



Spring-Summer 2008 | Volume 4 | Issue 1

## Resident Spotlight: Georgia McClary

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“I know that where I was two years ago and where I am today is completely different.”

This is how Georgia McClary began our interview.

Two years ago, Georgia McClary found herself in a sticky situation. She had outstanding DUI charges, an abusive boyfriend, and nowhere to turn. One night, an argument with her partner turned violent and the police were called. Georgia's warrants were discovered and she was put in jail – she'd finally hit rock bottom.

“I sat in jail for three days and at that point decided I needed to do something different.” She said, “I needed someplace that was safe.” That's when YW Housing stepped in.

Jackie Parker was Georgia's first case worker. Jackie was able to see Georgia's potential and drive to succeed. “Jackie took a risk with me,” Georgia noted as she recalled her first week in the program. Georgia moved into Hyde Park House and began the process of getting her life together. She had found her “someplace safe,” but that was only the beginning; she still had jail time to serve.

“I sat in jail for another 75 days, but I had a place to come home to. There is something to be said about stability.”



*Georgia McClary*

Completing her term in jail, Georgia was allowed to move back into YW Housing. The stability and security she found allowed her to take care of the other “stuff” that had been disregarded for so many years. Her first accomplishment was to finish the Displaced Homemakers Program at Clark College. She then went on to complete YW Housing's Ready to Rent program while attending her two, weekly recovery meetings and outpatient treatment. During this period of achievement and growth, Georgia was on electronic home confinement—trying to reach her goals while

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## Spotlight

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attached to the not-so-trendy ankle bracelet. With the help of YW Housing women, however, Georgia made it work. "One of the gifts about being in YW Housing," she said, "is the support from other women."

In January 2007 Georgia started full-time at Clark College pursuing a two-year degree in Business Accounting. She even went the extra mile to work

part-time as a work study student. Her new caseworker, Valerie Norris guided her to set goals and accomplish them. Perhaps the greatest achievement of all was that Georgia was finally able to reconnect with her family after 4 years. She flew to Minnesota and met her two grandchildren for the first time. Georgia's determination paired with Valerie's assistance fueled the fire for success.

Georgia's time in transitional housing is coming to a close, and she's getting

ready to move into permanent housing. She has spent two very successful years transforming her life and becoming the woman she always knew she could be. She will receive her A.A. in Business Accounting at the end of the quarter and is transferring to WSU Vancouver this fall. When I asked Georgia how she felt about moving out of YW Housing, she responded, "It's gonna be hard to leave. I'm ready, but it's gonna be hard."

"I'm doing things today that I never would have done—things I knew I was capable of but didn't have the foundation for: a place to sleep, a place to prepare food, a home to come home to."

—Georgia McClary

## Staff Update

Sarah Bowens has taken on the position of Re-Entry Specialist for our new Re-Entry Pilot Program. As many people would say, "Sarah was born for this position." Her commitment to the program and strong work ethic are exactly what is needed to make the program a success. Congratulations, Sarah.

## YW Housing Awarded Meyer Memorial Trust Grant!

For several years it has been increasingly evident that in order to thrive in our community and continue to provide services to our residents, YW Housing must implement a development plan. There is a need to decrease our dependence on government grants and become more self-sufficient in our ability to fund programs and expand our reach.

In mid-December, we completed the Meyer Memorial Trust (MMT) Grant application in and, after a process of phone interviews and a site visit, were thrilled to have our request funded. The Capacity Building Grant is structured for three years and is designated to help us execute our new fund development strategy. The first year of our new Development Director's salary (as well as most of our marketing costs) is paid for by MMT.

In each subsequent year a decreasing amount is paid for by MMT with the expectation that our development efforts pay off and allow us to absorb more of the expenses.

The new Development Director position represents a fantastic milestone for YW Housing, and we anticipate that it will help propel us into new self-sufficiencies and enhance our ability to serve more women and families in Clark County.

MMT was founded when Mr. Fred Meyer (founder of Fred Meyer stores) passed away and set up a philanthropic trust to help his native community of Oregon and Clark County, Washington. For more information on Meyer Memorial Trust please visit [www.mmt.org](http://www.mmt.org).

# Re-Entering Society, Reclaiming Self-Sufficiency

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**A**t the beginning of the year, YW Housing was awarded one of four state-wide offender re-entry program grants through the State of Washington. The Re-Entry Housing Pilot Program (RHPP) allows us to take women coming directly from prison and place them into scattered site, privately owned apartments and group homes with rent subsidy and case management. Through a coordinated effort with the Department of Corrections, each client is given the tools (and in some cases the funds) to systematically work through their goal plans. Clients of the program pay an increasing amount of rent as time goes by so that by the time they leave the program, they are paying 100% of the rent and maintaining self-sufficiency.

The RHPP is a very exciting pilot program that gives YW Housing the chance to prove that it is indeed better for women coming out of prison to go into housing than it is for them to be homeless. Sounds like an easy case to prove!

Below is a story from one of our new RHPP participants, Kimberly.

“As I sat in prison, counting the days until I could touchdown back into society, my mind raced with thoughts of a new life. It was time for me to put the past behind and make a fresh start. As an inmate in a correctional institution, I spent my days in an intensive drug and behavioral modification program followed by countless, sleepless nights of planning my release back into the community. No matter how much self talk you do, nothing can prepare you for the initial shock of regaining your freedom. All of a sudden my stomach felt nauseous, anxiety was at

an all-time high, and my head screamed with emotions. After being in a controlled environment for two years and being told what to do and what rules to follow, I was at a loss. Everything changed as soon as I walked out the gates; I suddenly had choices.

“I knew I needed to make choices that counted for something good rather than returning to a life of drugs and criminal activity. I was introduced to the Re-Entry Housing Pilot Program through my parole officer, Amy Baddgor. Initially I had been residing at The Oxford House which required me to pay \$325 per month. This doesn’t sound like an unreasonable amount to most people, but I can tell you that most male and female offenders coming out of prison only have the \$40 gate money that is issued to them upon release. It wasn’t going to work.

“I met with a lady named Sarah Bowens, who interviewed me for the program. After speaking with me briefly, she determined that I was eligible for her program and began explaining the rules and guidelines I needed to follow. My new life was about to begin.

“Today I live in a beautiful, re-entry house shared by another lady and her son. We keep close contact with our case manager and discuss our needs and wants, but most importantly we have support and understanding. The Re-Entry Program provides aid with rent, utilities, and job searches, and it encourages us to keep a strong recovery. I am truly grateful for this program because it gives me the support I need to have a successful future.”

—Kimberly Simpson



*Patty Katz and RHPP resident Kimberly Simpson*

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## Director's Note

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2008 has already been a year of growth and adventure for YW Housing! I am so pleased with our ability to serve more residents through our Re-Entry Housing Pilot Program, and I am thrilled that we've been able to hire a full-time Development Director to help YW Housing become a more self-sufficient agency. Through the myriad of changes, we've continued to succeed at providing an impressive array of case management, property management and rental assistance programs that have made YW Housing such a strong force for positive change in our community.

As we look forward to the upcoming months, we anticipate even more transformation; we will soon be moving our administrative offices. For the past twelve years, YW Housing has been the beneficiary of an incredible amount of support from our sister agency, YWCA Clark County. We have shared space and services allowing both of our organizations to develop and expand. It is only through their generosity and collaboration that we have been able to grow strong and vibrant, and it is with bittersweet anticipation that we will move from these offices into a larger space of our own. For YW Housing staff, clients, and board, this is an important time of looking ahead while honoring our strong roots and the people who have helped us become what we are today.

We will continue to contract with YWCA Clark County for our financial service and maintain our solid relationship. More than that, both organizations are strongly committed to collaborating on our well-matched missions, and I suspect that the coming years will bring joint projects that will be of great benefit to Vancouver and Clark County.

—Megan Newell

## Board of Directors Update

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New faces and new energy have been added to YW Housing's Board of Directors. Sue Kusch and Cozette Tyler joined the board this spring. Sue has worked at Clark College for 17 years and is currently an Eligibility Instructor. She is passionate about helping marginalized communities—especially those living in poverty. Cozette is a student at Clark College, working on a degree in political science, and she is also an intern for U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell. She is passionate about advocating for low income women and families and is very empowered by the mission of YW Housing.

Welcome Sue and Cozette!

### Board Members

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Cheri Meyerhofer, President  
Jim Massey, Vice President  
Ginger Smith, Treasurer  
Mary Boettcher, Secretary

Ken Bello  
Barbara Caggiano  
Sue Kusch  
Jennie McCartney  
Becky Merritt  
Avaly Mobbs  
Debbie Runyan  
Cozette Tyler  
Marién Vera

### Staff Members

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Sarah Bowens, Re-entry Specialist  
Martha Brett,  
Landscape Maintenance and  
Mentoring Program Coordinator  
Victoria Clevenger, Ready to Rent/  
Story Street Coordinator  
Debby Dover, Asset Manager  
Lisa Erickson, Unit Preparation  
David Gilmore,  
Housing Services Assistant  
Megan Maschmann,  
Development Director  
Megan Newell, Executive Director  
Valerie Norris,  
Case Manager Coordinator  
Teri Owen, Resident Services  
Coordinator and  
Ready to Rent Assistant

## YW Housing Mission Statement

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As a community based non-profit we exist to foster self-sufficiency for at-risk women and families through affordable housing linked with community services.

# YW Housing's First Annual Resident Celebration!

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*Photos from the First Annual Resident Celebration, left to right: Lauren and Jayden Zuver signing in; Kids' Table; Tracy and Alexis Watson.*

**O**n Thursday, April 24th, YW Housing Board of Directors hosted the First Annual Resident Celebration at the Water Resource Center. The event was geared toward recognizing the women and families served by YW Housing and honoring them for their hard work and determination. It was also a chance for Board Members and staff to eat dinner, socialize, and get to know the faces of the families we serve.

One fun feature of the event was the children's table. The table was covered in white paper, allowing the kids to go wild with crayons and markers. There were games and activities to keep their little hands busy. At one

point, Board Member Jim Massey was caught teaching the kids how to make paper airplanes. I'm sure their future teachers will appreciate that!

And while the kids table was fun and the dinner was delicious, the best part of the evening came toward the end when many courageous women took the microphone and told their amazing success stories. One of these women disclosed that before coming to YW Housing she didn't have anything. She didn't have a job, a home, or even clothing. One thing that stuck out in her mind was that when she moved into YW Housing she was shocked to find matching sheets on her bed—that was a first for her.

The poignancy of the evening reminded everyone of the important work done by YW Housing and the continued need to help women and families in our community. When commenting on the evening, one staff member noted, "I was amazed at how many people got up to share and make themselves vulnerable. It was beautiful."

The First Annual Resident Celebration was a huge success and will indeed be returning next year. Nobody knows what future celebrations will look like, but we are certain that they will develop and mature into annual events that everyone looks forward to attending.

## A special thanks to Walsh Construction for your sponsorship and support.

## Three Board Members Retire after Six Years of Service

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In 2002, Becky Merritt, Mary Boettcher, and Jennie McCartney began volunteering on the YW Housing Board of Directors. They each came equipped with the essential characteristics of a good board member: commitment to the community, passion for social change, and spot-on sense of humor. Through incredible leadership and dedication to the cause, these three women helped steer YW Housing from a successful, young agency into a mature, self-sufficient organization. Now, six years, 100+ meetings, and thousands of service hours later, the three are nearing the end of their tenure and while we would love to change the bylaws to keep them on the Board, we must say adieu and send them off with good wishes.

Q&A sessions with each retiring board member can be found on page 7. Their responses are honest and insightful. Thank you Becky, Mary, and Jennie for all you've done.

## Welcome David Gilmore

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David Gilmore is a student at Clark College where he is taking classes that will lead to his ultimate goal of becoming an elementary school teacher. David works for us part-time as the Housing Services Assistant which means that he is doing some of the behind-the-scenes work to help residents apply for and succeed in transitional housing. He is also putting his computer skills to work by installing new computers in several of our houses and will soon be teaching a computer class at Aurora Place. David

is an energetic, eager addition to our staff. In addition to working for us, David also works part-time at a local law firm.

David was once a baseball player for Hudson's Bay High School and is actively engaged in the community. When asked, "Why should we hire you?" during his interview, David swiftly responded, "Because I'm a hard worker with a charming personality and a great smile!" He was right. Join us in welcoming David!

## Welcome Megan Maschmann

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We are very excited to introduce Megan Maschmann, our new Development Director. She comes to us from the YWCA Clark County where she was the Resource Development Coordinator for the CASA program. Prior to that, Megan received her BA in Humanities (English and Sociology) and a Professional Writing Certificate from WSU Vancouver.



*Maschmann*

Megan brings an infectious sense of passion, energy and vision to this new position. She began her position in late April and has already completed an ambitious list of accomplishments that includes a completed grant application, a brand new database, in-kind donations for residents and the lion's

share of this very newsletter. Megan's job is to work with board and staff to create a fund development program for YW Housing that will allow this organization to become more self-sufficient and able to weather the inevitable ups and downs of government funding cycles.

There are many reasons that we decided Megan was the perfect fit for this position; she has excellent technical writing skills, is very much an outgoing people-person, enjoys networking, has a terrific sense of humor and can name all 44 of Idaho's counties in alphabetical order. Please join us in welcoming Megan to her new role and to the YW Housing family.

# Volunteer Spotlight

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## MARY BOETTCHER

Mary teaches Language Arts and Social Studies at Wy'east Middle School.



Boettcher

### What initially drew you to the program?

My friend, Kathy Massey, was on the board, and I was impressed with her enthusiasm for the work of YW Housing.

### What did you like most about being on the board?

I most liked being able to watch this organization grow steadily over the last six years and to work with others to help that growth along.

**Besides volunteering on the board, what do you like to do in your free time?** I like to read, travel, and spend time developing characters for on-line role-playing worlds.

**What inspires you about YWH?** The women who come to YWH and walk the courageous journey of getting their lives going in a different, more positive direction. Nothing is more inspirational to me.

**Do you plan to stay involved with YWH?** I will be available to help in any way I can.

**What is your vision/hope for the future of YWH?** My hope is that YWH will continue to grow in new and positive ways. I have no doubt that with the incredible dedication of the director and staff, the women they serve, and the board of directors, this will happen.

**Any other comments?** Thank you for having given me the opportunity to serve on the board for the last six years. It has been an honor.

## JENNIE MCCARTNEY

Jennie is the Clinic Administrator at Rehabilitation Medicine Associates, PC in Portland.



McCartney

### What initially drew you to the program?

I was asked by the original Founders of YW Housing to be on the Board. I had been on a Board for a similar program back in Ohio, thus I was very interested in YW Housing and wanted to contribute to their efforts.

### What did you like most about being on the board?

The enthusiasm and commitment of all involved with making YWH a very effective, successful and rewarding program for women and children who walk through YWH doors.

**Besides volunteering on the board, what do you like to do in your free time?** I love outdoor adventure(s): kayaking, camping, snowshoeing, hiking.

**What inspires you about YWH?** The clients who speak so highly and passionately about the program in terms of how it changed their lives, as well as the commitment and dedication of YWH Staff. I feel very inspired about the on-going success of the YWH; the leadership is amazing and I am certain YWH will continue to be a model program in the State of Washington.

**Do you plan to stay involved with YWH?** I hope to serve as a volunteer on a committee.

**What is your vision/hope for the future of YWH?** My hope is for continued financial support from generous donors, grants and future housing development. YWH is one life-changing success story after the next, and

it will need on-going resources to continue fulfilling the mission.

**Any other comments?** KUDO's to YWH Staff and Director! They are the real heroes in the success story of YW Housing.

## BECKY MERRITT

Becky is the director of the Displaced Homemaker Program at Clark College.



Merritt

### What initially drew you to the program?

The case managers have been referring residents to the college for years, and through that, I knew the director. She asked me to be on the board because of my work at the college and with the women.

**What did you like most about being on the board?** Being involved with a committed organization

**Besides volunteering on the board, what do you like to do in your free time?** Volunteering and traveling

**What inspires you about YWH?** The success stories that I see every day at the college with the women.

**Do you plan to stay involved with YWH?** If the opportunity arises!

**What is your vision/hope for the future of YWH?** That it continues to help women transition to education, work and successful lives with loved ones.

**Any other comments?** I have been on the board for an amazing six years, and I will miss it. I will still get to see the women come to college, join the Displaced Homemaker Program and meet their educational goals, and that's the best part!



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