

# Catholic Community Services

A Forever Home for Everyone

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## **NORTHGATE COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER CELEBRATES OFFICIAL OPENING**

*April 22, 2009, Salem, OR...*Northgate Community Learning Center, a program of Catholic Community Services, today celebrated its official opening with a luncheon for supporters, recognition of outstanding student Aileen John, and a ribbon cutting ceremony with Salem Mayor Janet Taylor. North Salem Business Association (NSBA) sponsored the event for the new program which supports children to develop the skills and self-discipline necessary to succeed in school.

The Northgate Community Learning Center (NCLC) is a collaborative effort of 15 community organizations championed by the Family Systems Investment Consortium (FSIC) of the Marion County Children and Families Commission. Doors opened to the first students last October. The afterschool center now regularly serves nearly 30 youth aged 11 to 14 in fifth through eighth grades from three schools: Washington Elementary, Waldo Middle School, and Hallman Elementary. The Center is a demonstration project which FSIC hopes to duplicate in as many as ten Salem area neighborhoods.

Speakers at the event included

- Linda St. Pierre, Washington Elementary School Principal, who reported on the measurable difference the Center is making in the lives of students.
- Aileen John, a fifth-grader, told the crowd how the Center has helped her succeed in school after her family moved here last year from their native Truk Islands in the South Pacific.
- Salem Mayor Janet Taylor expressed her gratitude to the community for coming together to make the Learning Center possible.
- Jim Seymour, Executive Director of Catholic Community Services, explained how the Learning Center is an important component in strengthening families and building healthy communities.
- Lori Davis, president of the North Salem Business Association, spoke of the Learning Center and the newly refurbished Northgate Center building's contribution to the North Salem area.

Students are referred to the NCLC by their teachers and receive an assessment based on the *40 Developmental Assets*. Research shows that engagement is the essential aspect of keeping students in school. To help students engage, the Center uses the *Check and Connect* process to support students in homework completion; communicates the relevance of education to future endeavors; and, creates a caring, supportive environment which helps students work through personal issues.

James T. Seymour | Executive Director

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Learning Center staff stay in continuous communication with teachers and parents to support youth in homework completion and resolution of behavioral issues. Mentors work one-on-one with each child, sometimes with a ratio of 1:5. Additionally, NCLC provides wrap-around support to children by supporting their parents and families. Parents are contacted at least weekly and are invited to attend monthly *Family Nights* featuring topics such as affordable housing, community gardening, nutrition, and parent-youth communication. *Homework Power Hour* and other educational activities help parents learn how to create a positive homework environment at home.

For more information about the Northgate Community Learning Center: call 503-540-2929 or visit [ccswv.org/northgatelearningcenter.html](http://ccswv.org/northgatelearningcenter.html).

Catholic Community Services provides a full continuum of programs to strengthen families and help individuals live responsibly and independently. The CCS stand “A Forever Home for Everyone” guides the organization’s efforts to support families, including foster families, to raise their children well. For more information call 503-856-7015 or visit [www.ccsww.org](http://www.ccsww.org).

For more information about the North Salem Business Association visit [www.nsba-salem.org](http://www.nsba-salem.org).

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