**Connections Transitional Housing Program**

St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County, Inc.
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Connection’s is an up to 2 year transitional housing program. Potential applicants must be homeless families with at least 1 minor child. They will pay 30% of their income towards rent as well as cover utilities and other regular monthly household costs. Connections will pay for the deposit and prorated months’ rent if the family cannot afford to or cannot get the funds through other resources in the community.

All adults must be clean and sober & if there is a history of chemical dependency, they are active in their recovery. The families also must demonstrate a genuine desire to become self-sufficient & an ability to achieve self-sufficiency.

We have 24 families in our Connections Program. Case Managers meet with families once a week for at least the first 6 months. We create a monthly budget; set realistic, attainable goals and problem solve barriers families are experiencing. An expected goal in this program is to establish and maintain a savings account. An expectation to graduate from the Connections program is to save money each month so when the time has come for graduation they are able to afford the deposit for permanent housing as well as maintain their bills, save monthly and establish healthy financial habits.

Moms in the program are committed to attend a 12 week class, *Boundaries*, where childcare and transportation are provided. Here, women learn tools on how to communicate effectively and set healthy boundaries in their life. Often these classes result in lasting relationships among the woman seeking support of each other. Another expectation is to complete the Lifeline class through NEDCO.

We contract with a life coach working with families to recognize the barriers that stand in the way of folks creating their most ideal employment and or educational opportunity. Lisa Anderson assists many families in taking the first step, whether that is going back to school or sprucing up their resume to apply to a specific job. We notice when folks work with Lisa their confidence soars and often they come to the realization they were the one standing in their way.

We also contract with Ashley Churchill to work with our families, providing parenting support. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Oregon in 2008 and has over 10 years’ experience working in social services. The work
has been specific to DHS casework, domestic violence, at risk youth, sexual abuse, substance abuse, and parenting education. Ashley received formal training in parenting education from Parenting Now; she mentors and coaches clients from a Positive Parenting perspective. She has contracted with DHS as a parent trainer since November 2013 and with the Connections program since October 2014. She is also currently contracted with Kids' FIRST as a part time child forensic interviewer and trainer. Ashley is a mother of two, a 2-year-old daughter and 7-week-old son.

We have a Boys Group where boys the ages of 7-13 meet once a week for dinner and an activity. This may consist of arts and crafts, nature walks or various team building activities. Basilio Sandoval facilitates this group. He is a counselor at Centro Latino Americano and has been a mentor in this group for over 10 years. The consistency of the Boys Group is vital; having a set time once a week that these boys can count on helps to rebuild a sense of security and trust. Security and trust is something a young boy coming from homelessness knows very little about. Basilio & Sue provide a quiet, safe space where young boys are expected to respect each other at all times and paid individual attention that makes them feel special. With much patience from Sue and Basilio the boys are provided one on one time to address any behavioral concerns that may arise. By intervening at this age, they help them work through trauma they’ve experienced and learn non-abusive ways to relate to their peers and adults that will be of benefit their entire lives.

Since June 2010 we have served 275 families, 168 children and 91% have graduated onto permanent housing from homelessness.