

*“Give a man a fish;
You feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish;
and you feed him for a lifetime”
—Author unknown*



Impact Statement 2007



WESTERN WASHINGTON



Our Four Guiding Principles

Community First

We listen closely to the community to discover unmet needs, and then create solutions for our area's most critical human service challenges.

Commitment to Excellence

We positively impact this community because of the dedication and commitment of our professional staff. Our solid infrastructure, enriched and strengthened by the efforts of volunteers, allows us to tackle complex community issues with continued success.

Effective Stewardship

We understand and appreciate the value of our resources and direct them efficiently towards those we serve. We effectively manage contributions to make the greatest impact on the greatest number of the most vulnerable among us.

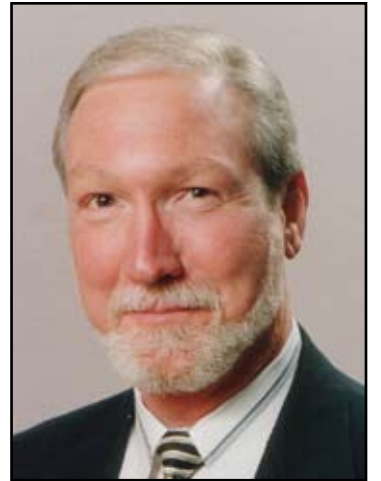
Faith in Action

We engage people of all faiths to reach, uplift, serve and empower the human spirit. We strive to not only affect the material condition of those we serve, but also to touch and strengthen their spirit.

Our Principles, Our Values, Our Impact

We worked hard this year—as we do every year—to reach, serve and empower as many people in our region as possible. We have succeeded in so many exciting ways.

Through our effective management of resources, contributions, volunteers and staff, we have been able to transform thousands of lives. In the 2006 fiscal year, 1650 donors have given us \$836,426 to support vital programs and services; 388 donors contributed in-kind materials and many did both. Over 450 volunteers have donated over 98,000 hours to improve the quality of life of so many of our community members; and our dedicated staff of 440 employees worked tirelessly to allow us to remain this community's go-to organization.



The statistics, however exciting, are not the only—nor the greatest—measure of our success. A truer gauge of our success lies in how well our guiding principles help us remain true to our core values. At Volunteers of America, we are community-minded, committed to excellence, and effective stewards of our resources, fostering change through faith. With these principles in mind, we uphold our deepest values, which are to build community capacity, foster independence, promote self-sufficiency and support positive development in the people we serve.

To consistently keep these principles at the forefront is a welcome challenge, and I believe that our commitment to them is stronger than ever. Our guiding principles and core values come to life in this publication through the stories you will read in the following pages. They are evident in our Greater Residential Options (GRO) program's dedication to helping the Chamberlain brothers to live healthier, happier, more independent lives. Our principles guide the Transitional Housing Operational Rental Assistance (THOR) program as it helps individuals like Debbie Wilkerson learn to thrive through new-found self-sufficiency. They steer our ever-evolving partnership with the First Baptist Church of Everett, allowing us to leverage their resources to reach more of those in need. Our guiding principles also influence the work of our Dispute Resolution Center, and through it the wonderful success of Dr. Chuck Kerr in his work with prison inmates.

As we continue to listen and respond to the needs of this community, we must keep in mind that our work is to constantly be formed and shaped by our values. We will persist in our search for innovative ways to fulfill unmet needs, wherever we find them. We will continue to engage our powerful network of volunteers and professionals to tackle the complex social issues that we face. We will remain effective, efficient stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We will abide by our core belief that to truly impact an individual, we must first touch their spirit.

Please join with us in making a lasting difference in this community—a positive difference that is shaped by essential values that we hold in common. Your contribution—whether it be time, skills, or a monetary donation—allows us to put our values into action. Together, let us strive to keep our values present in our hearts and in our actions to make a real difference in our community. Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Sincerely,



*If you think of vision and mission as an organization's head and heart,
the values it holds are its soul.*

~Buzotta

The Chamberlain Brothers Grow with GRO

John, Michael and Thomas Chamberlain live together in a house in the country, helping to tend to a horse, seven sheep, twelve chickens, two peacocks, a turkey, two cats, and an assortment of rabbits. Although all three of the Chamberlain brothers have severe developmental disabilities and are nonverbal, they have learned to set the table for meals, clean the house, and feed the animals out and about on 'the farm.' Most importantly, they are together. This is the best outcome for which their parents, Beatrice and Dermot, could hope.





Two years ago, Beatrice and Dermot Chamberlain found themselves facing a dilemma, one familiar to many families

with members living with developmental disabilities. The Division of Developmental Disabilities notified the Chamberlains that their two older sons, who had lived together in foster care for years, could not remain in their current placement after September 2005. They knew too that their youngest son, who still lived at home, would also soon need a new place to live and to grow.

After searching for a living situation that would not only protect, but also nurture all three of the boys, Beatrice was referred to Volunteers of America's Greater Residential Options (GRO) program. In answer to her questions, Program Manager Allen Clemens explains, "It is our mission to provide our clients with every opportunity to learn, explore the community, discover areas of interest, find possibilities for employment if they like, and generally create a well-rounded life."

Before making the final decision to engage GRO services for her children, Beatrice first visited another GRO site, where she spoke with the family's mother about her experiences. It was then Beatrice knew that this was just what her family needed. "The caring nature of the management was very evident to me," says Beatrice. "Additionally, the positive feedback I received from case managers and senior personnel at the Division of Developmental Disabilities about the work done by Volunteers of

America reinforced my opinions."

A little over a year ago, all three brothers moved into the house in the country, which they rent from their parents.

GRO provides them with

round-the-clock support, two staff during the day, one at night. The household is kept on a regular routine, and all three have become progressively capable of helping with chores. "Instead of watching television all day, the brothers help around the house, do crafts and planned activities, feed their animals or help do the shopping," says Allen. "They're also taking American Sign Language classes and have developed a vocabulary of over twenty-five words."

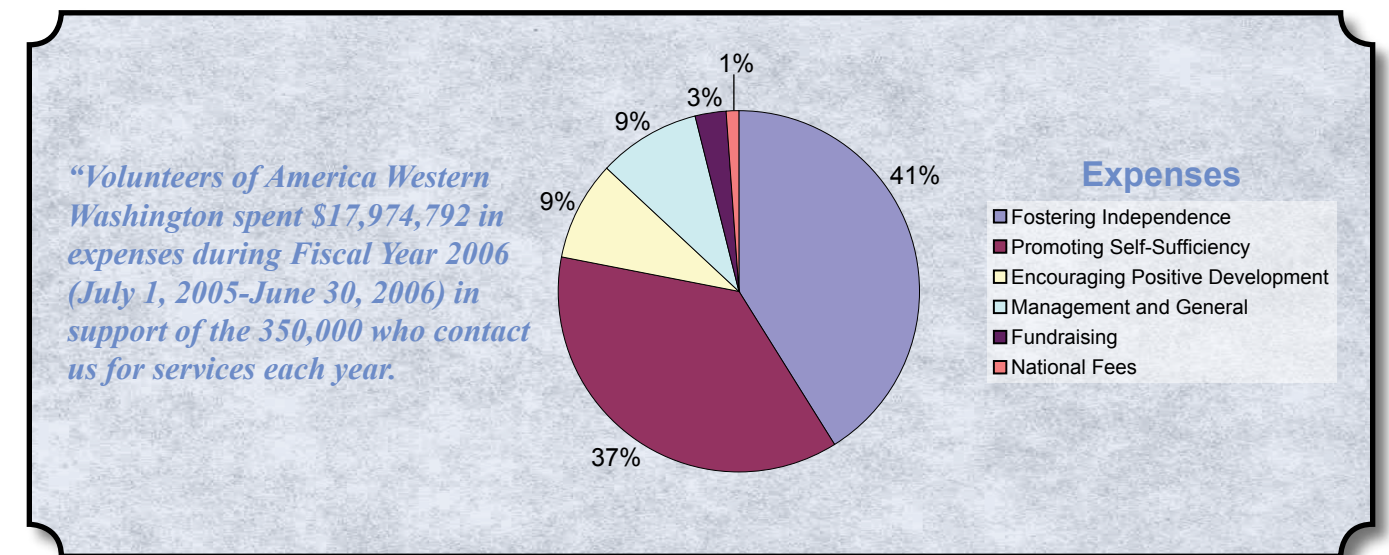
"Volunteers of America connected us to many resources which we might never have discovered. I feel that if we had not been able to work with the GRO program, our sons would have been separated."

our sons would have been separated. The disruption in their lives might well have caused one or more of them to be institutionalized—which from our point of view would have been a tragedy. I am very pleased the course of our lives – and those of our sons - involved Volunteers of America."

In 2006, Greater Residential Options served 90 adults and seniors with developmental disabilities, in four counties. These community-based services provide support for developmentally disabled adults to live in the most self-sufficient environments possible.

It is evident that the GRO staff takes delight in the brothers' growing list of accomplishments. According to Sara Pittman, the brothers' on-site Lead Personal Support Advocate, "the changes in the Chamberlain brothers have just been phenomenal. They have become more self-reliant and are very active in their daily routine...we have all had the privilege of watching them go from boyhood to young adulthood."

Beatrice now feels like her family's life is on the right track, thanks in large part to GRO's mission to foster her sons' independence. "Volunteers of America connected us to many resources which we might never have discovered. I feel that if we had not been able to work with the GRO program,



*From what we get, we can make a living;
what we give, however, makes a life.*

~Arthur Ashe

Fostering Independence

Perhaps the heart of our mission at Volunteers of America is to nurture the dignity of those we serve. That's why our programs, particularly services that benefit seniors and those with developmental disabilities, aim to foster independence. This means we step in where needed to provide just enough support—a meal, transportation, lively conversation, or help with daily living—so that individuals can remain at home. All of us want the freedom to make everyday choices about how we live. We respect this human quality and seek ways to promote the dignity that comes with independence.

I Can Think of Myself as Somebody Now: Debbie Wilkerson's Story

For Debbie Wilkerson, the string of abusive relationships seemed to be a never-ending, hopeless cycle.

The 47-year-old mother of two could not remember the last time she was in a healthy relationship. She tried, with some success, to make changes on her own—she has been drug-free and sober for 17 years now. But when she and her youngest son decided to flee an abusive relationship, she found that they were safe, but out of options—and homeless.



promoting self-sufficiency



She did not want to go back to the abuse she'd known all of her life, and she knew that to break that cycle, she would have to make some drastic changes. Then,

just last year, a friend mentioned Volunteers of America's Transitional Housing Operational Rental (THOR) Assistance program available through the agency's Sky Valley Services. Debbie jumped at the opportunity.

In 2006 Housing and Transitional services provided 35,855 days of transitional housing to 288 people in crisis.

"I've been on welfare before, but Volunteers of America helps you to *be* responsible," remembers Debbie. Welfare keeps you needy, but Volunteers of America makes you responsible." She was more than ready to become responsible for her decisions, and to create a brighter, more successful life for herself and her youngest son.

"I've been on welfare before, but Volunteers of America helps you to be somebody. Welfare keeps you needy, but Volunteers of America makes you responsible."

Sky Valley Community Center connected over 3000 people in need to services in their own community.

THOR's program provides rent assistance and requires that clients see case managers once a week to help them set goals, clean up their credit, find and keep jobs, and settle debt. The counseling was eye-opening for Debbie, who eagerly applied what she learned and was soon moving out of debt and toward greater financial security. "I went from minimum wage to \$11 an hour, and am now a kitchen manager in the restaurant where I used to wait tables."

According to Nicole Hubbard, Debbie's case manager at THOR, "Debbie is incredibly optimistic, self-motivated and focused. She got a job right away, and was promoted shortly thereafter. She is really moving forward." Nicole is proud of Debbie's accomplishments. In a program meant to assist clients for an average of one to two years, Debbie has nearly outgrown her need for the program in six months. Nicole summed up the determined journey, "Debbie is pretty much all we could hope for in a client."

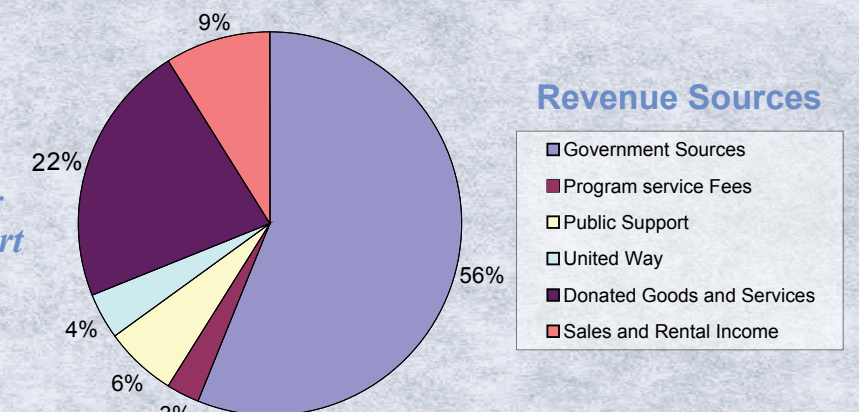
In addition to changing her own future, Debbie also took advantage of an opportunity to truly impact her 17-year-old son's life when she enrolled in the Individualized Development Account (IDA) program. IDA is a savings account that offers matching funds usually used for a client's own education or to open their own business. Debbie, however, convinced the program to allow her to set up an IDA for her *son's* future education—a unique application of the account.

Now Debbie feels like she is ready to start giving back. "If it weren't for Volunteers of America, I would still be in a shelter. I never thought I could be somebody, be a success.

Now I can start to think of myself that way." She knows that other young girls are in the same position in which she once found herself—trapped in abusive relationships with no one there to show them a different way. "I want to be a mentor to young girls who need a positive influence. I was there, and I didn't have anyone there for me for the longest time. I want to be there for them."

In 2006, almost 29,000 callers in five counties contacted our North Sound 2-1-1 information and referral line to get help finding the community resources that they needed.

Revenue and pledges of \$18,531,181 were received during Fiscal Year 2006 (July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006) to support programs in Western Washington."



Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

~ John Wesley

Promoting Self-Sufficiency

We believe in people. We believe that each person can lead a healthy, productive life. And sometimes our job is simply to work with others to recognize that very thing. Many of the people who seek our services need help through a crisis. This may mean financial help with daycare costs while attending college, a supply of groceries while families work to stretch household budgets, or emergency shelter as they dream of permanent housing. For many in a period of crisis, having someone that believes in them empowers hope and perseverance, and ultimately can mean the difference between living in despair or thriving in self-sufficiency.

*Sharing the Mission,
Multiplying the Blessings*

First Baptist Church of Everett

In the entry of First Baptist Church of Everett sits a shopping cart with a sign on it that says Volunteers of America. Just about once a week for the last 10 years, the congregation fills the cart with food items, which is delivered to Volunteers of America's food bank. Keenly aware of the community's needs, the food bank is then able to distribute the food to those who need it most. First Baptist Church's contributions harvested thousands of pounds of food in a decade, and is a mighty example of how partnering with Volunteers of America can leverage smaller contributions into a phenomenal community impact.



building community capacity



“These days, with resources what they are, we’ve got to get smarter,” says Brian Harpell, First Baptist Church of Everett’s Pastor since 1985. “Getting

together and pooling our resources with like-minded organizations like Volunteers of America is how we will ultimately make a difference in our community.”

“People get more satisfaction in giving a tangible gift like groceries,” Brian observes. “They see with their own eyes a full grocery cart and feel that these groceries will make a difference in someone’s life.”

“People get more satisfaction in giving a tangible gift like groceries . . . They see with their own eyes a full grocery cart and feel that these groceries will make a difference in someone’s life.”

The members of First Baptist Church of Everett also realize that when it comes to placing direct financial contributions in the hands of an organization such as Volunteers of America—with a network of well-placed, effective services—contributions stretch farther and help more people.

“Our entire congregation decided that we wanted to make a significant financial contribution to a few organizations that we felt were making a difference,” says Brian. “Volunteers of America is one of those organizations. We’ve included Volunteers of America in our annual budget and our members feel good when we see the many people the organization helps.” In fact, this commitment leveraged over \$100,000 in the last 10 years, supporting literally thousands of households with children and seniors.

Having lived in the Everett area for almost two decades, Brian has witnessed the incredible prosperity that has drawn people here. But a growing population means more demand on existing services. “The truth is,” states Brian, “one congregation, or organization, alone cannot respond sufficiently to the many and growing needs in our communities.”

The Everett Food Bank provided 17,940 individuals - or 7,779 households - 1,775,460 pounds of food last year.

Volunteers of America and First Baptist Church of Everett have adapted to these demands by maintaining an ever-evolving partnership that draws on and augments each other’s strengths.

“Churches are known as being high on mercy but low on discernment,” says Brian, meaning that though First Baptist Church of Everett has the volunteer effort and contributions, these resources could always be managed more efficiently. So, upon invitation, Volunteers of America helped train church members to become more adept at interfacing with other organizations in the area, thereby directing people in need to the best available resources.

It makes sense that churches would leverage Volunteers of America’s ability to discover and meet local needs. Our mission, goals and

values align with those of many faith-based institutions. “The most effective partnerships are built on common values,” Brian says. “In my congregation’s decision to have a significant partnership with Volunteers of America, we considered the values we might have in common. Caring and compassion are obviously common values for both of us. Caring is the basis for everything we try to do. We also think that effective ministry is seeing need and meeting it. We see Volunteers of America doing this and it’s why we see the partnership as really an extension of our mission.”

In 2006, we served over 3700 households with holiday food through our food bank and community sponsors.

We see the best in people even in the worst of circumstances.

Our programs brighten thousands of lives each year.

Wherever we see the signs for help, we find a way.

Whatever it takes, however long it takes.

For over 100 years, we’ve been helping those who need it most.

Help support the programs that respond to 350,000 requests for assistance each year.

He who believes is strong.

Strong convictions precede great actions.

~J.F. Clarke

Building Community Capacity

At Volunteers of America, we continually weave together the resources and strengths of our community to bolster our existing network of services. Over the years, we have formed numerous partnerships—big and small—resulting in a powerful synergy of effective, well-placed assistance for those in need. We’ve earned a reputation for being fair, responsible and insightful when it comes to leveraging resources. Whether we join together with church members, high school students, local business owners, elected officials or you yourself, we know that to build community capacity we must recognize and facilitate the strength and generosity of others.

*Getting Inside Dispute Resolution:
The Groundbreaking Work
of Dr. Chuck Kerr*

Relationships of any kind, even under the best circumstances, can be difficult. Imagine, though, living in a confined space with the same people for great lengths of time.

The slightest offense could trigger disastrous conflicts. This is certainly true of prisoners at the Monroe Correctional Reformatory and Twin Rivers Units. However, they have the unique opportunity to peacefully confront or bypass interpersonal issues that inevitably surface in close quarters. They can take part in a mediation session.



Mediation or dispute resolution in a local correctional facility is the groundbreaking work of one of Volunteers of America's outstanding volunteers, Dr. Charles

“Chuck” Kerr. After a 40-year career in military law enforcement, Chuck retired to Washington State in 1986. But he didn't retire from helping others.

“It all started,” says Chuck, “from a small Volunteers of America ad in the Herald, asking for volunteers to be trained in dispute resolution and mediation.” Chuck answered the ad and, in June of 1988, completed the 40-hour basic mediation training. Since that time, Chuck has participated in 1,653 mediations at the federal, state and local levels with agencies such as NOAA and the United States Post Office.

In 2006, 73 volunteer mediators like Dr. Kerr provided 4100 hours of professional mediation services in our community.

In October of 1993, Chuck had the idea of bringing mediation to the prisons. Simultaneously, and perhaps even miraculously, an offender at Monroe Correctional Facility wrote a letter to Volunteers of America's Dispute Resolution Center, asking about the

possibility of mediation between prisoners. By January of 1994, The *Inside Dispute Resolution* program emerged.

The program pairs an “outside” community mediator with an “inside mediator” (an offender trained in mediation). The two disputing parties then come together under the guidance of these mediators to resolve such issues as loud music, incense burning or even the exchange of unpleasant looks. After about four hours, the dispute terminates with a written settlement or contract drafted by the parties. Having an opportunity to “keep the lid on things,” says Chuck, benefits everyone in the complex. Chuck also notes that there has never been a breach of contract.

“Mediation is a very valuable skill the offenders can take anywhere . . . These trainees also undergo tremendous self-growth and self-discovery. They learn they have skills they never knew they had. And they learn to think more deeply about things.”

Offenders not only use the services offered to effectively resolve their differences, but can also receive intensive training to become mediators themselves. Seventy-five mediators have been trained, eight of whom have become accredited mediators at a level which is on par with the University of Washington's Law School. Considering that the 40-hour training

must conform to the time restrictions of a prison environment and takes up to four months to complete, this is quite a feat. “Mediation is a very valuable skill the offenders can take anywhere,” says Chuck. “These trainees also undergo tremendous personal growth and self-discovery. They learn they have skills they never knew they had. And they learn to think more deeply about things.”

Outside of prison, these trained offenders have more skills, and therefore more opportunities to

give back to society with a reduced chance of recidivism.

“I believe in the mediation process and its outcome,” says Chuck. “Rather than giving authority to a third party, mediation gives power to the parties involved to make choices and resolve their differences.” Thanks to volunteers like Chuck Kerr, this kind of positive self-development empowers individuals and supports Volunteers of America's mission to ultimately better the lives of everyone in our community.

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Supporting Positive Development

Our programs that support positive development operate on the firm belief that it is never too early—or too late—for a person to learn to improve his or her life. Children can blossom in our early childhood education programs as easily as those with disabilities can at our popular Camp Volasuca summer camp. Both replenish a sense of self-worth and foster growth through positive learning experiences. Our prison reading and dispute resolution programs also recognize the value of developing skills that transform lives. We truly believe that, through positive guidance, vulnerable individuals can not only learn to get by, but can reach their potential and soar.

*Let us not look back in anger or forward in fear,
but around in awareness.*

~ James Thurban

Our Mission

Volunteers of America
Western Washington, a
Christian human service
organization, is dedicated
to reaching, serving and
empowering diverse
individuals, families and
communities.



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