



MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

HELP. HOPE. CHANGE.



True Stories
2016 SPRING/SUMMER

COMMUNITY HELPING COMMUNITY

MSC HELPS LUNCHEON

Thursday, October 20, 2016
11:30am-1pm
Emerald Downs



Honorary Co-Chairs:

Jim Berrios, Golden Steer Steak 'n Rib House, Kent City Council

Lydia Assefa-Dawson, King County Housing Authority, Federal Way City Council

LUNCHEON

Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us for the Third Annual MSC Helps Luncheon on October 20, 2016, featuring keynote speaker Donna Beegle.

Dr. Donna Beegle inspires and educates individuals, organizations, politicians, and entire communities with proven models to better outcomes for people in poverty. Born into a migrant labor family and married at 15, Dr. Beegle is the only member of her family who has not been incarcerated. Dr. Beegle's inspiring story of moving from 28 years of homelessness to achieving a doctorate and her groundbreaking work assisting people to move out of poverty has been featured on the internet, in newspapers, and on television around the nation. She is an authentic voice from poverty that speaks, writes and trains across the nation to break the iron cage of poverty for others. For more than 25 years, she has traveled throughout hundreds of cities in 47 states and four countries to assist professionals with proven strategies for breaking poverty barriers. State agencies, politicians and other organizations have partnered with her to implement community-wide approaches to improving outcomes for citizens in poverty.

Lead Sponsor: United Healthcare

Associate Sponsors: CHI Franciscan Health, Kiwanis Club of Federal Way and Laurus Financial

For more information on the luncheon, including sponsorship opportunities, please contact Le Ann Taylor at leannt@mschelps.org or 253.835.7678, ext. 105.

CRAB FEED

Saturday, June 4, 2016
6-10pm

Weyerhaeuser King County
Aquatic Center



****SOLD OUT****

Waitlist reservations currently accepted. Contact Le Ann Taylor at leannt@mschelps.org or 253.835.7678, ext. 105 for more information.

Thank you to our sponsors!

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A REAL BED

“For the first time in eight years, I have my own real bed,” shares Lola.

Lola had worked for years with a local hotel chain and was doing okay, making ends meet at least, until the day she started to get sick. It turned out that the hotel had a mold problem, and it was affecting Lola’s health.

Lola was able to get medical treatment, but whenever she went to work she had to wear a mask. Her employer started to treat her differently and she was no longer given the same opportunities she had prior to her illness.

So, Lola jumped when she was presented with the opportunity to become a live-in caregiver for a woman she had known for several months. She put in her notice to both her employer and her landlord; however, before she started her new caregiver job everything fell through.

Lola quickly found herself without a job and without a place to live. She was able to stay with different friends each for a week or so at a time, but eventually she ran out of friends to stay with. She started to stay nights at a local shelter last November.

That’s also when Lola found a part-time job at a gas station and got connected with MSC’s THRIVE Program. Lola learned about THRIVE after getting signed up with ORCA LIFT through an MSC outreach program. ORCA LIFT is a program providing reduced fare for public transit in King County.

Through THRIVE, Lola was able to get free bus tickets and clothing for her new job. Things were still hard though. It was difficult to get more than two hours of sleep a night at the shelter and her work pants kept getting stolen. After a couple of months at the shelter, Lola was back staying with friends and couch-hopping until she finally got a place of her own.

Through the Rapid Rehousing program, Lola found a place to call home in one of MSC’s affordable rent apartments. MSC helped connect Lola with a resource for furniture and for the first time in eight years she is sleeping on a real mattress, not a couch or an air mattress. Lola is continuing to look for another part-time job or a full-time job that would provide her with a livable-wage salary. MSC continues to support Lola throughout her job search by providing resources and tools to help her succeed.

“My case manager at MSC was so genuinely supportive, so real, it set MSC apart from the other organizations where I’ve received help,” shared Lola. “She can relate to me, she’s someone I’d want for a lifetime in my corner.”

FEEDING THE SOUL

Sarah was walking down the hall of the nursing home when a partially opened door caught her eye. She saw the name of a man and a woman on the door that she did not recognize. As a volunteer Long-Term Care Ombuds, she regularly visited residents to make sure their needs were being met and their rights were protected.

As Sarah entered the room, she saw three people in the room. A woman in bed by the window being tended to by a nurse and a man in the bed by the door. They were Michael and Teresina.

When Sarah met them, Michael was legally blind from cataracts and was bedridden because of a lack of muscle tone. Teresina was suffering from cancer and receiving hospice care. Teresina urged Michael to go into therapy and get cataract surgery. "Teresina was worried about me. She was worried about going into the dying process because of me," shares Michael.

The next week, Teresina told Sarah that Sarah needed to talk to Michael and to talk with him about Latin. Sarah brought Michael a book in Latin, *Winnie the Pooh*. Sarah read the book and Michael happily translated. "He was very gracious about interpreting *Winnie the Pooh*, even though he is a Latin scholar," shares Sarah.

Michael and Teresina met in the 1960's in a Tacoma coffee shop where Michael was reading poetry. They shared a passion for the arts—Michael wrote poems and Teresina drew and painted. As they aged, their health declined. One day after they had both fallen down, Teresina made the decision that it was time they both get help and they went to the hospital. After a few days they were transferred to a nursing home.



The transfer was a traumatic experience for Michael. After spending fifty years together, they were separated. Michael wasn't able to find Teresina. He was distraught and crawled along the floors looking for her. The staff wouldn't tell him where she was. His doctor decided he was incompetent and started guardian proceedings.

Once he was reunited with Teresina, her hospice nurse figured out what was going on with Michael's potential guardianship. A guardianship would take away Michael's ability to make decisions for himself. She knew Michael did not need a guardian, he was in a crisis situation, not suffering from dementia, and was able to stop the proceedings from continuing. However, initiation of guardianship proceedings was now on Michael's medical record and would follow him through the rest of his life. Sarah, in her role as ombuds, helped Michael to have additional information added to his record to discredit the claim of a need for a guardian. This will help Michael to be in control of decisions about his health, finances, and final wishes in the future.

After a few months at the nursing home,

Michael lost Teresina; however, he still had Sarah by his side. He was moved into a small room with two other men at the nursing home. He received cataract surgery and physical therapy, but there were issues with his roommates. The staff left the television on 24 hours a day for one of them which made it hard to sleep. He didn't want to make waves though. Sarah tried to help where she could in getting him transferred and making the best out of his room situation. About a year after Michael's arrival at the nursing home, Sarah came back from a vacation to find Michael had been moved to a new facility. The new facility was a vast improvement, it afforded Michael privacy, a space of his own, and most importantly, to decorate all the walls with the artwork of his beloved Teresina.

This new facility was outside Sarah's coverage area as an ombuds, however, she had developed such a friendship with Michael, that she decided to start visiting him as a friend. Sarah approached her Staff Ombuds Sam Hopkins. "There's a layer to volunteering as Ombuds that involves emotions. Additionally, our volunteers build relationships in their roles. I can appreciate this and respect Sarah's decision. She has my support to continue her friendship off duty," said Sam.

As Michael's friend, she visits him often and brings him books in Latin, which Sarah has learned through her friendship with Michael. "We laugh, I really enjoy my visits," shares Sarah.

"Sarah fed my soul. I don't think I would have made it without her friendship," shares Michael. Michael is now under hospice care, and Sarah is there for him. He has shared his final wishes with her and she, as his friend, will remain by his side until that time comes.



BACK ON TRACK

In his teens, Rob made the decision to leave high school for a job at an independent tech store. He did well, starting out as a janitor but quickly moving up in the ranks to become head tech. His employers recognized his skill and knowledge, and rewarded him for it.

Unfortunately, after seven years as head tech, the store Rob worked for went out of business. It was at a time when a lot of smaller independent stores were closing. Rob found himself at a big box store. Tech services like Rob had been providing were starting to move off-site from stores, so Rob found himself only performing a retail

function. He stuck with it for years, until just over three years ago when he was laid off.

At the same time Rob was laid off, his grandmother was diagnosed with cancer. Rob decided that he would care for his grandmother full-time, and did so until she passed last July. A short while after her passing, Rob had not yet landed a job and he found himself visiting the MSC food bank.

“Everyone requires you to at least have a GED. I had thought about it, but the fees and classes just seemed insurmountable at the time,” shared Rob.

Rob happened to visit the library at the same time MSC was there with a resource table. He came over to look at

what other programs besides the food bank were offered by MSC, and found that he could get support and financial assistance to take his GED. He signed up and started classes in December. By February, he had passed all four tests and earned his GED.

“I received good support from staff. If I needed help, I had someone. They were so familiar with the materials, they could help direct you to the areas you need the most practice to pass the tests. They helped fill the holes.”

Rob is now one step closer to obtaining employment. He is also getting connected with employment resources through the RISE Program (Resources to Initiate Successful Employment) to help him find success in his job search.



P.O. Box 23699
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MSC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency that offers people pathways out of poverty through support and resources in education, employment, housing, energy assistance, food, and clothing. We also provide statewide advocacy for elderly and disabled residents of long-term care facilities.
Learn More: Call 253.838.6810 or online at www.mschepls.org

Help. Hope. Change.

Empowered individuals, thriving communities.



TRUE STORIES ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

Inside this newsletter, you will read three stories of customers that have been helped by MSC. These are stories about our customers, but they are also stories about our staff and volunteers. One of the themes that runs through each story is the personal connection that develops between the customer and staff or volunteer, and the sense of value the customer receives from knowing that someone believes in their success and is in their corner.

Everyday, volunteers and staff are making a difference through connections with our customers. Housing case managers are finding stable housing for individuals and families. Staff and volunteer tutors are teaching youth and adults the skills they need to pass the GED test, learn English, or basic education. Employment case managers are teaching both soft and hard skills

to unemployed or underemployed adults so they can find meaningful work. Energy staff and volunteers are helping families keep the lights on and use their limited funds for other important needs. Long-term care ombuds are standing up for the rights of residents in long-term care facilities. Each of these on their own may seem like a small success, but together can add up to a life-changing event for members of our community who are trying to make ends meet.

Your support makes that connection, success, and life-changing event possible for our customers. You make a difference by supporting our work in the community and showing each and every customer that they are valued and deserve success. Thank you!



Best wishes,

Robin R. Corak
Chief Executive Officer

