

Multnomah County

2011 Public Health Heroes

Josiah Hill Community Leadership Award

Multnomah County lost a powerful and dedicated champion in the fight for social, racial, health and environmental justice when Josiah Hill III passed away October 12, 2000. To honor his legacy, the Health Department has established the Josiah Hill Community Leadership Award for outstanding community members.



Heather Fercho (left) and commissioners

Heather Fercho – Employed at Sisters of the Road, Heather has helped to foster relationships throughout the community that increase the network of people working to elevate healthcare to a human right and see this become a reality locally and nationally. Leaders in our community, through Heather's ongoing mentorship, have partnered with groups like Partnership for Safety & Justice, CAUSA, and Portland Jobs with Justice to increase awareness and movement around healthcare reform.

Heather was recently chosen to be a member of the Oregon Health Authority's Oregon Health Insurance Exchange Consumer Advisory Group. This group will provide input and feedback to staff on the development of a consumer-oriented exchange and to ensure ongoing consumer engagement and interest in an exchange. In addition, she operates as a private practice community therapist and offers low-income counseling to people three nights a week. She is also the respected meditation leader of the Portland Dharma Punks, which she leads weekly.

Community-Based Organization or Program Award



OrMOM and Commissioners

Oregon Mission of Mercy (OrMOM) - The OrMOM leadership team, spearheaded by the Oregon Dental Association, set up the largest dental clinic ever held in Oregon and the first of its type on the West Coast, delivering \$829,119 in free dental care to many of Oregon's most underserved and uninsured citizens. 94.2% of patients had no dental insurance. 51% of patients came to the event in pain. OrMOM is being recognized for its high level of collaboration, dedication and tireless effort over many months of planning and executing a major dental clinic in Oregon. The media coverage it received helped demonstrate the tremendous public health need in Oregon and highlighted the incredible spirit of volunteerism of our citizens.

Ryan White Service Providers - Comprised of nine community partners, along with Multnomah County's HIV Health Services Center and Disease Intervention Services, Ryan White Service Providers worked tirelessly to serve more than 2,500 clients in 2009. They focused on serving populations who are most vulnerable, with special programs for women, African Americans, Latinos, refugees, the homeless and people with dual diagnoses of mental illness and substance abuse.



Ryan White Service Providers

The Ryan White Service Providers collaborate and coordinate across private and public organizations, community-created and run advisory and planning groups, and models of care that see clients as whole people who need to be physically, emotionally and socially healthy. They have established systems that have increased the length and quality of life of thousands of poor and marginalized people, and that have changed the physical, social and political meaning of an HIV diagnosis.



Multnomah Food Initiative Steering Committee

John Kitzhaber Public Health Leadership Award

Governor Kitzhaber leveraged his medical school education and political influence into significant policy solutions that improved public health for all members of our community. To honor his contributions, the Health Department has established the Governor John A. Kitzhaber Public Health Leadership Award for outstanding policy leaders and organizations.

Multnomah Food Initiative Steering Committee – 31 organizations (businesses, nonprofit organizations, schools, faith communities, and local governments) came together to collaborate on improving the health of our community by creating the first food action plan in Oregon. The goal of this effort was to develop a 15-year roadmap for community action resulting in a healthy, equitable, and prosperous local food system. In addition, the Steering Committee helped identify, for the first time in our community, a collection of indicators that will track progress on health, hunger, food equity and prosperity in our food system.

Business/Corporation Award



Jeld-Wen Field – Jeld-Wen Field is ready to reopen as home to the Major League Soccer team, The Timbers, and has made the decision to take the property smokefree. The policy does not allow anyone from leaving to go out to smoke and will offer messages and help for employees who want to quit smoking. Mostly affected will be our new generation of non-smokers as children live, play and study in smokefree environments. Their decision makes it the largest non-smoking venue in Oregon, joining many stadiums and arenas around the country in helping make our community a healthier place to live and play.

National Public Health Week Theme Award: Safety Is No Accident



Youth Violence Prevention Partnership

Youth Violence Prevention Partnership (YVPP): The Youth Violence Prevention Partnership is a community-driven collaboration between the Health Department's Community Capacitation Center, law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations and youth. YVPP builds relationships between law enforcement officials and young people with the ultimate goal of preventing youth violence. To do this, YVPP works to build trust among all partners, increase young people's understanding of the law, empower youth to make healthy choices for a better future, empower law enforcement officials to interact with youth and communities in effective ways, and help law enforcement officials and young people look past stereotypes and start to humanize each other.

The YVPP model uses popular education, an empowering style of educating and organizing rooted in social justice, to engage youth and law enforcement officials as equal participants in the process of identifying the problems in their communities, discussing the root causes, and exploring and carrying out solutions.

Multnomah County Employee Award



Melissa Greeney and Commissioners

Melissa Greeney – An Aging and Disability Safety Net Specialist, Melissa is responsible for helping some of our county's most vulnerable citizens maintain their housing, gain access to life-saving prescriptions that they would otherwise be unable to afford and obtain important items such as glasses and dentures that make a huge difference in health, safety and quality of life. The assistance Melissa provides through the Safety Net Program is not available from any other source and is vital to helping its recipients meet their most basic needs.

Melissa works with a wide variety of people, some of whom are quite difficult. She has a true gift, honed over years of public service, for treating even difficult clients with respect, compassion, dignity and exquisite patience. She has helped many clients get to the point where they become willing to move forward and make difficult changes that lead to long-term health and stability.



Welcome Baby Team

The Welcome Baby Team - Over the past 9 years, the Welcome Baby Team has built close working relationships with all 7 local hospital maternity departments, creating a seamless link between hospitals, our health department and early childhood community partners. They do an amazing job of respectfully engaging families during their daily rounds, assessing each family's dynamics and culture and conducting unique visits based on their sense of what the family needs. They work with dozens of interpreters in person and through phone services to assure access to services for new immigrants. When visits are interrupted, they follow-up with a phone call to ensure the family has an opportunity to participate. The Welcome Baby Team is comprised of Julie Goodrich, Sherri Malstrom, Jim Cox, Reneé James, Peggy Yoder, Elizabeth Carroll, Carol O'Neil Shaw and Wendy Coppage.

[More winners from previous years»](#)