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LINN COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

" Linn couple honored as exemplary foster parents "
Submitted by Colynn Elder—OYA Foster Care Certifier
"Inside OYA" (April 2011)

Long-time OYA foster parents Donna and Arnold Brubaker are being recognized this month by the Oregon Adolescent Sex Offender Treatment Network for their commitment to youth and families.

The Brubakers, Linn County residents, first became foster parents in 1974 for DHS and have been OYA foster parents since 1995. Ranging from a few hours to several years, hundreds of youth have been in their care.

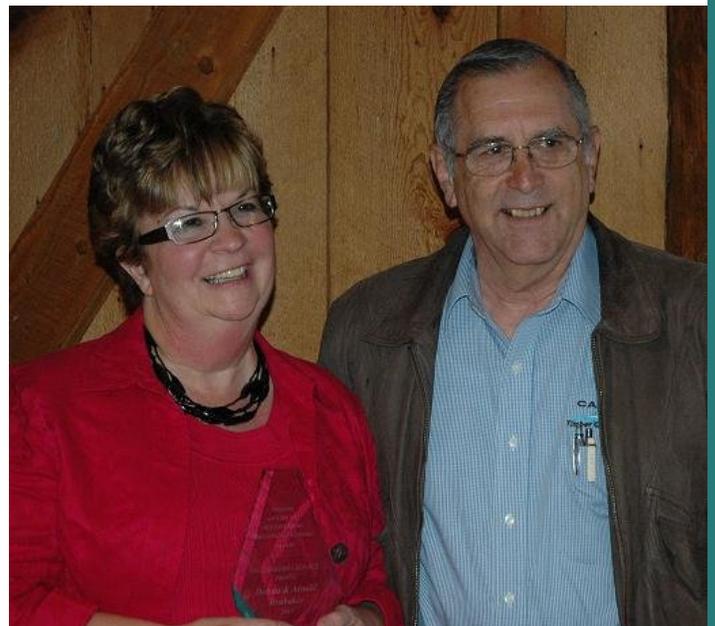
"The Brubaker foster home is highly regarded by youth, caseworkers and treatment providers for being a professional, compassionate, and caring family," said the nomination submitted by OYA Foster Care Certifier Colynn Elder, OYA JPPO Tara Williams, and Linn County Juvenile Probation Officer Karen Cox.

Arnold Brubaker works outside the home, making it possible for Donna to be the primary caregiver for foster youth. "One of Donna's most notable qualities is her ability to maintain firm boundaries while ensuring youth feel genuinely cared for," according to the nomination. "She participates in individual and family sessions, attends monthly Parent/ Teen sessions, works with biological families on understanding their children's offending and treatment, and helps them develop skills for improved communication and supervision."

Even after decades of experience, according to the nomination, Donna Brubaker continues to participate in training opportunities.

In a November 2010 confidential survey asking foster youth what they had learned, responses from youth who lived in the Brubaker home included "empathy, assertive communication," "to take accountability for my actions," and "listening skills."

Congratulations and a big Thank you to Donna & Arnold Brubaker.





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Vision: To provide public safety by helping youth and families achieve positive change.
Mission: To increase public safety by coaching youth and families to make positive choices through education, skill building and community partnerships.



Community Partnerships "8th Grade Transition Project"



Studies have shown that there are certain transition points for youth which are critical to their future success. The transition from middle school to high school is one of those critical time periods for many youth. The Juvenile Department, working in partnership with Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS) and the Safe Schools Healthy Students Grant initiated a new program the last week of March 2011. The department asked the middle schools to identify ten 8th grade students from each of the three Albany middle schools which they believe will have difficulty with the transition into high school. The perceived difficulties with transition could be related to grades, and behavior or personal barriers the youth is experiencing at home or in the community. The 9 week program was developed by department staff after a series of meetings with school officials, with a focus on building relationships and connections to administration, teachers, and mentors. The high schools provided underclassmen to serve as peer mentors to the thirty 8th graders who are transported weekly to the high school to have lunch and participate in activities. The high school students have the opportunity to serve as a guide and provide knowledge to the younger student about what went right and wrong for them. The youth, both mentor and mentee, completed interest surveys to help match them up and serve as a guide to help identify which school staff and administrators the youth will meet with and learn about their program areas. The transition program includes four weeks of skills training provided by juvenile department staff such as; how to organize your notebook, how to handle conflict with a teacher or another student, how to make new friends, etc. Students will also have the opportunity to tour Linn Benton Community College as well as Oregon State University or Western Oregon University. The ninth week of the program will occur in the fall after school has reconvened. This week will be time for the 8th grader, now a freshman, to reconnect with their mentor. It will also provide the opportunity to ensure each student is off to a strong start academically and identify any barriers the student may be facing. We believe having the youth well connected at the school will help provide them with the needed support to be successful during this critical transition time in their life.

