



HEARTS —WITH-A— MISSION

Together With You

SUMMER EDITION 2023





Thank you Hellgate Jetboat Excursions for bringing joy to our hearts!



Thank you Medford Rogues. You always knock it out of the park.



Thank you 808 Ohana Grindz for being a superhero to our youth



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for your supporting our seniors!

Update from Hearts With A Mission



Springtime is a season of hope and optimism with new beginnings and transformations. As the grass turns greener and the cherry blossoms bloom, hopefully, winter is finally behind us.

In 2022, when my 91-year old mother became sick and ended up in the emergency room, I was faced with a dilemma. My wife and I were diagnosed with COVID-19, my brother and sister-in-law were also sick, and my friends and children were out of town. The thought came crashing down, “As connected as I am with I overseeing dozens of employees, being involved at church, and plugged into the community... there really isn’t anyone who can go to the hospital with my mother?”

I thank God for Maureen Wright who was available to sit with my mom in the hospital for 12 hours! My mother would have been alone if it wasn’t for her! I suddenly became aware of the fact that even if you typically have support, there are times when you need additional help for those you love.

As I started to dig deeper into companion care for senior citizens, I was astonished to discover the lack of resources or affordable services available. It made me think of the youth we serve and I thought to myself, “We have to do better.” Not only are our youth in need, but our seniors are in need as well.

That’s how Hearts For Seniors was born. It’s a volunteer-based, free companion care service for eligible seniors 65 and older. The goal is to create authentic relationships with our elderly and join them in everyday tasks such as grocery shopping, light cleaning, or simply sitting and having a conversation together. (See page 4)

Over the years I’ve learned there are people who want to help but just don’t know how. Volunteering as a companion through Hearts For Seniors is just one way you can give. Time after time I’ve witnessed, people who volunteer, become just as blessed as the people we are trying to support. If you aren’t involved in the community, I encourage you to reflect on how you can help someone in need today. Maybe it’s by visiting a neighbor or serving at your church, and of course, we would be honored for you to join us here at Hearts With A Mission.

As we enter this new chapter of growth in our programs at Hearts With A Mission, I want to thank all of our partners who donate time, money, and effort to our cause. HWAM only exists because of generous people like you.

Together with you,



Kevin Lamson,
Executive Director



Welcome Ashley Thompson

Hi There!

I’m Ashley Thompson, Development Coordinator of Jackson County. Some of you know me as Ashley Carrasco, TV news reporter. I retired from my broadcasting career earlier this year after giving birth to my sweet and happy baby boy. While my husband and I prayed about where the Lord would lead our family next, it became very apparent He was bringing me to Hearts With A Mission.

My husband is from Nevada and I’m from California. We live away from our biological families, therefore are passionate about shepherding and bringing family and friends together. I am honored to use my passion for people, along with my communication skills developed from reporting, to unite our community in support of our at risk / homeless youth and socially isolated seniors.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, I’ve fallen in love with the rural and slower pace of life southern Oregon has to offer. I didn’t realize how much I love hiking until I left Medford to report in Iowa. As beautiful as it was, my heart remained here. I’ve lived in four states and Oregon is by far my favorite place because of all its beauty, outdoor activities and most of all, the people. I look forward to meeting more of you and building lifelong friendships.



Oliver, Ezekiel and Ashley Thompson

Welcome Christie Hill

I’m so excited to be here at HWAM! I love people and sharing their stories of growth through life’s challenges and blessings. I’m grateful to be in a role at HWAM where I can share positive staff and client experiences while collaborating with individuals, businesses, and partners throughout our community.

I’ve been blessed with an amazing husband, Jon, and two boys, Zane (13) and Lucas (10). We enjoy getting outside for all kinds of outdoor activities and participating in sports year round. My husband and I grew up in Grants Pass and are happy to be raising our two boys in the Rogue Valley surrounded by supportive grandparents and family.

I’ve had the opportunity to work in case management roles with youth and family services at non-profits in Grants Pass, Ashland, the Portland area, and Flagstaff, AZ. Additionally, I have managed sports and recreation facilities and most recently founded and owned, "Summit Fitness" in Grants Pass.



Lucas, Jon, Christie and Zane Hill

The Development Coordinator - Josephine County position at HWAM, is a perfect fit for me. It’s been fun getting out in the community to build and strengthen relationships with local businesses, health providers, foundations, and non-profit partners. It’s been a pleasure getting to know the HWAM staff, board members, and volunteers. I look forward to all we will accomplish as a team committed to furthering HWAM’s mission. I am thankful to be a part of this incredible organization and can’t wait to meet you!



Stephanie Miller,
HFS Manager

Introducing our newest program:

Hearts For Seniors

Hearts for Seniors (HFS) is an elderly companion care program for socially isolated seniors in our community. We aim to support seniors with everyday tasks while building and fostering relationships. HFS also helps offset large financial discrepancies that typically keep seniors from receiving the care they need by offering all services free of charge. Our services are to support independence by assisting isolated seniors (ages 65+) with their companion care needs in the comfort of their own homes.

Our main goal is connection. Our volunteers may assist with some basic errands and chores, but companionship is the primary focus. All services are volunteer-driven. Our volunteers are the heartbeat of the program and have been crucial in its success. As the list of seniors in need increases daily, the need for volunteers also grows.

A note from Stephanie Miller

My name is Stephanie Miller, and I am the Program Manager for Hearts For Seniors (HFS). I discovered my passion for serving the elderly community in high school when I worked with them as a part time job. I found a deep connection with this generation and it brought me great interest and joy.

While attending Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls, Oregon, I met my husband, Jarred. We were married in August of 2008, and shortly thereafter he joined the ARMY. We have two children, Carter and Katelynn. I was blessed with the opportunity to stay home with my children during their preschool years. When they became school aged, I met a woman who had her own elderly companion care business and she showed me how to set up my own career doing the same. I was overjoyed that this dream had come full-circle and that a job serving this generation was a possibility.

When Kevin approached me with the idea of taking my business and modeling it after "Safe Families for Children," I didn't want to miss out on this opportunity.



Stephanie's good friend, Evy



HWAM and partners tour
"Celia's House" in Medford.



Easter dinner with family
and new friends.

Here we are almost half a year into the launch and the need for assistance is growing daily. The vision we have had for this program is coming to fruition. One senior told me, "I have felt more love in the past two months than I have felt my entire life." Another senior said, "I have had a pain in my chest for a year, but since I met you, that pain is gone." He is now attending that church and has regular fellowship with a men's group.

As for me, I'm trusting the Lord throughout the planning and launch of this program which has been truly humbling. The Lord continues to provide. My hope is that His will continues to be done. Hearts for Seniors is His plan and I feel absolutely blessed and honored to be a part of it. My prayer is that more people will feel the same and be moved to get involved.

~ Stephanie

A helping hand

By Stephanie Miller, HFS Manager

In our first month of launching Hearts For Seniors, we received a referral asking if we could help a senior clean her yard. She was going to be evicted if she couldn't tidy up the space.

As we offered her our services, she mentioned she was lonely, had very high anxiety, and could use some physical assistance. However, she wasn't sure she wanted anyone in her

home. Through several phone conversations she hesitantly decided to allow an in-person meeting.

"I have felt more loved in the past two months than I have in my entire life."

During our first visit, I watched her slowly relax. We scheduled another time to meet and help her with a few

things around her home. After our second visit she was more open to meeting with a volunteer.

A husband and wife volunteered and immediately got to work. They helped in many tangible ways like fixing her broken sink, door knob, and helping organize her home.

They did it with so much love and compassion, our senior reached out to me and said, "I have felt more loved in the past two months than I have in my entire life."



Prepping for the yard sale.

It has been amazing watching her go from someone opposed to being around others, to someone who enjoys company. Just a few

weeks ago we helped our senior host a yard sale so she could save money for an apartment and she welcomed any volunteer that was sent her way.

She has truly appreciated the support and is learning to trust and embrace kindness from others. Thanks to the love and care of our volunteers, our senior found new hope and faith.

I receive regular updates on how supported she feels and how her anxiety is going away and her energy levels are increasing.

Ways to get involved with Hearts For Seniors

- An hour a week to sit with someone and check in on them, or even an hour a month.
- A lot of our seniors could use a meal delivered to them that they didn't have to prepare.
- Take a senior to their doctor's appointments or to the grocery store.
- Help them around their home. (Sometimes, that is the best way to get to know them better.)
- Take their animals on a walk or to the vet.
- Invite them out to lunch with you or to the movies.
- Maybe you are handy and would be willing to help with repairs or installing grab bars making their home safer and accessible.
- We always need people that would be willing for one-time projects of yard clean up, etc.
- We can most certainly always use prayer as we begin this new program and prayer for those seniors who will be coming into our care.
- Consider donating your money to Hearts With A Mission to continue supporting all the amazing programs offered.

"It was a wonderful day"

Out of the mouth of babes...

This quote was spoken by five-year old Sam as he headed to the face painting booth after having spent the day hanging out with his friends. The kiddos have one thing in common, their moms, Chelsea, Lisa and Dannie, started working for Hearts With A Mission at the same time ten years ago. Today, they all have kids and they showed up to support the Superhero Run. Over the years, they have continued to work for HWAM (in between babies) and have fun reminiscing about when they first started.

Dannie: *We all started right before the school-year of 2012 and we were a whole new group of life coaches. We didn't know what to expect but we jumped in and figured it out. Our favorite memories were getting the kids out of the house, going to the lake in the summertime, exploring waterfalls, and driving around in the van listening to music. Some of the most special memories were on Saturday mornings making breakfast with the kids. It was something we all looked forward to. We had such great bonds with the youth in those times... it was a very special time of my life that I will always cherish!*

Chelsea: *We all started together and friendships formed. We would take kids on all the outings and out exercising. We loved doing the annual camping trip each year and have lots of fun memories up at Lost Creek Lake. Dannie and I covered weekend mornings together for a long time. We learned to make pancakes together in the dozens for all the kids.*

Lisa and I remembered a huge shaving cream fight at the house with the youth. We were glad new intakes didn't show up that day! We were all covered with shaving cream and so was the house. We were laughing about what that would have been like to walk into as an outsider.

Another favorite memory is that we loved having dance parties in the lobby after chores.

Lisa: *Some of my favorite memories are cooking the kids breakfast on the weekends and hiking and exploring during the summer. It was so fun going to work, it was something I looked forward to because of the kids but also the staff. We laughed a lot. We spent so much time together we started to feel like family. The shelter can be both an inspiring and heartbreaking place to work and we shared those experiences together. We started hanging out outside of work and just doing life together. I cherish my memories from those first few years and we often reminisce about kids that took special places in our hearts or the crazy things that happened. I'm so blessed by their friendship.*



Flashback: kids having a little shaving cream fun.



Our heroes get ready to run!



Chelsea, Dannie and Lisa started working together at Hearts in 2012.



And they're off!!! This year's Superhero Run began with our new half-marathon race along the beautiful path out of Valley of the Rogue State Park. Our 5K runners were off to a quick start and the 1 mile had the kids leading the way. There were many first-time racers who came dressed up as their favorite superheros, beautiful weather, yummy food, tremendous fun in the kid zone, and many smiles and laughter had by all.

It was an enjoy-life kind of day!



A community of superheroes came out to support Hearts!



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Safe Families for Children

In Jackson, Josephine, Douglas, Klamath & Lincoln Counties

Reversing the spiral

By Marisa Hayner, Lincoln County



The lowest point in this season for Jennifer, was hearing her “friends” had trashed and looted her home while she was in jail. A single mom with two boys, Jennifer was struggling with substance abuse and finally hit rock bottom. She was determined to straighten out her life.

After serving time in jail, Jennifer went straight to a drug outpatient program. She heard she wouldn't be able to get her boys back until her home was in good living condition. Safe Families of Lincoln County heard about her plight through the Department of Human Services.

Our team began attending Jennifer's “Family Decision Meetings” and established mentorships for her boys who were staying with a resource parent. We decided her home needed immediate attention in order to get the boys home. Our Safe Families team partnered with multiple churches and spent a few weekends painting, putting in new floors, and new furniture, and fixing the plumbing and walls at Jennifer's home.

Meanwhile, Jennifer moved into a halfway house in Lincoln County. She immediately got a job at Abby's and was visiting her boys weekly. She did not have her license or a car but Jennifer made sure to find a way to visit her children. Other times, she rode her scooter around town, to work, and to various support groups. She never

complained even though it was sometimes rough to ride a scooter in the coastal weather.

Safe Families decided we wanted to bless her further and found a local mechanic who out of his own heart, generously donated a used car to Jennifer. After one year of being out of her house, Jennifer was finally able to move back home. On top of that, Safe Families, the local churches who helped fix her home, and other community members raised \$3,500 for Jennifer and her kids. Her boys were eventually able to return home as well.

I can't even explain all the things they did to help me.

A year later, Safe Families received a call from Jennifer. She was working as a mentor at a local program called CHANCE Recovery and was needing community resources. She began referring people to us and explained how she shares her story with her clients and tells them, “They (Safe Families) really do help you, I can't even explain all the things they did to help me.”

This is such a celebration for Safe Families and other community partners involved to support this family. This mom didn't waiver in her goals and stayed positive even when all odds were against her.



Welcome Douglas County Safe Families for Children

We are excited to announce Hearts With A Mission is now serving youth and their families in Douglas County!

The current agency of the Safe Families for Children host home program was unable to continue offering services and resigned as the implementer of Douglas County. In May 2023 HWAM Board of Directors

voted unanimously to become implementers in Douglas County, joining Jackson, Josephine, Lincoln, and Klamath counties under Hearts With A Mission. We are thrilled to welcome Liberty Dryden as our new Director of Douglas County SFFC. Liberty is very familiar with Douglas County serving as the SFFC Director for the last year. She has been a part of the Oregon Collaborative's Safe Families for Children network serving 14 counties in Oregon.

“HWAM has been a large part of my support system for the past year, so it feels like home to be a part of their team,” said Liberty.

Safe Families for Children (SFFC) surrounds families facing a crisis with a caring, compassionate community of volunteers. It is a volunteer-driven, professionally supported framework created to keep children safe and families together. SFFC provides host homes and family support for youth 0-24 years of age. HWAM leads the nation in serving teens and adults ages 14-24 amongst Safe Families for Children host home programs.

We would appreciate your prayers as we enter Douglas County. It is only with your loyal and dependable support that we are able to continue to serve our communities in Oregon. Thank you for all you do!

It feels like home to be a part of their team.



Left to right: Carter, Finn (dog), Liberty, Tom, Conner, Copper (dog) Dryden

Thank you is not enough to say how we feel about your help and generosity. You opened your hearts and doors to help our family at the hardest chapter in our lives and we so appreciate you all so very much. You all will always hold a special place in our hearts.

~ A note received from a family helped by Safe Families

Ways to get involved



Host Family

Voluntarily host children in your home on a temporary basis

Family Friend

Encourage and support host families and families in need

Mommy/Daddy Mentor

Provide support, connection, encouragement, and assistance for parents

Family Coach

Help families in need reach their goals and provide encouragement to host families

Resource Friend

Provide goods and services to families in need

Pray

Pray for families in crisis, volunteers, staff, and the restoration of the family

Coming up from the depths



By Bethany Holmes, SFFC Klamath County

The first time Kate called me, she explained how her son died. It rocked her so badly she fell into addiction and her other children were sent to live with her niece. Since then, Kate had gone through treatment and found Jesus. She moved to transitional housing in Chiloquin called, "The Stronghold" where they allowed her 9 year old twins to live with her. Kate also had a court date approaching and needed support. Safe Families for Children (SFFC) agreed to step in.



On her court date, Kate was glad to report she had been given custody of three of her children (the twins and her 14 year old). She was also starting a job at the "Tribal Office" and had found after school care for her kids.

A month went by and Kate contacted SFFC again stating she was struggling to find a home because of her debt. The one rental company that would consider her application was requiring \$5,300. SFFC wrote a proposal to "The Brooks Foundation" to clear her old rental debt and to help with her first month's rent. They graciously provided the funds!

Once Kate and her daughters received their keys, a volunteer helped move the family into their new home. SFFC was able to provide a washer and dryer, beds, dressers, night stands, a table and chairs, a couch and living room chairs, kitchen items, bedding and a lawnmower. Our volunteers have really wrapped around this family and they are doing well.

Medford's TLP home gets a face-lift

By Josh Crider, TLP Manager

Our Medford Transitional Living Program (TLP), supporting young people ages 18-21, opened its doors in January of 2020. We converted the original youth shelter into our TLP home and recently it got a facelift thanks to a grant from the City of Medford, Lippert's Carpet One and American Flooring.



The renovations were much needed and the results are beautiful. The flooring had been chipping and the carpet was peeling. After all it had been well worn with the traffic of many young feet.

Program manager, Josh Crider said, "I'm grateful that the residents are going to feel like this place was made for them."

The program has existed for three years and with many pivots and adjustments we are finding our footing. The house is consistently full with a wait list. The residents usually live here for up to a year and a half. We see a lot of growth in that time period.



We enjoy being serenaded every day on the piano.

Two of our residents have become peer supports for some of our other programs. Each resident is required to either be working full time and/or going to school.

For skill building we have life and enrichment programs, including pottery, 3-D printing, car maintenance, household chores, finances, and job skills. We are lucky to have Talent Maker City donating various classes to help support these efforts. The Rogue Rock Climbing Gym has helped us to provide weekly rock-climbing excursions, which helps build confidence and provide a great way to exercise! Delish Bakery has been an enormous help through mentorships and by hiring our young adults.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Transitional Living Program. We couldn't do it without you.

Coming full circle

By Tony Mendenhall, Josephine County

We are happy to introduce Jessica Tucker, one of our newest team members at our Grants Pass Transitional Living Program (TLP). For many that have been around Hearts With a Mission and Safe Families for Children in Grants Pass, Jessica may be a familiar face.



Jessica was one of our very first youth in Josephine County to be hosted in our Safe Families for Children program. She grew up in a home with a parent who experienced trauma, addiction and significant mental health challenges, leading her to leave home at 13. She would remain homeless until she was 16 when she became aware of HWAM.

She was quickly surrounded by a great community of committed volunteers from Edgewater church that loved her and believed in her when times were tough. She would later come to our youth shelter in Grants Pass two different times.

Jessica's growth has been an inspiration to all who know her and who have stayed in contact with her. Now a wife and mother of a beautiful active two-year old son, Jessica wants to "give back" to HWAM.

She is our first hire in our newest position as a "Peer Support Specialist (PSS)." A PSS is a unique position to offer support by virtue of relevant experience. Jessica's role is to offer a safe space of trust and understanding. "It's great to be able to remember where I was in my time at Hearts With a Mission and be able to reflect on my own history and struggles and help each of the kids and young adults we work with. I want to bring hope and proof that we can make it and be a reminder that the struggle need not last forever," said Jessica.

Welcome back to Hearts With A Mission Jessica.

Richard's story

By Bill Hague, Medford Youth Shelter



I want to share an exciting success story of a past youth. Richard exited Hearts With A Mission (HWAM) nearly a year ago. He was brought to our shelter by a local youth pastor and his relationship with his family was so damaged, they could hardly be in the same room. For six months, the HWAM team worked diligently on restoring Richard's connection to his family through building blocks. The relationship slowly improved and the family was able to spend short periods of time together. At the time of Richard's discharge, full reunification was still desired but wasn't quite there.

After 10 months of being separated from his family, Richard began to thrive at Job Corp. In the meantime, he continued to work on the relationship with his family from afar. We are beyond thrilled to report that Richard has spent more

time with his family and has expressed how much better things are at home. He says for the first time in years, due to the intervention and building blocks HWAM offered, he and his family are finally able to come together and celebrate with love, joy, and compassion. Thank the Lord, their relationship has been completely restored!!!

More good news! When Richard began at Job Corp, he had only completed half of his high school credits. Now he is set to graduate with his High School Diploma in the coming weeks. Richard will also be receiving his certification as a Heavy Equipment Mechanic and already has a job lined up in the Southern Oregon area. He was also chosen to represent Job Corp from the Pacific Northwest at their National Leadership Conference located in Washington DC. Congratulations Richard! We are so proud of you!

Enjoy the summer,
and save the date
For Fall Y'all

H2H Auction Gala
September 23, 2023



For more information and
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A Community With Heart

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