



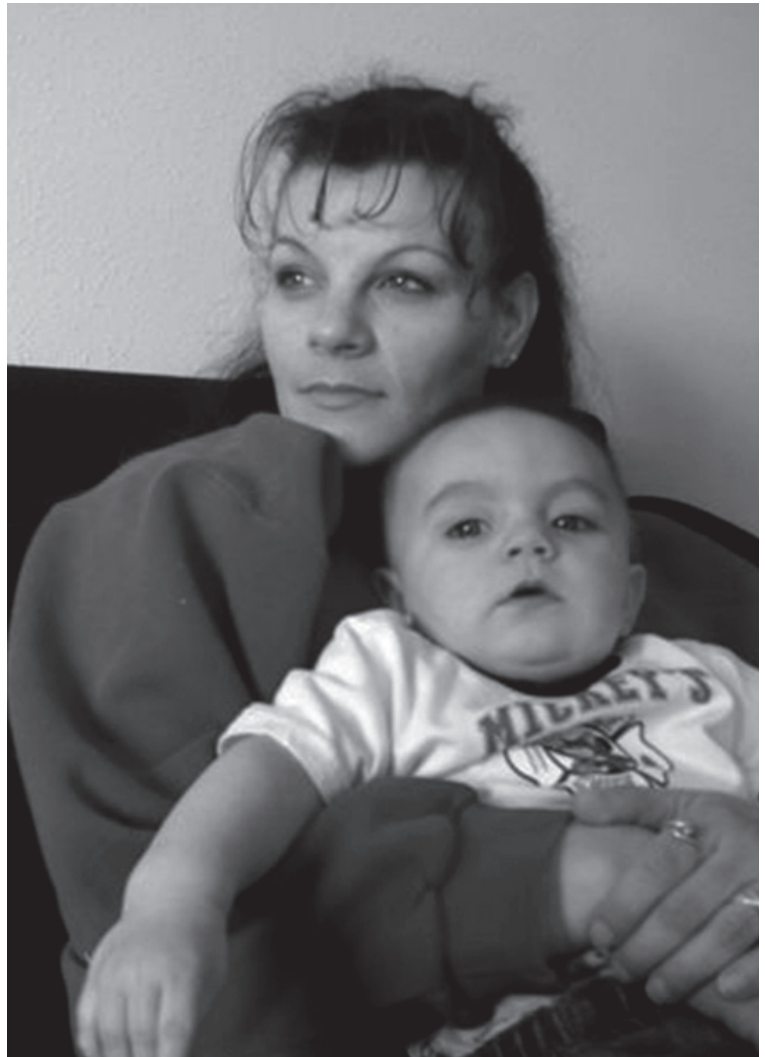
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Another YW Housing Success Story

In July of 2006, I arrived at the YWCA to apply for YW Housing. I had been homeless for over a year and using drugs for about 16 years. During that time I had three children, and because of my addiction I was unable to take care of them and they were all put up for adoption.

In February of 2006, I finally got clean and sober and moved into a local shelter. In May I gave birth to my son, Dakota. I didn't know what I was going to do when I had my son; I figured I would have to give him up for adoption like all of my other children. But once I saw Dakota and held him in my arms I decided right then and there that I was going to grow up, change my life and take care of my son. I felt overwhelmed by all the obstacles that I faced. I had no where to live, no job, no education and could not stay with any family or friends. At the hospital someone directed me the shelter and helped my get in. Once I was there I stayed for 2 ½ months. At the shelter I learned about YW Housing and applied for their transitional housing program. I met with a case manager and waited to hear what would happen. Shortly afterwards, I was accepted into the program and moved into YW Housing. I was so happy, especially when I found out that a dear friend, Rose, from the shelter also lived there.

I lived in transitional housing for about 7 months while I started outpatient treatment, attended 12-step meetings, completed a parenting class, and



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Shawntell and Dakota Long

Success

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finished Ready to Rent. I got a referral to work with Ernie, through Child Protective Services, and he became and very important part of me and Dakota's life. Not only did he help me become a better parent, he also encouraged me to start pursuing my GED—which is something I thought I would never accomplish because I have a severe learning disability and am very challenged by reading and writing. Today I have passed the pre-GED classes in math, reading and writing. I am currently taking more GED prep classes in Science, Social Studies, Literature, and Essay writing. I go to school 5 days a week and I absolutely love it! It keeps me busy and has done wonders for improving my self-esteem and self-confidence.

In March of 2007, my son and I moved into permanent housing at Aurora Place. We have our own apartment and I love my independence sense of community there. Dakota started day care a few months ago and he loves it! I am still connected to YW Housing through my case manager and I also participate in the Mentoring program. I have a wonderful mentor, Jamie, and we get together often for fun and support.

One final accomplishment I would like to share is that in July of 2007, I passed the written exam to get my driver's license. This is something I have been terrified of trying because of my learning disability. However, with the support and encouragement of my case manager, maternity support specialist, and Child Protective Services I have accomplished many things I never thought I would achieve.

—*Shawntell Long*

Kaci, an Alki Middle School student, gives the gift of books to our houses!

My Girl Scout Silver Award Project was a book and bookshelf drive. I got over 1000 books and 7 bookcases. I gave these shelves to Y housing units.

My motivation for my Girl Scout Silver Project came from a few places. One was that I have always loved to read, and I wanted people less fortunate to still have just as much reading materials as I have. Also, children are our future so having them get an interest in reading could really benefit everyone sooner or later. Mostly I wanted kids to have something educational but fun to do when they are home and just really bored.

I hope my project has benefited many people and will for a long time to come!

—*Kaci*



Thank You, Insurance Professionals

The Insurance Professionals of Southwest Washington have, again, generously given scholarship money to YW Housing and our residents! This summer, their generosity helped pay for:

- tuition for an Associate's Degree,
- Nursing Assistance Licensing fees,
- tuition for a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, and
- a GED test.

Thank you to the Insurance Professional of Southwest Washington for continuing to believe in the women of YW Housing!

DASA/Clark County Parenting continues to make a difference in YWH residents lives!

Three graduates of YW Housing's DASA funded parenting class met recently to discuss the positive impact the class has had on their lives. Katrina, Crystal and Emily shared a house in YW Housing's transitional housing program. All three are in recovery from substance abuse. Katrina has a newborn daughter and recently regained placement of her two-year old son from foster care. Katrina moved to permanent housing at the end of September. Crystal participates in Family Treatment Court, is involved with Child Protective Services and visits with her eleven month old twin daughters regularly. Emily just gave birth to her first child.

All three women agreed that the parenting class was invaluable in teaching them life long parenting skills. They said they learned how to regulate their emotions in stressful situations so that they could parent their children in an appropriate manner. They said they learned the ages and stages of child development so that they would know what is appropriate behavior for each developmental stage as their children grow. They also learned how to provide nurturing and structure for their children.

Crystal said, "I am the mother of 11 month old twin girls. I have twenty hours of visitation weekly. The thing I found most useful from the parenting class is the affirmations and praises. Since the time I have with my children is limited, it is important for me to let them know how much they are loved."

Emily's son is a newborn. She said, "The thing that is most useful for me is the emotion regulation. I now know that when he is crying, it is OK for me to step out of the room for a couple of minutes, take a few deep breaths and go back in and he is still OK. I am able to approach him from a better place." Emily also thinks that the experience of taking the parenting class together with her housemates was important for all three of them. She said, "We help each other with our kids and now we come from a common understanding of good parenting skills. The class has really helped us to be able to help each other. We have bonded with one another and we really have a sense of being a family within our house."

Katrina has a two year old son and a newborn daughter. She chose to write the following essay to share with you:

When I moved into YW Housing's transitional housing program, I was invited to attend their parenting class. I was unsure what to expect, but I was pleasantly surprised at how many things I learned. The parenting I received was absolutely horrific. When I gave birth to my first son, I knew I wanted things to be better for him but I didn't know where to turn so I began to read, picking up bits and pieces of information as I went along. In my life I have not always made the best choices and at the age of 31 I gave birth to my fourth son who tested positive for crack cocaine. He was immediately placed into foster
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Board of Director's Updates:

There have been exciting changes for the YW Housing Board of Directors in the past few months. We said our heartiest thanks to Jennie McCartney for her year of service as our Board President—Jennie was a fantastic president and we were sorry to see her tenure come to an end. However, it was with great excitement that we welcomed Cheri Meyerhofer to that role. Cheri is the Vice President of Human Resources at Southwest Washington Medical Center and brings an incredible amount of experience to our organization's top position.

Jim Massey, was elected as Board Vice President. Jim's dedication to YWH and his motivation to help this agency move forward makes him a great choice for this role.

Perhaps most excitingly, we have welcomed two new board members to our organization: Ken Bello and Marién Vera have committed to helping to guide YW Housing! Welcome!

Alpha Club at Alki Middle School continues

The Alpha Club at Alki middle school has members with career aspirations like marine biology, environmental science, politics, teaching, interior design, law, medicine and acting. These middle-schoolers are smart, driven, and passionate at a very young age and they generously volunteer their time in the community to help others. Their teacher/club sponsor, Linda Meade, has long been a mentor with the Women Helping Women program at YW Housing and has been instrumental in a partnership that works wonders for both the middle school students and the children in YW Housing.

For several years now, Alki middle school kids have buddied up with a child living in YW Housing. Both the YW Housing child and the Alki student learn about each other and find similarities and friendships that prove fruitful for both.

This summer Alki students came to a YW Housing resident BBQ, befriended their buddies, played games with them and generally got to know them. In the processes they discerned what special gift they might enjoy and then figured out how to get each buddy a meaningful gift. As some of

the Alki students were able to articulate, the gifts were less about getting the “stuff” but about the process of learning about each other and helping to make someone feel special.

The responses to the experience had a common theme: they loved it! Megan Newell (our Director) interviewed the Alki about their response to the project and was overwhelmed by the positive, mature responses the students had about their experiences:

Claire Rifkin said, “The kids were so smiley and so happy, it warmed my heart.” Jessie Hoi said that she “didn’t want the evening to end,” while Sam Reel said that she felt a real sense of achievement about the fact that she was able to help make someone feel special. Austin felt joyful at being able to help someone and Shea DeWale said that she had an “unbelievable feeling of happiness” and that was “one of the most rewarding things she had ever done.



to give to YW Housing



Support YW Housing through Divine Consign!

Support YW Housing while you redecorate! At Divine Consign you can donate home furnishings and recommend that a portion of the proceeds be shared with YW Housing.

Divine Consign sells, consigns and accepts donations of upscale home furnishings at their store at 904 Main Street, downtown Vancouver.

There is no cost to the nonprofit, and no cost to the donor to pick up furniture. Divine Consign is a Nonprofit Network program.

Hours: 10:00 - 5:30 Mon - Sat

Info: 360-695-6443

Web site: www.npnnw.org



Parenting

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care. When he was two years old and I had moved into YW Housing, I was able to begin his transition home while I was attending the parenting class. I was taught some very basic things that I had never known like what is 'normal' for a child at each stage of development. I learned about different ways to discipline my children that are healthy. I even have information on communicating effectively, which is great with your children but is also applicable to all adult relationships. I am happy to report that my son has been returned to me permanently. I enjoyed the parenting class so much that I chose to take it a second time. I have been given many new tools for my parenting toolbox. For that, I will always be grateful. I truly believe that because of this parenting class I will be a better mom and a better person all around. We are three moms parenting children in the same household. We help each other and it is nice that we are all now on the same page after attending the parenting class together. It has really brought us closer together.

Message from the President

Autumn is here with its changing colors. YW Housing looks back on a year of change, and looks forward to further changes in the coming months. Our Executive Director, Megan Newell, celebrated her first year anniversary at the end of the summer. The Board and the staff continue to be inspired by her energy, creativity, and dedication in providing housing and services to YW's clientele.

Our most significant challenge this coming year will be to find a new home for the staff of YW Housing. The YWCA has provided our agency space and services for a nominal cost since its inception. The YWCA is growing, as is YW Housing, and we are both in need of additional space. YW Housing is actively looking for space to move into late this summer. This also means infrastructure items like telephones, copiers, fax machines... Megan and the board have a challenge!

We have a small, but active board of directors. Our members have lots of energy and a strong desire to see YW Housing succeed in meeting the needs

of women and children in our community. As government funds become more difficult to obtain, our small agency, like many others, is looking to the private sector for assistance. Stay tuned for some creative fund raising efforts by YW in the spring!

I am proud to be part of such an active and vital agency in our community. Thank you for your continued support!!

—*Cheri Meyerhofer*

March 1, 2007

Dear Ms. Victoria & Ms. Teri,

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed and what I gained from attending the Ready to Rent classes. These classes have been a godsend, as well as proving to be a crucial tool in assisting me in getting my life organized and back on track. Thank you!

In closing, I would like to again thank you and all those that make RTR possible. The value of these classes is much greater than just getting a certificate to gain housing. For this person it was a

needed jumpstart to change old habits, a boost in courage to find the strength and esteem to do so, and an everlasting tool to assist me in continuing to strive for the success and excellence that I now realize I possess.

Ready to Rent is a definite step in assisting all that are truly Ready to Live! As least for me it was. A million thanks to you all!

*Sincerely and Gratefully,
Roberta Tyler*

Welcome Teri Owen to Her New Role!

Some of you may recognize Teri from her previous (and continuing) role as our skillful Ready to Rent assistant. She has consistently received rave reviews for her interpersonal skills, her public speaking ability, her professionalism and her passion for what she does. Now, thanks to CDBG grants from Clark County and the City of Vancouver (in conjunction with our other, ongoing funding sources,) we have been able to hire Teri as a full time employee for YW Housing. Teri spends her days providing resident services, coordinating our parenting class, our group education class and continuing with her work on Ready to Rent. She is a wonderful addition to the YW Housing staff, please join us in welcoming Teri to the YW Housing lineup!

Director's Note

As I write this, the first real rains are arriving in the Vancouver. Whenever the weather turns toward the darker, colder months, I feel a certain urgency in the air. I don't know if it's the shrill laughter of children walking to their new school year, the sense that another year is more than half gone or the weather itself that renews my vigor. Perhaps it's simply the idea that, while at no time is it okay to be homeless, winter can be the cruelest time to be without a safe, warm place to call home.

In this newsletters, you'll read about some of the successes that YW Housing program participants have had. You'll be touched by Shawntell's story of recovery and self-sufficiency, you'll see notes from real Ready to Rent participants who have done the work of change in their lives and you'll see that the lives of middle-school volunteers have been changed by the faces of YW Housing's children. And, so, during this blustery season, I want to take a moment to thank the residents of YW Housing, both present and past. I am continually humbled by your strength and courage. Thank you for helping YW Housing find its direction, thank you for allowing us to be a part of your lives, thank you for sharing your stories and thank you for coming in from out of the cold.

YW Housing Mission Statement

To provide affordable housing linked with community services to formerly homeless women and their children in Clark County.

YW Housing combines a variety of housing services, coupled with intensive case management, to assist clients in moving toward self-sufficiency. We offer transitional housing, permanent rental housing, and a rental assistance program.

All residents are committed to goals and life plans that move them closer to economic and social self-sufficiency and family reunification.

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