

For immediate Release

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Relief Nurseries study proves greater self-sufficiency for participating families

(Salem, Oregon) - The Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries (OARN) announced today the release of a 2007-08 evaluation study, demonstrating that not only is children's development improving but also the positive impact that participation in Relief Nursery programs had on families' economic condition.

The study, conducted by Northwest Professional Consortium of Portland, showed the near doubling of the number of families that are employed, increasing the number of families that are able to achieve income above poverty level and lowering usage of the emergency room for routine care.

The evaluation study looked at the over 900 children served by the Relief Nurseries in Portland, Eugene, Salem, Bend, Cottage Grove, Pendleton, Medford, Roseburg and Albany. Results from the study demonstrate the remarkable effects of the Relief Nursery model on not only the lives of infants and young children who are at risk of abuse and neglect, but also significantly and positively impacts families. Results demonstrated that the Relief Nursery model of prevention and early childhood intervention improves family functioning, parent-child interactions and engagement in literacy -- all significant steps in normal childhood development.

"These results are truly overwhelming and show that Oregon's investment in early childhood development, child abuse prevention and helping families become self sufficient is working. Every time we prevent a child from being abused or neglected, or help a family stay out of the child protective services system, we are not only realizing a better future for Oregon's children but cost savings for our state budget," said Heather Murphy, OARN President. Murphy also serves as Executive Director of the Family Relief Nursery located in Cottage Grove, serving south Lane and North Douglas counties.

"The evaluation shows that families participating in the Relief Nurseries show improvements in several different areas – parenting, family self-sufficiency, and family stability. Further, children in these families spent less time in foster care than might be expected given statewide patterns, and were more likely to be reunified with their parents," said Beth Green, Ph.D. of Northwest Professional Consortium who conducted the evaluation.

The Relief Nurseries recently suffered a loss of funding in the 2007-09 budget rebalance due to decreased revenues and state budget reductions.

The evaluation study results can be viewed online at:

http://www.oregon.gov/OCCF/Documents/Relief_Nurseries/Executive_Summary_Relief_Nursery_0209.pdf.

The Relief Nursery is a unique model of early intervention, child development and child abuse prevention that was created in Oregon. Families receive a combination of home and center-based services including therapeutic early childhood education, parent education and support groups, crisis respite care, case management and assistance in accessing services and supports in the community. Relief Nurseries are currently operating in Eugene, Portland, Salem, Cottage Grove, Medford, Roseburg, Bend, Pendleton and Albany.