



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.

‘Sexting dangers’: Think before you ‘send’

Parents, do you know what your son or daughter is sharing in cyberspace? If not, you’ll want to keep reading.

Studies suggest that one in five teens has sent nude or semi-nude pictures of themselves via cell phone or instant message, and many more have exchanged sexually suggestive messages online. What’s more, many think it’s no big deal. But underage “sexting” can and does ruin lives.

That’s why Rural Resources’ Family Support Center is educating teens and their parents about this dangerous and illegal practice. During Teen Domestic Violence Awareness Month in February, we distributed informational handouts and “Say NO to Sexting” bookmarks in school libraries to raise awareness around a growing problem.


Your teen may be a whiz when it comes to technology, but is he or she aware of the following?

- It’s a felony to create, distribute and/or possess child pornography. Minors can be charged with having nude pictures of girlfriends, boyfriends or even of themselves.

- Not only can sexting have serious legal consequences, it can ruin job and college prospects and lead to public harassment. (In Ohio, one young woman committed suicide after being branded a “whore” and “porn queen” following her ex-boyfriend’s circulation of her nude photo.)
- If you don’t want it public, don’t put it out there. Once it enters cyberspace it can’t be removed.

Talk to your children about what they’re doing online and set clear expectations for their behavior. It’s not snooping to check out their online profiles from time to time – this is information they’re making public.

Set limits. Have your teen surrender his cell phone when he’s home, and keep computers out of bedrooms so that their use can be more easily monitored.

The Family Support Center helps victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and works to prevent abuse and violence in our community. For help, support or information, call our 24-hour help line at 509-684-6139. 

inAction

Helping people, changing lives.

Kinship programs: A lifeline for relatives raising grandchildren



Learn more about Family Caregiver Support and Kinship Care, 509-684-3932 or 1-800-873-5889.

When Deborah Bailey and her granddaughter, Dawn*, were in danger of having their electricity shut off, Rural Resources stepped in.

When Deborah's car died, leaving her isolated in Cusick without transportation, Rural Resources provided funds to fix up a used car.

And, our Kinship Care Program has offered activities like a three-day retreat on Chewelah Peak, where the pair can have fun with other families like theirs.

"What a blessing it is to know there are programs specifically focused on grandparents who are raising their grandchildren," Deborah says. "It's like a lifeline was thrown out to me."

Deborah, 63, never thought she'd be raising a child at her age. "We're supposed to spoil them and send them home," she says. But her own daughter became addicted to meth and neglected her baby, so Deborah stepped in and eventually got legal custody.

Holding down two jobs, Deborah was barely scraping by when she just had herself to worry about. After Dawn came, she wasn't able to work as much. Then sickness and unemployment took their toll, and now the family's financial situation is even more fragile.

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Tips for Family Caregivers

- 1 Take care of your own health. Eat right, exercise, get plenty of sleep and get regular medical checkups.
- 2 Call your doctor if you start to experience signs of depression, including sleep disturbances, hopelessness, apathy, extreme sadness and suicidal thoughts.
- 3 Depression is fueled by isolation. Maintain a network of family and friends you can call on for conversation and recreation.
- 4 Ask friends and family members for help with chores, driving and other needs so you can take a break. Or take advantage of services in your community, including respite care and meal and transportation services.
- 5 Full-time caregivers often have normal feelings of anger, guilt and resentment. Try to focus on your strengths and accomplishments, while finding constructive ways to release your emotions (journal writing, arts and crafts, sports).
- 6 Look into Medicare, Medicaid and long-term care insurance to help pay for services.



ActionSteps

By Barry Lamont, Rural Resources Executive Director



It's no secret that I think one of the federal government's greatest roles is to help people in need—the elderly, the disabled, the families who are working hard but still struggling to get by with the bare necessities of life. That's why Rural Resources exists and why I'm so proud to have been part of it for more than two decades.

It's also no secret that our economy is in trouble. I agree with President Obama that we have to tighten our belts. But that doesn't mean we should tighten the noose around the necks of our country's most vulnerable citizens. The President's proposed budget would slash funding by 50 percent for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program. For Rural Resources, that means:

- Fragile and isolated seniors will have 3,000 fewer meals delivered to their homes next year.
- Seventy-five children will no longer be able to attend Head Start classes.
- Hundreds of local students and employees will no longer learn how to recognize and protect themselves from domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Dozens of homeless youth will lose the services of our Youth.Dot.Com program.
- Hundreds more families will be affected by many, many other cutbacks.

Funding cuts of this magnitude will be devastating to those we serve at a time when the need for our services has never been greater.

What can we all do about it? Write or call the White House and our senators and representatives in Washington D.C. Tell them not to balance the budget on the backs of Northeast Washington's neediest families. **RR**

Speaking of CSBG, I'd like to wish a belated farewell to Sargent Shriver, one of the first champions of the national Community Action program that gave birth to Rural Resources in 1965. Sarge passed away in January at the age of 95. He was one of the most dedicated public servants our country has ever known, a true statesman.

Housing Choice Vouchers provide a critical safety net

Rural Resources is helping more than 400 families in Stevens and Pend Oreille Counties avoid homelessness through rental subsidies offered through federal Housing Choice Vouchers.

The program helps very low-income families, the elderly and the disabled afford decent and safe housing in the private market. Since the vouchers are provided on behalf of a family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments. To qualify, in general, the family's income may not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the county in which they choose to live.



“The safety net for these very low-income families is fraying,” says Dale Wilson of Rural Resources. “Housing Choice Vouchers have an incredible impact on preventing homelessness and alleviating poverty.” **RR**

For more information, call 509-684-8421 or 877-219-5542.

Kinship programs are a lifeline

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Deborah doesn't know where she'd be without Rural Resources. Our Family Caregiver Support program provides things like beds, clothing, household appliances and car repairs to eligible families. The Kinship Care program offers information, referrals and help navigating social service and legal systems. There are also monthly support groups and respite help.

It's a great comfort to Deborah knowing that she can call Kinship Navigator Vicki Pontecorvo whenever she has a question or just needs to talk.

In a recent letter thanking Vicki, Deborah shared a story. When asked at school to identify something special about her grandparent, Dawn replied emphatically: “They don't leave you!”

“The same could be said of Vicki and the Kinship Program,” Deborah wrote. “Thank you for being that someone we grandparents can lean on and know you're there, you care, and will never leave us.” **RR**

*Deborah and Dawn's names were changed to protect their privacy.

From Vietnam to Colville:

Que's journey shaped her desire to help others



Photo by Valerie Lamont

Upper right: On the day before their wedding in December 1973, Que Hong Hong (third from left) and Minh pose with their parents. **Bottom right:** Que and her family last Chinese New Year in Seattle. Left to right: twins, Phong and Trung; Minh; Que; and daughter, Luan.



Que Hong Hong depended on charities for her very survival when she and her young children came to the United States as part of the wave of “boat people” fleeing Vietnam.

More than 30 years after settling in Colville, Que is on the giving end, as a clerk for our Adult and Long-Term Care Programs. Working for Rural Resources, she says, is personally satisfying because she knows she's part of an effort to change lives for the better.

The daughter of wealthy factory owners, Que had it good in Vietnam before the war changed her life. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, she and her husband, Minh, knew they had to flee the country or face imprisonment and possible death at the hands of the communist regime. Exhausting their resources, the couple, their young twin boys, and other relatives secured their places “packed like sardines” on a fishing boat. Unlike many refugees who died trying to escape, they made it safely to Malaysia and spent 10 months living in refugee camps.

Catholic Charities eventually arranged for the family to come to the United States and then Colville. Arriving here in February 1980, Que saw snow for the first time. After five days, she was so cold, she was ready to leave, but a priest talked her out of it. The family stayed and persevered. While raising four children, Minh and Que worked hard, sometimes holding down multiple, menial jobs to achieve their independence and put four children through college.

It was a desire to help her ailing mother-in-law that brought Que to Rural Resources more than 10 years ago. She ended up volunteering for our Adult and Long-Term Care Programs and before long was hired on.

“I like how the social services system here in the United States helps the poor and reaches out to isolated people,” she says, reflecting on how far her own family has come. “I feel so lucky.” **RR**



Check out our new Web site!

The In Action newsletter is not the only thing at Rural Resources with a pretty new face. Our Web site at www.ruralresources.org has had a makeover, too. With warm colors and a background of tall pines, the design evokes beautiful Northeast Washington. More importantly, it's full of information and tips that can help just about everybody in our community. Check it out! **RR**