



# The Health Center

*Promoting the success of children by providing for their physical, emotional and social well-being.*

Volume 1

Back to School 2012



## Walla Walla's School-Based Health Centers: Working to Build a Better Home Town

### Fast Facts!

Did you know that children who use school-based health centers:

- *have fewer hospitalizations*
- *use emergency rooms less*
- *are three times more likely to graduate*
- *are half as likely to be absent from school*
- *increase their grade point averages when their care includes counseling*

[www.nasbhc.org](http://www.nasbhc.org)

*(The National Assembly of School-Based Health Care)*

In 2008, a small group of concerned citizens noticed a problem; many of the at-risk children attending Lincoln High School were going without badly needed health care. Also around that time, local health and social service agencies were reviewing new data which led them to identify those same children as being one of Walla Walla's highest social priorities. In response, the local non-profit, *The Health Center at Lincoln*, was established as a place where Lincoln students could easily receive the basic medical, mental health and social support services they required. Four years later, the staff at The Health Center is caring for more students than ever, and plans are underway to expand services to yet another high-need group of children through a new program called, *The Health Center at Blue Ridge*.

Too many of Walla Walla's children are unable to access the basic services that most of us take for granted. Some of them struggle in isolation with *serious* health and social issues such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and homelessness. Others bear the responsibility to provide for the health and safety of a younger sibling, or are struggling to deal with the fear and uncertainty of living with an addicted or mentally ill adult.

Research tells us that children need to *be well* in order to *learn well*, and that educational attainment is the best predictor of a person's lifelong health and success. At The Health Center, we see ourselves as partners in the "village" that must raise Walla Walla's children in a way that allows them to become the happy and productive citizens they were meant to be. Like you, we believe that *every child deserves hope*.



## Bruised, but not Broken.

Social scientists refer to serious childhood hurts as “Adverse Childhood Experiences” or ACEs. Research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control has found that the accumulation of certain ACEs is associated with *life-long social problems, poor health, early death and wasted potential.*

### 1 Abuse

Eighteen percent of Lincoln students have been sexually abused.

### 2 Neglect

A quarter of Lincoln students have been homeless for some part of the last two years.

### 3 Violence

One in four Lincoln students has been beaten by an out of control parent.

Fortunately, there is evidence that communities can intervene to heal children who have known too much pain. *We can help children recover from pain and become resilient. And resilient children become high-functioning adults.*

[www.ResilienceTrumpsAces.org](http://www.ResilienceTrumpsAces.org)

# The Health Center at Lincoln:

Tackling tough issues and helping high-need teens get back on track for the bright futures they deserve.

Fifteen-year-old Brendon would have chosen a different life. Talking about his early childhood for The Health Center’s outreach video earlier this year, he said *“I was born into a family of meth addicts. I remember my mom beating the s— out of me. I got put into tons of foster homes. You know, it’s not your choice where you’re born.”*

Brendon went on to say that the counseling he received at The Health Center at Lincoln - and the relationships that he formed with the caring adults he found there - helped him appreciate that he is a survivor. Now he knows that he is strong, and that he *can* choose what the *next* chapters of his life will be like. After years of expressing his pain through self-destructive anger, Brendon is becoming resilient.

*Resilience is being able to bend under stress and then bounce back instead of breaking.* At The Health Center at Lincoln, we believe in the power of resilience. As we help children take care of their specific medical, emotional and social needs, we also tend to their less obvious, but perhaps even more important need to learn how to *bounce back from adversity.* And sometimes the simplest gestures can help do that - like offering a smile and a word of encouragement to a hesitant child, or calling to check-in with a teen who is having a hard week at home.

We may never know what *an act of kindness* accomplishes, but we do know, that for all the serious issues we work on at The Health Center, sometimes it’s the little things that matter most.



*Hear Brendon tell his story at [www.TheHealthCenterWW.org](http://www.TheHealthCenterWW.org)*



# The Health Center at Blue Ridge:

Offering hope for even greater impact through early intervention.

***On-site, supplemental student health care is coming to Blue Ridge Elementary School!*** The Health Center at Blue Ridge will open this month to provide easy-access health care to children attending Blue Ridge Elementary, Walla Walla Head Start, or the Walla Walla Early Childhood Educational Assistance Program (ECEAP). Located in the existing school nurse's office, services will be free of charge and will be available to all students who have pre-registered with The Health Center; no insurance or government documentation will be required for registration. ***Registration packets are available at Blue Ridge Elementary, or by calling (509) 526-1798.***

Medical providers will be available to see registered students starting October 15<sup>th</sup>. Both scheduled appointments and drop-in visits will be available from 12:30 to 3:30 every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday that school is open. A Care Coordinator will be on-site, daily, from 11 to 4 to assist with registration, appointment scheduling, and the coordination of services with parents, teachers and primary care providers.



According to the Centers for Disease Control, early and repeated intervention to promote the physical and emotional health of children has “the potential to significantly improve school achievement and reduce school drop-out”.

***“Our team at The Health Center is excited to be embarking on this next chapter in our organization’s life. We know the potential of school-based health care because we have absolutely seen it work”.***

***- Kathryn Barron, Board Member for The Health Center***

[www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/thecaseforcoordinatedschoolhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/thecaseforcoordinatedschoolhealth)



## Kim:

***“It’s so important!”***

***Blue Ridge Elementary Principal, Kim Doepker,*** knows what it’s like to feel helpless.

Kim has watched children suffer and then fall behind as their families crumble under the stress of poverty, violence, addiction and mental illness. She’s seen first-hand that poor health predicts poor performance. Though always a fierce advocate for children, sometimes Kim is limited in her ability to rescue those with the greatest needs.

Think of ***The Health Center at Blue Ridge*** as one more “life ring” that Kim can use to help save our kids.

# “Thanks for Caring!”

Meet Kelsey, one of our student-clients attending Lincoln High School. Kelsey is an articulate, soft-spoken sophomore with bright eyes, and an easy smile that lights up her face. She lives with her mom, her older sister and her baby nephew. Her favorite subject in school is art (Kelsey especially loves painting!), and her favorite thing to do outside of school is hang-out with her two best friends.

Kelsey appreciates The Health Center at Lincoln because *“there is always someone there [she] can talk to”*. As anyone who has been through high school knows, sometimes the demands of school, home, work and a social-life can really mount-up, even in the best of circumstances.

It’s so simple, but a young person’s having a network of trusted adults available to listen and offer support can make the difference between floundering and flourishing, failure and success.

Your donation to The Health Center makes a difference to Kelsey!



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TheHealthCenter

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