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True Stories

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MSC Helps Luncheon, Thursday, October 17, 2019
Honorary Chair: King County Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Brenda Combs

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MISSION

MSC is building a future without poverty by creating pathways to help, hope, and dignity for our neighbors.

VISION

Empowered individuals. Thriving communities.

VALUES

TEAMWORK
PASSION
RESPECT

INTEGRITY
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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THE NEXT WARREN BUFFETT

At “22 years young,” Renorlito has a crystal clear vision for his future. “In five years, I hope to be the next Warren Buffet,” he shares.

“The company you keep has a lot to do with the outcome you will see. You can’t let your environment get the best of you. You have to surround yourself with people who have goals and want to do good things. Not that having a good time is all bad, but you have to have balance,” he shares. “I want to lead by example.”

When he was 18 years old, Renorlito moved back to the Seattle area with his mom. He wanted to finish high school, and was referred to the Federal Way Open Doors program where he worked with an MSC case manager on achieving his goals and obtaining his high school diploma.

Renorlito had moved around a lot as a kid, and when his mom once again

was moving shortly after they arrived here, he decided to stay in Federal Way. “It was a life-changing decision for me, I knew this was where I needed to be.”

Renorlito was the first Open Doors student in a new tuition waiver program and co-enrolled at Bates College in its barber class. “The tuition waiver was a success story for me and for them. It’s really a way to engage kids in something they want to do while they are also getting their high school diploma,” shared Renorlito.

Since then, Renorlito has earned his high school diploma and has begun taking classes in Highline’s small business and entrepreneurship program. He’s already opened a t-shirt shop and wants to open a barber shop in the future.

His strong entrepreneurial spirit is accompanied by a desire to spark the same energy and excitement in other youth. He hopes to achieve this by

incorporating an incubator program into his business where youth can have the space and inspiration to do productive things with their lives.

Renorlito recently joined the MSC staff as an AmeriCorps volunteer helping youth obtain their GED, get enrolled in college, and with job-readiness training. He wants youth to know they have options. “I want to hear more success stories by helping them get their minds working and allowing them to exercise their own voices,” says Renorlito.

MSC and Federal Way Open Doors partner to reengage students ages 16 to 21 and support them in obtaining their High School Diploma or GED Certificate. MSC has dedicated staff at Open Doors who work with students to achieve their academic and personal goals, provide individualized learning plans and other GEDplus supports, provide comprehensive case management, connection to community resources, post-secondary planning, and positive youth development opportunities such as field trips and leadership activities.

WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

“You often hear of issues around finance and healthcare decisions with Powers of Attorney and guardianships. But a huge issue we see in long-term care facilities is the guardian or POA agent restricting the elder’s relationships, such as who they can see and socialize with,” says Patricia Hunter, Washington State Long-Term Care Ombuds. “The real issue is about how we help vulnerable adults maximize their choices and help them facilitate their wishes.”

The Washington State Long-Term Care Ombuds, a program of MSC, advocates for residents of nursing homes, adult family homes, and assisted living facilities to protect and promote their resident rights under Federal and State laws and regulations.

“There is often a lot of confusion between Powers of Attorney and guardianships,” shares Hunter, “so it is really important to see the actual legal papers because they are very different in the way they affect someone’s rights.”

“A guardianship is sort of like the ultimate substitute decision maker,” says Hunter. “A guardianship can only happen through a court of law and it is very formal. The court will determine what rights will be taken away, whether full or partial. The POA is much less formal and is really about choosing someone who can help you make decisions and be your agent when you can’t do so. We recommend that everyone has a POA.”

A very common scenario seen by the Long-Term Care Ombuds



is siblings disagreeing over care issues of a parent with cross-allegations of neglect and financial mismanagement that lead to restricting access to an elder. This generally happens due to a misunderstanding over the powers granted by a POA and is usually an emotional time for all involved, with issues between siblings obscuring the care or needs of the elder.

As a result, it often isn’t clear whose direction the long-term care provider should follow, and often Adult Protective Services is brought in and a guardianship proceeding started. The Ombuds can help with the process of working through these issues and helping family members learn how to do healthy and safe visits that don’t put the elder in the middle, and don’t disrupt care.

“There is a concern about how to balance resident legal rights when there is a guardian or POA who doesn’t realize they have those rights,” says Patricia.

Recognizing these issues, the Washington State Legislature passed HB1402 which directs both the Long-Term Care Ombuds and the Office of Public Guardianship to create trainings to help alleviate this confusion. The Ombuds training is geared towards long-term care

facilities, while the Office of Public Guardianship will create trainings for the legal community.

While focused on training providers, management, and staff at long-term care facilities, the training produced by the Ombuds shares information on POAs and guardianships that are helpful for everyone. The training consists of two audio-visual trainings of about 40 minutes each that can be viewed in segments and accompanying resource guides. The trainings are available to the public at <https://www.waombudsman.org/education/decision-making/>.

“These trainings will help providers and staff at long-term care facilities know what to watch for in terms of legal agents overstepping their authority and respecting a resident’s right to choose who they socialize with,” says Patricia. “There is already a lot of isolation for someone in a facility, it is important they have relationships. The hope is that we can give accurate information about what they can and can’t do, and how they can improve relationships for their client’s well-being.”

“Guardianships are very necessary and some people are very in need. In fact, there is a shortage of public guardians in this state for several different reasons. Vulnerable adults may have no one who can step forward to make decisions for them,” shares Patricia. “This training will help to ensure that resident rights are respected and honored.”

An attorney is recommended to help you create a durable Power of Attorney; however, free or low cost legal clinics and resources are also available at www.kcba.org and www.nwjustice.org. None of the above information should be considered legal advice. If you or someone you know is in a long-term care facility and have questions about your rights, call 1-800-562-6028.

IT MEANT THE WORLD TO ME

At 33 years of age, Alicia is focusing on getting her life back on track. Over the last several years, she has struggled with substance abuse issues, an abusive former partner, and the loss of custody of her two children, Justin and Kaylynn.

Losing custody of her children sent Alicia spiraling out of control. She began using drugs heavily; however, she never lost sight of her goal to get her children back. So after a few months, she entered her first treatment program. Unfortunately, she relapsed shortly after. She tried again several times with different programs, but continued to relapse. Finally, about a year and a half ago, Alicia found a program that worked for her and she stuck with it. She has been clean and sober since.

Alycia regained custody of Justin, age 7, last April. Shortly afterward,

she learned that she was going to need to find new housing. She had nowhere to go. That's when she learned about Multi-Service Center. She met with one of MSC's housing case managers who was able to get her into MSC's family shelter. She stayed there for several months until a unit at one of MSC's affordable permanent housing properties became available last Fall. She moved in with Justin, and the two of them have begun their path to stability.

Alicia is close to regaining custody of Kaylynn, age 4, and looks forward to her visits with her. Alicia also has a good relationship with Kaylynn's father, and although they were not good together as romantic partners, they are great friends and co-parents. Alicia wishes she could also have this type of co-parenting relationship with Justin's father; however, she does not see that happening due to the nature of their past relationship and Justin's feelings towards his father.

Clear boundaries are one of the reasons behind Alicia's success. She knows that her sobriety is vital for the health and safety of her children, so she only maintains relationships with friends and family who are clean and sober, and who help create a healthy environment for her and her children.

"It meant the world to me when I got involved with MSC. My life turned around 100% from struggling to a place where I can move forward," shared Alicia.

Alicia is currently unable to work because she needs to care for Justin who has been exhibiting behavioral issues. She plans on accessing other services at MSC including energy assistance and the food bank to make sure her family's needs are met until she can return to work. Eventually, she wants to be able to help advocate and counsel parents who are in a similar situation to help them reunite their families.





P.O. Box 23699
Federal Way, WA 98093-0699

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.mschehelp.org

Help. Hope. Change.

Empowered individuals, thriving communities.



TRUE STORIES ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are values that Multi-Service Center staff and board members embrace as vital components in fulfilling our mission of “building a future without poverty by creating pathways to help, hope, and dignity for our neighbors.” Over the last several years, we recognized the need to implement efforts to improve DEI knowledge and competencies throughout all levels of MSC.

Last Spring, MSC began working with Diverse City, LLC, to assess, strategize, and facilitate our process to improve our DEI competencies. Since that time we have created a three-year DEI strategic plan based on their assessment with measurable outcomes, and have accomplished the following:

- 1) Implemented an internal DEI committee with diverse representation from all levels of the organization. This committee will help the agency be accountable in our DEI efforts and provide feedback and recommendations.
- 2) Expanded our job listings to include recruitment through diverse job boards and included DEI competencies in our employee performance evaluations.
- 3) Senior management have all participated in DEI training and planning efforts. Some senior management

team members have joined local diversity networks and task forces.

- 4) Offered internal trainings to all staff on unconscious bias.

In the near future, we will be adding a “blind” job application process in order to ensure that candidates are evaluated on their skills and experience only, expanding our ability to communicate DEI competencies and knowledge to staff through internal networks, and continuing to offer training opportunities and resources to our staff on DEI topics.

We are committed to serving all members of the community and work to foster a spirit of inclusion and acceptance. We find strength in diversity and welcome people from all walks of life.



Best wishes,

Robin R. Corak

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Chief Executive Officer



MULTI-SERVICE CENTER