

**Rockwood Weed & Seed Steering Committee**  
**Tuesday, June 20th; 5:00pm**  
**Rockwood Grange**

*Note: Italicized, underlined items are Action Items.*

**I. WELCOME!**

**II. Introductions; in attendance:** Kathy Howell, Jim Harper, Janet Hawkins, Cheryl Houston, Bill Etter, Dane Warnke, Chris Piekarski, Teddi Lofton, Dina DiNucci, Kathy Minden, Natalie Mitchell, Bevin Smith, Ivan Cortes, Tim Osorio, Carmen Montaña, Cassandra Hernandez, Rebecca Ocken, Stephen Young, Robyn Gregory, Andrea Archuleta, Carl Jaber, Erika Silver, Gloria Wiggins, Brenda Butler.

**III. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Center** (See attached/below)

- The Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) initiated a new partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in 2005 and because of the success of this partnership, CCDO is expanding its support to launch an additional 48 computer labs (VITA Centers) for current W&S sites.
- Special welcome to **Kathy Howell**, Senior Tax Specialist with the IRS; **Jim Harper**, CASH Oregon's Executive Director & **Janet Hawkins**, Executive Committee Member of CASH Oregon.

Kathy -- 182 sites are AARP OR tax sites, funded by a grant, 40,000 returns file for free. CASH = Create Assets, Savings and Hope. Reduces fee and beneficial dollars going back into the community. We want people to go to trained volunteers. Keep people from going to cash advance businesses. During the filing season the computers are used for filing and then weed & seed can use the computers during the rest of the year. Makes ideal customer-client relationship.

Maximum of 6 computers and printer, jan-april of 2007. RWS Steering Committee needs to sign off on a letter requesting the service. We could have competition. The letter is due 6/30, then we will find out in late summer whether we are approved. This site would be available for other services. No laptops. Must be a two year commitment for sustainability. "Have to be committed and have resources, may be ways to provide services."

Brenda: Rockwood Library has been an AARP site, but wasn't able to provide it in 2006 and won't in 2007. El Programa Hispano is an AARP site, but it is not in the W&S boundaries.

Jim said "we did 758 returns on the weekend at Lloyd Center, trying for 2-3000, could have up to ten volunteers at a time, need a place to lock up at night, maybe a storefront from jan.-april." Kathy "need for bi-linguall services" Janet Hawkins "testimonials from people that had their taxes done, and had tax credits, she is a believer sandra garrison is an advocate and purchased a home with a tax credit, people are able to catch up on bills, strong benefit for volunteers to get involved! Offer financial literacy for legitimate assistance and avoid cash advance places.

Dina "can piggy back a lot of services together, training for wise ways to use the returns." Brenda "last year we had the opportunity and we bought into this, but struggled with a facility. A new place may be available with a back up facility. Brenda and Maura will sign off on and send in the commitment letter. The feds don't want the Site Coordinators to run the sites, CASH Oregon can help with the last three of the action items. Could partner with other sites, maybe the AARP folks from Rockwood library can help.

Gloria sees a strong need year after year. El Programa is a low income tax clinic, but don't help for current taxes, only disputes. Internet costs will have to be paid for by the site/facility. RWS has money for marketing and/or translator, but not for monthly fee of internet. Could be dial up for filing.

Dina "long time community member, creating a coffee/crepe/community place next to Vance Park adjacent to the Urban Renewal District. Next to Vance Park to create involvement of activities via the café. Plain cards with pictures of food items in order to create crepe with multi-cultural food items. All Rockwood things can be promoted. VITA, the café will be an internet friendly location with wireless. Potentially on a regular basis, three computers running with up to six during tax season, available to community. Looking into the FDIC opportunities for residents. Lease finalized

and signed on July 1. 1100 square feet, front is café and back is seating or closed off area. Parking available on the street in addition to a lot.

Rebecca “a back up to Dina’s site, the former Fred Meyer site, the smaller second building will be Rockwood police substation, up to 1500 square feet to offer to the community with internet staffed Monday-Friday 9-5. Need to find a designated person to open the center on the weekends. There will be a police presence coming and going. Official opening in September and may last for 2 years. It is a lockable room. Lots of free parking.

Brenda “need feedback and fill out application and figure out logistics. Present Park Place Coffee as main site and have a back-up. Discussion was opened... Kathy H. “trying to visualize how the person helping the client, how much space and privacy is required?” “you can have people in the same room, prefer to have a five foot space between to protect clients. Space is a concern if more than one person from a family comes to the clinic. 3-6 computers would need 3-6 tables. Appointments would be best or combination of walk-in. Need to make reminder phone calls. Consider having the site available at clients’ convenience.”

Jim “can Park Place Coffee keep the space committed to VITA? Dina “the place would be separated from the rest of the activity with a separate entrance” “I expect children to be running around because of the park and will be open for internet users”

A question arose of whether the computers can be used by non-tax filers during tax season but during non-taxing filing hours. Need to ask feds. The computers are wiped clean after the season and at the end of each transmission.

Erika, 2 questions. “if computers are networked, servers are not cheap, does the grant pay for the server? The security of people’s information?”

Jim “the TA providers will come in and do the networking, they will do the training. AARP/IRS paid for the server at the Lloyd Center site.

Dina “it’s looking less feasible, it’s great to offer the services, if I have to close off that part of the café then that might be a problem, what if we do the tax returns on a Saturday, can you do a clean up and then make the computers available, or do you just not make them available jan 1 thru april 15?”

Jim “you always have someone there to run the returns that need to be fixed”.

Brenda “we proposed Park Place, not only is it exciting because of its location and who’s behind it, because the VITA center would come with a built in coordinator from jan-april. Not the same support from the urban renewal site.”

If there are any partners that know CPAa, please notify Brenda.

Jim “it’s a 40 training for a cpa test, it is rewarding and not difficult and then when you start preparing taxes for people it is the most rewarding. part of the success will be finding the volunteers from the community here to commit to one day a week or more, if you can get one day and then maybe a Saturday that would be great.

Brenda “the worst penalty is that it could be taken away if we don’t reach the minimum goal of 100 the first year.

Dina “no doubt we can make the 100 goal, and meet it easily. If someone is already a tax preparer is there an incentive if they come to volunteer at the VITA center? Does the volunteer become certified?” Kathy “they are certified to be volunteers.” Dina “does it get them closer” Kathy “no, that is a state thing” “maybe if they want to come and instruct then there can be continuing education credits”

Gloria “need bi-lingual training” Janet “there are other opportunities for volunteers other than the 40 hour preparation. They can be greeters, etc.” Erika “we did one for a half a day at our Powell site.”

Jim “Our website is [www.cashoregon.org](http://www.cashoregon.org)

Brenda, Dina, Rebecca and Maura will work on the commitment letter and application.

Janet also provided flyers for the Summer Lunch Program. "Gresham/Barlow has a number of sites, flyers are in Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese, please take flyers and get them out. Joining with other counties to increase participation, the key thing is that we are still only serving 30% eligible. Children and youth during the day can get a meal, pilot program where parents can eat as well called a parent feeding component.

Erika "we have a site at the pines apartments and do activities prior to the lunch."

Janet "kids don't have to be a part of a program."

Erika "teens don't want to just say they are hungry, but they can come help out with the little ones and save face and still get a meal"

#### IV. Site Coordinator's Update

- Rockwood Weed & Seed's 5<sup>th</sup> Year – No budget edits needed! **Applause!!**
- New Weed & Seed Community – No submission from Central Gresham. **There are a variety of factors that impacted our decision to not apply for a New Weed & Seed Community.**
- Mini-grant opportunity will re-open soon! **\$400-1000 mini-grants will be available. Brenda will notify you via e-mail.**
- June 30<sup>th</sup> -- RWS 2005-2006 No-Cost Extension Request Due to feds. **Brenda will submit this. All previous extensions have been granted; this allows us not to lose any dollars while our spending cycle fluctuates.**
- July 30<sup>th</sup> -- Jan–June 2006 Progress Report. **Brenda will be in touch with all of you regarding the information and data she needs for this report.**
- August – survey the community ■ any helpers? **We want to survey again to look for any changes, we may have a few dollars to help pay for surveyors, but also looking for volunteers to help go around the community. Ivan "can provide a couple of guys" Erika "we can help out at the Pines Apts."**
- August 14-17 – CCDO Law Enforcement Conference in AZ
  - Attendees: Brenda? Officer Schmidt? Ricardo Lopez? **Can send 3-4 folks, looking for approval. Possibly Teddi Lofton. Is Ricardo still interested? Gloria "he is concerned that they will talk about things that are not his field." Erika "what is the cost and what are we okaying?" Brenda "the conference is free and travel arrangements could cost about \$600 total per person." Motion by Erika to send 2-3 reps, second by Chris Piekarski; passed. Chris "we may like to send a new deputy DA, there is a good deal of movement coming up in the office."**
- September 9<sup>th</sup> -- Back To School Fair 2006, Rockwood Fred Meyer Site
  - Who are our committed partners to assist? **Gloria and EPH will continue to collect donations to hold for the event. Ivan will talk to the department to see if there is any money. We will emphasize the resource piece again first and then let them have the free stuff. We need donations for supplies. Robyn mentioned that Community Court has classes and some people have put together school supplies, books and stuffed animals, so we have boxes of supplies. They were middle school kids. She's not sure if this would apply since we arrived at summertime.**
- September 19<sup>th</sup> -- RWS SC meeting -- Federal Representative might visit!!
  - What else shall we put on her visit agenda? **Our federal Weed & Seed Program Manager (Katie) will likely pay a visit in September. Mark your calendars now. Her travel dates have not yet been arranged, so we may change the steering committee meeting date to happen while she is here. If you would like to be on the Katie's agenda to showcase your services to Rockwood while she is here then let Brenda now.**

#### V. M.A.D. Outreach Coordinator's Update

- Rockwood West Gresham Business Coalition **We held a successful walking tour on June 14. It was a great event. Great work, Natalie!**
- Rockwood West Gresham Urban Renewal -- **Police substation will open in August, the large store will come down by the end of the year and looking for a new developer within a year. Will take up to 2 years to see a real change.**

- July 22<sup>nd</sup> – Community Clean-up – **It will take place on the old Fred Meyer property. Community members will be invited to bring their junk! Help us to prevent illegal dumping!**

## VI. Additional BRIEF Partner Updates

- June 26<sup>th</sup> – PAL Youth Center opens for summer programs!!
- June 29<sup>th</sup> – National Youth Sports Program begins @ PSU
- July 8<sup>th</sup> – Salvation Army’s Rockwood Site Open House -- SEE FLYER.
- August 1<sup>st</sup> – National Night Out at Red Sunset Park – SEE FLYER.
- Tim Osorio mentioned that OCHA has to leave their building and they have desks, tables and chairs that are free 503-806-1222
- Robyn Gregory is leaving the DA’s office as the Community Court Coordinator. She will be there thru the end of July, will spend time with her baby and then get her Masters in Social Work at PSU. Someone will be assigned to take her place. Kathy M – “Community Court will be included on the sign at the Vance Park community garden.” On the budget, community court and social services seem to be okay and not in too much danger.
- Andrea Archuleta “it was a pleasure coming and we thank Ivan for inviting us. I work with juveniles and adults.
- Carl Jaber “I am here in support of all the work than Ivan has done. I have committed to be more proactive with the Latino community. First step is to educate myself with what is going on and take that information back. Our budget will be finalized on Thursday, there is a shortfall for our agency, looking at moving some population off supervision. Half our funding comes from the county. MCDJC office next to future site will remain.
- Erika Silver “Human Solutions has a piece of land, 181 and Couch, hoping to use for the multi-agency service center. We think we can do it. I think the work of Weed & Seed helped. Land bank half of the site, looks like we have to build a two-story building and use the other half for housing at another time. Partners currently are Loaves and Fishes, DHS, Human Solutions, MFS, El Programa, Wallace Medical Concern. Please put other agencies in contact with Erika.

Also, we just got the last piece of funding to rehab the apartments on 187 between Stark and Yamhill (Raintree Apts.) and they will close some in September, none of the residents needs to be moved. Also reconfigure the drive-thru and take out the pool and add a kids’ area.

Project Homeless Families Connect on July 11 at the Coliseum for services. Outreach work to hotels and campsights on June 30. Please let HS know of areas for outreach.

- Cheryl Houston: the Rockwood Neighborhood Health Access Center is closed. Referrals go to either Mid County or East County Clinics.
- Dave Warnke: will have a booth at National Night Out and to help people find out if they have a registered sex offender in their area and resources to prevent their children from becoming victims of sex abuse.
- Chris Piekarski – First of all, Deputy DA Chris McCormack has left the Office. For now, Chris P. is handling all Project Safe Neighborhood issues. Secondly, Chris P/I will most likely be transferred out of the N’hood DA position in July. The position will be filled by another Deputy as early as July 15.
- WE WILL MISS ALL OF OUR DA OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES!! STAY IN TOUCH, FRIENDS!
- But before Chris P. leaves – one or two community search warrants will likely be processed AND the Drug Free Zone issue is on City Council’s agenda for reading in July and August. Yeah!
- Kathy Minden is beginning Operation Turtle on 6/27. On the horizon – Butterfly House, AmeriCorps Member, MOOvin’ Campaign, possibly funding from NW Health Foundation.
- Ivan Cortes mentioned that unfortunately the work program cannot happen to the capacity it did last year. Also, regrettably, the 5 crew members that will participate with Ivan have to be documented; ages 15-18.
- Gloria Wiggins – LIBRE grant was approved by the County for gang prevention services – 2 staff. EPH is also looking to fill 4 AmeriCorps positions – 2 pt and 2 ft – for SUN and financial literacy.
- Carmen Montaño and Cassandra Hernandez also extend their gratitude for the invitation and look forward to connecting more with the community.

## Meeting Schedule

**July 18th, Tuesday. Rockwood Grange--18303 SE Stark Street**

**No meeting in August!!**

**SEPTEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup> – FEDERAL PROGRAM MANAGER SITE VISIT??**

**ALL subsequent 2006 dates – 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month; 5-7pm @ the Rockwood Grange.**

# **CCDO Opens Opportunity for 48 Additional Weed and Seed Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Centers (VITA) in '06**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) initiated a new partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in 2005 to launch 50 new Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Centers. VITA Centers provide free income tax assistance to low- and moderate-income families, increase the use of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credits by low-income families, and assist families in poverty to accumulate significant enough assets to buy a home, start a business, or seek higher education. Those 50 new Weed and Seed VITA sites completed over 11,000 returns and returned more than \$15 million in tax refunds to Weed and Seed residents during the tax season that ended April 17th.

Each Weed and Seed VITA site received a networked computer lab made up of six computers and a printer to facilitate electronic filing of tax returns. These computer labs are being used for additional Weed and Seed purposes outside of tax season such as computer classes, after school programs, tutoring, etc. Each site was required to provide internet access and commit to recruit, train, and manage volunteers to staff the VITA Center during tax season. No direct funding was provided. Sites leveraged partnerships, local resources, and occasionally their own grant dollars to support the VITA effort.

The IRS worked closely with the Weed and Seed VITA sites to facilitate coordination and training, provided the Taxwise software for the computers, and offered technical assistance throughout the planning, development, and implementation phases of the new VITA Centers.

## **Criteria for Selection:**

- Current or graduated Weed and Seed site
- Completed VITA Application (Email, Fax, or Mail by June 30, 2006)
- Commitment Letter from Steering Committee signed by the Chair and Weed and Seed Site Coordinator (Fax or Mail by June 30, 2006)
- Full compliance with all current OJP grant requirements
- Evidence of support for VITA Center operations: location, equipment, volunteer management
- Sustainability Strategy
- Demonstrate a willingness to link to other asset building strategies:  
financial literacy, IDAs, micro-enterprise, home ownership, educational opportunities, job skills training, etc.

**Commitment from IRS:**

- Coordination with other VITA efforts in the community
- Assistance with the recruitment, training, and recognition of volunteers
- Taxwise Software
- Technical Assistance and Support to VITA site coordinator

**Commitment from Site:**

- **Commitment of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee**
- Minimum goal of 100 completed and accepted returns
- **Facility for the proposed computer center**, preferably a Safe Haven
- Quality assurance for work performed by the VITA site
- Cooperation with the local IRS staff
- Access to the computers and the Internet (1 line)
- **Recruitment and management of volunteers**
- **Outreach and marketing of the program**
- **Reporting of results**

\*Sites may partner with an existing VITA Center to expand the service into the Weed & Seed site or expand the number of residents being served by an existing center.

---

**Rockwood Weed & Seed ACTION ITEMS:****Commitment of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee**

- We need this before Maura and Brenda can sign a letter on June 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Facility for the proposed computer center**

- 2 proposed sites
  - Park Place Coffee, brought to you by Dina DiNucci, 182<sup>nd</sup>/Vance Park
  - GPD Rockwood Satellite Office, brought to you by Urban Renewal, 187/Stark

Things to consider (all staffing issues):

**Recruitment and management of volunteers****Outreach and marketing of the program****Reporting of results****Other?**

For more information, check out <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/programs/partnerships.html#irs>  
Or the main page at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/>