



# Beyond Welfare Leader Letter



April 10, 2008

## Scheduled Events

The Beyond Welfare rummage sale is finally on the calendar! It will be held the last weekend in June, at the First Christian Church in downtown Ames. We will be accepting drop-offs at the church the week before the sale. Please stay tuned for exact times and dates. Want to volunteer? Contact Jennel Clarke at nelschildcare@yahoo.com. People will be needed for sorting, set-up, and staffing of the sale.

## Board and Staff Meetings

The Beyond Welfare staff has their weekly meeting from 10am-2pm every Tuesday. During this time, please be patient and leave a message and someone will return your call as soon as possible.

## Welcomes/New and Goods/Thank You(s)

**Beyond Welfare receives award!** Beyond Welfare had a great turnout at the FACES event the last weekend in March. This event celebrates diversity in Ames. Thanks to Randy, Jan C., Jayne and Julie, Christina, Jacqueline C., David S., Greta and others for painting kids' faces and talking about Beyond Welfare to people who visited. The big draw was "Becca the Balloon Lady," who volunteered her time to us by tying balloon animals and hats. The best was Christina's "peacock hat" which made her look like an Aztec ruler or exotic swami, with different colored balloons streaming from her head. Becca must have tied literally a hundred balloon figures--which meant that many more people became informed about Beyond Welfare.

To our surprise, in the middle of the morning, we heard that Beyond Welfare was going to receive the 2008 Humanitarian Award for embodying diversity. What a thrill! Many of us stuck around for the show afterwards, which included the awards ceremony. Gary showed up, and Tiffany M. and Sabrina (Jessica's daughter) were performing, so they could join us on stage, too. David gave a wonderful speech, and Terah C. stepped up to receive the shiny plaque, now on display in our office.

Thank you to Aloma H. for securing the space for Beyond Welfare's rummage sale!

Thank you to Greta and Lois for providing some of the content you are reading in this newsletter! If you are interesting in contributing something, please e-mail astoehr@iastate.edu and I will include it in the next issue!

## For Your Information...

The month of March was devoted to preparing for the visit with the Ames Police Department. Earlier in the month, we discussed our appreciations and concerns, documented them, and shared the findings with the police. On March 20,

Lieutenant Mike Brennan, a police supervisor, and Sergeant Rory Echer, the officer behind the Angel Tree and Shop with a Cop programs, came to our meeting. On the topic of community, Echer noted a city he had visited that put front porches on its new Section 8 housing, and the positive difference it made in the tone of the neighborhood. Lieutenant Brennan breezed through our list of concerns, then opened the floor for questions. The group asked a number of questions about the requirements for the job: an agility test that "anyone could pass with a couple weeks of training" and a written comprehension test.

**Does racial profiling exist in Ames?** Lieutenant Brennan flatly denied the existence of racial profiling in Ames, but acknowledged that "everyone has their horror story" of a police stop. In terms of racial/ethnic minorities, there is only one African-American and one Hispanic officer on the Ames police force. They want to hire more. Sergeant Echer felt that other minorities who had been hired quit due to the peer pressure of their community: their community considered them a traitor. It was too bad that this topic and other more sensitive issues could not be examined in more depth.

**What's the deal on sentencing disparities?** Sergeant Echer stated his belief that the difference in federal crack cocaine vs. powder cocaine sentencing had something to do with impurities in the drugs. Currently, possession of 5g of crack carries the same sentence as possession of 500g of powder, making a user of one the equivalent of a dealer of the other. In the 1980s, when this law was passed, there was a lot of hype about "crack addicts" and "crack babies", but scientific studies since then have proved that crack and powder are equally addictive. U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions has been putting together a proposal to reduce the 1:100 disparity to a 1:20 disparity. This is an improvement, but it does not abolish the inequity that has put millions of African-Americans behind bars. Of course, the sentencing laws are something the police have no authority to change.

Overall, it seems that if CLTM wants to engage the police in more honest, open discussion, we will have to keep inviting them. The March visit was a good start in building trust. If that trust could expand and deepen, members of both groups ("us" and "them") could be transformed.

--Written by Greta Anderson

Beyond Welfare Director Lois Smidt has been taking our community wisdom "to the world" for a while. But never before has "the world" meant--the world! Yes, Lois has international engagements throughout the month of April. She began in Macedonia, then to Brussels, and will continue on to lead workshops in London, Gloucester. and Wales, then across the seas to Newcastle and finally Sydney, Australia, where she will deliver the keynote address at a conference focusing on Australia's indigenous people. Lois' themes include:

- How to create environments of welcome for everyone, leaving labels of prestige and deficit at the door, where gifts,

dreams, and needs of ALL are invited, without constraints of eligibility

- Our learnings on "making friends on purpose" across lines of difference that separate us

- How we are breaking completely free from the model of "helping" which institutionalizes caring, requiring people to be defined by deficits in order to be "served." This, we have found, limits the gifts of those being served and the gifts of community, reinforcing the myth that there are the "needy" and the "helper" when, in reality, all of us have needs and all of us have gifts by which we can assist one another in community

Her travel expenses are being paid by the groups that want to hear about our revolutionary but simple ways of connecting people to people. In addition, her stipends for this work abroad are paying for most of her salary/benefits costs during the time she is gone. The Community Leadership Team has "blessed" this part of our mission: sharing our knowledge with others.

Take some time every once in a while to think about Lois. Send her strength and courage for this month of travel and teaching so very far from home.

**DO YOU WANT A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT?** A circle of support can help clarify your goals for the near- and long-term future. Allies will help you be true to yourself and connect you with opportunities you might not know about. Contact the BW office to indicate your interest, as well as names of people you would like to have on your circle.

Beyond Welfare is currently looking for people that would be willing to help staff pick up new and/or current participants and/or allies that need a ride to Thursday night CLTm meetings. We have started to see a lot of new faces, and would like to make sure they continue coming if they need a ride. Some of our new participants are also from Nevada, Story City, etc. If you are interested in helping with transportation, please call Jessica at 292-5992. Thank you for your willingness to help people stay out of isolation!

Beyond Welfare is always looking for office volunteers, Thursday night CLTm facilitators, and Dream Path facilitators and scribes. Representatives to the Curriculum Team are also needed. If you are interested in any of these roles, please call the office at 292-5992.

Beyond Welfare has two computers that are ready to donate to families. If you are interested, please call the office at 292-5992.

### Community Resources

The Story County Community Dental Clinic is located in the Department of Human Services building at 126 South Kellogg, Suite 2. The clinic has recently hired a new dentist, and will now be seeing patients four days a week. The new hours are as follows:

Monday	9am-6pm
Tuesday	8am-5pm
Wednesday	8am-5pm

Thursday 8am-5pm

The clinic is accepting both new Medicaid (Title 19) and uninsured patients. Uninsured patients will pay for services based on a sliding fee scale. The clinic will also work on dentures and partials, and perform more in-depth procedures such as root canals. For more information or to make an appointment, please call 956-4595.

Dental Hygiene senior students at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny, Iowa are looking for patients who qualify for the Central Regional Dental Testing Services Exam in Omaha. You may qualify if you have not had an opportunity to have your teeth cleaned for 2 or more years. If you qualify, you will receive a free oral cancer screening, a thorough cleaning, patient education, and x-rays. To schedule an appointment, please call the Dental Clinic Monday - Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 515-964-6280.

Suited For Work, 130 South Sheldon Avenue, Suite #305, is a service that is available to FIP recipients and low-income men and women in Story County who have found employment or who are actively seeking employment. In order to receive work and interview clothing, you can pick up a referral from Beyond Welfare. Suited for Work also welcomes donations of business-appropriate, in season clothing and accessories. Please be sure that the clothing is in excellent condition, clean and on hangers, with sizes clearly marked. Acceptable items include suits, dresses, blouses, shirts, skirts, slacks, blazers, sweaters, new hosiery, all-weather coats, scarves, ties, handbags, briefcases, shoes, and jewelry. Suited for Work is open the following times:

#### Closet Hours:

Mondays 11 am-1pm.  
Thursdays 5-7pm  
Every third Saturday of the month 11 am-1pm

#### Donation Drop-Off Times:

Mondays 11 am-1pm  
Every third Saturday of the month 11 am-1pm  
For more information, call Shirley Barnes at 232-6064 or e-mail suitedforwork@hotmail.com. During Closet hours, please call 292-8582

#### Quotes of the Month

*"Plant seeds of expectation in your mind; cultivate thoughts that anticipate achievement. Believe in yourself as being capable of overcoming all obstacles and weaknesses."*

~Norman Vincent Peale

#### Needs and Offers

