



EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE – Larry Eyer, Executive Director



This past year was remarkable for KCR. Despite cutbacks in state and local funding, federal stimulus monies allowed us to accomplish more in 2009 than we have ever been able to achieve.

The recession certainly took its toll on many Kitsap residents. Our unemployment rate doubled; many families either lost their homes to default or were at serious risk of doing so; local homelessness and demand for emergency shelter rose; unemployment, TANF (welfare), foodstamps and foodbank usage all increased significantly. Our housing authorities closed waiting lists for Section-8 housing as they had become so long. State and local governments were forced to reduce services and layoff employees. Service levels and waiting lists in all KCR programs rose dramatically.

At the same time community members stepped up in a big way, donating money, time and goods. And United Way was a strong supporter. The federal government provided stimulus funding through several programs that helped us serve more people.

As we set our sights on strategic planning for 2010 and beyond, it is of value to pause and consider what KCR accomplished this past year.

HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES

KCR took unprecedented steps to respond to homelessness in 2009. Each of the initiatives below involved public and/or private partnerships. We:

- Initiated Safe Park to provide a safe, legal place where homeless women with children could live in their cars with access to sanitary facilities and weekly case management help. Kitsap County Parks, Sheriffs and Personnel and Human Services Departments have been key partners.
- Added three family emergency shelters with support teams thanks to our partnership with One Church One Family, a faith-based non-profit supported by area churches.
- Purchased two duplexes and a single home that had been foreclosed on for use as transitional housing. Funding was derived from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Kitsap County Community Development Block Grant program has been our key partner.
- Purchased and remodeled six units of rental housing in Bremerton with federal HOME funds and state Housing Trust Fund monies. Our key partners were City of Bremerton Community Development and state department of Commerce Housing division.
- Opened the Family Place, a supervised group shelter for 6 homeless families with children. This came about as a result of a tremendous partnership among Kitsap County, volunteers from several County departments, One Church One Family, and nearly a hundred donors of money, furnishings and time, and KCR.
- Utilized some two dozen homes owned by Olympic College for transitional housing for homeless families. OC graciously made these homes available for a period prior to their redevelopment work.
- Implemented the new Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing program beginning in October. We are on track to use this new stimulus funding to help homeless families attain affordable housing or help those at risk of homelessness avoid it altogether.

These are all in addition to our “regular” work helping over 500 families with emergency shelter, transitional housing, homeless childcare, case management and other related services, plus providing leadership roles with our homeless services partners through the Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition.



TFP Case Mgr., Wendy Beckmark with On-site managers Sarah & Marvin Elliott

JOBS, TRAINING, AND BUILDING ASSETS



Employment & Training clients receive skills critical to successful career transition and effective job search

Unemployment numbers climbed consistently throughout 2009. Subsequently KCR 's education and training support for DSHS clients climbed as well. Our Employment & Training Division:

- Helped 500 TANF participants learn employment and life skills, gain employment experience, work references, and earn required participation hours,
- Provided training, computer access and career help to 200 low-income Workforce Development job seekers at our WorkSource Affiliate located at our Family Service Center on Bay Street in Port Orchard, and
- Presented financial education to over 200 low-income residents received financial education through KCR's financial education program. KCR continued to support the Kitsap Asset-building Coalition in its work helping participants buy a home, access college education, open savings accounts, and maximize their tax savings.

INVESTING EARLY IN KIDS

Comprised of Head Start, ECEAP, WIC, and The Parenting Place, the Early Learning And Family Services division of KCR provided a wide range of services to our community and had a wonderful year in 2009.

- Our fourteen HeadStart/ECEAP centers provided free, comprehensive child development services to nearly 500 children.
- Through WIC we provided 5,850 pregnant women and young children with:
 - Nutritional assessment and guidance,
 - Health and social service referrals,
 - Nutrition education, and
 - Checks for the purchase of healthy foods.
- 347 parents completed parenting classes and used resources at the Parenting Place.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Among the many other services KCR provided in 2009 were these:

- KCR supported 36 full-time AmeriCorps team members who committed a year of their lives to community services at schools and non-profits while earning a stipend and college scholarship. Another 40, mostly students, participated during the summer.
- 5,294 low-income households received energy assistance help from funds provided by Puget Sound Energy, Cascade Gas, and the federal Low-income Home Energy Assistance program.
- More than 600 young people ages 11-17 learned about an ethic of service and leadership as they provided community service throughout the county.
- 986 Community Service Workers, under KCR supervision, worked off minor sentences by working at parks, doing street cleaning and other work for governments in our area.
- KCR kitchen staff prepared 163,000 meals for children at Head Start and childcare centers, Kitsap Mental Health inpatient treatment facilities and senior citizen programs, largely for shut-ins.
- 366 veterans received emergency assistance and/or case management through the



KYA volunteers worked on community service projects while learning the valuable lessons of service.

Veterans Assistance program.

- 2,400 low-income received Christmas gifts and school supplies through the generosity Christmas Angel and Support-a-Student programs.