

**ECOS 2006 Board Retreat  
Wednesday, January 25, 2006  
Springdale Job Corps – 9 AM to 3 PM**

<b>ECOS 2006 PLANNING RETREAT - ATTENDEES</b>		
Beaudry, Derek	Human Solutions	503.548.0211
Butler, Brenda	Rockwood Weed and Seed	503.816.1530
Cusick, Karen	Worksource Oregon, Gresham	503.669.8790
Dean, Phil	Project YESS	503.491.7641
Espinosa, JoAnn	Springdale Job Corps	503.695.2245
Foote, Debbie	DHS – Self-Sufficiency Svcs.	503.872.5586
George, Marian	ECOS Project Manager	503.233.2398
Hubbard, Karen	Linfield College	503.413.7694
King, Don	ECOS Project Manager	503.577.2857
Lopez, Kay	Workforce Connections	503.252.0758
McGraw, Dan	Mercy Corps NW	503.236.1580
Morrison, Carolyn	Child Care Development Svcs.	503.489.2580
Ough, Kedma	AVITA & Associates and ECOS Project Manager	503.998.9560
Park, Patti	Portland Habilitation Center	503.261.1266
Pasco, Joan	ECOS Project Manager	503.661.3981
Patterson, Kim	Steps To Success	503.256.0432
Remchek, Tabatha	Human Solutions	503.548.0200
Roberts, Betty	Computer Skills Plus	503.262.9811
Staab, Lani	Goodwill Industries	503.238.6169
Todd, Catherine	Human Solutions	503.548.0299

**Retreat goals:**

- Identify service gaps or areas of new opportunity based on changing demographics
- Generate discussion and interest in new program activity that will create resources and solutions for the people served by ECO partners
- Increase partner awareness of resources available through ECOS and its partner agencies

**Overview of Worksystems Inc. goals and policy direction for Region 2: Andrew McGough was unable to attend, this report was provided by Karen Cusick and Kay Lopez.**

WSI is changing the structure of its board and creating a 9-person operations board to implement policies developed by the larger board. Operations and policy changes include adoption of a more centralized approach to delivery of workforce services in Region 2. This will include the gradual conversion to five One Stop Center facilities, all co-located with state Employment Offices. The first to be developed is in East County with the co-location of Workforce Connections and Worksource Oregon Employment Dept. on 194<sup>th</sup> and Stark in Gresham. We will be known as Worksource Oregon Portland Metro-East. Workforce Connections will move 23 employees from its current location on 102<sup>nd</sup> and Prescott to the Employment office facility. The move is expected to be completed by July or August 2006. Other services co-located at Worksource Oregon Portland Metro East will include VR for one day a week, OHDC located in close proximity, and other partners as room/space permits. ECOS partners were encouraged to participate in the planning process if they wanted to have a physical presence at this site.

The state WIB is providing funds to pay for marketing materials and promotional “branding” of these co-locating services and offices to help the public identify with the strategy.

The North, Downtown and Beaverton offices of Worksource Oregon will all be moving to new facilities. Locations are still being determined.

## **Long Range Planning Session – Trends and Service Gaps**

### **ECOS MISSION STATEMENT:**

ECOS is an alliance of over 35 workforce and community partners convened to foster a systemic and holistic approach to workforce and community development through information and data sharing, prioritization of service need, encouraging efficient delivery of services, joint resource development and fund procurement, and collaborative problem solving.

### **Vision statement:**

It is this system approach that utilizes the expertise of ECOS partner agencies to:

- Increase the skill and ability levels of the East Multnomah County workforce that enhances business operations for employers.
- Reduce the number of East County families living in poverty through the development of individual skills and removal of barriers that prevent greater employment opportunities.
- Jointly identify solutions to gaps in the workforce and community development systems and cultivate a greater understanding of complex community problems that require a holistic approach.

### **ECOS Primary goals and activity areas:**

ECOS is an alliance of organizations that address issues impacting the employment of persons with barriers to getting and keeping a job. These agencies comprise the service providers for the East County One Stop Career System. The ECOS 501 c3 was created in order to generate non-Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding for community and workforce development projects in East Multnomah County.

ECOS has successfully procured (or assisted with) over \$2.1 million in revenue since 2000. These resources have generated innovative programs to serve distressed communities, ex-offenders, small businesses, disabled persons, and non-native English speakers, giving these populations more opportunity for income producing enterprise and living wage career paths.

Since inception in 1996, ECOS has accomplished an impressive array of creative and valuable work: collaborations, partner networks, on-line communication capacity for small non-profits, base-line research and evaluative benchmarks, compilation of data bases, professional development and networking for partner agency staff, community planning research, high demand occupational studies, transferable skill set matrixes, and much more – with a limited budget and cooperative support from partner funds, abilities and staff. This is an organization that works smart, leverages resources, and uses its strength and associations to accomplish large-scale projects on a limited budget.

ECOS operational funds come from partner support and a 10% indirect fee for grants received.

### **Projects funded through ECOS efforts:**

Ex-offenders:

- Career modeling tools for ex-offenders
- Assistance with setting aside arrests and convictions
- Connections to employers that do not do background checks
- Employer training workshops
- National re-entry Best Practices and advice on state and federal laws

Training and education:

- Development of Nurse Educator curriculum and training
- Job Coach Institute/Intercultural Coaching Institute
- Advanced training for cosmetologists

Small business development:

- Market Vendor Incubation Project – training for market vendors
- CEO – Creative Earning Options – micro-enterprise training

Community Development:

- East County Health Care Forum
- Rockwood Weed and Seed
- Rockwood International Marketplace

Support for partner agencies:

- Assistance with finding resources for clients
- Connections with regional partners
- Maintaining the workforce SYSTEM in East County
- Referrals to services for clients
- Problem solving and trouble shooting
- Networking and collaboration
- Advocacy for East County issues

**Current trends impacting East County and ECOS partner agencies:**

**2005 retreat identified these primary challenges**

- The abrupt recession/decline in the economy
- 9-11 and its impact on employer background checks
- Extreme budget cuts in services for the working poor;
- More job seekers than jobs = an employee supply driven economy
- The number of long-term unemployed individuals. (People with high barriers to traditional employment will require 4 to 5 years of support in order to move to meaningful employment and self-sufficiency.)
- Sustaining placement rates - (some partners report that rates are excellent 6 months after service, but decline to poor within 12 months).

**2006 - What has changed? Any new challenges? Discussion included:**

**State of the economy and supply/demand state of hiring:**

This issue generated a great deal of discussion. The board worked through an exercise to determine economic and workforce change since 1998.

**1998:** In 1998 the economy was booming, jobs were plentiful and we were in an employee demand economy – more jobs than people to fill them - the demand for workers was high. In this environment, employers were willing to take more risks and were hiring from populations that are hardest to place. These were the years when ex-felons could be placed and persons with

disabilities were getting greater workplace accommodations. Employers were doing more in-house training and hiring more ESL workers.

**2000-2001:** Following the dot-com burst and 9-11, the Oregon economy tanked. Oregon was now in an economy where there were few new jobs, little hiring and lots of lay-offs. This generated a supply side workforce environment with an abundance of people competing for very few jobs. In this environment, only the best of the best were being hired. Employment incentives (except in health care) were rare and benefit packages were reduced for new hires. Employers had no incentive to hire from populations with high barriers to employment. Long-term unemployment was common. Individuals were hanging on as long as their unemployment benefits were coming, on the outside chance that they might get a job that paid as well as the one they lost. As UI benefits expired, they began to accept jobs paying much less, with fewer benefits.

**2005-2006:** Jobs are beginning to re-appear, but the new jobs are paying less and offering little or no benefits. Living wage jobs are not increasing, with a few exceptions. The middle class continues to diminish as more technical and engineering jobs are outsourced offshore. The trend to offshore manufacturing jobs is increasing. Many retirees are returning to the workforce, needing supplemental income or a job that will offer them medical benefits. Health care costs are escalating, as are prices for utility/energy, food and gas. The general consensus was that the people served by ECOS partners and ECOS partner agencies themselves are no better off than they were in 2001. For certain populations, things are getting worse. Agency budgets continue to decline.

We are experiencing a growing gap between the “haves” and the “haves not” – due to loss of middle class jobs – outsourcing, loss of manufacturing jobs, and loss of good jobs being replaced by low paying jobs: refer to Oregonian article on Jan. 27, 2006 by Brent Hunsberger: “Middle Class Falts in Oregon” link to article:

<http://www.oregonlive.com/business/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/business/1138334128232950.xml&coll=7>

#### **Other trends driving services in 2006:**

Self-employment continues to grow as a viable option for people who have given up trying to get a traditional job. Self-employment is becoming a larger piece of the employment pie, however, has less visibility, resources and support.

We are experiencing a shift in responsibility for benefits from the employer to the individual. Benefit packages are becoming more portable and will be owned by the individual rather than the employer. This is a trend predicted several years ago. In a demand side workforce economy, people will be able to negotiate higher employer contributions to benefit packages, health care and 401 K accounts. However, in a supply-side economy, employers have little incentive to offer contributions equivalent to what they used to provide in company plans.

The working poor has increased at least 30% since 2004. Human Solutions fields one to seven calls a minute from people seeking energy assistance. This is doubled from last year. Agencies project new cuts in the food stamp program at the federal level. Hunger and housing issues continue to grow as significant survival barriers for many people. Transportation costs are increasing – bus fares have gone up as well as gas prices. Many families have no funds to cover a crisis: car repair, medical emergency, etc. In addition, they may work for employers that will fire them if they miss two days of work, so they defer preventative medical treatment and care and

work until they are severely ill. Overtime options have also been reduced resulting in loss of income.

There is a health care crisis: The decline in employer offered health care benefits, cuts in the Oregon Health Plan and increase in poverty is taking a huge toll in East County. There is virtually no preventative health care. Emergency rooms are providing the health care of last resort. There are 3 new hospitals being built in the Portland Metro area and all three are considering whether or not to provide emergency room services due to increased cost of serving indigent patients.

Seniors and frail elders have fewer services and resources than they did five years ago. Retirees are beginning to seek roommates to help with housing costs. Elder care and adult day care is hard to find and expensive. There are few programs to help people stay in their own homes rather than go into more expensive assisted living facilities.

Youth services, especially for teens have almost disappeared. Project YESS had 37 staff and served 800 teens in 1988. Today they have a staff of 9 and serve 150 teens. There are no more summer employment programs, business mentorship and job shadow programs. The YO (Youth Opportunity) center has closed. Resources for youth employment services have diminished considerably.

Setting aside arrests and convictions/Expungement and percentage of persons with criminal records: ECOS partners report that about 60% of clients served in all programs have a criminal record in their background that limits employment options. This issue continues to grow and is a constant source of frustration for all agencies. There is little political support to fund programs for ex-offenders. No agency resources can be used to assist with the cost of expungement. Project Clean Slate was a good beginning, but that program is overloaded with persons needing assistance and the wait list is long.

More employers are doing UA tests and credit checks. This trend is also increasing the numbers of persons that are being turned away from jobs.

**Gaps in service identified in January 2005 – still significant gaps in 2006: ECOS partners were asked to help by directing resources and energy into programs that will help mitigate these areas that are underserved.**

- Services/resources/projects that address needs of non-native English Speakers
- Services/resources/projects that address needs of Ex-offenders returning to the workforce
- Training on un-documented workers – resources and solutions for this population
- Addressing the stigma and perceptions that create tension between cultures
- Accurately reporting and communicating changing demographics, trends, and issues of importance to all partners
- Older Worker issues – changing employment and retirement trends
- Multi-disciplinary Triage process – wrap around services for persons needing assistance from multiple agencies and with high barriers to employment
- Child and Elder Care support services needed
- Self-employment options and the Rockwood International Marketplace
- Innovative solutions to rising health care costs critically important

**Additional gaps in service identified since last retreat:**

- Replacement of the Clothes Closet in East County – a site is needed by July to replace the Helping Hands resource sponsored by Human Solutions, Salvation Army, Sno-cap and Catholic Charities
- Need for a no-cost laundry facility – clients are returning for free clothes to replace dirty clothes due to lack of laundry facilities
- Aging in Place – need more resources for care givers that can work with seniors in their own homes
- Support for inventors – Intellectual property rights and the patent process
- Long-term technical assistance for new businesses – especially micro-enterprises
- Resources to fund organizational development for non-profits (as opposed to program activity)
- Services for youth have almost disappeared (especially teens)

#### Additional gaps identified at the Board Retreat:

- Post employment retention and transitional services are needed as well as technical support services for self-employed persons. This includes a need for emergency funds for self-employed individuals – from loan pools or from training funds. Mentors and job coaches are needed for both the traditional employed and those that are self-employed. This is a huge systemic need expressed by most ECOS partners.
- Phone, I.D. and mail services for the homeless – low to no-cost services are needed by many persons. Lack of any of these three will prevent or limit employment options.
- Short-term emergency funds are needed to help people avoid the trap of “payday” loan sharks and expensive tax refund scams.
- Urgency level lack of affordable housing units at all levels: emergency, transition and permanent.
- Lack of support for people navigating the SSI process.
- Child care for children with special needs.

#### Discussion on New ECOS program options:

##### **Health care, elder care and senior issues – Marian George**

The United Way RFP’s will be out on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Marian sits on one of the United Way Vision councils and she reported on the outcomes of that process. United Way funds are divided to serve three major service areas: community, children, and a large category that includes housing, hunger, employment and seniors/disability services.

ECOS will be applying for a grant through the United Way to support services for seniors who face the following service issues: growing utility bills, ability to stay in their homes, isolation and no access to resources, medication management, home safety issues, and hunger. Marian will be writing the grant and will serve as project manager for any programs funded.

##### **Patent process, disabilities, women’s issues – Kedma Ough**

**Inventors:** Oregon needs and wants to encourage innovation, however, inventors are underserved by the workforce system. They need assistance with intellectual property right protection, training on the patent/trademark and copyright process, assistance with utility applications, marketing their invention to investors, and research and development. Kedma will be submitting grants under the ECOS umbrella to funders to create a hub process to grow businesses started by inventors.

**Disabilities:** Technical assistance is needed for disabled persons wanting to enter self-employment. They have a high level of need for support systems that will help with SSI,

procurement and government contracts, and technology. She will be seeking funds to support these areas of need as well as creating a network for businesses owned by a disabled person.

**Women's issues:** Women are staying with abusive spouses out of economic need. These women need supportive services to help them find employment or grow a business that will allow for economic self-sufficiency. We will be seeking funds to support home-based self-employment and knowledge based enterprise. This will include connections to out-sourced work products from area businesses.

#### **MicroBusiness Center – Dan McGraw**

The MicroBusiness Center concept is a one-stop, single point of entry for persons seeking to start a new business. The Center will offer skill set assessments, feasibility studies, technical assistance, training and referrals to other entities that support self-employment and micro-enterprise. There are few resources in the Portland area to support microenterprises – five or fewer employees – as opposed to small businesses – 5 to 500 employees. Business start-ups face many challenges and best practices demonstrate that on-going support and technical assistance has a big impact on their success/survival rate. There are many programs for career counseling – similar programs are needed for self-employment counseling. The “Entrepreneurial Quotient” can be measured. To be successful in business, the owner must possess general business skills that include basic math, social skills, good communication and grammar etc. Individual support and counseling is very important to these new business owners. ECOS can offer support by serving as the non-profit umbrella and fiscal agent for grants seeking funds to support this concept.

#### **Linfield College – Karen Hubbard, Asst. Professor of Nursing** - Student Nursing program – outreach to East County

Linfield Good Samaritan School of Nursing would like to invest in the ECOS collaborative by bringing nursing students and their clinical instructors to ECOS partner agencies to work with identified individuals, families and communities delivering preventative health services and connecting people to community resources.

Long-term vision is to establish a health care resource clinic in East County. A resource where information on improving health, primary care services and connections to local community resources is provided year round by an interdisciplinary health care team of students with their faculty supervisors. These services would be available to the community at no charge for student or faculty time.

As a first step we are seeking several organizations that have identified individuals and families that might benefit from a health assessment (see below) and be willing to host four or eight students under the supervision of their clinical instructor. Students connect with the individuals, work through a wellness health assessment, create an individualized health promotion activity and connect the family with community resources. The nursing student's clinical experience is one day a week for seven weeks beginning the first week in April and for fall semester, the second week in October.

Examples of current required student projects:

**Prenatal assessment and health promotion project:** Two students interview parent(s) in their home and create a family health history, review lifestyle behavioral choices and environmental exposures. In collaboration with the parents, students develop a health promotion activity that fulfills the requests of the family and anticipates parent needs for community resources.

**Health Promotion Project:** Each student gathers information about the unique health care issues of a specific population, usually the clients at their clinical site. In consultation with their clinical

instructor they identify, refine, research and deliver a health promotion activity for this unique population.

**Medication Analysis Project:** Each student works with an individual who is self-managing six or more prescription medications at home. Student interviews the individual, identifies which medications are being taken, any side effects or scheduling difficulties then contacts the individual's health care provider to confirm prescriptions and discuss any issues identified. Student presents the analysis of any prescription management issues to the individual and collaboratively establishes a workable plan for effective medication management.

Child Care Development Services and DHS both indicated an interest in being part of the student practicum experience. Others interested should contact Karen at 503.413.7694

### **Reports on Current ECOS Projects:**

#### **Rockwood Weed and Seed – Brenda Butler**

The Rockwood Weed and Seed is a crime prevention strategy in Rockwood. The five-year project was funded initially in 2002 through efforts of ECOS and its partner agencies. Weed and Seed Communities weed out crime and seed in community and economic growth through neighborhood restoration and economic development strategies. The newest W&S strategy is a project called "Rockwood Makes Me Want To Go M.A.D. – Make a Difference". A project coordinator has been hired to conduct outreach to Rockwood businesses and community members. They are beginning a "Buy Local" shopping campaign with shopping reward cards that lead to a merchant discount after the card is filled out through visits to area businesses. The current site has one more year of funding. Discussion is beginning on perhaps seeking federal W&S designation for another community in East County. The Dept. of Justice program will not renew the current Rockwood location, but application could be made for an adjoining or separate area. The Rockwood Weed and Seed, with partners, will be making application for a SAMSA Drug Free Community grant this spring.

#### **MVIP – Market Vendor Incubation Project – Joan Pasco and Don King**

Project overview:

**Training:** Workshops will assist participant businesses with the development of a business and marketing plan, customer satisfaction feedback, booth design and appearance, market definition and customer outreach. One of the primary benefits of co-location in a marketplace model is the advantage of collective marketing and critical mass of "people attracting" events, food and products.

**Fall and spring vendor training – 2005-2006 and 2006-2007** 10 Workshops (twice weekly for five weeks). These are two-hour workshops with an additional 30 minutes of networking time for participants. Project goal is to enroll 20 participants in each of the four series. This is a large class size, but manageable with two trainers and a format that includes breakout sessions. The training curriculum includes:

- Clarifying Your Business Idea—craft three business goals
- Designing Your Business— starting budget and work plan
- Testing Your Idea—market research for a best customer profile
- Retailing Skills—best vendor practices and booth design
- Money Management—break-even, recordkeeping & budgeting
- Pricing & Negotiating—price and buy confidently
- Promoting Your Business—cards, databases & reps
- Finding the Best Market Venues—Selecting best markets, packing & travel tips
- Start-up Check List—legal steps & risk management

- Next Steps—Rolling Three Year Plan & SBDC referral  
Registration materials are available at [www.eastcountyonestop.org](http://www.eastcountyonestop.org)

### **Training Videos**

Three topic-specific training videos will be developed to facilitate distance learning and expansion of the workshops statewide. The specialty areas for these video training tools are: Food Vendor businesses, Farmer's Market – Produce and Ag business, and a General Guide to Retail Sales at Local Markets. Note: both vendors and market managers will find the videos excellent resources for conducting market research and crafting their promotional efforts.

### **Guided Research and Experiential Learning**

Two field trips will be conducted to do on-site education and research. "Testing Your Idea," teaches market research techniques, but conducting a guided field trip will insure that participants learn how their potential customer buys and the practices used by successful retailers and market vendors. Participants will be given digital cameras and a directive to explore markets and find examples of the "good, the bad and the ugly" and bring these lessons back to a workshop for discussion.

### **Specialized "Booster Shot" Training**

Five weeks is too short a timeframe to absorb all of the issues of creating a stable business. In particular, food vendors, farmers, and retailers have unique challenges. Therefore, we will sponsor eight booster shot training sessions that will be open to any vendor business; whether or not they have gone through the 10 session workshop series. Topics for the booster shot training sessions will include two sessions (one each year) on each of the following: Food vendors, Farmer's Market vendors, E-retail and Advance Marketing. When possible, these workshops will be held at SBDC centers and other locations throughout the state.

### **Oregon Market Vendor Conference:**

MVIP will host a two-day conference in the fall of 2006. The conference will feature statewide resources available to vendor businesses as well as specialized training, networking and support for persons wanting to grow their businesses beyond the marketplace venues. The conference will be held in a central area with relatively equal access to persons living anywhere in Oregon.

### **Business Support Services and Advocacy:**

Participant outcomes will be enhanced through one-on-one advocacy and support services from members of the project team. Support services will include intervention with regulatory groups; getting appointments with other services and directing clients to important resources; finding the right person within a support group to work with the participant, etc.

### **CEO/JOLI Grant – Joan Pasco**

The CEO (Creative Earning Options) project is funded by the Dept. of Health and Human Services through their JOLI program – Jobs for Low Income persons. Partners include Easter Seals Oregon, Mercy Corps and Child Care Development Services. Over 100 persons were assessed for participation in the micro-enterprise development CEO project. 65 enrolled and participated in one of five two-day Small Business Boot Camps. There are currently 57 active participants (16 months into the project). With the exception of Child Care Provider businesses, no new participants will be accepted into the project. (An additional boot camp will be held specifically for the day care provider business.) Participants receive on-going support, technical assistance, training, a business coach, and access to business loans. The project was scheduled to sunset in February 2006, but a no cost, one-year extension has been requested. The extension is

needed to give participants enough time to grow their businesses and fully access the capital available to them from the project's revolving loan fund.

Participants represent a wide range of businesses including inventors, knowledge based information specialists, florists, landscapers, jewelers, re-sale shops and Ebay sales. The full list of businesses is located on the ECOS web site at [www.eastcountyonestop.org](http://www.eastcountyonestop.org).

The CEO project has three mobilized scooters that have been returned from one of the loan applicants due to his death shortly after purchase of the scooters with CEO loan funds. The scooters are in storage at CCDS and we need to find homes for them. Contact Carolyn Morrison at 503.489.2580 for product description and prices. They are brand new, still in the original boxes and retail from between \$1500 and \$2500 each.

### **ECO Partner updates**

#### **MHCC and Workforce Connections – Kay Lopez**

As mentioned earlier in the retreat, Workforce Connections is moving its office from 102<sup>nd</sup> and Prescott to the Worksource Oregon East Metro office on 194<sup>th</sup> and Stark. They will be co-located with state employment office staff. Other program activity includes office specialist training, internships with staffing services, and careers pathways exploration. They have hired a Business Services Coordinator and an additional job coach. Their challenges include an aging staff, with the average age of 50 years, and expect many retirements in the next few years.

#### **Worksource Oregon Metro East – Karen Cusick**

Laurie Warner is the new state director, replacing Debbie Lincoln who retired. The Gresham office will be co-hosting a spring job fair with the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce – more details on the “Connect to Success” event will be sent out in February. The event will likely be held in the gymnasium at Gresham High School on a non-school day. Regionally, the agency is working to become as consistent as possible, with all offices offering the same service and giving the same information to customers. Their goal is that a customer will have the same experience regardless of which office he/she visits. All clients must be registered in the I-Match database in order to be served.

#### **Mercy Corps – Dan McGraw - Immigrant and Refugee workforce issues**

The IDA program funded by Office of Refugee Resettlement funds has concluded, but Mercy Corps still has other IDA programs available. The Individual Development Accounts return two dollars for every dollar saved by the client – once savings reach a minimum level of \$900. Mercy Corp manages several revolving loan funds including the one in partnership with the CEO project. There are many different cultural sensitivities to borrowing, some cultures will not use a bank or incur any debt to start a business. They rely on friends, family and their greater community for support. The Russian and Ukrainian communities are reluctant to take any classes or training that do not directly lead to new income. Challenges for trainers and staff include the cultural differences between each culture plus between each and the US culture. Farming practices in other countries are very different from Oregon. They are not used to dealing with environmental laws and banned pesticides etc. There are opportunities for niche farming markets as long as language skills can be developed to allow them to be capable vendors.

#### **Springdale Job Corps – JoAnn Espinosa**

Springdale serves youth aged 16 to 22 in a residential training program located on their campus near Springdale on the Historic Columbia River Highway. The Culinary Arts Program students catered and served the lunch for retreat participants.

On a national level, the Job Corps program has been shifted and is now directly under the office of the Secretary of Labor. Many reorganization ideas are under consideration, which may result in site changes that focus on a career cluster or academy approach.

### **Child Care Development Services – Carolyn Morrison**

CCDS administers the USDA Child and Adult Food Program. They work with over 700 day care providers who serve 5000-8000 children and over 250,000 meals each month. CCDS provides monthly monitoring visits to day care providers, offers business development support, technical assistance and one-on-one counseling. As a result, their provider retention rate is well over the national average. Carolyn distributed a copy of the Oregon Child Care Market Rate Study conducted in 2004 that demonstrates the shortage of child care slots in East County. As mentioned earlier, there is a high demand for resources to serve special need children. Child care is expensive and challenging for low-income families; often leading to “under the table” or hidden child care that is not regulated. The CCDS role with the CEO project is to assist with the business loan program and foster the start-up of more day care provider businesses. A specialized two-day Small Business Boot Camp will be conducted to offer training unique to these businesses. As an incentive for these businesses to repay their loans, CCDS will be rebating all or a portion of the interest paid when the loan is repaid in full.

### **DHS – Debbie Foote**

The agency’s \$172 million shortfall is driving much of the decisions and direction for the agency. The issue is being addressed by Dr. Bruce Goldstein, new state director and is caused by higher than projected need for state services by people qualified to get these services. Debbie reported on the successful Homeless Resource Fair held on January 17<sup>th</sup> at the Oregon Convention Center. (Sponsored by the City of Portland) She expects more events to be held in Portland. Over 900 people were served and some were turned away. Participants received blankets, socks, food bags, dental work, information on SSI, VR, food stamps, housing and other social services. People can qualify for food stamps if they own a car or a house. Many families qualify and if they are accepted into the food stamp program, they also receive discounts on their phone bills, relief from student loan payments and other benefits. Proposed 2006 cuts in federal funds may reduce services for TANF, food Stamps, WIC etc.

### **Goodwill Industries overview – Lani Staab**

Lani is the director of Goodwill’s Job Connection Program. This is a free service and people are referred to them by agencies and businesses. As an example, businesses will refer job applicants who could not be hired by their company. Goodwill maintains relationships with other businesses in the community who may hire these same individuals. The program served over 10,000 persons in 2005 that resulted in 553 hires. They service three populations: the disabled, disadvantaged, or competitively employable. The program is growing rapidly and will be opening a new office in Corvallis or Hillsboro.

### **Steps-to-Success – Kim Patterson**

STS is a joint project of MHCC and PCC. They provide training and services for people in TANF, Welfare, and food stamp programs. There are four STS sites in the Portland area: Metro Career Center, Steps-Net for non-native English Speakers, STS Teen Branch, and STS East Branch on NE 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave. The East Site is three times larger than the others, has mental health services on site and assists with GED completion. The STS Health Career Class has a 90% placement rate. They also offer training in customer service (call center), office skills, basic workforce and life skills, and provide staffing at the Helping Hands store for Human Solutions. Clients must be attached to work products, and STS is seeking work products such as assistance with mailings, sending out marketing materials, folding flyers, etc. They take orders from

employers and businesses to provide this work free of charge. STS participates in a degree completion program – there are 100 slots funded statewide. For more information on all of these programs, contact Kim at 503.256.0432

**Youth employment issues (Phil Dean – Project YESS and Brenda Butler representing the Police Activity League - PAL)**

Project YESS is a youth education and employment program for low-income youth aged 16 to 21. They serve High School drop-outs and students in the Reynolds SD Alternative Learning Academy. Services include help with GEDs, getting a job, transition to more education and training, paid work experience, job shadows, support and technical assistance and bus passes. They have a contract to serve 150 persons through DOL and wsi. Wsi has received a grant to work with youth offenders, preparing them to work in high growth occupations. The grant has high outcomes and expectations and includes a \$2400 educational stipend for students that complete the program. Wsi has contracted with Project YESS to serve 20 of these students by September 2006.

General issues and trends impacting youth include:

- The drug of choice has changed from marijuana to Meth – impacting at least 10% of students in the project. This is a serious and progressing issue.
- Dealing with fewer teen parents than 10 years ago, but childcare for teens is still an issue.
- Transportation remains a challenge for youth as does housing.
- Youth are less prepared for employment and/or college due to a lower base of skill levels than in the 90's.
- Increase in the number of youth that are on the street/homeless
- Attrition/loss of services to youth at all levels: fewer agencies, little to no funding, cuts in DHS, loss of case management, no summer employment programs, no adult mentoring of older teens. In 1988 Project YESS has a staff of 37 and served 800 youth. Today it has a staff of 9, serving 150 youth.

The PAL (Police Activity League) is a youth activity center on 172<sup>nd</sup> in Gresham. They serve youth from age 8 to 18. The program serves an average of 130 kids a day with games and other after school and holiday break activities. They partner with the SUN school program and are expanding into the Mollalla and Lynchwood schools.

The Civic Justice Corps is using Americorp and VISTA volunteers to recruit ex-offenders to be Americorp volunteers. The project is based in North Portland and they are seeking activities where these new volunteers can get work experience. If you know of an appropriate activity/site, please let Brenda know – 503.816.1530

**Human Solutions – Catherine Todd**

Human Solutions manages 471 units of affordable housing (range - \$450 to \$565 per unit), temporary transitional housing (4 to 5 months), and provides rental and energy assistance. The rental assistance is offered the first day of each month and is gone in about 10 minutes. Calls seeking energy assistance are coming in at a rate of 1 to 7 a minute. Housing issues include dealing with “slum lords” that force people to live in sub-par housing that is not clean or healthy for children. There is a lack of affordable housing region wide and especially in East County. Human Solutions partners with MHCC Steps to Success, Sno-Cap, FISH, and St. Vincent DePaul to provide a Helping Hands Community Store located at 27<sup>th</sup> and Powell. The store is open on Tuesday and Wednesdays from 10 to 2 PM. Clients may obtain 10 items per household, two

times a month – at no cost. They get donations of new and used clothing from the GAP and NIKE as well as community members. They have served over 8000 persons since opening in November of 2005. This service was once provided in their East County office – but was forced to close due to budget and lack of volunteers to staff the store. A new location will be needed by July or August and they are actively seeking a site in East County. Assistance with filing federal income taxes will be provided at the East County Office beginning in February. This is a free service and helps people access earned income tax credits. Erica Silver is the Social Service Director and Doreen Warner is the Housing Director for the agency.

### **Portland Habilitation Center – Patti Park**

PHC is a not-for-profit 501c3 organization that is self-supporting and employs over 1100 persons. As a Qualified Rehabilitation Center, 75% of all employees must have a disability. Their training programs include landscape (6 month program), clerical (constantly hiring – stay in clerical pool until placement), and janitorial (high drop-out rate and high turnover in the janitorial jobs). The janitorial jobs begin at a rate of \$7.50 per hour with advancement to \$10.10 an hour after 6 months. The largest contracts PHC handles are for janitorial services in public facilities such as the airport and Portland Public Schools. PHC is building a new 100,000 sq. ft. facility to accommodate growth in their business product contracts which include production and manufacturing services for Danner Boots, welding, hazardous-waste bags, National Guard contracts, record keeping for DHS, recycling program, and many others. They provide free ESL classes and own and operate affordable HUD housing units. PHC is a qualified participant for the SSI Ticket to Work program that allows people to get full SSI benefits without losing SSI income due to full time employment. Persons with criminal backgrounds pose a large challenge for many of their contracts. These people are hired on a case-by-case basis depending on the felony charge and mental health issues.