

April 2009

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Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back

Hello to all of our "Friends of WINGS." Well, it is has been a very interesting winter and we have learned *so* much. Just as I was getting ready to tell you we had a house full of boys, we had three of them walk away from the program in February. We spent about 15 minutes feeling really bad, and then spent a month pulling together as a team and revisiting and tweaking almost every aspect of our program.

I will introduce you to our newest team members in a minute, but know that the worst part of losing the guys was trying to figure out how to tell all of you. Then I realized that you understand we are a start-up and learning and growing every day . . . and kids are not always ready to work hard and turn their lives around. So, February was a tough month, but we came out so much stronger and united as a team and a board!

We now have a greater understanding of our rules and policies and our selection process. We factored in more time off, more counseling, a two-week probation period, and so much more. Now we have reopened our doors - and yes, **Daren**, our first WING-man, is still with us, and he has helped us so much in our rebuilding. So, let me apologize again for the delay - and the length of this newsletter - we just have *soo* much good news.

New Guys!



We are proud to introduce **Trevor** and **Jason** to you. Trevor is from Lyle and is 18, and we are proud to say, he has just completed his GED. He loves computers and he and **Adam** plan to hike to the top of Mt Adams.

Jason was a wildland firefighter, is 22 and from The Dalles. He loves to fish and be outdoors. Both are such hard workers and such great additions to our team. We are actively interviewing for our fourth WING-man and hope to introduce him to you soon.

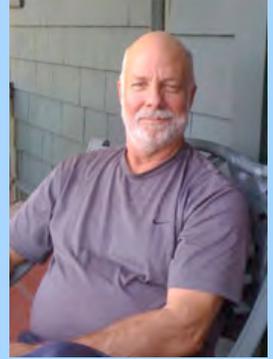


New Team Members



Melanie McCloskey -- well, she rocks. Melanie brings her amazing organizational skills and passion for the program, as well as her writing skills, to help us with everything from acquiring needed donations, like a toilet for the house, to applying for grants. We are so lucky to have her!

Steve Labadie -- many of you locals probably know Steve from his many years as the Visual Arts teacher at Hood River High School. Well, he approached me about teaching life skills to our guys and I asked him to also be our teacher - so we are getting 2 for 1! He passion is contagious and the guys really get his message! I know, how did we get so much talent? A million blessings!



More Good News!

OYCC Grant - we just found out on Friday we have been selected for an **Oregon Youth Conservation Corp** grant. This money will be enough to cover the salary of **Shawn**, our houseparent/crew leader, for a year! This will also help a great deal with our credibility and sustainability and I am very proud of **Paula** and **Melanie** for their hard work in putting the grant together so beautifully - woo hoo! We are writing almost a grant a week!

Government Largesse - We were approved for property tax exemption by **Hood River County** and are working with **Mid Columbia Housing Authority** to get our rent paid for! So much good news!

Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital



This angel is **Rena Whittaker** and everyone in town knows her as the "go-to" person if you want to get something done. . . . she is amazing. She is the Director of the **Providence Hospital Foundation** here in Hood River and what a blessing the Foundation has been. They have agreed to help with some dental assistance, some mental health assessments and therapy and free medical care through their Mobile Health Unit. You have to know that these are

huge savings for us - a miracle!

Even More to Be Thankful For

Susan Sisko and **Tiffany Kenslow** have been another blessing - we are so lucky! They have a therapy practice here in Hood River and have agreed to offer our guys two hours a week through a depression and communication group they are offering! We so appreciate them and their support!



Big hugs to **Bernadette** and **Corey Williams** for our new/used riding mower.

Also thanks to **Neal** and **Diana Price** for all of the furniture and the Bo-Flex machine - very popular!! **Standard Supply** in Portland donated our new toilet! We also had the first of our sleepovers from the *Hoe-Down* - thanks to **Clark** and **Carol Emmerson**, and **Geoff Gill** for catering! Thanks also to **Ginger McGeer** for our new phone for **Adam**, our Volunteer Coordinator/Americorp Member from North Carolina - so needed!

Doings On the Farm



Easter -- we always want to be sure we keeping the "kid" in our kids . . . yeah they might be 18 - 23, but who doesn't have fun coloring Easter eggs? Shawn says they were all recovered from the yard . . . we shall see!

Garden -- we are getting ready to put in our vegetable garden - with lots of help, hopefully - so if you have any seeds, or more seedlings than you can use, please call us - we need everything!! Also need berry bushes or fruit trees! Tools too!!

Work



We have two contracts for work! Shawn and the WING-men are working Mondays at **Cascade Commons** doing maintenance work. One to two days a week they are working for the **Port of Hood River** doing noxious weed removal and clean-up along the shore. We have, when weather

permitted, worked for folks in the community. Photo was taken at **Neal Price's** - doing fuel reduction. We hope to fill our schedule and work four full days per week - allowing us to make at least ¼ of the money we need to be sustainable!

Giving Back

So what do we do on the fifth day? We volunteer in the community. Every Friday morning, you can find our 1989 Suburban in front of **Safeway** and **Rosauers** loading up to take bread and other items to the **Fish Food Bank** and **LaClinica**. The "Sub" can hold 508 loaves of bread!



The WING-men also helped with **Riverkeepers** fund-raiser last month and did all of the set up for the *Bite of the Gorge*. They made lunch and dinner for 80 kids last weekend at the **St Mary's Catholic Church** retreat.

On the Horizon

Look for info next month on a **Wine/Fund Raiser** in Portland in June, and a **Rebuilding Party** for our poor old barn! Hugs to you all for your faith in us, and your support. Know that we would not be here without each of you. If it takes a village to save a child, it takes this community to build our village.

How You Can Help:

WINGS needs your help to continue running and to grow this year. Please check out the Donation/Volunteer page on our website: getwings.net/donation.html. If you can help with a one-time donation or better yet, a monthly pledge, your money will be directly spent to provide services to kids.

We understand that not everyone can make a monetary donation - but WINGS could use your help in so many other ways! If you have a skill or a passion or a favorite sport, and could spare an afternoon, please let us know. If you have excess furniture or equipment, please check out our Needs List and make a donation. If you have work for the Crew for a day or longer, please give us a call at 541-380-3820.

Thanks to all of you who have helped WINGS get this far; your help has made all the difference! When the young men are ready, together we will give them "WINGS."

Give Them Wings, Inc is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation doing business as WINGS. WINGS is a two-phase program which provides housing, work, trade and life skill training, education and wrap-around services for 18- to 23-year-old young men in Hood River and Wasco Counties who were formerly in foster care or are currently homeless and in need of support.

Sincerely,
Allyson Pate
WINGS

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