

# Columbia River Wraparound Newsletter



Champion recipients, names listed on pg. 3



RALLY AT THE  
CAPITOL  
PAGE 2

EDDIE ORTIZ WINS SPOT  
IN NATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE PAGE 4



## Honoring Champions for Children's Mental Health

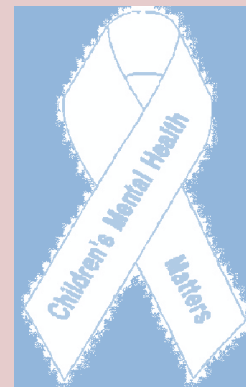
Columbia River Wraparound hosted a "champions for children's mental health" luncheon May 14th. Twenty-two people of the 75 in attendance were honored for going above and beyond in providing services, volunteering and/or advocacy for children with mental health needs. This included recommending community members who have inspired others through their resiliency and successes. Nominations included people from all three counties: Sherman, Hood River and Wasco.

The luncheon opened with a guitar piece by Nykai Lembke from Sherman County followed by important messages from Sharon Guidera, Executive Director Mid-Columbia Center for Living; Bill Lennox, Wasco Co. Commissioner; Nikki Lesich, Mayor of The Dalles and YAHOO leaders, Trey, John, Kayla, Graham and Randi. All shared their support and experience in Children's Mental Health. (Continue on page 3)

**Columbia River Wraparound is designed to meet the complex needs of children and youth with serious emotional challenges and their families by providing coordinated and individualized services within the community.**

**The system services youth ages 0-21 and their families in Sherman, Wasco and Hood River Counties.**

*Our Mission is to create a community-wide system of care that empowers families and youth with complex needs and provides a strength-based, coordinated plan to keep youth at home, in school and out of trouble.*



For more information, please call any of our offices at Mid-Columbia Center for Living: Wasco/Sherman: 541-296-5452 Hood River: 541-386-2620

# LEGISLATORS LEARN FROM STUDENTS AROUND THE STATE

*Oregon celebrates Children's Mental Health Awareness Day at the Capitol*

SALEM, Ore. — More than 200 students from small towns to large cities throughout Oregon descended on the State Capitol Friday, May 8th to educate legislators about the needs of youth who struggle with mental health challenges.

The theme for this year's national Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is "Thriving in the Community." The event had a special emphasis on high school youth, who with the right services, can have positive outcomes such as better grades and higher rates of graduation and are less likely to have negative outcomes such as involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Events began at the Capitol Mall with a youth talent show followed by a rally on the front Capitol steps. Speakers included Claudia Black from the Governor's Office, who read a Proclamation by the Governor, and several youth leaders from around the state.

Jammie Farrish, Executive Director of the Oregon Family Support Network (OFSN), explained "This is a great time for people to educate themselves and better understand youth with mental health challenges, to see the incredible talent and strengths of our young people, and to have fun." In a typical year, over 250,000 Oregon children are eligible to receive publicly funded mental health services. However, according to the State Department of Human Services, only 30,000 of these children receive mental health and/or addiction treatment services. OFSN, a chapter of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, reports that without treatment, many youth will become homeless or incarcerated, so treating youth as early as possible avoids tragic outcomes.

Columbia River Wraparound took a van full of young people from the Community Education Program, a middle school behavioral classroom and Youth Advocates Helping Others Overcome"

(YAHOO), a youth led leadership council to the capitol. YAHOO is part of Columbia River Wrap-around System of Care devoted to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development by uniting the voices of individuals who have lived experience in various systems including mental health, juvenile justice, education, and child welfare. Joining the young people were Care Coordinator, Avie Ferres; Youth Coordinator, Robert Salazar; CEP Teacher Assistant, Carrie Sheline, and OFSN Regional Director, Shannon Billings.



John Huffman listening to YAHOO Leaders

The group participated in the organized events but their highlight was a visit with Representative John Huffman, inviting him to wear a green ribbon to help promote awareness of the needs of children and youth with emotional, behavioral and social disabilities and their families. They also shared why they think Oregon's Children's Wraparound Initiative, House Bill 2144, is important to support. One youth leader quoted, "Some of us are involved in various agencies; each has it's own plan for me. Having one plan of care will make things less confusing and make it easier to be successful." The YAHOO leaders shared pieces of their stories which echoed many of the ways wraparound has been successful across the nation: improved grades, involved in community, out of residential treatment, one plan of care and off probation.



NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY



**Nykai Lembke jammin'**

The following were the "Champion" recipients:

- JoAnna Vega** , Next Door, Inc.
- Bill Marick**- Independent Living Program, Next Door, Inc.
- Ron Cooper**- Middle School Teacher at the Coe Building in Hood River
- Robert Bissonette**- High School Teacher at the COE Building in H.R.
- Kelly Beard**- Principal, Pine Grove Elementary School in Hood River
- Shannon Hansen**- Teacher, South Sherman Elementary
- Terry Earl**- Assistant, South Sherman Elementary
- Nancy Kieling** - Sherman Elementary Schools Principal
- Rodney McDowell**- Clinical Services Manager for MCCFL
- Jean McKern**- Counselor, TDMS; facilitates the Parent Project.
- Tom Neal**- Behavioral Classroom Teacher at Colonel Wright E.
- Scott Berggren**- Assistant, Community Education Program, TDMS
- Amy Hampton** –Teacher, community education program, TDMS.
- Doug Erickson**- Assist. Special Ed. Director for N. Wasco School Dist.
- Eric Macnab**- The Dalles City Police Officer
- Ryan Clark**- Probation Officer for Wasco County Youth Services
- Karin Guertin**- Probation Officer/ Care Coordinator for Wasco County Youth Services.
- Heidi Crane**- Families First for Next Door, Inc
- Carrie Sheline**- Teachers Asst. , community education program, TDMS
- Dr. Elizabeth Chambers**-Psychiatrist at Providence in Hood River
- Guy Morris**- Foster Parent in Wasco County
- Paula Christy**- Teacher at Mid-Columbia Child and Family Center

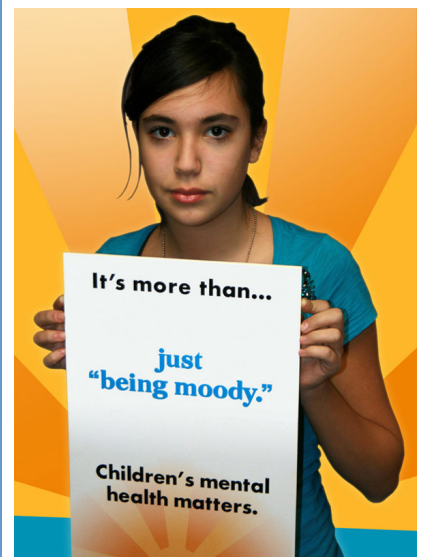
Each recipient was acknowledged with a "certificate of appreciation" and brief sharing of why they were nominated. Yahoo Leaders and Governance Council Members were also recognized for their efforts in children's mental health. The luncheon provided a celebration of the successes in children's mental health and recognized that it really does take "a whole village to raise a child".

<b>Upcoming Meeting and Training Opportunities</b>
<p>June 15th &amp; 22nd Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment Options 4:00-7:00 pm Life In Christ Center, TD Call to sign-up 300-9544</p>
<p>Explosive Child Book Club Hood River Time and Location TBA Call, 300-9544</p>
<p>Summer Months YAHOO support group activities Wednesdays Time and Location TBA</p>
<p>June 16th IEP Training 4:30-6:00 pm HR DHS Office Call to sign up 490-3900</p>
<p>June 24-26 Strengthening Families Conference Portland, Oregon</p>
<p>July 24th Family Fun Event Hood River Swimming pool 6:00-8:00 pm</p>
<p>July 29-31 National System of Care Conference</p>

### What are Key Ingredients to Success in Children's Mental Health?

(most frequent answers by attendees at luncheon, May 14th)

- ◆ **partners, staff, parents, youth, work as a team collaboratively and communicate openly**
- ◆ **after school group, support groups**
- ◆ **Unencumbered access to services**
- ◆ **Adequate funding and resources**
- ◆ **Supportive & involved parents/caregiver**
- ◆ **Services & supports at early age**
- ◆ **Focus & recognition of strengths/talents of child and family**
- ◆ **Successful experiences in school (safe, non-stigmatizing place)**



NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

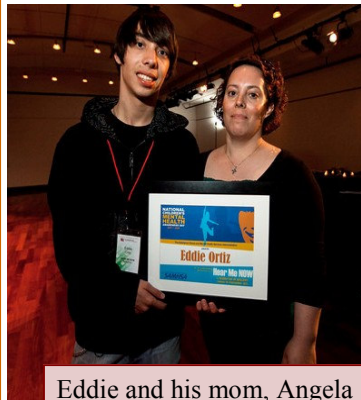
A local The Dalles-Wahtonka Alternative High School student, **Eddie Ortiz** was featured as one of six youth acts to perform at the national Children's Mental Health Awareness Event called Hear me NOW, a celebration of resiliency through the performing arts on May 7, 2009, to a sold-out crowd at the Harman Center for the Arts in Washington, D.C.

Eddie auditioned in February along with hundreds of youth in other system of care sites across the nation. He was selected because of demonstrated talent in the performing arts and conveyed the performer's strength and resilience in facing life's challenges. This honor came with an all expenses paid trip to the celebration in Wash. D.C. for Eddie and his chaperone (his mom, Angela) along with a \$500 honorarium. He played an original acoustic guitar piece. Eddie said he got the idea for this piece while listening to the way a friend tuned his guitar. He uses music to express himself and hopes to inspire other youth to do the same.



Eddie and youth performers pictured with actress, Goldie Hawn

The other youth performers included young people from California, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. They expressed passion and resiliency with talents ranging from Spoken Word, Native Drumming, Fancy Shawl Dancing, and Piano Performances. While the main spotlight was on the youth performers, some of the highlights of the event included Goldie Hawn accepting an award for her work with the Hawn Foundation, co-hosts singer/actress Sabrina Bryan from the Cheetah Girls, and poet/activist/actor, Solomon Trimble from the movie Twilight.

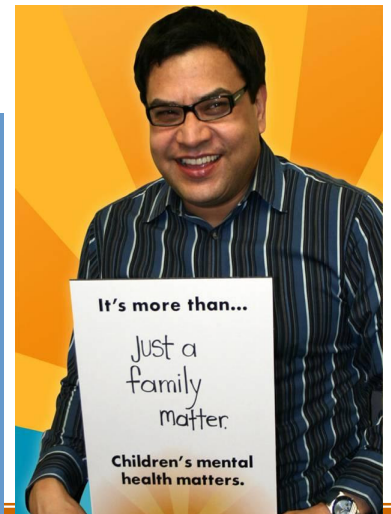


Eddie and his mom, Angela

Children's Mental Health Awareness month is a nationwide initiative to draw attention to the issue of children's mental health. Mental illness affects all people, including children. In fact, more children suffer from psychiatric illness than from leukemia, diabetes and AIDS combined. In the United States, 1 in 10 children and adolescents suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment. Yet, in any given year, it is estimated that fewer than 1 in 5 of these children receives needed treatment. With early detection and appropriate treatment, chances are excellent that most children with mental

health needs can recover and lead healthy lives.

Eddie felt it was an honor to represent Oregon at this prestigious event. As for the future, Eddie plans to go to college and study music. The event is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Anne E. Casey Foundation. To learn more about children's mental health in your area call Mid-Columbia Center for Living, 541-296-5452.



## How do we as a community foster emotionally & mentally healthy children & families? (most frequent answers by attendees at luncheon, May 14th)

- ◆ Adequate, affordable, accessible health care
- ◆ Reduced stigma and educate community to support youth with mental illness
- ◆ Give youth a stronger voice in the community, voice in leadership and decision-making
- ◆ Parent Training
- ◆ Focus on strengths and assets of family, including natural supports (helping families see what they have); opportunities to model, put them in a setting that is not clinical so they can see appropriate behaviors and positive parenting
- ◆ Recreation: family-centered, affordable activities: After-school clubs and sports