



Summer/Fall 2014

Diner Stories: Shawn & Sarah

by Barbara Scott, Board of Trustees



On a Wednesday in June, I interviewed Shawn and Sarah and their children Clinton (15), Kayla (14), Dakota (11), and Constance (almost 1). They are a BEAUTIFUL family and were eager to share their story. So, with a plate of food in front of each of us, I began the conversation.

The family was living in a house by Wal-Mart for 4 years under the impression they were renting to own. In 2013, their housing representatives informed them that in fact none of their monthly payment had been going to owning the home. Instead, they were asked to pay \$24,895 within two weeks or they would have to leave. The family was in shock. After paying for four years with nothing to show, they were heartsick and had to move out. Baby Constance was born one week after becoming homeless.

Sarah and Shawn have been married for 20 years. Shawn is ten years sober and very proud of that fact. Ten years ago, Shawn was involved in a car accident that left him in a wheel chair. For many years, there were no doctors that would help to alleviate his agonizing back pain. Two years ago, Sarah was thumbing through the phone book looking for surgeons again and found Dr. Ward who agreed to see Shawn. Dr. Ward is their "angel". It has been 5 months since his surgery and from appearances it would be difficult to know Shawn had been suffering at all. He now can carry his youngest daughter on his hip and beams an infectious smile.

Sarah is trying to get a job and has had several interviews but has been unsuccessful to date. She has a Bachelor's degree from Colorado Tech in Accounting. Because they have no permanent address, she feels discriminated against during the application process. The plan is to continue searching for work. This might mean moving to Alaska for the summer months which would allow Shawn to work at a cannery. The money is decent and they may be able to purchase land, rumor has it the price is cheap: \$99.00/acre.

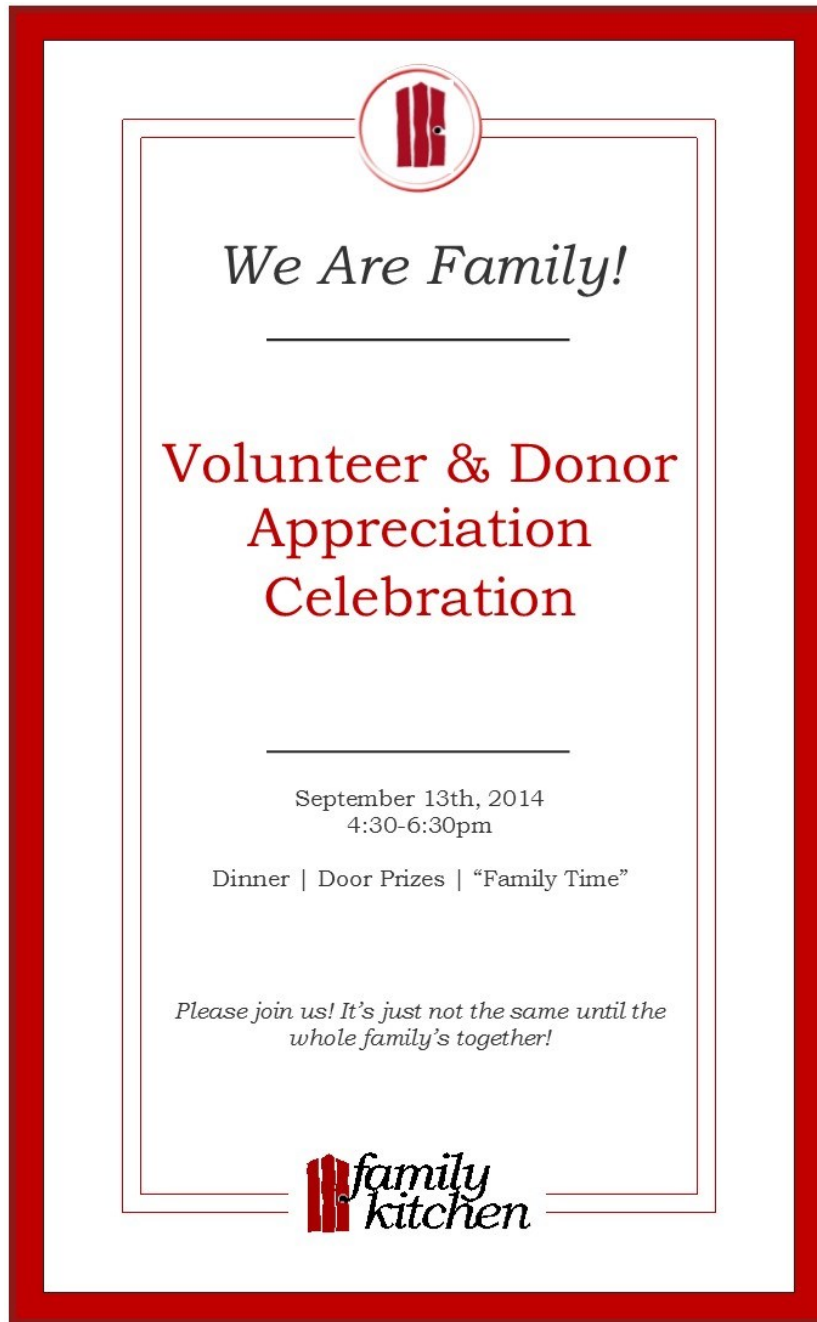
Today, the family has 3 storage units, totaling about \$600.00/month. As Shawn and Sarah are unemployed, the money to pay for the units comes out of SSI checks – Shawn and their son, who is diagnosed with autism, both receive \$700.00 a month. The family lives in their truck, sleeping on the flatbed at night with no camper cover alongside their two cats and two dogs. Home moves around each night: mostly between the country and the Wal-Mart parking lot. The family has been reported to the police several times as residents watch them piling onto the flatbed of the truck to sleep and have concerns.

Shawn and Sarah homeschool their children. Each of them were very polite and engaged during the interview, until the two boys ran off to the library. Kayla told me she read 221 books last summer! Sarah is proud to report all her children are testing at or above their grade level.

Shawn and Sarah discovered Family Kitchen through word of mouth. Sarah teared up as she shares that the Kitchen has been a lifesaver. They feel very welcomed and eat every meal served throughout the week. They love the food and the community. Both Shawn and Sarah shared they feel very judged and misunderstood most of the time, "People look at us differently, you can just feel it" says Shawn, but not at Family Kitchen.

When I asked the family about their dreams, Sarah again teared up and replied that she just wants a home and to see her children succeed. Many days Sarah gets discouraged, but knows she must be strong and carry on to create a better life for her family.

Thank you to Sarah, Shawn and the children for sharing their story.



Did You Know?

- We now have an online donation system. familykitchen.org/donate-now
- We served 5,539 meals in April, an all time monthly high.
- Family Kitchen meals are approximately 1/3 higher in protein than fast food meals.
- 1 million more people are hungry than 4 years ago and 50 million people are food insecure. About 50% of all adults will use food stamps at some point between the ages of 25 and 65. (USDA Economic Research Data)

Board of Trustees

New Member, Sherry Ortega

Sherry Ortega, Principal Broker with Bend Premier Real Estate, became a member of the Family Kitchen Board of Trustees at our April 2014 meeting. Her business relationship expertise and experience volunteering at Family Kitchen are strategic additions to the makeup of the board. Ortega has already made her mark by bringing in the first new business supporters for the Board Corporate Donor Campaign.

Ortega is "honored to be on the Family Kitchen Board". She has lived in Bend, working as a Realtor since 2001. Community involvement has always been a big part of her life. In addition to her involvement with Family Kitchen she is also a Local Director for the Central Oregon Association of Realtors and an active member of PEO Chapter FL. Pat Roden, President of the Family Kitchen Board of Trustees, says, "We are delighted to have Sherry on board. Her leadership quality, board experience and time spent volunteering are a dynamite combination for Family Kitchen."



Sherry Ortega, Board of Trustees

Nutrition Facts

We've been curious. How do our meals compare to fast food (FF) meals that are often the only other alternative for folks? Dr. Julie Hood Gonsalves, Associate Professor, Science at COCC has done a bit of a comparison for us.

Some findings:

- FK meals are approximately 1/3 higher in protein than FF meals.
- FK meals are lower in total fat.
- FK meals are higher in Vitamin A and Vitamin C content unless one pays the extra \$2.00 for FF salad and apples.



Central Oregon Veteran's Outreach Sack Lunch Preparation (delivered to camps Tuesdays)

Recent Gifts:

Newport Avenue Market
Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation
St. Charles Community Health
Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund
Hunger Prevention Coalition
Deschutes County EFSP
Elliott-Scott Corporation
Pease Family LLC
Dutch Bros. of Central Oregon
Hydro Flask
Director's Mortgage
First American Title
AmeriTitle
Western Title and Escrow
Thrivent for Lutherans
Bisbee Grant
First United Methodist Church
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Foundry Church
Nativity Lutheran Church
First Presbyterian Church
Bend Youth Collective
Eastmont Church
And many, many generous individuals!

Board Corporate Donor Program

Eight local businesses were the first to come on board as new donors to the cause at Family Kitchen. The ongoing effort is a partnership between the Family Kitchen Board of Trustees and the Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund. The initial seven businesses donated a combined total of \$2,500, which will be fully matched to reach a total of \$5,000. They are the Elliott-Scott Corporation, Dutch Bros. of Central Oregon, Director's Mortgage, Hydro Flask, First American Title, AmeriTitle, and Western Title. The eighth, the Pease Family LLC of Madras, became a new business donor just after the match had been met.

Historically, Family Kitchen has relied heavily on individual donors. With the increase in meals served over the past two years, it has become crucial to spread the word and widen the donor base. There has been an 18% increase in the number of meals served from the mid-year ending 2012 to the mid-year ending 2014. "Increasing donations through business and corporate involvement is a many-fold increase in awareness overall. We are so grateful for the continued – and very needed – support of our dedicated individual donors and are glad that these businesses have taken this step to help feed fellow Central Oregonians who are struggling", says Board President Pat Roden.

The Board is still actively seeking new business/corporate donors. Contact info@familykitchen.org to set an appointment to discuss your corporate donation program needs.

President's Message

I hope you have had a wonderful summer. Family Kitchen has been busy over the past several months.

The need for our meals continues to grow. We have had record numbers of meals served in the recent past. One of the big changes in our kitchen is a new swamp cooler. The dining room is very comfortable and it is a *bit* cooler in the kitchen.

The Board of Trustees met earlier this year for a strategic planning session. The initial conclusion to the session was that we are right on point with our operations (both volunteers and staff) to carryout our mission along with a strong Board of Trustees. We did identify a couple of areas to investigate over the next 12-18 months. Watch for an update in our next newsletter.

We are keeping up with it all thanks to all of our staff, volunteers, and loyal donors. Thank you!

Best regards,

Pat Roden, President
Board of Trustees

We serve anyone who needs a nutritious meal in a safe and caring environment.

Family Kitchen
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Bend, OR 97701

Contact Us

info@familykitchen.org

Visit us on the web at
www.familykitchen.org



Board member Kathy Drew (L) and Program Coordinator Cindy Tidball (R) accept a donation from Soraya of the Elliott-Scott Corporation.

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