

Fostering Student Successes in 2008

The SchoolWorks program was created in response to the very poor educational outcomes experienced by the children and youth JRP serves. Among the 1,700-plus children and youth we represent in the court system each year, we saw youth failing on probation because they were lost in class and avoided school as a result. And we saw children in foster care caught in a vicious cycle of foster home moves, academic failure and behavioral problems.



SchoolWorks helps to write new chapters in the lives of such students. We're experts on the lives of vulnerable children and youth who end up in the juvenile court system. We know the challenges they face, and we know how to help, as the outcome data on page 3 show.

Changing schools as a result of entry into foster care or moves from foster home to foster home causes students to lose ground academically. Students who are lost, confused and struggling — no surprise — tend to act out. In many cases, students who are struggling in school end up changing foster homes again because the school repeatedly calls the foster parent and, in some cases, suspends or expels the student. The cycle not only repeats, but gets reinforced each time the student has to change schools.

SchoolWorks assisted 353 students in the new cases we opened in 2008. Our ability to help hundreds of our community's most at-risk students rests upon two important ingredients — the expertise and dedication of our staff and the critical support provided by local foundations and individual and corporate donors.

The success stories in this report were made possible through the support SchoolWorks received in 2008 from:

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Collins Foundation, the Portland Children's Investment Fund, The Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation, the Oregon Law Foundation, the Boyd Family Foundation, the Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation, the Jackson Foundation, the Rose Tucker Charitable Trust, Bank of the West, the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, Wieden+Kennedy and numerous individual donors.

Children Served by Age

Age	Number	Percent
6 years and under	40	11%
7- 12 years	102	29%
13 – 17 years	199	57%
18 years or older	11	3%



Please note: The names of children served have been changed to protect their privacy. Photos do not depict actual children served by SchoolWorks.

Bethany



Bethany was recently suspended pending expulsion for threats against another student. SchoolWorks has been working with her and her four

siblings for the past 5 years. The kids have been in care for the last ten years due to their parents' substance abuse problems. Both parents are now deceased, and the children are being raised by paternal aunts. Bethany receives special education services as a student with an emotional disturbance. She also is drug-affected and has learning disabilities. Because of our long history with the family, the staff at Bethany's school is familiar with SchoolWorks and happy for our advocacy on Bethany's behalf. SchoolWorks has also coordinated services with outside agencies serving Bethany and her aunts, helped her aunt understand the IEP process, and has worked with school staff to develop appropriate school plans for her. SchoolWorks represented Bethany at the expulsion hearing and argued successfully that her behavior was a result of her emotional disability. Rather than expelling her, the school developed a plan to prevent this behavior in the future. The team, with SchoolWorks assistance, also developed more coordinated communication between Bethany's mental health provider and the school.

Alex

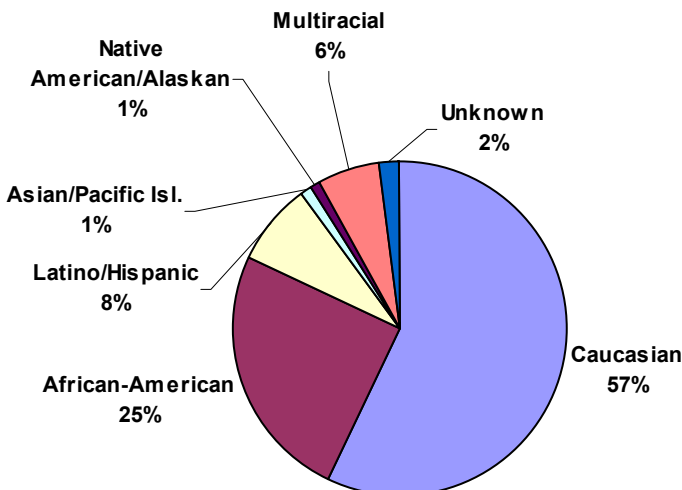
Alex is a 12-year-old boy who was in foster care due to parental substance abuse and neglect. He had several mental health diagnoses and significant behavioral struggles in foster care and at school. He experienced 3 school placements during the school year resulting from disrupted foster placements and his eventual return to his mother. Alex was having chronic behavioral problems in the spring, and his school ultimately moved to expel him. SchoolWorks was able to keep Alex in school by arguing that the behavior was a result of his mental health disorders, as well as the stress of the upcoming return to his mother. At the



same time, SchoolWorks asked the school to do additional assessment related to his mental health needs and expand his IEP to better

address his behavioral and emotional needs. SchoolWorks coordinated between the school and the mental health provider to get an expedited evaluation completed. In late April, Alex was returned from foster care to his mother in a neighboring county, and SchoolWorks advocated for services and supports in the new school so that he did not lose the gains that had been made. The juvenile court case closed and Alex's mother asked for assistance from SchoolWorks to help plan a successful transition for Alex to middle school in the fall. This assistance is being provided through JRP's HelpLine program with the assistance of the SchoolWorks staff who worked on Alex's behalf throughout the school year.

Race/Ethnicity of Children Served



2008 Student and Program Outcomes

SchoolWorks: Total cases closed in 2008 (323 closed cases)	Total Children with Need	Percentage with Need	Percentage Achieved
Improved Academic Achievement	113	35%	86%
Improved Behavior	97	30%	86%
Reduced Absences	49	15%	86%
Re-Enrollment in School	58	18%	86%
Prevent School Moves	11	3%	91%
More Appropriate School Placement	53	16%	89%
Reduce Expulsion	24	7%	96%
New Educational Plans (IEP, 504)	101	31%	97%
Establish Eligibility for Special Education	33	10%	91%
New Services	31	10%	100%
Less Severe Disciplinary Actions	4	1%	100%
Reduced Court Involvement	5	2%	100%
Cross-System Coordination	105	33%	97%

**Why students
were referred to
SchoolWorks**

2008 SchoolWorks Reasons for Referral	Number	Percent
Out of School	49	14%
Behavioral Problems	188	53%
Academically Behind	170	48%
Multiple Reasons	121	34%
Total	353	

SPOTLIGHT: SchoolWorks Attorney Helps Talented Teen Find her Way to College

SchoolWorks helps students overcome significant barriers to their success. This is just one example.

Attorney Lynn Haxton has been a part of the SchoolWorks program since 2006. In April, she received the wonderful news that her client, Ashley, will graduate among the top three at her high school, and also will be admitted to her preferred college this coming autumn. But Ashley's story could have taken a very different direction.

Ashley is in permanent foster care due to a history of abuse in her guardian's home. Despite the fact that she has only one hand, Ashley plays on her high school volleyball team and aspires to a career in fashion design. The

creative teen has over 300 sketches of her own designs. She is also interested in studying psychology.

Last fall, Ashley wasn't getting the support she needed to look into colleges, to make her applications, and to fill out financial aid forms. That's when Lynn Haxton and the SchoolWorks program stepped in.

Lynn arranged for a meeting to help Ashley plan, contacted the school she decided upon, and helped her understand and complete the application process. Lynn also made arrangements for an Independent Living Program (ILP) counselor who could assist Ashley.

Lynn next arranged a meeting with the family and the new

ILP worker, and facilitated the process of ensuring Ashley's financial aid application was complete and submitted on time.

Since then, Ashley has toured the campus, already made friends with another student, gotten involved with Oregon Foster Youth Connections, and is now looking forward to starting classes in September.

Lynn knows that, nationally, fewer than 5% of all foster youth achieve a college degree. Ashley's story shows how important it is for foster youth to have someone who can break down barriers in the system for them, and help them navigate a world in which they have no experience.



Stacey was a 14 year-old attending the 8th grade at a K-8 school in Portland. Her SchoolWorks attorney was able to keep her at the same school in spite of multiple foster home placements—six foster homes over 2½ years. This was the longest period of time Stacey had attended the same school in her entire childhood, and she had made tremendous educational, social and emotional progress during the time there. Her teachers and other school staff were very supportive and patient, and she was considered a model student at the time that Stacey's case worker moved her again at the end of January. In an expedited hearing requested by Stacey's attorney, the judge reaffirmed that school stability was in her best interests, and a plan was worked out between DHS and Stacey's new placement to transport her back to her school on a daily basis. Stacey was moved yet again to another foster home and continued to attend the same school until she graduated from the 8th grade in June.

Supporting SchoolWorks is Easy: Individual and business contributions support the SchoolWorks program. We've made it easier to give. Just go to the JRP web site (www.jrplaw.org) and click on the **DONATE button to make a one-time donation or set up regular donations to support JRP programs throughout the year.**

