

reaching out

The Quarterly Newsletter of Hopelink

WINTER 2010 | Vol. 30, No. 4

Standing Strong

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is Building a Foundation
and a Future

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hopelink

Hopelink's mission is to promote self-sufficiency for all members of our community; we help people make lasting change.

Credits

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Since 1971, Hopelink has served homeless and low-income families, individuals, children, seniors and people with disabilities. Hopelink services include food, shelter, homelessness prevention, family development, transportation, adult literacy and employment services. Hopelink's mission is to promote self-sufficiency for all members of our community; we help people make lasting change.

For more information about Hopelink and its services, call 425.869.6000 or visit the website at www.hope-link.org.

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425.378.7977

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www.hope-link.org



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Hopelink is too. Let your friends, family and colleagues know that you support the work of Hopelink. Join us by searching Hopelink on these sites.



About Hopelink

How Hopelink Helps

At no other time since its founding in 1971 have Hopelink's services and programs meant so much to so many in east and north King County. Even in more prosperous times, Hopelink meaningfully touches the lives of more than 50,000 people – families, senior citizens, people with disabilities – every year. The most vulnerable in our community turn to Hopelink for help with meeting their basic needs not only for food and housing, but also for transportation to medical and other critical appointments, and support in paying their heating bills, improving their literacy skills, and building life and job-readiness skills.

Last year we served thousands of families with food during the holidays. In addition, more than 4,500 children received gifts or through holiday gift rooms. In these gift rooms, clients selected gifts specifically for each of their children or grandchildren. Through this program, children who would otherwise not receive holiday gifts were able to experience the joy and happiness of the holidays.

Major Services

Family and Emergency Services

Hopelink's five centers in Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Shoreline, and Sno-Valley serve as community resources providing emergency and long-term services, together with information and referrals to thousands of people seeking access to medical care, employment, housing, counseling and other critical support. The centers also provide emergency financial assistance, food banks, energy assistance and health care.

Transportation & Interpreter Services

The lack of reliable transportation can prevent people from finding and reaching jobs, health care, education, social services and child care. Hopelink coordinates rides to and from medical appointments for King County residents on Medicaid and operates DART services for smaller routes with fewer riders. Additional assistance may include bus passes, gas vouchers, mileage reimbursement, taxi service, wheelchair-accessible vans, and school transportation. Hopelink also brokers spoken language interpreter services to assist clients during medical and DSHS office appointments.

Family Development

With the assistance of a family development specialist, families work together in a long-term partnership that empowers them to reach new levels of self-sufficiency. By working with the whole family, the family development specialists can help the family identify their strengths, visualize a better future, set goals, and achieve success in critical areas such as housing, nutrition, employment, health, education and parenting.

Housing

Hopelink believes that every family deserves a safe and stable home. Hopelink works on many levels to help families find or stay in safe, affordable housing. Programs include: emergency shelter, transitional housing and first month's rent for homeless families, as well as eviction prevention to help at-risk families. Hopelink provides services in more than 13 units of emergency, transitional and permanent affordable housing help families get back on their feet.

Adult Education

Programs include: confidential one-on-one tutoring for adults in reading, writing and mathematics; preparation for the General Education Development (GED) exam and the External Diploma Program (EDP); classes in English as a Second Language (ESL), citizenship, workplace literacy, money management; and basic computer training. Additionally, Hopelink clients have access to our Employment Program. We work with a diverse population of job seekers to help them prepare for, find and maintain successful employment. Our services are provided at no cost to clients and employers.

Standing Strong

By Karen Crary Dawson

It was a cold and snowy New Year's Day in 2008 when the Perry family waited for the roads to be cleared so they could journey west from a suburb of Detroit, Michigan and begin their new life in the Seattle area. As the family traveled over Snoqualmie Pass, Jeffrey Perry and his two children were all sick and his wife, Tanica drove the family through the winter storm just before the Pass closed due to dangerous weather conditions.

Jeffrey had been laid off from his position in transportation logistics at a vendor company for GM, and he and Tanica decided it was time to move to a place that would allow their children to grow and flourish and a place where they would have opportunities to excel in their respective careers. They knew the family needed to take a leap of faith in order to keep moving forward.

At the time, Tanica was working as a healthcare analyst at Trinity Health Information Services. Jeffrey admits that his skills were outdated and irrelevant and that he would need to "upgrade" himself in order to provide for his family.

Having decided that the Pacific Northwest would be an excellent place to raise their two children and for their family to thrive, Tanica had applied for and secured a position at UW Medical Center. Jeffrey was caring for their children and sought to find employment.

At the time, they were living in an apartment in Bothell where the apartment manager was extremely kind and forgiving of their situation. Tanica says, "There were so many people who helped us without really knowing how much they helped us." Jeffrey and Tanica both count that apartment manager among those people. They said that she really went out on a limb, wanting the family to be able to stay and find their way out of their struggles. But eventually, the family filed for bankruptcy and they were evicted.

They moved into an Extended Stay hotel room briefly before being referred to Hopelink. They moved in to Hopelink's Kenmore shelter and were extremely focused on their goals and on finding their way back to independence as quickly as possible. "I was embarrassed, I was more concerned with our children," Jeffrey said.

Jeffrey said that when they met with the Hopelink staff, they received respect and opportunities to resolve their financial issues and move forward. Linda Bonner, the family's original case manager at Hopelink, said that the family had a joy about them that was palpable.

"I was very impressed by how quickly they moved on a lot of their goals." She said that, because of Tanica's income, they didn't qualify for many of the programs Hopelink offers but the couple was tenacious in finding the programs and services they did qualify for and then utilizing those services that would best help them reach their goals.

Tanica says that they felt Linda and other Hopelink staff members opened themselves up to the family and, in turn, the family opened up and could receive the help that was being offered to them.

“ “ They knew the family needed to take a leap of faith in order to keep moving forward.

One of those opportunities that Jeffrey uncovered was Bellevue College's Opportunity Grant. Specifically in place to help individuals such as Jeffrey, the grant allows limited income adults to take up to 45 college credits, receive educational advising and assistance with employment searches in addition to personal support, goal planning and problem solving.

Jeffrey applied for and received the grant and he is now a fulltime student at Bellevue College and, in 2012, will be a certified Operating Systems Support Specialist. In addition to working fulltime, Tanica also applied for and received the same grant and is currently taking online courses towards a certification as a Business Intelligence Analyst.

The Perry family has successfully secured permanent housing in Issaquah and is, together with their Hopelink support network, laying a foundation for a brighter future.

The couples' three children; Nyasi (16), Summer (3) and Ryan (1) are thriving. Summer and Ryan attend daycare at Bellevue College's Early Learning Center which is also covered by the grants the couple was awarded. The couple is immensely grateful that the children get to be in a safe, nurturing environment where they are cared for and are learning. It gives Jeffrey and Tanica a sense of peace so that they can go after their goals and work hard, knowing that the kids are in highly capable hands. Summer and Ryan ride to school with their dad each day after breakfast and they are picked up by Tanica at the end of their day. Nyasi attends the local high school which her parents say is an excellent school.

How the Perry Family is Building a Foundation and a Future

The attitude with which Jeffrey and Tanica have approached their circumstances is inspiring to those around them. Linda said, "There was always a joy on their face and joy in their heart." She recalls multiple times when they were living at the shelter and she'd walk by their door and hear laughter through the thin walls. "I could hear the way the dad conversed with the kids, their hardships were kept in a positive light and they carried a positive attitude," Linda said. "They kept their sense of humor."

Jeffrey said that the emotional stress of going through these trying times can be a heavy burden to carry. He said that every day, while he adores his three children and is glad that he can be their caretaker, he can't escape the strong feelings that he should be working. This is the first time, since he was 14-years-old that he has not worked and has been a fulltime student. "I should be bringing home the bacon," Jeffrey says. "I look at my wife and I'm more than sure that she's tired. I'm certain that she feels the roles should be reversed. And the roles should be reversed so it would make her happy," he continued.

Throughout this ordeal, Jeffrey and Tanica have kept their communication open and free. They strive to make their home a safe place to let feelings out and highly encourage each other to do so. Jeffrey said, "You have to let it out. Otherwise you'll have emotional and physical issues if you keep it all bottled up." He said that they want to break the cycles of dysfunction in the families they grew up in and create a better life for their children. They encourage their teenage daughter to express her feelings as well so that she has a voice and feels heard.

They also respect and support each other and honor their wedding vows each day. "She could have left at any time," said Jeffrey. Tanica described how Jeffrey would ride with her on the bus to work so that she didn't have to ride alone and then he'd return in the evening to bring her dinner at work and to ride the bus home with her. Their love for each other is inspiring as they gaze at each other almost in awe of each other's strength and resilience.

"The vows do say 'for richer or for poorer,'" said Tanica.

The couple recently attended a Financial Planning

Day which allowed them to meet with a professional financial planner who was serving in a pro bono capacity and discuss budgeting and other financial matters.

Currently, the family is taking part in Hopelink's Family Development program which addresses the whole family system and works to prevent homelessness by helping families build strength, stability and resources. The Perry's case manager works with them to identify strengths, address obstacles and work to set and attain goals. The program provides a support system for the family and helps them build their own support network for the future.



The family is not out of the woods yet. They have worries and stresses and unknowns. They fear layoffs and wonder "what if?" But they remind themselves that they have each other and they've gotten through so much that they recognize their strength as individuals and as a family. And because of Hopelink, they know they are not alone.

Even with all that they have on their plate, Jeffrey and Tanica look forward to the day that they will be able to give back to families just like theirs. "We want to help in the same ways we were helped," Jeffrey said.

This family is on the path to independence thanks to their fantastic attitude, their hard work, their enthusiastic acceptance of opportunities and the assistance of Hopelink and its supporters.

LEND A HO

Clothing Donations



In addition to toys and food this holiday season, families need new clothing with which to surprise their children. Hopelink's younger clients range in age from newborn to age 18. While all children need new clothing, each year there is a great need for new clothing for high-school-age children. This age group is easily overlooked at this time of year but their need is just as great.

Some of the items that will go to a well-deserving child include:

- 👕 Socks
- 👕 Coats
- 👕 Pants
- 👕 Undergarments
- 👕 T-Shirts
- 👕 Shoes
- 👕 Warm Clothing

Regardless of what age child you consider helping, please think about making a donation of new clothing this holiday season.

Giving Trees



There are several ways in which you can get involved in helping Hopelink clients. One way is to organize a gift collection using tags provided by Hopelink. The tags contain an age range, as well as a list of suggested gift ideas. Some companies and organizations place these on Giving Trees or hang the tags on garlands or doorways. Some people host parties with family and friends where these tags are used for the gift exchange. Some hosts ask for gifts to Hopelink in lieu of hostess gifts. You can download tags and gift suggestions from our website.

With social media becoming more common, Facebook and Twitter users encourage their contacts to make a gift to Hopelink instead of buying a gift for them. The end goal is to gather donations of toys and clothes for kids and make their holiday a little brighter.

Gift Rooms



The holidays come alive through the eyes of the children in our lives. Without the new clothing and new toys they receive from Hopelink, many children would have a disappointing holiday.

All the new gifts Hopelink receives are distributed through Hopelink's five centers in December. Parents and grandparents are able to shop for toys for all the children in their families. Smaller items such as stuffed animals and stocking stuffers are also included. Gifts suitable for teenagers are especially needed this year.

If you are considering donating to the gift room this year, **please remember that all toys, games and other gift donations should be new and unused.** All gifts should come to the center unwrapped. Every child should have the opportunity to open a brand new gift and be excited that they are the very first to have it. More often than not, their gifts and clothes come from second-hand stores. This may be the only time during the year when a child is receiving something new. They will remember this holiday with joy for years to come.

Gift Suggestions

- 📺 Gifts for Teens (e.g. portable CD players, jewelry, sports equipment, etc.)
- 📖 Books and games for all ages
- 🧸 Toys for all ages

Tribute Donations



Give a gift to honor someone close to you on a special occasion. Hopelink will send a card acknowledging your thoughtful donation to the person of your choice. **Go to www.hope-link.org and click on donate.** This is a popular idea for teachers, coaches, and scout leaders. A memorial gift to Hopelink is another way to remember loved ones who have passed away. A gift in their honor supporting a cause they cared about carries on their legacy.

PING HAND

Supported by Intelius

Food Banks

Hopelink's five food banks collectively serve thousands of individuals and families each year. This year, Hopelink will serve a growing number with holiday foods for their families in addition to the regular staples they normally receive. In order to ensure that November and December are memorable months for everyone, we need help from the community with food donations.

Our greatest needs are for foods people generally use at this time of year such as:

- Cooking oil
- Flour
- Sugar
- Baking items & mixes
- Cranberry sauce
- Olives
- Pumpkin
- Yams
- Stuffing

We also need traditional nonperishable items used year-round, such as:

- Canned tuna fish
- Pasta and rice
- Cereal
- Canned fruit & tomato products
- Peanut butter
- Baby food
- Soup
- Canned vegetables
- Juice

If your group is planning to organize a food drive for the holidays, contact the Hopelink center closest to you. The Hopelink staff will ensure you have everything you need to make it a successful collection event. Each center offers specific foods based on the cultures of the clients who are served there and is based on what the center is able to purchase through monetary donations.

Think about how you and your family can help hungry families in our community this season.

What Your Donation Buys

Your gift makes a real and immediate difference for families and individuals in need.

For every dollar contributed by individuals, foundations and businesses, Hopelink leverages an additional two dollars from the public sector. A pledge that can be paid over the next year, or a donation matched by your employer, further increases Hopelink's ability to serve families, seniors and people with disabilities. **There are four ways in which you may make a donation.**

1. online www.hope-link.org
2. by phone, just call 425.869.7835
3. by mail to: Hopelink, 16225 NE 87th St, Redmond, WA 98073
4. in-person at any of our five centers

Hopelink has five centers where you can take your donations:

BELLEVUE
425.943.7555
14812 Main St.
Bellevue, WA 98007

SNO-VALLEY
425.333.4163
31957 E. Commercial St.
Carnation, WA 98014

KIRKLAND/NORTHSHORE
425.889.7880
11011 120th Ave. NE
Kirkland, WA 98033

SHORELINE
206.440.7300
15809 Westminister Way N.
Shoreline, WA 98133

REDMOND
425.882.0241
16225 NE 87th St.
Redmond, WA 98052-3536

Centers are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Check www.hope-link.org for special holiday hours.

2010 HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

President/CEO's Desk

Marilyn Mason-Plunkett

Each day I come to work at Hopelink, I am moved.



At our annual luncheon in October, I was moved when we filled the Meydenbauer Center with more than 1,700 caring and generous people, assembled in one large room with a common goal—to make our community a better place, to help catch a person or family before they slip too far away.

I am moved by many of our clients including The Perrys and Christina and Jasper featured

in this issue of Reaching Out. One family I was moved by recently was the Dak family of Bothell who escaped poverty and violence in their home country and came to Hopelink for help in building a new life for themselves and a safe place for their beautiful daughter to grow up.

The women of 'Girls Giving Back' move me. They have come together many times to outfit, paint and decorate Hopelink apartments, making them a welcome place for a homeless family. Girls Giving Back makes these spaces feel like home, not merely housing.

We have a client who I will not name here. She came to Hopelink to escape an abusive husband, to build a violence-free life and to show her two sons that it is not acceptable for men to hit their wives or their children. She moves me.

Jeff Pint moved me. Jeff is the Hopelink driver who pulled over his bus in the middle of a busy route to administer CPR to a passenger in distress, a 32 year-old father of two who had quit breathing. We learned from the responding crew that Jeff's efforts saved that passenger's life, while the man's wife and children watched as Jeff worked to save their husband and father.

The staff I work with moves me. Hopelink has had layoffs, cutbacks, and wage freezes, but the committed team I work with has not wavered for one moment in their dedication to our mission, their will to help those who are teetering so close to the edge.

I am moved because I know that Hopelink has the will of the community behind us. There is no question that these are tough times for Hopelink and our clients. With last month's election, we know that we will have far less financial support from the State just as an increasing number of families in need are flooding into our five

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centers for help. Hopelink is serving an additional 14% more people today than this time last year in our food banks - this is our third consecutive year of double digit increases. Last year alone we had to turn away almost 900 homeless families because we did not have enough housing and resources to help them.

It moves me that people want to help. It's the kids who bring toys in during the holidays so that another child has something to open on Christmas. It's the mom who pulls into our food banks with an SUV full of groceries to help another mom. It's the volunteer who goes to Safeway every week to pick up a food donation or another volunteer who keeps their appointment every week teaching someone to read. It's the people who write a check to Hopelink that help us help the community. Our donors come from Microsoft and Medina as well as Boeing and Bellevue, but they also come from unexpected places. Our donors include former clients coming back to pay it forward. Our donors are people of many different faiths collecting money to help people of many different faiths. Our donors are people who are making minimum wage, living paycheck to paycheck, but have been so moved by a story they heard they want to share what they can. Every person and every donation makes a difference

It moves me that so many people are willing to make a difference and do. Every day I come in to Hopelink, I am moved.

A Better Life for Christina

By Chad Close

In September of this year, Christina and her 3-year-old son Jasper settled into a tan and brick building with a small playground on a quiet street in Redmond. Just weeks earlier, Christina had been notified that she and her son had been awarded transitional housing, and they were eager to see their new 2-bedroom apartment. "We had several weeks before we could move in and we would drive past the place 3 or 4 times a week just to look at it," Christina remembers, "and every time we drove past Jasper would get excited and point at the building and say 'look mommy, there's our new home.'" For Christina and her family this new apartment was not just a place to live, but was a home; something they had been trying to establish for the last few years. "It was a struggle, but we made it, all thanks to Hopelink."

Christina's search for a home with her son began in January 2008. Christina had been in a five year relationship with Jasper's father when Jasper was born. Over the course of their relationship, Christina became a victim of physical abuse. In the past Christina had stayed in the relationship hoping it would change, but when an escalated argument threatened the safety of her and her son; she knew she had to get out. "When it was me it didn't matter, but when it was my baby it was something I couldn't imagine." With a modest sum in savings and little support, Christina started looking for a stable and safe place to raise her son.

For more than 2 years, Christina and Jasper would rent rooms that they found on Craigslist. At a number of the places, they had their own section of a house where they had privacy and their own space; however, these places were never permanent and soon they would be turning to the classifieds and looking again. Other rooms they would rent were less favorable. "At one time the two of us were sleeping on a friend's loveseat in a very small place. It was unbearably too small and we had no place for just us" In another house, the lifestyle of her roommate was not a place to raise a toddler.

"Towards the end we would isolate ourselves in our room. I would leave to make dinner, bring it back and then we would eat it on the floor."

Despite the difficulties, Christina and her son would make the best of their situation, and they always had each other. "We would spend a lot of time playing all day at a nearby playground or taking long walks so we could just get away," Christina said.

Through a friend, Christina heard about Hopelink's Family Development Program and found that support in her Family Development Specialist, Kimberley Beck. "When I think of Hopelink, I think of friend. Kimberley is not some case manager who performs a job, she turned my life around." Christina and Kimberley began establishing

a support network to assist Christina in reaching her goals and advocated on her behalf to area housing programs to find her a place to live, Christina also began to work with a Hopelink Job Developer who assisted her in finding employment and career development.



Christina (right) and her case worker, Kimberley (left).

Within months, Christina was interviewing for transitional housing programs and was bringing in an income from a job she secured in Bellevue. Through her support at Hopelink, Christina had found the resolve to initiate change and take control of her future. "It was tough during those times and I would contact Kimberley and I would feel like giving up. I would say to her I can't do this anymore. Kimberley always responded with such optimism and reinforced how strong I was and how I am a good mother. She's an angel, Hopelink is my angel."

“When I think of Hopelink, I think of friend. Kimberley is not some case manager who performs a job, she turned my life around.”

After more than 6 years in Washington, Christina and Jasper have a home. Christina is still working with Kimberley to develop plans and goals for the future. Christina's next step is to go to college and she is looking at programs that will allow her to give counsel and comfort to those who face similar problems as she did. "My experience with Hopelink...they just come through. They save lives."

Part of the Solution

Since 1971, Hopelink has been enriching lives by helping people make lasting change. It is due to the steadfast generosity of our supporters that this work is made possible.

Hopelink would like to thank and honor the individuals and families who have demonstrated their dedication to helping others through their leadership giving. We gratefully acknowledge their gifts and welcome them as members of our leadership donor association, Part of the Solution.



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The significance of these leadership gifts will be manifested in many ways

...the quiet elation of a middle-aged man learning to read and getting a job of which he can be proud

...a young mother feeling relieved that, even with the downturn of the economy, she will not have to choose between feeding her family and paying her rent

...young children not experiencing the burdens of poverty, forced to grow up well beyond their years

We invite you to help people make lasting change by becoming a part of the solution and making a leadership gift to Hopelink today.

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