

Sign of the times...

Rural Resources' story reflects 45 years of our community's history

When a small group of Northeast Washington community members got together in Newport back in 1965 to talk about local implementation of President Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act, many of them weren't quite sure what all the fuss was about.

Young people left the towns where their families had lived for generations. Jobs dwindled and unemployment in Northeast Washington counties grew to consistently rank among the highest in the state. Through good times and bad, Rural Resources changed to meet emerging needs while staying true to its core mission.

Al says the biggest change he's seen is that "we've grown and can offer a lot more people the help that they need."

That's especially true now that Rural Resources has come to serve Lincoln County just this year (*learn more in the article on this page*). "It's a milestone – the first time we've

Continued on page 3



Barry Lamont and Al Six

But one person knew. He was school teacher Al Six.

"It was all about helping people," he recalls.

Al was there that day – at the "birth" of the new Community Action Agency called Rural Resources – and he's still here today, having served on the Board of Directors for four decades.

From its earliest days in Newport, Rural Resources soon moved its main office

to Colville in order to more centrally serve its three-county area. In the mid-1960s, jobs were plentiful in Pend Oreille, Stevens and Ferry counties. The timber industry was booming and the small population of eager workers found plenty to do.

Still, there were people in need – most of them children and the elderly. And Rural Resources set about helping them, offering a hand-up to families often too proud for just a hand-out.

Over the years, opportunities for education increased.

Since 1965, Rural Resources has helped residents of Northeastern Washington help themselves and each other. Through education, resources and support, we offer real hope to children, seniors and families, working to create a strong and stable community for us all.

Contact us at 509-684-8421. On the Web at www.ruralresources.org.

SENIORS, PUT A LITTLE SPRING IN YOUR STEP!

Spring is a great time to get moving and stay moving, with more opportunities than ever for seniors (and their younger friends) to get out and get active.

Besides making you more fit, simple exercise can help prevent injuries and falls by strengthening coordination and reflexes.

Strength, conditioning, flexibility and balance are greatly improved with a regular, moderate exercise regimen, such as walking 30 minutes a day, say aging experts.

Now that the weather's getting nicer, you can actually head outside and enjoy the fresh air and scenery, which is good for your mood as well as your muscles. And, speaking of muscles, you might also consider weight training, which also promotes bone strength and helps prevent osteoporosis.

Here are some other tips to get you started and keep you moving:

- Start slow and consider small 5- to 10-minute exercise intervals.
- Be realistic in your expectations and results by

setting modest goals. Don't be too hard on yourself if you have periods where you relapse into inactivity.

- Working with a buddy or a trainer can provide excellent support. Classes and groups at your local community center can offer camaraderie, as well as a lively social atmosphere.
- If exercising outdoors remember to "think cool": Wear loose, light-colored clothing, sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat; drink plenty of water and keep a supply on-hand; and be aware of the signs of heat exhaustion, including confusion, headache, nausea and blurred vision.
- As with starting any regimen, consult your doctor first to determine what types of physical activity will best suit your health and overall condition.
- And most importantly, enjoy yourself!

For more information, help and referrals for people age 60 and older, call Rural Resources' Senior Information and Assistance line at 800-873-5889 or visit our Web site at www.ruralresources.org.

We are now serving Lincoln County!

Lincoln County residents who need help paying their winter heating bills or making their homes more energy efficient can now apply for assistance through Rural Resources. We've opened an office at 712 Morgan St. in Davenport to provide energy assistance, weatherization services, increased employment and training help, advice on health-care insurance, and other services to people living in Lincoln County.

Until this year, Lincoln County's energy assistance and weatherization programs had been administered by the North Columbia Community Action Council, which disbanded in February.

To find out more about our energy assistance and weatherization programs, call toll-free 1-877-219-5542. Please let us know when you call if you are a resident of Lincoln County.



The two-and-half-hour session promotes an understanding of the nature and impact of child sexual abuse and teaches participants the seven steps they should take to protect children:

- * Learn the facts
- * Minimize opportunity
- * Talk about it
- * Stay alert
- * Make a plan
- * Act on suspicions
- * Get involved

Did you know?

- ✎ One in four women and one in six men were sexually abused as a child.
- ✎ At least six out of 10 children who have been sexually abused don't tell.
- ✎ Six out of 10 teen first pregnancies are preceded by molestation, rape or attempted rape. Teen mothers are less likely to finish school and be successful in jobs and more likely to rely on public assistance.



Free training encourages adults to take action against child sexual abuse

Ruby* is well aware of the emotional scars left by child sexual abuse. Her own family bears its painful legacy.

That's one reason she took part in Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children, a prevention training program offered through Rural Resources' Family Support Center.

"Everyone needs to know this because everyone has a role in preventing, recognizing and reacting to child sexual abuse," Ruby says. "By educating adults, we lower the risk of children being victimized."

Stewards of Children is a comprehensive program provided nationally by Darkness to Light, an organization dedicated to empowering adults to prevent child sexual abuse. The training targets parents, professionals and volunteers who interact with children, but is open to anybody.

"We are so fortunate to have this available locally," says Linda Norris, Outreach and Prevention Manager, who facilitates the training in Stevens County.

The training is free in Stevens County, but each participant is asked to donate \$10, if possible, to cover the cost of interactive manuals. There is currently no trained facilitator in Ferry or Pend Oreille counties, so sessions there would be provided upon request.

For more information or to schedule a training, call 509-684-3796.

"We don't charge for the training because our passion is to reach every adult in Stevens County with this life-changing information," says Linda. "This training teaches adults how to talk to kids, what to look for and how to react responsibly. It calls on participants to take personal responsibility for child safety and motivates them to take courageous action."

Ruby, who works with children as a church volunteer, hasn't had to use her training to take "courageous action", but she's prepared to if the situation arises. She wants to prevent the suffering she knows all too well. Members of her family needed therapy and their faith in God to heal from their trauma. Now they take comfort in knowing the abuse wasn't their fault and doesn't define who they are.

"Our children only get one childhood," she says. "We need to protect their future."

**Ruby's last name is withheld to protect her privacy.*

Celebrating 45 years of community action

Continued from page 1

expanded our core territory since 1965," says Executive Director Barry Lamont, who joined the agency 20 years ago.

Other major changes? Rural Resources assumed greater responsibilities for employment programs and job training, opened Head Start schools, added transportation services, and developed housing for low-income families, seniors and the disabled. The Family Support Center was created to serve victims of domestic violence, child sexual abuse and other crimes.

In the future, Barry says he hopes the agency can help lead economic development efforts to actually help create more jobs for the area.

"The needs continue, they don't abate," he concludes. "People need a roof over their heads, food in their stomachs and a living wage to pay for it. Rural Resources will always be here – neighbors helping neighbors."



LBJ signs the Equal Opportunity Act in 1964.



Head Start brings a family closer together

Brandi Ruff and Kyle Sanders don't need the reminders on their refrigerator door anymore. Good communication comes naturally to them now, and they have their children's Head Start preschool program to thank.

In addition to getting low-income children ready for kindergarten and a life of learning, Head Start helps their parents with training, information and support. Head Start is another program

that began in the mid-1960s during the Johnson Administration.

Brandi and Kyle have been involved with Rural Resources' Head Start program for five years, first with their eldest son, Demetrius, who's excelling as a second grader, and now with their 5-year-old twins, Lucas and Zachary, who will start kindergarten this fall.

They saw how the program helped their boys, so last year, they took the opportunity to meet with a Head Start Family Advocate to help themselves. They wanted to communicate better as a couple.

"When I get stressed out, my voice gets high, and my husband wouldn't stop pointing it out," Brandi says. "I would get really upset because I felt like he wasn't hearing me out or taking me seriously."

A Rural Resources Family Advocate helped them come up with communication goals and steps to get there.

"We put the steps on the 'fridge and we re-read them many times," Brandi says. "Pretty soon we realized we didn't need them up there anymore because we were practicing good communication. We got it!"

Kyle and Brandi celebrated a milestone wedding anniversary in April. Not only are they involved in their children's education, they're going to school themselves. Their lives are hectic, but they fight less and talk more.

"Head Start brought us together as a family," Brandi says.

Seeking volunteers

Want to make a difference in the lives of children and families in your community?

Our Family Support Center is looking for caring volunteers to help victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and other crimes. No experience or special talents are necessary, just a kind heart and willingness to donate your time.

Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks, which include answering our 24-hour help line, working with people who come into the Center, taking clients to appointments and court dates, and providing temporary safe shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children.

For more information, including the complete training schedule, contact Shamra Coy, Family Support Center Resource Development Coordinator, at 684-3796 ext. 6092 or scoy@ruralresources.org.