

# OP LINK

OREGON PARTNERSHIP WINTER 2009 PREVENTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE. CHANGING LIVES.



Peter Jacobsen, professional golfer and OP supporter, talks to fifth grade students at Stephenson Elementary School about the dangers of drug and alcohol use

## Peter Jacobsen plays a special role with OP

One of Oregon's most admired celebrities demonstrated his enthusiastic support of Oregon Partnership's work, meeting with OP staff and later speaking to 5th graders at Portland's Stephenson Elementary School.

Professional golfer Peter Jacobsen came to know Oregon Partnership in the early 90's while attending a parent training at his children's school.

"And now I'm a grandfather!" said Jacobsen, who was accompanied at OP headquarters by his daughter Amy, the mother of a one-year old son.

"With alcohol and drug prevention and suicide prevention, we never stop learning and never stop helping others," remarked Jacobsen during his January visit. "There isn't anybody who is immune to the problems of drugs and alcohol. We need to work together, to keep on the right road."

Jacobsen added that "like every family," his had issues with alcohol and drugs. "If you're ever uncomfortable about speaking up (about alcohol and drug abuse), just think about the ramifications if you don't speak up – in their lives and in yours."

Jacobsen is recuperating from a shoulder injury before heading back onto the 2009 Champions Golf Tour. While currently living in Bonita Springs, Florida, Jacobsen still considers Oregon home.

During his visit to the 5th grade classroom at Stephenson, Jacobsen spoke about goals, asking students about what they wanted to do when they grew up. Jacobsen added that combating peer pressure is a lifelong skill: Choosing between right and wrong follows them their whole life.

"We all want to do things in our lives that are impactful," said Jacobsen. "Just helping somebody else within our lives is the most important thing." ❏

## City Hall ceremony for Laura Mersereau essay contest winners



Laura Mersereau, as seen in her senior picture, died at age 46 of a perforated gastric ulcer, a complication caused by decades of drug and alcohol abuse.

Writing about the devastating effects of substance abuse, several high school students were honored by Mayor Tom Potter at Portland City Hall for their winning essays in the Laura Mersereau Memorial Essay Contest.

Oregon Partnership administered the essay contest on behalf of the Mersereau family. 124 high school students representing ten school districts submitted essays, currently published on the Oregon Partnership website ([www.orphnership.org](http://www.orphnership.org)).

The first place winners: Arunee SengChanh of Parkrose High School ("A Living Miracle") and Hilary Annes of Sandy High School ("The Acceptable No") received \$2,500

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# City Hall ceremony for Laura Mersereau essay contest winners

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payable to a college or trade school upon enrollment. Chloe Jones, Wilson High School senior and YouthLine volunteer was awarded honorable mention.

Brad Mersereau, a Portland composer/pianist, created the scholarship program in memory of his sister, Laura, who died in 1999 after a 25 year battle with drugs and alcohol. The purpose of the contest was to challenge high school students to think critically about drug use in their life and their community.

“I believe the participation of these high school students honors my sister’s memory,” said Mersereau, who participated in the awards ceremony at the Portland City Hall Atrium. “Together, we wanted students to look within themselves to seek answers to this challenge of staying away from alcohol and drugs.”

“Although it is hard not to give in to peer pressure, it’s more important to lead a happy and fulfilling life the way you want to lead it,” wrote Annes in her winning essay entitled “The Acceptable ‘No’”. “I am very lucky that I am a stubborn



Chloe Jones, Wilson High School senior and YouthLine volunteer receives her award from Tom Potter and Brad Mersereau

person who doesn’t give in easily. Sometimes it is very difficult to be that first person to say no.”

The three award winners read their essays to an appreciative crowd of family, friends, school counselors and administrators.

To read all of the essays including the winners and to learn more about Laura’s story visit: [www.orpartnership.org](http://www.orpartnership.org).

Visit Brad Mersereau’s website honoring Laura’s memory at [www.bradmersereau.com](http://www.bradmersereau.com) to take the pledge for a drug and alcohol-free lifestyle. 📌

## Southern Oregon coalition targets alcoholic energy drinks

Umpqua Partners for a Drug-Free Future (formerly Douglas County Communities Aligned to Prevent Substance Abuse - DC CAPS) has kicked off its “Sticker Shock” campaign designed to alert young people, parents, merchants and law enforcement officials that the drinks contain large amounts of alcohol and caffeine.

The combination of a stimulant (caffeine) and a depressant (alcohol) can mask a person’s intoxication level, allowing for longer periods of drinking.

Students handed out fliers and bright green warning stickers that read “Contains alcohol. Dangerous Mix.” that store owners can attach to cans of the drinks. “It’s kind of disheartening that companies have made alcoholic drinks look like energy drinks,” said 17-year old Erika Linden. “It makes me question what they’re trying to sell and who they’re trying to sell it too.”

The Roseburg City Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting the efforts of the group.

In the past six months, Miller-Coors and Anheuser-Busch have discontinued the manufacture of alcoholic energy drinks following pressure from state attorneys general and threats of lawsuits by anti-drug coalitions.

For more information on the Umpqua Partners for a Drug-Free Future coalition please visit: [www.updrugfree.org](http://www.updrugfree.org). 📌



Douglas County students participate in the “Sticker Shock” campaign, warning of the dangers of alcoholic energy drinks.

## OP training reaches out to military personnel, providers and families

A stellar panel for mental health professionals and members of the treatment community painted a realistic and compelling picture of the challenges facing returning soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan at a recent Oregon Partnership training.

The message was clear: Too many deployed soldiers face serious psychological problems upon returning home, including post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression and substance abuse.

Up to 30-40% of the men and women returning from the war zone display signs of PTSD and all too often, the condition goes untreated.

The December panel was comprised of James M. Sardo, Ph.D., program co-manager of the PTSD Clinical Team of the Portland V.A. Center; Robert Tell, LCSW, Suicide Prevention Coordinator of the Portland V.A. Medical Center; and Major Scott Delbridge, Chaplain, Oregon National Guard.


OP is working with the Oregon National Guard on issues such as suicide prevention and intervention, drug and alcohol problems, PTSD and treatment referral.



Dr. James Sardo answers questions from the audience about post traumatic stress disorder.

“Fear, worry and anger can often lead to family and work problems,” said Sardo. “And all too often, veterans and their families are at odds on how to respond to warning signs.”

Just as veterans can be afraid or unable to address traumatic experiences, so can family members because of their uncertainty how the returning soldier will respond.

The event was part of OP’s panel discussion series at Montgomery Park, examining such topics as alcohol and drug prevention strategies for parents, Internet safety, media communications for non-profits, and balancing home and work for women executives. 

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OREGON PARTNERSHIP TRAININGS PLEASE VISIT: [WWW.ORPARTNERSHIP.ORG/WEB/SERVICES/TRAININGCENTER/DEFAULT.ASP](http://WWW.ORPARTNERSHIP.ORG/WEB/SERVICES/TRAININGCENTER/DEFAULT.ASP)

## Sharp rise in Crisis Lines calls

Calls to Oregon’s 24-hour alcohol and drug and suicide crisis lines run by Oregon Partnership are reflecting the stress of an economy that sees more people out of work, homeowners unable to pay mortgages and families worried about making ends meet.


As a result, calls to the suicide intervention line and the alcohol and drug crisis line increased by a dramatic 60% in December 2008 compared to December 2007.

The number of calls began increasing in September and October, months normally with lower volumes. The total for December reached almost 2,900 calls.

“It stands to reason that when the unemployment rate goes up and prices of goods do too, so does the tension level for more Oregonians,” said Leslie Storm, Director of OP’s Crisis Line Program. “And of course, that’s been compounded by what’s going on in the housing market and on Wall Street.”

Storm notes that during the last several months, callers have been mentioning job and money issues.

“The great majority of our calls are from those in crisis as a result of drugs and alcohol,” explained Storm. “But it seems that all the implications of the economy are having an impact, too.”

Operated by experienced staff and approximately 55 volunteers who undergo 56 hours of crisis line skills training, OP’s four crisis lines – HelpLine, LifeLine, YouthLine and Linea de Ayuda - are the lifeblood for those in crisis and feel they have nowhere else to turn. 

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OREGON PARTNERSHIP’S CRISIS LINES VISIT: [WWW.ORPARTNERSHIP.ORG](http://WWW.ORPARTNERSHIP.ORG) OR CALL LESLIE STORM AT: 971-244-4621



## Judge Koch new CARSA chair

One of Oregon's premiere experts in family law and juvenile justice has joined Portland's anti-drug coalition CARSA as its new Leadership Council Chairman.



The Hon. Dale R. Koch sits as a Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge after serving six years as Presiding Judge for the county. Prior to that, Koch served nine years as a family court judge.

"We are thrilled that Judge Koch is joining CARSA at a time when his expertise will be put to good use," said CARSA Director, Barbara Caplan.

Since 1993, Judge Koch has been an international speaker on family violence and child abuse. He holds both undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Oregon. ♣

## SAVE THE DATE!

Oregon Partnership's Annual Gala will take place on Saturday, May 2, 2009 at the Oregon Convention Center in the Oregon Ballroom. The fun filled evening will start at 6:00 pm with live entertainment and a silent auction followed by a full course dinner and short oral auction.



**RESERVE YOUR TABLE NOW! CONTACT PETER JUNEY AT 971-244-1369 FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TABLES AND SPONSORSHIPS!**