

**Lincoln Commission on Children & Families**

**April 2, 2010**

*Success Story*

**For the 2008-2013**

**Comprehensive Plan for Children and Families  
Biennial Update**

**Name of program: Lincoln County School District Homeless Education and Literacy Project (LCSD HELP)** This project is designed to increase access to educational and basic need support for the growing number of homeless and runaway youth by building a collaboration of partners working through the LCSD HELP.

**Goal of this project:** LCSD HELP is designed to comprehensively serve homeless youth and families in Lincoln County by increasing support from both the school district and community. Sea Shore Literacy Center serves as the model for HELP. Seashore is non profit Literacy Center, currently operating in South County. LCSD has committed to increase support to develop a HELP in each of the four major population areas of the County. In addition to Sea Shore Literacy Center, a school district supported literacy center operates in Arcadia Elementary School (East) and in a portable building next to Taft Elementary School (North County). A literacy center is under development in the Yaquina View Elementary School (Central County), but is not currently in operation. Each of these centers operates in school buildings that are not currently used for daily classrooms. Each Literacy center is to be staffed by an eight hour per day HELP Advocate. Each area HELP Advocate will provide assistance to homeless students and their families by providing the following services: tutoring, food and clothing, emergency funds for medical care, emergency transportation and housing funds, GED completion, literacy assistance, counseling and connection with other community and governmental resources.

Each HELP advocate will develop partnerships with agencies, community organizations, private or faith based groups and the business community in their local regions. The long term goal is to build community support so that each literacy center can operate as a non-profit.

To support this project, Lincoln Commission on Children & Families has committed the support of a summer AmeriCorp VISTA to assist in the development of the centers.

**Time Period:** January 2008- current

**Background:** The Lincoln County 10- Year Housing Plan for Lincoln County with a Special Focus on Chronic Homelessness, “At Home in Lincoln County”, prioritized the need for Lincoln County to support the school district in making sure “*that children can stay in school independent of their living situation*”. Lincoln County recognized that families with children are the fastest growing population of homeless. The common cause of their homelessness is poverty. A significant number of families with housing vouchers were unable to find housing that is priced within Fair Market Rents. Families were doubling up, putting them at risk of eviction. Youth were leaving home after years of physical and/or sexual abuse, strained relationship, addiction of a family member, and parental neglect.

The Lincoln County School District (LCSD) is a K-12 School System that encompasses six widespread communities, each with their own distinct cultures and needs. In the 2008-09 school year LCSD identified over 484 homeless students spread throughout the county. At nine percent of the total number of students in Lincoln County Schools, this was one of the highest rankings among all of the Oregon Counties for the percentage of homeless youth identified that attended school. Even with these growing numbers, only two staff, with a combined eight hours per day, worked to serve the needs of these homeless youth and their families.

The 10 Year plan, “At Home in Lincoln County” charged the Commission with the development of strategies to address the needs of homeless and runaway youth. The commission partnered with Community Services Consortium (CSC) to develop a successful application for a Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) project grant. LCCF was one of eight funded for eighteen months through a pilot program established by the 2007 session of the state legislature. A RHY Coordinator was hired by CSC and was successful in supporting the homeless liaisons by increasing youth access to basic resources, improving continuity of education, improving safety, expanding partnerships, and increasing community response.

The 2009 Legislature continued funding for the pilot projects, but at a reduced level. Lincoln County’s funds were reduced significantly despite the increased need and successful project. LCSD and LCCF worked collaboratively to continue moving forward in the direction of developing HELP.

**Funding sources:**

- Title I Homeless - LCSD
- Title I ARRA Homeless – LCSD
- Homeless ARRA Funds – LCSD
- Juvenile Crime Prevention - LCCF
- Youth Investment funding – LCCF
- Family Preservation funding - LCCF
- RHY funding from State Commission- LCCF

**Partners:** Lincoln County School District, Members of the 10 Year plan Governance Committee, Community Services Consortium, and Lincoln Commission on Children & Families

**Key Individuals:**

Bill Hall, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners

Joe Novello, Lincoln County School District, Operations Manger/Title Funding Coordinator

Senitila McKinley, Lincoln County School District, Homeless Liaison

Barbara Dougherty, Commission on Children & Families, Director

Jennifer Versteeg, Commission on Children & Families, Program Coordinator

**Outcomes:** LCSD has committed to increasing its homeless FTE's from two .5 FTE's to five 1.0 FTE's. As of this date, the hiring process has begun. The full time Homeless Countywide coordinator will oversee the four homeless outreach workers in the four major population areas of the county. The Outreach workers will assist in building the HELP centers. Each HELP center will provide regional resources and assistance to homeless youth and their families. Assistance will include meeting basic needs first then educational support and connection to other services. As the HELP advocate develops partnerships with agencies, community organizations, private or faith based groups and the business community the community will begin to take an increased ownership of the Literacy Center. This model will enable the eventual transition from a school district driven center to the status non-profit.

LCSD HELP centers will provide:

- 1) educational support including academic tutoring and supporting students in completing high school with a diploma or a GED,
- 2) case management (Youth Service Teams),
- 3) access to resources and assistance with basic needs,
- 4) transportation,
- 5) identification, tracking, and services to unaccompanied youth,
- 6) connection to medical and health services,
- 7) emergency and long term housing.

Local planning process:

- Monthly stakeholder meetings in central County
- Community forums held in north and south County
- Survey of individuals experiencing homelessness
- Research of other models/best practices
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Coalition
- School District partner meetings
- Family Resource Centers established as goal of the Ten Year Housing Plan

Other information:

*"What happens to children has a lifelong impact on them.  
When you see a homeless adult, it is quite possible that they are homeless  
because of people and systems that failed them as children."*

National Alliance to End Homelessness  
*and adopted by Lincoln County Runaway and Homeless Coalition*

Please contact the Lincoln Commission on Children & Families with comments, questions, and suggestions regarding this success story. We welcome your interest in becoming involved with the Commission's work:

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