

Clatskanie, OR  
(Columbia Co.)  
Chief  
(Cir. W-2,807)

JAN 3 2002

Allens

January 3, 2002

Clatskanie Chief

As Oregon faces a recession, many families struggle to get by...

## Children First for Oregon Group Releases 2010 County Data Book

Across the state of Oregon, many families have difficulty providing basic food and shelter for their children, according to Oregon's leading statewide advocacy group, Children First for Oregon (CFFO).

The 2010 County Data Book: *Growing Up in Oregon* was released December 11th. The study reports data on the economic stability and quality of family life in every county in Oregon.

"We found that even after ten years of general economic prosperity too many children across Oregon are growing up poor, hungry or homeless," said CFFO Executive Director Marie Hoeven.

According to Hoeven, the prosperity of the 1990's resulted in some improvements in child well-being, but it did not provide many families with lasting financial stability. "As the economy continues to decline more stress will be put on our system of supports," she said. "Our state needs to be ready to help families who are losing their jobs."

In each of Oregon's counties, the Data Book reveals that many families struggle to achieve financial stability.

Key statewide findings included the following:

- 42 percent of children in Oregon live in families with incomes below or near the poverty level (the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four is an income of less than \$17,630. CFFO considers a family of four near poverty if they make between 100 percent and 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level).

- 28 percent of Oregon's families spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

- 34 percent of the state's public school children need help paying for school lunch or breakfast.

- Nearly 3,000 kids were homeless on a given night in 2000. Statistics for Columbia and Clatsop counties were consistent with these trends. According to the study, 40 percent of the families in the region including Columbia and Clatsop counties lived at or near poverty level during the year 2000, and 25 percent of households spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

The Data Book listed Columbia County's total population at 43,560 with a child population of 11,902. In comparison, Clatsop County was documented as having a child population of 8,434 and a total population of 35,630.

The study revealed detailed information about each county, including family structure and housing data, and the number of children and families helped by public assistance. Significant findings for Columbia County included the following:

- 35 children sought refuge in a homeless shelter on a given night.
- 24 percent of homes were renter occupied.

- 226 children or more were affected by divorce in 2000.

- 17 percent of households with children had single mothers. (Compared to 20 percent statewide.)

- 249 children received assistance through TANF (welfare) in a typical month.