



The Health Center

Advancing the success of students by addressing their physical, emotional, and social needs.

Volume 7

Spring 2016



Teen Center on Horizon

Did you know that last night dozens of Walla Walla Valley teens had to “couch surf” or sleep outdoors because they are homeless? These young people often have painful stories and need temporary shelter and support services so they can make healthy choices like staying in school.

The Walla Walla Youth Alliance is taking a bold and exciting step to help these teens with the construction of the Teen Center on the site of the current Health Center. Blue Mountain Action Council will own this new facility. Catholic Charities will operate an overnight emergency shelter and coordinate homeless prevention services for teens. Children's Home Society of Washington will provide Early Head Start child care for parenting teens. **The Health Center will be located in the Teen Center and will continue to provide primary and mental health to Lincoln students and teens accessing the shelter.**

Funding for the Teen Center construction comes from state and city development funds as well as local and regional grants and generous local funders.

Tim Meliah of Catholic Charities, a longtime volunteer mental health counselor at the Lincoln clinic, calls the new Youth Center “**a one stop shop that will meet youth where they are and give them the help they need to reach their social, emotional, and intellectual potential and become healthy adults.**”

Construction is slated to begin in the fall and our Lincoln clinic will take up temporary residence in nearby buildings so our operation will not be affected. **Occupancy is expected in the Spring 2017.**

This Just in...

The Health Center at Blue Ridge

900 visits have occurred for **counseling THIS YEAR**

The Health Center at Lincoln

Over **1,000** visits have occurred **THIS YEAR**

Thanks to our generous donors for making this much help possible

Donate Online at: www.TheHealthCenterWW.org/donate



The Health Center at Blue Ridge

Care Coordination is key to our success

Summer School

Studies show that kids at risk can lose academic ground over the summer. Children in crisis can do the same thing if they lose contact with the supports they need to practice healthy emotional behaviors.

That is why we are so happy that Blue Ridge Elementary is offering summer school sessions for current K-4th graders. Sessions will be Monday-Thursday from 8:00 to 1:00 from June 20 until the end of July.

With the building open for summer school, The Health Center counselors will be available to continue to work with the children whose needs don't stop when school gets out. The demands for our services over the school year makes the decision to offer counseling over the summer an easy one. We are glad we can do this because our donors sustain our work.

Thank you for helping us make this ongoing support for our youngest students possible. Together we are making a real difference for children.

Sonja Rootvik is the care coordinator at our Blue Ridge clinic. Many students come to our clinic to see our medical providers for sick visits, vaccinations and healthy child checks. They can do this because Sonja obtains parent permission for services and connects students with our providers. However, overwhelmingly our Blue Ridge students seek counseling help also.

Sonja describes her job as “putting together a 3D puzzle with pieces that often do not seem like they will fit.” **With six mental health providers, three counseling spaces, and 900 individual counseling sessions so far this year, it's a challenge to coordinate with teachers, counselors, space and children each day.** But Sonja loves this part of her job.



Recently Sonja helped Joseph connect with our counselor, Erica. **Joseph was an unhappy and struggling second grader.** Joseph's mom worried about his tantrums at home and his teacher agreed he needed help with his fears and focus.

Finding time and space for Joseph to see a counselor was a challenge for Sonja. Added to that, his parents insisted that Joseph work with only Erica - whose schedule was already full. And, Joseph's teacher was concerned about time out of class because he has an individual educational plan (IEP) so he has special learning sessions that he cannot miss.

Sonja managed to find a time on Erica's schedule when Joseph was not in his special class and when a counseling room was available. Joseph could start getting help. Recently, Joseph's teacher told Erica that she could see what a difference working with Erica was making by the way Joseph acted in class. **He is calmer and more focused and very proud that he is getting better grades.**

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The Health Center at Lincoln

Another Care Coordination Success

Lacee Key is our Lincoln Clinic Care Coordinator and Medical Assistant. Besides welcoming students and taking vitals, Lacee says that an essential part of her job is helping students navigate referrals outside our clinic. **She is a diligent and untiring sleuth: tracking down medical records, finding resources for kids and helping families get connected to the services they need.** It's a complicated and time consuming task but she loves doing it because she knows it makes a difference for our students.

Recently, Lacee spent several hours helping Kendra, a sophomore who recently enrolled at Lincoln. Kendra had been through significant trauma and chaos in her family and had recently moved in with her grandmother. Over the prior several weeks, Kendra had been coming to the clinic with frequent unexplained stomach pain. Clinic staff had assessed the reason for her problems and recommended that she see a specialist.

Lacee called Kendra's grandmother to explain the recommendations and realized that **grandma was overwhelmed with the new responsibility of helping her granddaughter find stability and was not sure how to get Kendra medical help.** Lacee went to work identifying Kendra's medical insurance, gathering medical records and putting everything together with recommendations from Health Center providers.



Coordinating with Kendra's primary care doctor, **Lacee was able to arrange for a specialist appointment, helped the arrange transportation to take Kendra to the appointment.** Following the appointment, Lacee made sure that Health Center staff had the specialists' notes so all recommendations could be followed. **Kendra's grandmother is grateful that Lacee helped her learn about her granddaughter's needs so she can be a better support.** And Kendra is back to school feeling better.

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Mr. Whitman 2016

The women of Kappa Kappa Gamma have announced that the largest student hosted annual fundraiser on the Whitman College campus has selected **The Health Center** to receive proceeds this year!!

Eight campus gentleman will work with KKG fraternity members to raise funds, competing to see which team can raise the most money.

The competition culminates with a male beauty pageant to crown one man "Mr. Whitman" on **Friday, October 28th, 2016.**

Join us that evening for the fun and celebration of our mission and special partnership with the amazing women of Kappa Kappa Gamma!

Contact us for tickets!

Thank you Washington Women's Foundation

Capping a successful three year grant from the prestigious Washington Women's Foundation (WWF), The Health Center recently hosted Seattle based members of the Foundation's investment team for a final review. The grant helped us fund Care Coordinator positions at Lincoln and Blue Ridge clinics. We are honored that the WWF supported us and are very proud of their recognition of our success. Here is what they say about us:

"We congratulate The Health Center of Walla Walla for successfully using our \$100,000 investment in their program to strengthen core staffing," says Beth McCaw, President of Washington Women's Foundation. "During a recent site visit at The Health Center, our members were most impressed by seeing how the Center's leadership has strategically incorporated what they've learned from experience over the three-year period of our grant into their planning for future growth. Now their trauma-informed care model is poised to help even more children in the Walla Walla community and beyond. We have great confidence in The Health Center's future."

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