



Volunteer Center Provides Resources to Help Weather Economic Storm

It's the end of the first month of our brand new year, and looking back on the rollercoaster ride of 2009, we hope that the economic forecast for 2010 will include more clear skies than cloudy ones. Unfortunately it is often during a disaster, not before, that we realize how ill prepared we are. The power goes out and we reach for our flashlight only to discover that the batteries are dead and we seem to be low on matches and candles.

For many, the current economic storm has felt like a financial black out, leaving them a little disoriented and without apparent resources. Knowing where to turn in a financial crisis can be half the battle. For those in Mason County struggling to overcome the financial hand dealt to them in the past several months, there is a ray of sunshine on the horizon. January 30th, the Volunteer Center of Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties is leading the Economic Survival Fair to offer important information about organizations within the community that can help residents overcome their financial hardships.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. participants can gain valuable tips on interviewing for jobs, meal preparation on a budget, energy bill savings, and financial literacy as well as free tax preparation from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free onsite child care is provided as well as a free meal at the end of the fair which is located at Olympia Center on 222 Columbia St. NW in Olympia.

Representatives from over 30 community organizations will be on hand to talk about services they provide. One in particular is the Crisis Clinic of Thurston and Mason Counties. Every day, 24 hours a day, their volunteers field phone calls to provide support and a useful list of local resources that will help people navigate the murky waters of a crisis.

"A part of our philosophy is avoiding giving advice and focusing more on supporting callers in solving their own problems in order to feel more empowered," said the clinic's Volunteer In-Service Program Assistant Masha Lisitsa.

Maneuvering through economic troubles can seem a lot like finding your way in the dark. But with the help of local organizations like the Crisis Clinic, and other non-profits featured at the Economic Survival Fair, you can chart a course to improving your current financial situation.

The Economic Survival Fair, is lead by the Volunteer Center and sponsored by United Community AIDS Network, Crisis Clinic of Thurston and Mason Counties, United Way of Thurston County, Family Education and Support Services, Family Support Center, Thurston County CASA, and Center for Community Based Learning and Action at the Evergreen State College. For more information about the free services offered at the fair, call 360-741-2622 or visit our Web site at www.volunteer.ws.