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International Adoptions Began with Family Plan

by Julie Schafer, PW Maintenance

In the fall of 2012, I attended a series of classes with Amber Ezell, the Acquisition Coordinator at Holt International Children’s Services, and adoption agency here in Eugene. She has been working at Holt for 12 years, starting out in the finance department and after about eight years, moving to a position in the marketing and development department. There she is able to read the stories of the children and watch the progress that is made from the time they enter the program until they are adopted, their family becomes self-sufficient, or they age out of the program. Amber was generous enough to take some time out of her busy schedule to answer a few questions about the program and the benefits it has brought to not only the children but the Eugene area and beyond:

How did Holt International come about?

Harry and Bertha Holt lived in Creswell, Oregon where they were raising their six children. After seeing a documentary film about “G.I. babies” (babies with American fathers and Asian mothers) from the Korean War in orphanages in Korea, the Holts decided they would adopt some of the orphans. Each in their own mind had come up with the number of children they wanted to adopt. They were thrilled when they learned that the other wanted the same number of orphans: eight. So Harry began preparations to go to Korea, and Bertha asked a friend how to go about adopting eight children from another country. Learning that it would be possible only if both houses of Congress passed a law allowing

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Interested in Diversity and Our Organization?

Several of us are rotating off of the PWDC, and so new members from all areas of Public Works would be welcome. Service takes only a few hours a month. It is a great way to meet employees outside your work group and participate in diversity-related projects. Talk to your section manager by June 20 if you are interested!



Diversity in Public Works

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it, Bertha said, “Then that’s what we’ll do.” And that’s what they did. Two months later, the “Holt Bill” was passed, and in October 1955, Harry and eight Korean children arrived at Portland Airport. The resulting publicity stirred interest among many families in the United States. The Holts set about helping others to adopt, and what began as a small operation run from Bertha’s kitchen table in Creswell soon became Holt International Children’s Services.

How many children has Holt placed into homes?

Holt’s vision is: A world where every child has a loving and secure home. Sometimes that means keeping the child with their biological parents. Holt has a family preservation program to ensure the family will have the means to provide food, shelter, clothes, medical and educational support for their child. In some cases it’s impossible to reunite children with their birth families. When that happens, Holt seeks first to find a family for the child in their own country. We have child centers and foster care available to children while they wait for their “forever family”. When those two options aren’t available, Holt will look for families in the US. Since our founding in 1956, Holt has placed more than 40,000 children with families through international adoption.

How many of the children came to our local area?

Some of Holt’s post-adoption activities include family picnics held around the country, including Eugene and Portland. At the Eugene Holt Picnic, many local families who have adopted through Holt gather for an afternoon of fun games, food and connecting with families who have shared adoption experiences. It’s a wonderful way for the adopted children to connect with other adoptees. Many friendships are made during this event. I personally know and love one little boy who came to live in Eugene when my niece and her husband adopted a very handsome little boy from Ethiopia.

What drew you to Holt?

In November of 2000 I heard that Holt was looking to hire an accounting clerk. I applied and was grateful for the opportunity but hadn’t known much of Holt prior to my interview. What I learned quickly and appreciate to this day is that here at Holt, it’s all about the children. While we are an adoption agency, Holt is working to benefit the lives of children who are abandoned or at risk of losing their family. We don’t find children who

meet our need; we find the best way to meet the needs of children.

Do you have any special stories to share?

On more than one occasion I had an opportunity to travel to India to escort a child home to their “forever family”. I saw firsthand how we meet the needs of the children at one of our partner orphanages in India. The care that is given to each child by the caretakers is beautiful. They dearly love these children. My experience of bringing home a child and placing them in the arms of their new family is an experience I’ll never forget. I still hear from the family of the first little boy I escorted home and he is doing very well. My life has been enriched from the experience and my appreciation for how truly blessed we are in this country has deepened greatly. It’s amazing the transformation that takes place when they are fed, sheltered and given love. It’s true what Bertha “Grandma Holt” said: All children are beautiful when they are loved.

Are there ways people can help, if they cannot adopt?

Yes, Holt has a wonderful sponsorship program. For \$30 per month, you can change the life of an orphaned, abandoned, or vulnerable child. Holt sponsors children who have lost their parents or are at risk of losing their families due to illness, poverty or other hardships. They often come into care malnourished. A sponsor’s gift provides food, shelter, clothing and attentive care, meeting the sponsored child’s basic needs. We strive to provide children in Holt sponsorship with the highest level of care — care that comes at greater cost. To ensure all children receive the services they need, children will often have multiple sponsors. Funds are then pooled by country program. Your child represents not just one but all the children receiving support.

How can people learn more about Holt?

For more information on Holt and the many services they have go to www.holtinternational.org or call 1-800-451-0732.

If you have a question or concern regarding diversity and human rights in the workplace that you’d like to see addressed by the PWDC, please contact your division’s committee member (see page one for a list of our members) or e-mail PWDiversity@ci.eugene.or.us.

Record Crowds Attend Public Works Day

We shined and swept and painted and cleaned the Yard for the almost two thousand kids and adults who came to visit on May 16. Even with the rain, the activities provided lots of fun and information for everyone. This event is so exciting for the kids, and connects our services and employees to the public in a positive, memorable way. Thanks to the many, many hands in all areas who helped with all the preparations, as well as all those who helped manage the throngs on the day of the event. See more pictures on the City of Eugene Government's Facebook page.



Tour guides get a tour before the crowds arrive



School busses from around the area start rolling in



A dry spot at the airport display



Snowplow art from Spring Creek Elementary



Eewww...can I touch that? Wastewater provides toilet tips.



The trailer ride is worth the wait. See the big vehicles in action!



Centro LatinoAmericano's Latino Heritage Night

by Sharon Olson, PW Wastewater

I had the opportunity to volunteer for Centro LatinoAmericano's Latino Heritage Night which was held on October 12, 2012. There were over 200 people in the Lane County community who attended the event. The annual celebration commemorated 40 years of service of the agency but also honored esteemed members of the community. CLA also acknowledges and encourages new leaders by providing scholarships to 12 students who attend the University of Oregon and Lane Community College. Guests had plenty of time to network and to enjoy delicious food!

The keynote speaker for the event was Frank Garcia Jr. who was appointed by Governor Kitzhaber as the Director of the state's Affirmative Action Office. Other speakers included Marcela Mendoza, Centro's Executive Director, Shonna Butler, Board President and Treasurer, and Juan Carlos Valle, Past President

of the Board. Entertainment was provided by a local singer, Stephanie Duenas, and traditional folk dancing was performed by Girl Scout Troop 20501.

In addition to providing money for scholarships, the funds raised by the event go directly back into the community through all of the programs that Centro has to offer.

The event is held on an annual basis and I encourage others to attend next year. This is an opportunity to support and learn more about the Latino community and culture, and also meet new friends!

Learn more at centrolatinoamericano.org

Check out the Diversity Topic of the Month

One of the ways to learn about your co-workers is by taking an opportunity to share and discuss something new together. The PWDC would like to help this process along by offering a topic of the month related to our mission to "recognize and respect diverse viewpoints, cultures, and life experiences." Some of topics are serious—for instance a historical look at discrimination—but others include lighthearted looks at topics including the personal space different cultures require, the challenges of four generations sharing the workplace, or how selective attention works.

The PWDC is sending these out monthly to team leaders, but you can find a listing with links any time at the PW Diversity Ceshare site. Share one with a friend or co-worker. You never know what you might find out about them—or yourself!

Opportunity Village is One of Many Solutions to a Complex Problem

by Jeffrey Jane Flowers, PW Administration

Drive down any busy street in Eugene, and you are likely to see a person holding a scrap of cardboard with a message scrawled in pen or marker. The person may be young or old, any race or gender. Visit a park and you may see a shopping cart full of clothing parked outside a rest room, or glimpse a tent off in the bushes. There are many more individuals and families you don't see, sleeping in parks, at the Eugene Mission, and in cars and old RVs.

Some of those living without conventional homes are families, others are single people or small groups of friends who join together to share meager resources. Of the total count of homeless persons, in Oregon more than half do not have shelter on any given night. Many struggle without food, health care, or the most basic of sanitary facilities. The dangers of living on the street—from physical violence to harsh weather—make each day a potential nightmare.

Eugene/Springfield/Lane County Homeless Count from 2011

Total People Counted	2,140
Individuals	1,533
Persons in Families	607
Family Households	190

Because the un-housed lifestyle can be so erratic, it is often difficult for agencies offering help to connect with these individuals and families. Transitional housing (housing where homeless people stay and receive supportive services to enable them to prepare for a move into permanent housing) offers a place to meet basic needs and also chances for skill building to help with a job search.

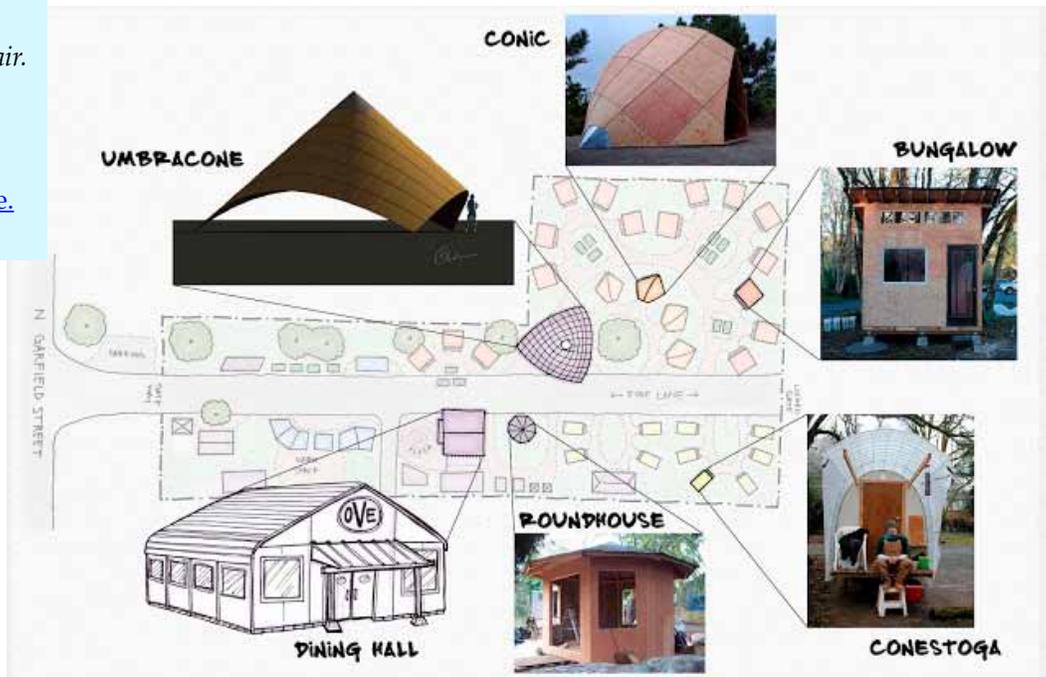
Opportunity Village, proposed for Public Works' Garfield site, is designed to provide a safe place for people to receive basic services and training until they get back on their feet. The design and organization of Opportunity Village will be based upon best practices derived from a comprehensive

This Opportunity Village plan shows "microhouse" dwellings that are economical to build, move and repair.

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www.opportunityvillageeugene.com

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study of other “tent cities” in the United States and lessons learned from local encampments. The plans include cooking and gathering areas, garden plots for food crops, and covered bicycle parking. There are also a variety of “microhouses” planned—small, easily moved dwellings designed to be built out of inexpensive or salvaged construction materials.

Some of the key goals for Opportunity Village (as stated on their website at www.opportunityvillageeugene.org) are:

- The opportunity for every participant to experience a better quality of life in a drug, alcohol, and violence free community.
- The opportunity for a stable, safe, and sanitary environment where basic needs are met such as food, shelter, medical care, and a sense of dignity and belonging in place and community.
- To meet needs for privacy and personal space while concurrently providing common areas for villagers and visitors to enjoy.
- To develop mutual aid and peer-based support systems and to collaborate with social service agencies, non-profit organizations, private businesses and individuals whenever feasible.
- The opportunity for people from the larger Eugene community to engage by providing help and support.

HOMELESSNESS IN THE US— A POINT-IN-TIME ESTIMATE*

ON ONE NIGHT IN 2011:

- In 9 states, more than half of the state’s total homeless population was in an unsheltered location. Among the five states with the highest rates of unsheltered people is Oregon (59.4 percent).
- In 16 states, at least 1 in 5 homeless families was in an unsheltered location. Among the five states with the highest rates of unsheltered families was Oregon (52.6 percent).
- 107,148 people were chronically homeless** in the U.S., or about 17 percent of all homeless people.
- 67,495 veterans were homeless in the United States, about 14 percent of all homeless adults.

* Numbers reported in the 2011 Homelessness study for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

** Chronic homelessness refers to an unaccompanied individual with a disability who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years.

PWDC MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Eugene Public Works Department is committed to fostering understanding, communication and respect among all members in the department.

We believe in a department that is accepting of everyone so that we capitalize on the strengths emanating from our differences.

By drawing on our individual strengths, we believe we can create an optimum and respectful workplace, one that can attract and retain a diverse workforce, allowing us to serve the community from which we come more effectively.

We believe that an inclusive diversity program is pivotal to reaching our professional potential, both individually and collectively.

GOAL

The goal of the PW Diversity Committee is to promote a workplace free of harassment and discrimination. We recognize and respect diverse viewpoints, cultures, and life experiences.



School's out!

Looking for something fun to do this summer with the kids, visitors, your friends—or all of the above? Summer festivals, art walks, workshops and concerts in the Eugene/Springfield area offer plenty of chances to try something new in the way of arts and culture.

Some good online calendars include:

Eugene a Go-Go

<http://eugeneagogo.com/>

Eugene Asian Council

www.asiancouncil.org

Experience Eugene

www.experienceeugene.com

Travel Lane County

www.eugencascadescoast.org

And don't forget the City of Eugene's Summer in the City eugene-or.gov/summerinthecity that offers free movies, events and concerts all summer long!



Your Article Here

Kaleidoscope is about all of us! If you have an adventure, story, book, movie, or other topic that relates to your understanding of culture and the diverse world we live in, write a few paragraphs about it and send it in so we can include it in our next issue.

PWDiversity@ci.eugene.or.us