

SE WORKS NEWSLETTER

A newsletter for SE Works friends, supporters, donors, employees, students, volunteers, and customers

SE Works' Annual Soup Cook-Off & Auction

Sat, Nov. 8, 2014 • 5:30 PM
The Melody Ballroom
615 SE Alder Street
Portland, OR 97214

About the Auction

Entering our seventeenth year, the SE Works' Annual Soup Cook-Off & Auction is a celebration of food and community, featuring a soup tasting competition, dinner, and both silent and live auctions.

Soup chefs from across the city compete to win the coveted Golden Ladle Award. Guests are invited to "put your money where your mouth is" by voting for favorite soups with dollars.

The winning chef is the one who inspires the most donations. At the same time, celebrity judges select their favorites for the Celebrity Choice award.

Past Success

In 2013, the Annual Soup Cook-Off and Auction raised \$145,000.00 to support the *Dahl Family Youth Education and Career Development Center* that assists low income, at risk youth ages 17-20 obtain a General Education Diploma (GED) and transition to College and apprenticeships. Attracting over 375 attendees in 2013 our guest list included

donors, local business, employers, workforce development partners, old friends, community leaders, and area residents.

Auction 2014

Kelley Day will be returning for her fifth year to MC our event and proceeds from this year's event will go to support the *Dahl Family Youth Center* for at risk youth.

Soup Chefs

Interested in entering your famous soup recipe in this year's event? Please contact Event Coordinator **Jess DeNoto** at jdnoto@seworks.org for further information.

Donation/Sponsorship Contact

To learn how you can support our youth through donations or sponsorships for the 2014 Auction please contact **Dan Stein** @ 503-936-5411.



Dahl Youth Center Outcomes for 2012-2013

GED Graduation Rate - 98%
Placement In College - 85%
75% in after their first year of college
Post-Secondary Preparation - 100%
Work Readiness Training - 100%
Work Experience - 100%

SE Works Provides Employment, Educational and Supportive Services

Established in 1997, SE Works is a community-based workforce development organization providing employment, training and supportive services.

Our mission is to strengthen the economic health and well-being of our diverse Portland community by increasing access to

employment, educational, and supportive services.

We have a strong reputation in the community and among partner organizations for providing quality programs and creating an accessible environment that is responsive to our community's needs and concerns.

We have a full range of services available to job seekers, employers and youth designed to strengthen our local and regional economy.

SE Works is a registered 501(c)3 with an extensive history of successfully engaging multi-barriered, low income, underserved populations, including:

- At-risk youth involved in the justice system
- Unemployed adults
- Immigrants and refugees
- People experiencing disabilities
- People returning from incarceration

Welcome to our inaugural SE Works newsletter. This and subsequent newsletters will keep you informed about SE Works' recent developments in our programs, services, participants and most importantly RESULTS. The newsletters are possible through the generosity of **Mark O'Donnell** and **DJ Guild**.



Dan Stein
SE Works President

As you will read in greater detail, we have recently expanded our WorkSource Center to house the Oregon Employment Department. For the first time, our southeast community now has a fully staffed worksource center. Mayor Charlie Hales presided over our grand opening in May 2014 declaring this the best of public/private partnerships.

The *Dahl Family Youth Education Center* doubled in size this spring when we absorbed the youth from the Youth Employment Institute. We are now serving 120 youth annually who attend our Advanced Education accredited Alternative School to obtain their GED and transition to College! This program expansion required an increase in space for more classrooms and a computer lab and as a result, this summer our program will be moving upstairs to 6,200 square feet of new space to accommodate this need.

Our Resource Development Committee has created a sustaining scholars program to provide long-term stability for our youth education program. Their goal is to raise \$2,500,000 over the next five years. In a few short months, the committee has already achieved forty percent of its goal.

For a firsthand look at the most recent developments, I invite you to join me on a tour of our facility, meet our staff and participants and perhaps donate to very worthy cause. You can also visit us at www.seworks.org to review all of the programs and services we offer to the community.

Feel free to call me to schedule a tour and to find out how you can make a difference.

Dan Stein
SE Works Board President
503-936-5411

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September 2014

SE Works

An equal opportunity employer
7916 SE Foster Road, Suite 104
Portland, Oregon 97206

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The Dahl Family Youth Education & Career Development Center

The Dahl Family Youth Education Center is for youth aged 16-21 who are interested in getting their GED while they prepare to transition to post-secondary educational and/or training opportunities.

What Is It?

Students are given support as they move through the program from a volunteer-led Pre-GED preparation class, to GED class, and while they transition to college. Staff members support and assist students as they strive to reach their college and career goals.

The Youth Center helps students by providing:

1. Pre-GED preparation classes
2. Cohort-based GED classes, taught by licensed teacher
3. Resume building experience
4. Assistance with FAFSA process
5. College and career placement
6. Assistance with transitions

Meet some of our customers:

Juleah Wheeler, "I always knew I was smart ..."

"I got pregnant when I was 16 years old, and I stopped going to school. I tried going to night school when I was pregnant, but it became too challenging, and I dropped out," says Juleah.

About a year later Juleah heard about the Youth Program at SE Works from friends who had gone here. They all said great things about the program, so she decided to give it a try.

"I came in one day and started taking tests and three months later I graduate from the GED program. The classes are great... they're small, so you get a lot of attention," continues Juleah. "I always knew I was smart but I never applied myself until enrolling in SE Works' GED classes."

Her parents were drug addicts, and she and her four siblings were taken away when she was five years old. She went to



Juleah Wheeler, her two sons, Patrick and Kennedy, Jr., with Kenny Sparks at GED graduation.

different foster homes for a number of years but was eventually adopted by her grandparents.

Says Juleah, "I always felt 'less than' and I was angry and hung around the wrong crowd. I got in a lot of fights in school."

Right after completing the GED, Juleah got pregnant again so now she has two boys, Patrick and Kennedy, Jr.

"I just got a job at Burger King and I'm working full time. Kenny Sparks, SE Works Youth Program Director, got me the job. Says Juleah, "Before I came here I had never ever planned to go to college and now I'm completing first year at PCC. I'm going to be a registered nurse. Never would have happened without help from SE Works."

Kevin Adair... one phone call changed his life



Kevin Adair grew up in poverty.

Kevin's mother was disabled, and they lived on very little. They moved around a lot and Kevin went to four different

middle schools.

"I never felt like I fit in. It's crappy having to move all the time. Social relationships and making friends was a challenge," says Kevin. "I got discouraged and dropped out of school. I just messed around for a couple of years."

Kevin's life began to change with one phone call.

"A friend of my aunt's told me about SE Works. The friend said he and his brother had gone there years ago. So one day the friend just called Kenny Sparks on the phone, and handed it to me. Turns out that this changed my life entirely," declares Kevin.

Says Kevin, "I came in and took some tests and within a couple of months I was in the GED class. After completing GED, I went straight to college."

Kevin continues, "I thought college was only for rich kids, but the staff at SE Works showed me that there were grants to help me pay for college. I have been going to Portland Community College for nearly two years and will soon enroll at Portland State College."

At SE Works, Kevin has learned about work ethic and how to work for something you want.

"SE Works has changed me. It's like a family here, both students and staff. They are friendly and helpful. This place makes you into a positive person," says Kevin.

Justin Lewis is cooking



"I had a rather easy childhood. I do not have a traumatic story to tell," confesses Justin.

"Mom and dad separated when I was seven-years-old, and I lived with mom during

grade school and lived with dad in high school. I struggled in school and dropped out of high school in my junior year. I was depressed. I didn't go to school for two years," says Justin.

For two years, Justin just sat at home and mainly played the *Call of Duty* video game. He admits it was a distraction from real life. Says Justin, "It doesn't really teach you anything, but it does require you to use your brain power. And I was very good at it."

As Justin tells it, "My dad pushed me to no avail, so, after while he just gave up and said you'll have to figure it by yourself. Eventually, my dad and my brother, who also went through the SE program, talked me into coming in and talking to Kenny Sparks. I called Kenny on the phone, and he told me to come in right now, which I did."

Focusing as never before, Justin went through the GED program in four months. "The best day of my life was graduating from the GED program. It enabled me to get my confidence back. I made lots of good friends in the class and even met my girlfriend," relates Justin. "The whole atmosphere is great here. Everybody gets the attention they need."

"I was not thinking about going to college when I came here. Now I've finished my first year at PCC and will transfer to Portland State after my second year at PCC. My long-term goal is to become a chef. I cook a lot, and I love it. PSU has a culinary program, and I'm going to pursue it," declares Justin.

Here's how you can help!

By DJ Guild, Resource Development Committee

We are looking for more supporters and prospective donors who are touched by the youth in our program. Our youth program offers hope and makes a difference in a troubled youth's life.

Our development committee has created a sustaining scholars program to provide long-term stability for our youth education program. We have raised over one million dollars in the last five months. Our goal is to raise \$2,500,000 over the next five years.

Please contact **Dan Stein** at 503-936-5411 about becoming a donor.

Thelma Moss is “in love with the work”



“My life’s story is a million miles long,” says General Educational Development (GED) graduate, Thelma Moss.

“My childhood was very rough. I grew

in Portland with three sisters and my mother who was struggling to make ends meet,” says Thelma. “I took care of my dad on my own in the final stages of his cancer when I was 12. I was sexually abused by family and was once in a physically violent relationship.”

Thelma went to six different high schools before settling in at SE Works. “I’d always heard about the SE Works Youth Program, and more specifically, Kenny Sparks, Student Services Coordinator of the program. People kept telling me to go talk to him, and that he would get my future on the right track,” reports Thelma.

“I enrolled in the GED program, and once I finished my GED, everything came full force. I was to be taking college placement testing the following week, and starting classes two weeks later. I didn’t have a moment to think whether or not I wanted to go, I was doing it,” says Thelma.

Thelma is currently attending Portland Community College and boasts, “I’ve been there about three years, and with support from S.E. Works, I have passed every class I’ve taken.”

At PCC, Thelma started out to be a dental technician, making crowns and bridges. She would have graduated in June 2014, however, last December SE Works offered her a position as an Operations Assistant at SE Works. As Thelma tells it, “I completely fell in love with the work that we are doing here. I changed my major and am now getting my transfer degree to go to Portland State where I will study sociology and psychology.”

“In my job at SE Works, I make it a point to be accessible to everyone. I do projects like putting together packets and helping co-workers prepare for their workshops, and serving customers,” says Thelma.

Asked, who was the person who most influenced her and how, Thelma replies, “That’s easy, Kenny Sparks. He has influenced me and continues to inspire me with his dedication to helping students. Kenny makes himself available to all his students day or night. He’s always just a cell phone call away.”

“Whatever the needs, I want to be available to help whenever and wherever I can,” continues Thelma, “I know that’s a bit ambitious, but I am overjoyed with all I’m involved with at SE Works.”

More Room to Help More Kids

The SE Works *Dahl Family Youth Education & Career Development Center* inspires youth toward brighter futures. Our unique alternative education program is designed to get at-risk students back on track toward high school completion and college and career readiness.

Over the last year the *Dahl Family Youth Education & Career Development Center* has undergone extensive growth, and is continuing to expand.

While The Center was initially developed to address the education needs of the economically and educationally deprived outer SE neighborhoods, we now offer services to Portland metro, North and Northeast Portland, Clackamas, Hillsboro and Gresham. This is due to the incredible fund raising efforts of the SE Works Board of Directors and Dan Stein and DJ Guild who lead the SE Works Resource Development Committee youth fund-raising drive. The funds come from generous donors who believe all kids are one caring adult away from being a success!

In April, 2014 the number of students in the GED class doubled, and for the first time in 17 years The Center added a second teacher! With increased students and staff it became evident that the center had outgrown its current space.

Fund-raising efforts resulted in the acquisition of a 6,200 square foot space, more than double the current 2,200 square foot space that The Center currently occupies.

In July, 2014 we began the four month process to redevelop the new space. The new Center will be equipped with two classrooms and offices for school administrators. It will boast a kitchenette, computer lab and a lounge area. Renovations are scheduled to be completed mid-fall 2014.

The Center is a safe place for students, and it is a place where they can receive positive adult support, and can congregate with friends. Students attending the *Dahl Family Youth Education Center* become part of the extended SE Works family of staff, volunteers and donors. We wrap a village around these youth to ensure their success!

Volunteer with SE Works

Volunteering with SE Works is a very exciting and rewarding opportunity.

As a volunteer you will have the opportunity to contribute to the comprehensive employment and educational services we provide to our customers. You can provide your best service to the organization and community in the following positions:

Adult ESL Tutors:

Help adult students learn English as a Second Language. Read the position description or contact **Blair Orfall** at (503) 772-2341.

Youth GED Tutors:

Help youth students earn their General Education Diploma! Read the position description or contact **Catriona Setliffe** at (503) 772-2327.

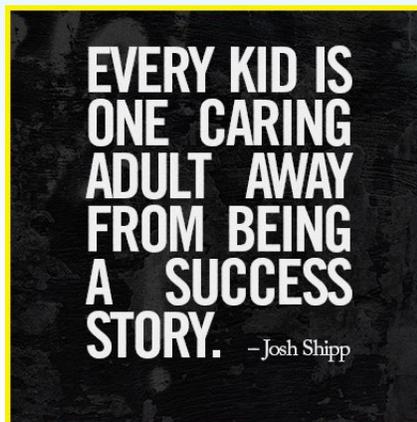
Youth Tutors:

Help students earn their General Education Diploma! Contact **Blair Orfall** at (503) 772-2341.

Youth Mentors:

Assist youth students’ transition into post-secondary education! Contact **Michelle Sanchez** at (503) 772-2326.

For any further questions or information about the Volunteer Program at SE Works, contact **Blair Orfall** at (503) 772-2341.



Visit SE Works On Line ... and Social Media

We’ve recently overhauled our web site for easy navigation ... check it out at <http://www.seworks.org>.

And hook up with us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/seworksinc> and Twitter at [@seworksinc](https://twitter.com/seworksinc).



The English Language Learner (ELL) Volunteer Tutoring Program at SE Works

The English Language Learner (ELL) Volunteer Tutoring Program at SE Works celebrates its tenth year of creating opportunities for both ELL adult students and tutors.

A unique program, it's the only one-on-one ELL tutoring program offered at any of the six Worksource Centers in the Portland-Metro area. In fact, there are few one-on-one ELL tutoring programs in the city. Limited English skills are a barrier to employment, regardless of a person's skills or capability.

This program was created by the community for the community to provide individualized English assistance to immigrants and refugees so they can better their current situations. This year the program expanded into a new, spacious tutoring lab on the second floor of SE Works.

SE Works ELL students come from all over the world—26 different countries were represented this last program year. Currently, the largest language groups are Vietnamese, Cantonese, Russian and Spanish.

The typical students in the adult program tend to be lower-income, middle-aged parents living in extended families, and

primarily interacting with his/her language group. Some students have earned degrees in their home countries, while others are learning to read and write for the first time at SE Works.

The students are eager to work with tutors, who are matched according to the student's needs. The 90 minute weekly sessions are driven by the student's interests, which typically include conversation and a desire for employment or better employment.

SE Works' ELL Tutoring team is a vibrant group of internationally-interested people with diverse backgrounds.

There are tangible, career-building benefits to tutoring for those who want experience teaching and working with people from other countries.

Many tutors are current MA TESOL and college students, retired ESL teachers, career-changers who are trying out teaching for the first time, people interested in joining the Peace Corps and teaching abroad, or community members who want to give back.

Tutors are trained in activity-based learning and supported throughout their teaching experience by a professional ELL coordina-

tor. SE Works provides a quiet and welcoming tutoring lab, textbooks, games, dictionaries, computer access, and other resources, while tutors contribute their time and dedication to their students. The rewards of the program are heard in the laughter that comes from the tutoring lab and are seen in the successes of students and tutors alike.

Success stories are easy to come by: one tutor-student pair studied for and passed the US citizenship test, another young man from Belarus achieved his dream of passing the US Army entrance exam with the help of his tutor, while many students have found employment and have been connected to community resources with the help of their tutors.

On a wider scale, many students are simply more at ease during their day-to-day lives because they have improved their English skills. ELL Tutors at SE Works have gone on to teach in Asia and South America, have been accepted into graduate programs, have found jobs or improved their employment.

The ELL Volunteer Tutoring program at SE Works cultivates an environment where tutors are able to achieve their goals by helping SE community members achieve theirs.

Meet Volunteer Jason Johnson

"We sit together, we eat together and we discuss ..."



"At the 2013 auction I heard some amazing stories from some of the kids in the program ... and that's how I decided to volunteer," states Jason Johnson.

Jason heard about the good things going on at SE Works from his friend, board member, DJ Guild. "Through DJ, I first became a donor, and then sponsored a table at the SE Works auction," says Jason.

As a volunteer, Jason leads what he calls a "process group" with students from the GED program. The participants in the program may have had a drug or alcohol problem, or come from a family who had substance abuse problems.

The group started with three kids in July. These three told their friends about the program, and by August the number was up to 18.

The group meeting typically begins with some sort of presentation. "Currently

we're going through a video program about substance abuse. We watch together and then we have a discussion," says Jason. According to Jason the kids suggest things to cover ... issues that they might be having like lodging, relationships, sometimes even cell phone problems, and as Jason says, "we try to find solutions."

Jason involves people from other organizations who know how to deal with specific problems. There's a young lady in the group who's pregnant and wants to be a nurse. So Jason arranged to have a Providence nurse, who was pregnant when she was 18, to meet with the young lady. They now stay connected by phone.

Jason provides a safe environment for the participants. They feel safe talking about anything they want. Says Jason, "I'm involved because I want to let these kids know that I'm there to support them. The kids are communicating. I get four or five phone calls a week."

The group meets every Thursday from 5:30 to 7. Jason brings dinner for every-

one ... pizza, sandwiches, or fried chicken. "We sit together, we eat together and we discuss," says Jason. "It's important to give people hope. I want these kids to understand that there's someone there for them."

About Jason Johnson

Jason is director of a sober living environment and owns two sober houses, (www.gurneestreethouse.com). He was a drug addict and an alcoholic, and has been in recovery since 1997. Jason does interventions and speaks in many venues across the nation.

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