



SLF's FANCY NEWSLETTER June 2009

WOW! On May 15, more than 750 people packed the Salem Conference Center downtown to celebrate “*City as Neighborhood*” with a tip-of-the-hat to good ol’ *Mr. Rogers Neighborhood*. We had a ton of fun and learned how churches are impacting lives (and neighborhoods) through ‘Faith in Action’ and Gospel servanthood. It was another major step toward the dream of Salem-Keizer becoming the healthiest community in Oregon. *Truly, the City of Shalom.*

What an evening it was. As neighbors arrived, they were greeted with classical music from talented middle-schoolers. The “ring-ring” of a tiny trolley car called us inside to the ballroom, which was festooned (as always) with partner banners from churches, schools, ministries, agencies, and businesses. An amazing ‘Google Earth’ zoom-in took us from outer space right down on top of Salem and then to . . . Mr. Rogers Neighborhood! (And probably the dorkiest imitation of ‘Mr. R’ the world has ever seen!). **Pastor Ronnie Brooks** of To God Be the Glory Ministries blessed the evening with a rousing invocation and a commentary on how Salem, Oregon, is a national leader with its civic/faith collaborative spirit.

After enjoying a montage of tasty desserts, **SLF Board President Dan Porth** welcomed guests and introduced the presentation teams for the two Leadership Awards. Deb Lush and Jason Brandt presented the “Faith Leader” award to **Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network**, which is celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year. After putting in a plug for IHN’s own Dessert on May 28, the award was presented to **Director Andrew Lane** and IHN board members. Up next was the “Community Leader” award, deftly presented by high-schooler Thomas Clapper with an assist from Jeanine Stice. After extolling the national (and international!) accolades earned by the **Salem-Keizer Schools Music Program**, Thomas surprised the real honoree—**Karl Raschkes**—the long-time “conductor” of the heralded music program. School Board members **Steve Chambers** and **Chuck Lee** joined **Deputy Superintendent Glenn Gelbrich** in saluting Mr. Raschkes from the stage.

Then we launched into the trademark “Neighbor Stories” that define SLF’s impact across the Salem-Keizer geography. First up were **Frank and Melissa**, who told how their lives were changed by a neighborhood Block Party at **First Free Methodist Church** in NE Salem. Thanks to **Celebrate Recovery** and the loving friendship of an entire congregation, two former Meth addicts are going to college, living in safe housing, and enjoying the return of their son from protective custody. *Hallelujah!* Next up was the story of **Pastor Larry and Principal Phil**—or “Swegle School and a CaN Center.” It started with a Pancake Breakfast to help build a new playground and it’s grown to include backpack events, block parties, Study Buddies, staff appreciation baskets, a food pantry, and supports for foster families—including the amazing **Royal Family Kids Camp** that **Christian Center of Salem** sponsors each July. **Blanchet High School, the Boys and Girls Club**, and a nearby retirement community also are part of the Swegle Neighborhood success story.

Finally, we were moved by the story of **Anne and Susan**, who became friends through the **New Beginnings Baby Boutique** at Salem Alliance Church. Anne started using Meth at age 13 and struggled with substance abuse and pregnancies into her ‘20s. A drug bust and the loss of her daughters to foster care led to Anne’s placement in a women’s transitional home, where she met Susan Smith—“a nice and funny Church Lady!” The Baby Boutique’s approach showed Anne that she wasn’t just a “project” to Susan, she’s a friend. Anne is employed, recently married, and walking in God’s love with her husband Israel and her three daughters.

In between the Neighbor Stories, we also learned about “SLF 101” (the 10 basic aspects that drive SLF’s work) and “SLF ROI” (the return-on-investment that SLF’s behind-the-scenes work generates in the community). We also had a bit of fun introducing all eight of SLF’s staffers in one of the evening’s lighter moments: imagine the opening sequence of the Brady Bunch! And “Alice” as our new Keizer Lightning Rod! (You had to be there . . .) We also announced the new SLF Website! www.salemlf.org

Pastor Matt Boda, to the audience’s delight, conducted the world’s shortest “Ask”—4.2 minutes. After that, **Pastor Lanny Pagett** of Salem Vineyard Fellowship sent us home with a benediction that reflected on how far our community has come since pastors and city leaders gathered in the early ‘90s to dream dreams about the transformation of Salem-Keizer. Revival is happening!

THANK YOU! So far, the Fancy-Dessert gifts and pledges are \$95,000 for this coming year, and just under \$200,000 total over the next three years. We still need \$90,000 to start our fiscal year on July 1, and we are hopeful more gifts/pledges will come in via this newsletter. We are very grateful to long-time supporters and new donors alike. **If you made a gift or pledge on May 15—THANK YOU.** If you would like to help us make our goal, please let us know via the Fancy Support Card enclosed with this newsletter. Any gift of any amount is eternally treasured!

The SLF Board and I would like to thank our **Fancy Dessert Team** and the many **Fancy Volunteers** for all the long hours and gallons of sweat they donated, which made it so successful. Thank you **Cindy Hayden, Lori Reese, Cindy Poore, Mary Lou & Mo Hittner, Karen Votaw, Sally Huggins, Phil Whitbeck, Lloyd Young, Marsha Boes, Trish Davis, Kristy Griffiths, Michelle Mendoza, Tricia Wartenberg, Katie Burton and Jennifer Skillern.** What a team!

We also want to give a **Fancy Thank-You** to the generous Event Sponsors: **US Bank, AKT, Heltzel Williams Law Firm, Copper Creek Mercantile, and Withnell Motor Company.**

Not to mention the many partners we worked with (and some of whom gave us discounts):

- **Allied Video Productions**, for long hours on the ‘Neighbor Stories’ and the evening’s production.
- **The 75 Fancy Table Captains** who invited and followed-up and hosted so well that night.
- **Deborah Barber**, a Salem-Keizer music teacher, and the middle-school artists who performed.
- The youth ambassadors from **Grant Community School** and the **Boys and Girls Club.** Not to mention their respective advisors **Anthony Cornell and Jason Caldwell**, who made the arrangements.
- **The IKE Box** and the youth band **Phantom**, who recorded the garage-punk Mr. Rogers theme song.
- **Action Specialty**, which always does a fine job with our Leadership Awards and the SLF Fancy pens.
- **Select Impressions**, who printed and mailed the Save-the-Date cards and the Fancy Invitations.
- **Maurice “Mo” Hittner** for his piano-playing par excellence to send the guests home with a smile.

There are roughly 180 churches/congregations in Salem-Keizer. That’s about 30 churches per each of the Six Keystone Areas around town. Imagine if each of them served their neighborhood the way the **13 CaN Centers** do. Imagine if all 180 of them opened up their buildings as do the 30 congregations partnering in the **Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network.** Imagine if all 180 of them went over to the nearest school and said: “How can we help?” We would become ‘the healthiest community in Oregon.’ **Truly, the City of Shalom.** May it be so—Amen.

In Faith, for the Neighborhoods,

Breaking News: As this newsletter is going to press the community mourns the death of Montez Bailey, the Chemeketa student who was shot in Northgate Park and later died. SLF joins the Bailey family and Pastor Wade Harris in urging calm and non-retaliation. We condemn this violent act and we mourn with the Northgate, Chemeketa and McKay communities. Assistance for the Bailey family can be sent to SLF and will be forwarded.