2019 Al Forthan Scholarship Awards $82,000!

On May 1st, the Al Forthan Memorial Scholarship Program awarded $82,000 to 56 Oregon high school seniors whose lives have been impacted by substance abuse. We would not be able to support these outstanding students without your involvement. Dr. Reginal Richardson, Executive Director of the Oregon Alcohol & Drug Policy Commission, was the keynote speaker, and new recipients also heard from Nirvana Kamsard, a 2014 scholarship recipient, about the value of staying focused through their hardships.

Since 2006, we have awarded $575,000! Thank you to everyone who helps make this happen each year.

Breaking out of the chains of poverty that have generationally locked my family into less than desirable conditions has been one of the most significant challenges I have had to overcome. I have always believed the way to break such chains is through the pursuit of education and a strong work ethic. - 2019 Scholarship recipient

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VOA Oregon Awarded Grant for Adult Day Services Sundance Program

VOA Oregon’s Adult Day Services program received a $5,000 grant from the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America (AFA) for the Sundance program. Thanks to the Foundation’s support, Sundance has continued to engage individuals living with progressive cognitive impairments in multi-sensory environments that focus on therapeutic play and movement.

An estimated 76,000 Oregonians suffer from Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. Around 66% of individuals with Dementia experience sundowning, or sundown syndrome, an escalation in neuropsychiatric symptoms such as delusion, hallucinations, and...
From the President and CEO, Kay D. Toran

VOA Oregon had full attendance at its annual board meeting held at our administrative headquarters in Portland on April 9, 2019. This meeting is open to the public and guests from the communities we serve are invited. Highlights of the evening included great program presentations from our Prevention Services and Treatment Services staff and testimony from a former program participant, Craig, who now is an employee of VOA Oregon. Craig elaborated on how important the treatment program was to him as he got his life back on track.

The new officers elected to the board of directors are Chair, Steve Moceri; Vice Chair, Carmen Gaston (Director of Development & Stewardship with the Archdiocese of Portland); Secretary, Adrienne Livingston (Director of Anti-Sex Trafficking Initiatives with WorldVenture); and Treasurer, John Hairston (Chief Administrative Officer, Bonneville Power Administration). VOA Oregon heartily thanks Al Zindel for his fabulous leadership as Chair of our board over the last three years.

Steve Moceri and Kay share an interest in historic and current social justice issues and are eager to collaborate with others. Over the past 33 years, Steve’s career included serving as owner and CEO of Moceri’s Puyallup Chrysler Plymouth; owner and CEO of Moceri Leasing; and owner and property manager of Torre-Alta Investment Company. After selling the automobile dealership in 1997, Steve enrolled at University of Washington Tacoma in the first cohort of the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program. Using his business acumen and knowledge of social work, Steve participated in both direct service and advisory capacities in the start-up of Homeless Coalition and was a consultant for Step By Step. He has also served on community boards, including the University of Washington Tacoma Chancellor’s Advisory Board; American Red Cross, Pierce County Chapter; Pierce College Development Board; and The Family Room of Portland, Oregon, which provides family reunification training. We welcome our new Board Chair!

In response to a request from real estate developer Jordan Schnitzer, VOA Oregon presented a proposal on repurposing the Wapato Jail site as a community wellness center. It was decided that it was best to discontinue the name “Wapato” as we moved forward with creating the Wellness Center, and to identify funding streams to support an integrated health and social services model of human services delivery. The new center would expand services to our community and would be anchored by a 100-bed treatment center for substance abuse and mental health disorders. Other service providers would be invited to house their health and human service offices and clinics at the site. Mr. Schnitzer was highly pleased with the proposal, and we are moving forward to seek funding for this hub of wellness in our community.

Board of Directors | 2019 - 2020

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About the Al Forthan Scholarship
The Al Forthan Memorial Scholarship is awarded to Oregon high school seniors from families affected by alcohol or drug addiction. “Affected by addiction” means you have been raised by a parent or guardian who has experienced addiction, or you have abused alcohol or drugs and are now pursuing recovery.

We believe that a good education can help students feel empowered and can cause change in an individual, in their community, and in their family. We want to create a world where families are not torn apart because of addiction, and in which children are not forced to grow up before their time. The scholarship creates that opportunity for change at the individual level.

The Al Forthan Memorial Scholarship was created in honor of Al Forthan who was the first Men’s Residential Center (MRC) client to go to Portland Community College to become a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

Al Forthan Scholarship $10,000 Award Recipients
Elizabeth Rasmussen — Forest Grove High School (Forest Grove)—$10,000
Justice English — Roosevelt High School (Portland)—$10,000

Another $62,000 was awarded to 54 students!

Children & Family Highlight

Support Our Family Relief Nursery
Help Us Soar: A Campaign for FRN

The Relief Nursery is a place I know that my child is safe. I never have to worry. The staff are professional, compassionate, and my child and I have both learned so much about what it means to be a family. I have also learned what it means to be a parent.
– Family Relief Nursery Parent

The VOA Oregon Family Relief Nursery is an innovative and creative model of working with children and families who are at risk for child abuse or neglect. Our programs provide stability and offer education on becoming a better parent, creating a wellness-centered approach to this long-time social ill.

Help Us Soar: The Campaign for FRN will provide needed funds to help our Family Relief Nursery grow and thrive. We will have the opportunity to widen our service area, reduce waitlist time, and respond to children and families in need more robustly. Your support along with our matching grant from the Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund will help make these dreams a reality! Please visit the campaign website at www.voaor.org/helpussoar. You can also support the campaign by returning the enclosed donation envelope with your gift earmarked for our Family Relief Nursery.

At the VOA Oregon Family Relief Nursery, we strive to walk with children and families, support their nurturing relationships, and strengthen the family unit to increase its stability and resilience. Your support will enable us to grow, serve more clients, enhance our program offerings, and maximize our impact. Please help us soar!
Why do I have to feel this pain? An Essay
By Malik Overton, CPR HEAT graduate, March 18, 2019

If you or a loved one has never struggled with PTSD, you should be thankful. Statistics say lifetime prevalence rates of PTSD in the U.S. population range from 6.8% to 12.3%. Post-traumatic stress isn’t something you just wake up and know you have like the flu or any other illness. You may seem fine, but the smallest things will set off little indicators. Unless you’ve been to a doctor you might not ever know you have it.

Growing up, my dad was merely involved but for the most part, I was raised by my mom and grandmother who tried their best to make men out of 3 boys. Searching for male guidance, me and my older brother looked up to our big cousins and older G’s in our neighborhood — we used to play around like we were gangsters as kids. But, after losing friends, being shot, and even being shot at starts to wear down on you mentally.

My life took a turn when my best friend Billy Moore got killed. It made me cold-hearted. I had so much hurt in my heart my mom sent me to live with my dad in Texas. He got me into boxing to distribute my anger, and put me into one of the best high schools in Dallas, Texas—a white high school. He taught me how to drive and was trying to instill the qualities of a man in me. But as momma’s and granny’s boy, I got homesick and came back to Portland my freshman summer. About a month later, I got shot in my groin right in front of my granny’s house. The doctor’s told me that it was a possibility that I might not function in that area again. Let me tell you, God really blessed me in a way I feel I can’t even repay him. But for weeks I didn’t know and all I could do was rack my brain and ask, why do I have to feel this pain? Why does my family have to struggle? I made it my duty to protect myself and my family after seeing how the treatment from the police for me and my grandma was unjust, and how in the African American community the police are not there to protect and serve.

Letting the emotions I’ve been holding in boil, I not only hurt myself and my family, I also hurt my community. PTSD doesn’t discriminate with race, everybody deals with pain. Sometimes it starts in the home. To the parents out there with little ones or even grandkids, talk to your children. Ask them what’s going on at school and how they are feeling. I think we need more programs and people we can talk to in the schools about how we truly feel without being judged, and we need consistency. Thank you!

Malik received his certificate of completion of the CPR HEAT program with four other cohort members on March 18th at the Multnomah County Offices in SE Portland. He is pictured with his poster. Since 2000, VOA Oregon’s Community Partners Reinvest (CPR) Program seeks to help young men get back on track after incarceration while helping families break the cycle of gang associations.

Alzheimer’s Association Foundation Grant

aggression in the late afternoon and early evening hours. These individuals lose the ability to function independently and rely on significant care from family and community organizations.

The Sundance program engages individuals exhibiting these symptoms in meaningful activities designed to reduce symptoms of their disease while delivering respite to their caregivers. The Alzheimer’s Foundation’s mission is to deliver optimal care and services to individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease and related illnesses, and to educate their families and caregivers. Since 2005 AFA has donated over $20,000 in support of Adult Day Services.
Val at My Little Waiting Room
By Val Sargent

As a volunteer at My Little Waiting Room (MLWR) at St. Vincent Medical Center, I am known as “Teacher Val.” On my first day, I walked into the room and there, on the sofa, sat Joanna. She was pouting, and it looked as if she was about to cry. I sat on the sofa beside her and whispered in her ear, “Will you help me? This is my first day working here. I don’t know anybody, and I feel rather lonely.” She looked at me and asked, “Do you know the song from Frozen?”

Well, all I know about Frozen is that it is some program or movie for children. I sounded very sad as I answered her. “You see, Joanna, I don’t have any little girls or boys at home, so I don’t know any songs that you know. Will you teach me?”

She willingly taught me! Within a few minutes, there was Teacher Val and Joanna sharing the sofa, singing away like a couple of larks.

It is the Joannas at My Little Waiting Room who make it such fun for me to spend four hours each week helping to care for and entertain the children.

I mustn’t forget to tell you about the day Lucas and I were playing. I think he had me dressed up wearing a fireman’s helmet. His mom came in to pick him up and he didn’t want to leave; he was having too much fun. She told him, quite firmly, “Well, next time I tell you we are coming here, I don’t want to hear you complaining that you don’t want to come here. Now that I’ve come to take you home, you don’t want to leave.” He put his head down, looked a little guilty and walked out to meet his mom.

Just another incident that makes my time spent at MLWR such fun. It also makes me feel good that I am helping children (and their parents) through what must be a stressful time for all the family.

VOA Oregon’s Family Relief Nursery Receives Portland Rotary Awards

The Portland Rotary Charitable Trust awarded VOA Oregon a $6,500 grant to fund a security fence for the East Family Relief Nursery. The Rotary funds local nonprofits through capital grants to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged youth. To date they have awarded more than $5.2 million to organizations in our community.

This grant will allow VOA Oregon to construct a fence across the front of the East Family Relief Nursery, ensuring the continued safety and comfort for over 100 children served each year. FRN previously received support from the Rotary in 2012 for the Seed to Table therapeutic gardening project. The Rotary’s Domestic Violence Solutions Committee also annually donates gift cards for clients served by Home Free. VOA Oregon is honored by this new partnership with the Rotary Club!  

Learn more about FRN at WWW.VOAOR.ORG/FAMILY-RELIEF-NURSERY
Swinerton Builders

This experience has taught me how invaluable human interaction is. It might be just an hour, but during that hour we’re able to step away from technology and form real connections with a group of individuals that seem to be often overlooked by society. Every volunteer experience at Lambert House is also a reminder in being grateful. Some of these clients have been dealt a pretty tough hand and every time I see them, they’re still laughing, smiling, and enjoying life to the fullest.

– Andrea, Swinerton Builders

In 2017, Andrea found Lambert House through Hands On Greater Portland to set up a volunteer opportunity for the team at Swinerton Builders for their company-wide Fall Giving Challenge. During their time at Lambert House, the Swinerton team helped with chair exercises, music with Robert (a music therapist), and had lunch with clients. This experience at Lambert House was only the beginning.

As one of our Adult Day Centers, Lambert House offers daytime respite services for caregivers and provides a supportive, therapeutic, and empowering environment for seniors and adults with a variety of health-related needs. When volunteers like the Swinerton team spend time with clients, it creates a community for them and provides an invaluable feeling of connection. This connection with Swinerton continued beyond their first visit.

Since the 2017 challenge, the team has visited Lambert House every month to host monthly bingo, and they sponsor the client holiday party. Andrea and the team individually select gifts for clients, and provide gingerbread house building as a holiday activity. “We have many company partnerships that we value, but from day one Swinerton has always been different,” explains Crissy, the Activity Coordinator for Lambert House. “Swinerton has done an amazing job connecting with our clients. They are thoughtful and have so much fun when they are here. They really enrich the community at Lambert House and are a huge part of our culture.”

I love watching Lambert’s clients select their bingo prizes. They’re always excited, and careful to pick just the right one. Lambert’s clients are clearly a close-knit group and care for one another. – Karie, Swinerton Builders

For the Fall Giving Challenge, Swinerton employees collect donations or volunteer their time at a local non-profit. The winning group receives a grant from The Swinerton Foundation to go to the charity of their choice. In 2017, this team won the challenge and The Swinerton Foundation awarded $10,360 to Lambert House.

I’ve always thought of organizations like these in the abstract. I know that non-profits exist, and I know they do a lot of good. But it was a different experience to see real people who want to dedicate their time to helping others who can no longer care for themselves. It gives me hope for the future. – Sonia, Swinerton Builders

From all of us at VOA Oregon, thank you to Swinerton and their staff for giving your time and support to our community at Lambert House.

Learn more about Lambert House at WWW.VOAR.ORG/ADULT-DAY-SERVICES
Therapeutic Art at WRC
An Interview with Candyce Scott

For over five years, Residential Counselor Candyce Scott has been providing art programming for the participants at VOA Oregon’s Women’s Residential Center (WRC).

With a degree in both psychology and art, Candyce uses therapeutic art as a model for health and healing for these women who have experienced a lot of trauma. Knowing the traumatic histories of the participants, Candyce works to focus on projects that will not be a trigger, and instead create a foundation of healing for the women of WRC. She often brings multiple projects to each Art Day to facilitate the varying engagement of her students. Candyce explains that for the art classes, “you always have a choice of what activity you would like to participate in.”

Most importantly, Candyce knows how to work with this population in a very intimate way. She is in recovery and was once a client of WRC. She knows first-hand how to heal and help others in their recovery journey from substance abuse and trauma. She gives back to our community in ways that strengthen the women and prepare them to face the tough challenges that lay ahead. She continues to pay it forward with her talent and experience as the Board President and Program Facilitator at The Geezer Gallery, a non-profit 503(c)(3) organization located in Portland. As part of the gallery’s space at Artist’s Repertory Theater her “Steps of Recovery” mobile has been on permanent display.

As a Residential Counselor, Candyce periodically takes part in the recreation trips the women would take to OMSI. While there, the women were able to see Candyce’s own exhibits on display. Sharing her work with the women empowers them to see what they too can accomplish.

The art classes allow for a little bit of encouragement and self-expression that help the participants think beyond the regimen of their program. Candyce has seen time and again that the artwork expands beyond the program at WRC, and contributes to who the women are able to become.

Looking ahead, Candyce would like to expose the women to more art projects, moving outside of craft and towards different modes of art that expand innovation and expression. An important part of therapeutic art is interaction with other people. Getting the women involved in a community-based art engagement project to share their story is part of the process of recovery.

Today you can see the artwork of the WRC clients proudly displayed at the center. Each piece telling the story of the community of women who reside here.

Learn more at:
WWW.SERRINESCULPTURES.COM
WWW.VOAOR.ORG/WOMEN-S-RESIDENTIAL-CENTER
GEEZERGALLERY.COM
Arlene Schnitzer
2019 DePreist Award for Excellence Honoree
Embracing a Culture of Philanthropy

For over 122 years, VOA Oregon’s responsive programs have worked to address local community needs, helping the most vulnerable to thrive. The DePreist Award for Excellence annually honors Oregonians who have exemplified civic values and extraordinary commitment to community.

Please join us
Thursday, September 5, 2019
at the
Portland Art Museum
as we celebrate Arlene’s lifelong achievements and commitment to community and philanthropy!

Sponsorships are available!

For more information about the Awards Gala, and to attend, visit www.voaor.org/DePreistGala or call (503) 595.2001