

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 17, 2016



Human services program celebrating 20 years of service *Shangri-La's Youth and Family Services Program to host ribbon cutting at new location*

Salem, Ore. -- Shangri-La's Youth and Family Services (YFS) program, formerly Employment Resources Northwest (ERN), is celebrating 20 years of igniting hope and vision for families in Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties.

Created in 1996, the ERN program was designed to serve Temporary Assistance for Needy Families¹ (TANF) clients who were seeking job skills training as a means of entering or re-entering the workforce. Built through a partnership with the Department of Human Services, the curriculum focused on overcoming barriers to employment, building positive work habits, learning office technology, practicing customer service skills, and completing job readiness activities. During its first year of existence the program served 18 individuals.

Today, YFS serves over 4,000 families in Marion Polk and Yamhill counties. Program participants receive life skills and job readiness training, family management coaching, and are connected to other local resources that can help stabilize their families. Through robust partnerships with area businesses, many participants are also able to receive valuable on-the-job work experience training.

The program has been successful in reducing dependence on state-funded programs like TANF or food stamps, and has provided preventative support to numerous families who are considered high-risk for child welfare intervention.

"Just coming out of a 6-year marriage that was extremely horrible, I didn't know what I was going to do. I was left behind with nothing and I was stuck. Never did I think my daughter and I would be in such a bad situation. I was nervous about starting the program, but coming here now, I feel like I have a future. Being able to build up these skills that I never had is amazing. It has helped me be independent. I am ready now for my future to begin."

- SC, former YFS client

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

In celebration of this 20-year milestone, YFS will co-host a ribbon cutting ceremony with the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce at their new location in west Salem on March 3, 2016 from 4-5 p.m. The new office, located at 1661 Edgewater St. NW, provides centralized administrative support to the program's tri-county region and will house computers that YFS participants can use for job search activities and resource navigation.

###

CONTACT

Kendra Morgan, Director of Shangri-La's Youth and Family Services
Phone | 503-910-2517 Email | Kendra.Morgan@shangrila-or.org

SHANGRI-LA YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES OFFICE

Address | 1661 Edgewater St. NW Salem, Oregon
Phone | 503-967-6318 Website | www.ShangrilaOregon.org

BACKGROUND

YFS is a program of Shangri-La. Founded in 1963, Shangri-La is a diverse non-profit human services organization serving individuals with disabilities and disadvantages so that they may recognize and achieve their full potential. Housing, employment and enrichment services are provided at over 100 locations in the Willamette Valley and Oregon Coast.

¹ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): The TANF program provides cash assistance to low-income families with children while they strive to become self-sufficient. Cash assistance is intended to meet a family's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and utilities.