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Mid-Willamette Valley Lawyers Against Hunger Soiree
Thursday, September 10th
by Jill Tanner

The First Annual Mid-Willamette Valley Lawyers Against Hunger Soiree was inaugurated by **Chief Justice Paul De Muniz**, who thanked everyone for their generous support of the **Oregon Food Bank and the Marion-Polk County Food Share**. Chief Justice De Muniz stressed the importance of the legal community being an active partner with other Oregonians in the fight against hunger.

The Soiree was held September 10, 2009, to coincide with the Oregon Food Bank's designation of September as Hunger Action Month - but we all know that hunger happens all year long. The **Oregon Food Bank's Executive Director, Rachel Bristol**, concludes that "the only way to deal with this issue" [increase in those needing food] "is" to make it "a public priority."

Dawn Bonder, senior policy advisor to Governor **Ted Kulongoski**, stated that the Oregon Food Bank's mission is to eliminate hunger and its root causes, which includes "too few family-wage jobs and/or inadequate skills to acquire family-wage jobs; health care costs; and the high cost of living." To place the challenge ahead in perspective, Dawn shared the following quote:

*Give a woman a fish and you feed her for a day
Teach that woman to fish and you feed her for a lifetime.*

Ron Hays, President, **Marion-Polk County Food Share** (Food Share), commented that as of year end June 30, 2009, Food Share was "called on to provide food boxes for an all-time record average of 6,500 families a month - an 11 percent (or 631 families) increase from the prior year." Ron stated that 44 percent of the people eating from emergency food boxes are children, more than 10,300 a month. "To meet local needs," Ron noted that Food Share "delivers 90,000 pounds of food a week to a network of charities" which requires "more than 205,000 volunteer hours" in a year or a "\$3.2 million value of those hours."

Soiree donors gave more than \$3,300; all collected funds went directly to the Oregon Food Bank and Food Share. **Two trophies were awarded**; one to **The Law Office of Gordon L. Dick** and a second trophy to **Willamette University College of Law** for their generous contributions and support. Soiree co-sponsors and law firm sponsors along with business sponsors, **Salem Riverfront Carousel, Reed Catering, Oregon Beverage Service and Capital Rentals**, funded the food, facility, and related costs. Wine was provided compliments of the **Oregon Winegrowers Association**. A silent auction of "celebrity bowls and plates" featured a bowl signed by **Governor Kulongoski**, a plate signed by former **Governor Barbara Roberts**, and nine plates depicting former (and current) First Ladies which were hand-painted by **Jose Klein**, an Oregon Supreme Court law clerk.

Without the generous support of the Soiree sponsors¹ and those who attended the Soiree or made donations, this event would not have moved beyond the "gee, wouldn't it be great if Mid-Willamette Valley lawyers joined Portland lawyers in the fight against hunger." A special thank you to everyone who came together to share a few fun evening hours with those who want to stop hunger in Oregon.