



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**For Immediate Release**

### **Project Homeless Connect Organizers Assess Next Steps in Helping the Area's Homeless**

**Eugene, Ore.** – Organizers of one of Lane County's largest community outreach events will focus on new ways to help the area's homeless population. For the past five years, Project Homeless Connect for Lane County (PHC) has provided aid to thousands of homeless and at-risk neighbors at its events, held annually at the Lane Events Center.

"While the events have been a tremendous way to provide critical services and basic necessities to those in need, we're re-evaluating—at this five-year mark--whether a one-day annual event is the most effective way to help people that are in need year-round," said Pearl Wolfe, chair and co-founder of PHC.

The one-day, one-stop events have provided everything from free on-site medical exams and dental checkups to hot meals and haircuts, while dozens of service agencies have provided information on housing, employment, addiction treatment and other services for youth, families, seniors and veterans.

"Project Homeless Connect has not only served those in need, but has generated a greater awareness of homeless issues in the community and has increased community engagement toward finding solutions," said Wolfe. "We're now seeing a variety of services and outreach programs that didn't exist five years ago. It's a good time to assess where time and resources should be directed to achieve the most effective results."

Programs like the Cascade Medical Teams and the Egan Warming Centers are among services that have come online in recent years, which have provided at-risk and homeless populations with access to medical care and shelter on a more frequent basis.

Meanwhile, as PHC leaders review the positive outcomes of its annual event, it will look at other homeless initiatives with long-term impacts that use less time and resources to organize and manage—especially at a time when many key agencies have experienced recent budget cuts that have impacted participation levels among key PHC planning positions.

"In the meantime, we want to encourage people to continue supporting organizations that help people that are homeless," said Wolfe. "There is still an incredible need in our community. Thankfully, through the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and agencies that have been involved with PHC, we've expanded and strengthened partnerships that will help us create even better ways to address homelessness."

In 2007, the first event served 1,007 individuals, while the 2011 event served 1,595 guests—a record year. Lane County's Project Homeless Connect grew out of a nationwide movement aimed at helping to meet the needs of people who are homeless, while engaging the local community in finding solutions for ending homelessness.

Please visit the United Way web site for volunteer opportunities <http://www.unitedwaylane.org/> or the PHC web site <http://www.homelessconnect.org/> to support the work being done in our community to end homelessness.

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