are among the community members who have called with questions pertaining to equipment needs, special education law, social security, childcare, counseling, specific disabilities, or alternative education. Call the Direction Service main number (686-5060) and you will be connected to an available person who will help you with your questions. Information Services continues to be a part of www.TheLane.net, an online database of social service agencies in Lane County. TheLane contains the information from the Direction Service Resource Information Base and from Whitebird's Help Book.



The Parent HelpLine (485-5211) offers assistance with many of the questions that arise when parenting young children. Parent Educators respond directly to these calls that deal with issues like biting, discipline, or sibling rivalry, or patch them through to partner agencies like Direction Service for specialized information and assistance.

Free Developmental Screening

EC CARES is a publicly funded early intervention/early childhood special education program for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children in Lane County. It provides parent education and home visits, parent-toddler groups and preschool services to children experiencing delays in their development. *Parents who have concerns about their child's development may call for a free developmental screening. (541) 346-2578*

On February 8th over 250 attendees celebrated an unforgettable evening of hilarious fun and laughter as we held the Direction Service 4th Annual Celebrity Roast at the Valley River Inn. Our two distinguished Celebrities, Jenny Ulum and Sid Voorhees, got roasted and lambasted by an all-star cast of Roasters and Emcees, *Rick Dancer (KEZI 9) and Dennis Nakata (Magic 94.5)*. The All-Star Roasters included: *Bill Barrett, Diana Bray & Randy Thwing, Staci & John Franklin and Kelli Steele, Dave Funk & Anne Marie Levis, Chris Ulum, and Alan Yordy.*

FOURTH ANNUAL
**CELEBRITY
ROAST**

JENNY ULUM

SID VOORHEES



WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 8TH 2006
VALLEY RIVER INN

PRESENTING EVENT HOSTS:



Thanks to the generosity of event hosts, Eagle's View Property Management & Newman's Fish Company, and event sponsors, Umpqua Bank, KEZI 9 & Magic 94.5, as well as other event contributors, the Celebrity Roast is an event that is continuing to grow in popularity year after year. Particular thanks for their "behind-the-scenes" efforts to those who volunteered their invaluable time to make this event a success!!! — Marc Evans (pianist), James Cloutier (caricatures), Dan Welton (photography), the Direction Service Board of Directors and our dedicated staff!

If you are interested in getting involved or in sponsorship opportunities for our 5th Annual Celebrity Roast please contact our Director of Development, Roger Durant at (541) 686-5060.

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Celebrity Roast participants.



Past Celebrities.

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 please contact
 Roger G. Durant,
 Development Director
 at (541) 284-4737).*

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 www.centralreprographics.com

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