

It's time again for POWER's annual Secret Café!

This Saturday, August 23rd starting at 5 pm and going until we run out of food, join us for some fabulous southern cooking – jambalaya, gumbo, grits, greens, and barbecue!

We will especially be enjoying the fabulous flavors of POWER Board member Jennifer Witherspoon of Saucy Spoon Catering, and the delectable desserts of POWER member Karin Murphy, recent SPSCC Baking Program graduate!

Live music by Jenny Jenkins, Robin Cutler, Vince Brown, and Yodelady!

All proceeds benefit POWER's work advocating for a strong social safety net while working toward a world where children and caregivers are truly valued and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated.

At Vince, Bryn and Monica's house: Head east from downtown Olympia. Stay left for Martin Way. Turn left on Phoenix. Turn right onto State Ave (half a block). Last house on the left behind the tall wooden fence. Parking lot on right.

Volunteers eat for free – let us know if you can help out by replying to this email or calling POWER at [360-352-9716](tel:360-352-9716).

www.mamapower.org

Below:

1. Back to School POWER Outage
2. Reach Out at the Well
3. Movie Night in Yelm
4. What do you think of Washington's Community Jobs program?
5. Info about food stamps from Columbia Legal Services.
6. Breastfeeding toolkit for affordable and comprehensive health care.

1. Hello all.

The first Monday in September is Labor Day, September 1st and we want to have a Back To School POWER Outage. We can bring information about your rights to go to college as a TANF recipients and resources for low-income parents.

We'd also like to hear from folks who are doing it or have done it. Do you have tips you could share that might help another low-income parents make it to and through college?

Let us know if you can make it on Monday, September 1st – potluck at 5:30, discussion 6 – 8 at Darby's Café, 211 5th Ave.

If you can't make it, do you have tips you can share by email?

We'll have childcare at the **POWER** office, 309 5th Avenue.

2.

Reach Out at the Well - FREE!

Friday, August

22nd

12:00pm - 2:00pm

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Olympia's Artesian Well

4th Avenue and Jefferson St, Olympia, Washington

98501

There's a lot of talk these days about how to help downtown. There's also a lot of action, but it's an unsung story.

With this in mind, over a dozen nonprofit organizations and community projects are banding together for "Reach Out at the Well," a street outreach and volunteer recruitment fair.

It's a chance to chat with folks doing the work, learn about available resources for coping with homelessness, illness, violence or job loss, and find out how you can make a difference in the community through street outreach work.

Participating organizations include Community Youth Services, **POWER** (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights), SideWalk, Thurston County Food Bank, Partners in Prevention Education, Stonewall Youth, the Olympia Free Clinic and others. The Olympia Downtown Ambassadors will also be present.

The public can expect to find resources and volunteer opportunities for housing and shelter, youth services, back to school information, free food options, free health services, low-income pet care and more. Some tables will give away snacks and sandwiches; others will offer free on-site counseling, advocacy, and pet food to those in need.

Organizers will also serve lemonade made with Artesian Well water. Covenant Creatures will be on site with free pet food, crates, collars and harnesses! Spread the word, this will help members of our community so much, especially the 4-legged ones! See you there!

3. FREE EVENT !!

Who: For Youth and Young Adults

What: Movie (Divergent PG-13) and Resource Fair

When: August 29th at 7pm

Where: @ The Yelm Lions Club

Subtítulos en Español

Why: Because youth need more free positive fun things do and because there are lot of resources available to youth in your area!

Organizations include:

- **POWER** (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights)
 - Community Youth Services
 - Lion's Club
 - Partners In Prevention Education
 - Cielo
 - Stonewall Youth
 - Crisis Clinic
-

4. Washington is mentioned as a welfare reform success story by the Director of the Office of Family Assistance in Wash DC, specifically for the Community Jobs and education programs.

What do you think?

Do these programs deserve national recognition?

Have they served you well?

Has Washington's WorkFirst program giving you the "needed skills, training and work supports necessary to become economically independent and provide a stable foundation on which to raise their children?"

We'd love to pass on your opinions to the Director, I imagine he rarely hears from the people who actually use these programs.

Office of Family Assistance

**An Office of the Administration for Children and Families
Director's Den**

The Director's Den is a special section of the Peer TA website that was created to facilitate communication between the Director of the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) and TANF program stakeholders. Periodically, the OFA Director will provide timely insights and useful information. This article seeks to address current issues related to the program, poverty, and American families. I welcome (and encourage) your feedback and communication through peerta@icfi.com.

May 2014

This Mother's Day, we recognize and affirm the resilience, dedication and value of mothers everywhere.

Motherhood is among one of the most important "jobs" any woman can have and many women find ways to make ends meet and support their families despite obstacles. After the passage of welfare reform, the employment rates for many low-income women grew dramatically. Despite early gains, employment rates, economic stability, labor force participation and job quality have declined over the last decade.

More and more mothers are taking on the primary role of family caregiver and it has been reported that of the 35.9 million mothers with children under the age of 18, more than two-thirds are in the labor force—48 percent are employed full-time, 16 percent are employed part-time, and 6 percent are unemployed.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is a vital resource for many mothers and their children. Whether it's direct cash assistance, job skills training, employment placement services, or subsidized employment, TANF has the potential to build pathways to independence for low-income mothers. Some states have invested in helping mothers gain needed skills, training and work supports necessary to become economically independent and provide a stable foundation on which to raise their children.

Washington State has been managing a transitional jobs initiative for low-income mothers since 2001. Community Jobs provides comprehensive, paid work experience plus skill building opportunities for hard to employ TANF recipients. Participants gain valuable work experience, self-confidence, marketable skills, and an avenue to permanent unsubsidized employment.

Additionally, Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model has been replicated in various localities around the country. The I-BEST model provides contextualized vocational education and training, job skills development and employment linkages for low-income women with high-demand employment sectors. The strategic partnership between the state's TANF program, community and technical colleges, local employers and stakeholders provide low-income women with the necessary skills and supports to obtain and maintain a family sustaining career.

I find it interesting that he says, "Motherhood is among one of the most important "jobs" any woman can have," and the rest of the article is how important it is for women to find work outside the home. He also fails to mention that the passage of welfare reform coincided with an economic boom. Employment rates for low-income mothers have always grown when there are jobs. The difference now is that thanks to time limits and welfare reform's punitive sanction rules, there was no safety net for women to come back when the jobs went away during the recession. Thanks to welfare reform, child poverty has increased dramatically.

If these Washington state programs have helped you to get a higher paying job, let us know. If they have proven to be dead ends for you, we want to know that too. The director should get feedback from the real TANF stakeholders, those who have to try to depend on it to support their families!

5. Food Stamps will be Cut in November and December 2014 for Some People

Authored By: [Columbia Legal Services](#)

Information

- A short-term cut in Food Stamps for some households receiving Basic Food (Food Stamp) will be confusing.
- DSHS will be sending out a Flyer to Basic Food households whose benefits will be cut in September; in October these households will receive a notice that tells them how much Food Stamps they will get in November and December. November and December benefits will be cut.
- Benefits will go back up in January 2015. This will happen in two stages. First, households will get the lower benefit amount. Later in the month, they will get a supplemental payment. This supplemental payment will bring them back up to what they were getting before the November cut. Beginning in February, these households will be back where they were in October.

What's going on?

- In 2009, Washington gave households who did not pay utilities separate from their rent or mortgage \$1 in Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds. Getting \$1 in LIHEAP meant these households could take the highest utility deduction. Taking the highest deduction meant getting higher benefits.
- Congress raised the amount of LIHEAP a household had to get to \$20 to take the highest deduction in the 2014 Farm Bill. About 200,000 Washington households were affected. These households lost up to \$90 per month in food assistance.

The good news:

- Governor Jay Inslee joined governors from nearly a dozen other states when he decided that affected Washington households would get \$20.01 in LIHEAP funds. This means these households won't have their benefits cut.
- In his announcement, Governor Inslee said, "Obviously, the loss of tens of millions of dollars aimed at feeding hungry families is not acceptable. These families have already suffered from significant reductions in the help they receive."

The complicated news:

· Changing the DSHS computer system takes time. The system won't be ready to implement the Governor's decision until January 2015. Some households will get a cut for November and December.

· In January 2015, DSHS will restore benefits. Two separate deposits of food benefits will be made on families' Quest (EBT) cards in January.

Ways Community Organizations can help Families Navigate this Confusing Change

· Emphasize that the benefit loss is for two months only. Families should contact DSHS if they do not receive two benefit deposits in January 2015.

· Ask whether the household has separate utility bills that they pay each month (that is, utilities are not included in their rent). If so, urge them to contact DSHS immediately to provide this information so they will continue to qualify for higher benefits with NO months of reduced benefits.

· Encourage new applicants for Basic Food to let their caseworker know if they have separate utility payments each month.

Resources for Families:

Northwest Justice Project: Advocates who can help if families feel they are not receiving the benefits they qualify for, or if they feel they are being treated unfairly.

[Contact Northwest Justice Project](#)

Family Food Hotline: Experts in community resources; call [1-800-322-2588](tel:1-800-322-2588)

Contact Parenthelp123/Family Food Hotline

6. From diaper duty to sleepless nights, new parents have enough to worry about. But there's one thing they shouldn't have to stress over — paying extra costs for breastfeeding support and supplies. Do you know someone who's breastfeeding — or will be soon? [Send them our easy-to-use guide on the health care law's new breastfeeding benefit:](#)
<http://www.nwlc.org/resource/new-benefits-breastfeeding-moms-facts-and-tools-understand-your-coverage-under-health-care->

Thanks to the new law, breastfeeding supplies and support are now available in many private insurance plans without costs. Our toolkit will make sure parents can take advantage of this benefit. With our toolkit, you can get the facts on the breastfeeding support, supplies, and counseling in the health care law and the tools you need to help you get this coverage. The toolkit includes details on how to call insurance companies as well as step-by-step instructions on how to file an appeal if an insurance company denies coverage.

We want to make it easy for parents to get the breastfeeding support they need so they can focus on what's most important: their families. [Share our easy-to-use resource with the parents in your life:](#)

<p>http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/final_nwlcbreastfeedingtoolkit2014_edit.pdf</p> <p>Breastfeeding benefits both parents and children, reducing the risk of breast and ovarian cancer in adults and asthma, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and leukemia in children. Women who breastfeed have also reported psychological benefits such as close bonding with their infants. <u>And with the health care law, breastfeeding support and supplies have never been more affordable.</u> Thanks for everything you do to ensure women and their families get comprehensive and affordable health care.</p>						
<table border="1" data-bbox="207 697 1161 869"> <tr> <td data-bbox="207 697 375 869"></td> <td data-bbox="375 697 1114 869"> <p><i>Judy Waxman</i> <i>Vice President for Health and Reproductive Rights</i> <i>National Women's Law Center</i></p> </td> <td data-bbox="1114 697 1161 869"></td> </tr> </table> <p>P.S. Need extra help using our breastfeeding toolkit? Contact our CoverHer hotline at 1-866-745-5487 or CoverHer@nwlc.org for help.</p>		<p><i>Judy Waxman</i> <i>Vice President for Health and Reproductive Rights</i> <i>National Women's Law Center</i></p>				
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