

Camp Fire USA serves more than 750,000 young people and their families each year in hundreds of neighborhoods, towns and rural communities nationwide. To realize its mission of developing caring and self-confident youth, Camp Fire places a high priority on strengthening families so they can help their children succeed. Family-based programs complement an approach that involves families in the full range of Camp Fire activities. "In our councils, families share a respite from life's demands and gain other families' support to move forward," says Jill Pasewalk, Camp Fire's National CEO and President. "We give them a place where they can connect with each other and their communities in a meaningful and lasting way."



CAMP FIRE USA CENTRAL PUGET SOUND COUNCIL

CAMP FIRE USA CENTRAL PUGET SOUND COUNCIL

Award-winning Program: Community Family Clubs

Jane White Vulliet, CEO

Karen Aoyama, Program Director

8511 15th Avenue, N.E.

Seattle, WA 98115

206-461-8550

www.campfire-usa.org

CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2005 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

MUTUAL SUPPORT, A SHARED GOAL

The families served by Camp Fire USA's Central Puget Sound Council could hardly be more diverse, yet they share a common goal: to help their children succeed. In Camp Fire's Community Family Clubs, these families find the support of other parents and new resources to move their families forward.

"We now have 14 Community Family Clubs across the Seattle region," says Program Director Karen Aoyama. "No two are alike in the families they engage or the challenges they address. But all unite families and give parents skills that ultimately benefit children." In one Club, Somalis help each other hold on to their cultural strengths as they learn to navigate their new homeland. In another Club, low-income families from India, Mexico, the Ukraine and Africa, all living in the same apartment complex, overcome cultural barriers to share knowledge and experiences. In a third, deaf parents find common cause with each other and with their hearing children.

MEASURABLE IMPACT, STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Each Community Family Club embraces five to 20 families, who come together to eat, share and grow. "It's our premier program," says Aoyama, "and much in demand."

Various "table topics" and readings support interaction and learning around an agenda set by Club families. Speakers, sometimes parents themselves, offer new information on community resources—from employment services and educational programs to housing loans—that help families build their assets. Club families may plan service projects, such as outdoor cleanups, that make their community a better place for children to thrive.

"Parents leave Club meetings with new information and networks," says Aoyama. "They also practice their skills as communicators. These skills and the confidence they build help parents negotiate relationships in the workplace and partner with their children's schools."

The results are those any parent would want: greater stability for the family and greater success in school for their children. "We were interested to learn that Club families don't move as often as other families," says Aoyama. "And their children do better in school." She notes that parents also report getting more out of their conferences with teachers, and some begin helping out in their children's classrooms. Says Aoyama, "Volunteering in schools is just one more way these parents are creating a brighter future for their children."

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Camp Fire USA, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize Camp Fire USA councils with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.



OUR COMMUNITY FAMILY CLUBS CREATE
NETWORKS OF FAMILIES THAT SUPPORT
ONE ANOTHER AND BUILD TOGETHER TO
BECOME STRONGER AND MORE SUCCESSFUL.

—Jane White Vulliet, CEO, Camp Fire USA, Central Puget Sound Council