

Together

Kaiser Permanente Northwest Community Annual Report



Kaiser Permanente's commitment to bettering the diverse communities we serve has been a part of our heritage for more than 60 years. Through research, volunteerism, employee initiatives, and individual efforts, we've made real and lasting change.

One example takes us back to World War II. Clifford Kuh, MD, a physician in the Kaiser shipyards, noticed that disabled workers were not being hired for jobs they were qualified for in spite of the wartime labor shortage. Dr. Kuh led a study of the physical effort required in 500 shipyard jobs to match each worker's abilities to the activities demanded by each job.

The study, cosponsored by the War Manpower Commission, was published in 1944 and focused on what employees could do—not on their limitations. This pioneering research dramatically shifted perceptions of disabled workers in a time of national crisis, and it created opportunities for disabled veterans after the war.

Kaiser Permanente continues to be a leader in health care research. Our investigative efforts are part of four nationally focused streams of work that, along with one regional initiative, provide our Community Benefit framework. Our efforts focus on:

Care and Coverage for Low-Income People—We believe everyone has the right to quality health care and coverage. We create and support programs so the uninsured and underinsured have access to the medical and dental care we provide.



Andrew R. McCulloch
President
Kaiser Permanente Northwest Region



Sharon Higgins, MD
Executive Medical Director
Northwest Permanente, PC



John Snyder, DMD
CEO and Dental Director
Permanente Dental Associates

Safety Net Partnerships—We are committed to building partnerships with community clinics, local health departments, and public hospitals. We help these vital health care providers improve care and expand treatment capacity for vulnerable populations.

Community Health Initiatives—We seek to measurably improve the health of the communities we serve. We design, deliver, and sustain long-term programs that engage communities to work to improve conditions in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools.

Developing and Disseminating Knowledge—We are dedicated to advancing health through research, education, and training. We share our knowledge about the evidence base for care and health.

Civic Engagement—We strive to meet the needs of communities by actively building relationships on a grassroots level. This Northwest Region initiative allocates resources, both monetary and non-monetary, to high-impact community projects through engaged staff volunteers.

We cultivate partnerships with like-minded organizations, encourage volunteerism in our workforce, and support the development of public policies that help spread health in our communities. We give positive proof to the notion that by working **together**, we are so much more than the sum of our parts.

Together

There's only so much you can do on your own. But together, we can do more.

Together we can speak louder and sing stronger. Together we can stand taller and climb higher. Together we can live healthier and make tomorrow better than today.

We can do all this and more.

Kaiser Permanente Northwest Community Annual Report

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2007 Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest Community Benefit financial overview

CARE AND COVERAGE FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE

Medical care services

\$37,555,086

Charity care; Child Health Program and Transitions; Medicaid; other government-sponsored and non-government-sponsored programs; grants and donations to medical and dental care providers

DEVELOPING AND DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE

Health professionals

\$8,238,579

Continuing medical education (CME); interns and residents program (GME); nursing and other non-physician education and training; grants and donations for health care professionals; medical libraries and medical information; medical research; tumor boards and registries; grants and donations for evidence-based medicine

COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES

\$496,523

Community health education programs and services; Educational Theatre Program; grants and donations for consumer health education and community-based programs

SAFETY NET PARTNERSHIPS

\$413,700

Specialty programs; technical assistance; grants and donations for community-based medical clinics

OTHER COMMUNITY BENEFITS

\$3,669,803

Community benefit administration; regional allocation for the Board of Directors Fund; Community Giving Program; other grants and donations

Total community benefit commitment to our community:

\$50,373,691

Together

WE HELP EVERYONE GET CARE

Making health care available to those with limited incomes is fundamental to our mission. Our **Care and Coverage for Low-Income People** initiatives support programs that lower financial barriers, provide free or deeply subsidized health coverage, and improve access to public health care programs.



High-risk, high-reward

The Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center serves migrant and seasonal farm workers—and others with barriers to receiving health care—in Washington and Yamhill counties. Its name honors the daughter of migrant workers. Without access to adequate health care, she died from complications of a simple foot wound.

Among the patients who come to the center are a group of women experiencing high-risk pregnancies. Kaiser Permanente perinatologists are called in to take over their care. These highly trained specialists care for mother and fetus when the chance for complications is high.

“The patients may have had diabetes before pregnancy or experienced a poor outcome in a prior pregnancy,” says Dr. Suzanne Lubarsky, one of a team of physicians who take on these challenging cases. “Or there may be abnormalities with the fetus, such as a heart defect,” she continues.

Virginia Garcia patient Maricruz Castro (second from right) enjoys family time knowing that Kaiser Permanente physicians are managing her high-risk pregnancy.

The expectant mothers can need frequent ultrasounds, medications to prevent pre-term delivery, or hospitalization. One patient suffered from a rare condition, isoimmunization, that causes a woman’s immune system to destroy her fetus’s red blood cells. An earlier pregnancy had ended tragically and close to the due date.

To help the patient, Dr. Lubarsky administered fetal blood transfusions through the umbilical cord. “The treatments counteracted severe anemia and allowed her to deliver a healthy baby,” she says. Dr. Lubarsky proudly displays a photo of herself with that mother and child in her office.

“It’s so important to help these families,” says Dr. Lubarsky. “It’s part of our obligation to our community to provide care for patients who can’t otherwise afford it.”



Skyline dentists applied more than 250 dental sealants during three days of free dental care.

CARE AND COVERAGE FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTS (2007)

- Child Health and Transitions programs provided full health care coverage to 4,335 low-income children and adults.
- 23,356 nonmembers and members benefited from our financial assistance programs.
- More than \$95,000 in dental care services were donated to low-income individuals.

Something to smile about

Almost 25 percent of Oregon schoolchildren don't have dental insurance. In Washington state, about 44 percent of children under age 5 have never visited a dentist. Those sobering statistics from each state's health department reveal the urgent need for dental care for our community's most vulnerable residents—our kids.

2007 marked the third year that Kaiser Permanente participated in the American Dental Association's "Give Kids A Smile" day. The annual event provides free preventive and restorative care, along with education, to low-income children without access to dental care.

We take the concept a step further by holding similar free dental care days for children throughout the year. Four Kaiser Permanente dental offices took part in seven events, giving more than 235 children a reason to smile.

Skyline Dental Office in Salem opened its doors to kids in need in February, May, and November. Students from Salem-Keizer Public Schools were transported to the dental office in vans provided by the Salem Boys & Girls Club. "Some of the kids had obvious decay," says Dr. Krista Richey, pediatric dentist at Skyline, "and all of them had no dental coverage."

Kaiser Permanente dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, dental member assistants, and other staff volunteered their time to care for 83 Salem-area children. Services included exams, X-rays, cleanings, sealants, fillings, crowns, and extractions. In the waiting area, kids learned about proper brushing and flossing techniques and healthy food choices.

"The kids were great dental patients," says Dr. Richey. "It's so rewarding for our staff to take part. After every event they ask me, 'When are we going to do another one?'"

Together

WE STRENGTHEN THE SAFETY NET

We build strategic **Safety Net Partnerships** with the institutions that serve on the front lines of health care for the uninsured and underserved. By providing financial, technical, and clinical support, we help ease the pressures on organizations that reach our most vulnerable populations.



Dr. Jill Ginsberg (left) with patient and Hurricane Katrina survivor Rita Moore in the North by Northeast Community Health Center's garden.

Hurricane Katrina survivors inspire free clinic

When Hurricane Katrina struck the southern U.S. coast in August of 2005, the world watched the aftermath in shock. Pastor Mary Overstreet Smith was instantly moved to help. She sent a van to the devastated Gulf Coast and eventually helped 40 families relocate to the Portland area.

But providing housing, clothing, and food wasn't enough. These survivors needed health care. That's where Kaiser Permanente family physician Jill Ginsberg came in.

Dr. Ginsberg heard about the efforts and arranged to meet Pastor Mary to drop off personal care items she had collected for the families. "That's when she told me her idea to start a free clinic to serve the North and inner Northeast Portland neighborhood," Dr. Ginsberg recalls. After a short walk to see the small office building that was to be the clinic's location, Pastor Mary simply asked, "When can you start?"

That was the beginning of a partnership that became the nonprofit North by Northeast Community Health Center. Just

nine short months after Pastor Mary and Dr. Ginsberg met, the clinic's doors opened. Kaiser Permanente helped the center get off the ground by providing exam tables, blood pressure cuffs, and other medical equipment.

The center offers a walk-in clinic every Thursday evening and schedules follow-up appointments at least two Mondays a month. Adult patients are treated for acute and chronic conditions, like upper respiratory infections, diabetes, and hypertension. Medications, laboratory tests, and vaccines are provided free of charge.

Kaiser Permanente Gives grants (solicited by Kaiser Permanente employees for organizations where they volunteer) were awarded to the center to help with expansion of hours and services.

Dr. Ginsberg is thankful for the support, both financial and moral. "Kaiser stands for health. Not just of the individual, but of the community," she says. "There's an understanding that we must contribute to the bigger picture."

SAFETY NET PARTNERSHIPS HIGHLIGHTS (2007)

- 2,160 professional staff from community health clinics participated in our Continuing Medical Education programs on 82 topics.
- Over \$35,000 in scholarships were awarded to clinical staff of local federally qualified health clinics to attend Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) conferences.
- \$173,821 in surplus medical supplies and equipment were donated to local organizations.

Together

WE MAKE BETTER HEALTH A REALITY

At Kaiser Permanente, we're proactive about health. That's why our **Community Health Initiatives** take a prevention-driven approach to health, focusing on policies and environmental changes that promote healthy eating and active living.



Mt. Solo Middle School students make their musical debut in IF.

A stage for learning

"If you had one wish, just one wish, and you could wish for anything, what would you wish for?"

That question is at the heart of Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre Program musical *IF*, which premiered in January of 2007. The collaboration with Oregon Children's Theatre uses original drama and song to vividly illustrate how the choices kids make now affect their future.

Unlike many touring children's theatre shows, *IF* doesn't bring in actors. Instead, the schools provide the talent. More than 50 students at Mt. Solo Middle School in Longview were the stars and crew of their production. After auditions and only nine rehearsals, it was show time.

The cast performed Mt. Solo's first-ever musical in front of more than 500 of their peers at an afternoon assembly. But the learning experience didn't end there. An evening

performance was open to the community as a fundraiser for the Lower Columbia Community Action Program, a local organization the students themselves chose to support.

Cowlitz County turnout broke box office records. The show raised \$658. Admission was a suggested donation only, and some 300 audience members attended the performance. The amount raised was matched by Kaiser Permanente.

The mission of the Educational Theatre Program is to inspire children to make informed decisions about their health. "We have planted a seed in a part of the brain that, in children this age, is still dormant," says Dr. Phillip Wu, pediatrician at Kaiser Permanente's Tualatin Medical Office. "By following up with other activities and linking with other organizations that have similar goals and messages, we really do have an impact."



Clark County residents walking along the Discovery Historic loop trail.

Steps in the right direction

A recent study found that one in four adults in Clark County, Washington, is obese. Six percent have been diagnosed with diabetes. Shocking statistics like these jolted community leaders into action.

The Vancouver-based nonprofit Community Choices launched the Steps to a Healthier Clark County initiative to build policies to turn the tide. Kaiser Permanente is the key health care partner in the coalition that has seen success in changing habits and changing minds.

A system of interconnected trails and walkways—and a map and Web site to help navigate them—have made the county more walkable. Access to healthy food in schools has been increased with healthy “Fit Pick” items in vending machines and more nutritious options in student stores. Smoke-free policies have been voluntarily adopted in parks and other public and private spaces.

The federal grant that supports the initiative has ended, but Community Choices and Kaiser Permanente won’t let the progress stop. Nancy Stevens, director of Community Benefit, cochairs the coalition’s health sustainability team. “We will continue to support efforts in Clark County that go beyond the doctor’s office and make a positive difference in schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces,” she says.

COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES HIGHLIGHTS (2007)

- 23,528 kids viewed Educational Theatre Program productions in Oregon and southwest Washington schools.
- Kaiser Permanente clinicians endorsed legislative bills and local bond measures that mandated nutrition guidelines for school foods; staffed farm-to-school and garden programs; and secured natural areas, parks, and access to streams.
- Oregon and southwest Washington coalitions received \$300,000 in support through the Alliance for the Promotion of Physical Activity and Nutrition.

Together

WE BUILD KNOWLEDGE

Kaiser Permanente seeks to improve the well-being of all communities by actively **Developing and Disseminating Knowledge** to stakeholders including consumers, policymakers, physicians, and other providers. Through research and education we translate knowledge into practice to foster community health.

DEVELOPING AND DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE HIGHLIGHTS (2007)

- Our Center for Health Research began 300 studies and published 178 findings.
- Our Graduate Medical Education program trained 220 residents and fellows in 18 independent and affiliated specialty programs.
- The Health Sciences and Medical Libraries at Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center handled 10,500 inquiries from clinicians and the community.



INSIGHT study participant Josonja Watson learned that an apple a day keeps the pounds away.

INSIGHT study reflects diversity

Scientists at Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research have found that overweight people can significantly improve their health by losing 4 kilograms (8.8 pounds) or more. But when the subject turns to dieting, scientists aren't necessarily in agreement about which diets to recommend. Many fad diets promise great results. But even if people can lose weight, is it a healthy weight loss? And can it be maintained?

These were questions Njeri Karanja, PhD, a senior investigator at the Center, set out to answer. Dr. Karanja's 2 1/2 year INSIGHT study is comparing low-carb and high-carb diets by measuring pounds lost, blood pressure, and other health indicators.

When it came time to enroll several hundred participants, Dr. Karanja felt strongly about boosting minority recruitment. Her data would be more useful with a broader sample of participants, she realized. African Americans and Latino Americans have a higher incidence of obesity, and she wanted to be sure to help the people who would benefit most from the research.

Dr. Karanja received Community Benefit funding that enabled her to do just that. She worked closely with Cheryl Johnson, recruitment director at the Center for Health Research, and they developed a strategy to reach people in the community who they'd never reached before.

They created posters and presentations that would speak to minority populations and shared them at churches and community centers that serve African Americans and Latinos in large numbers. The results were better than expected: a full 19 percent of participants in the INSIGHT study were minorities, which accurately reflected Portland's minority population.

While results aren't out yet, it's already clear that many participants have had tremendous success so far. Josophia Watson is one of them. She lost 52 pounds and admits the INSIGHT study changed her life.

"It's a new me now," Josophia says. "I used to think of fruits and vegetables as some strange little side dish. I really didn't know how to eat for my body, and that's what I learned in this study. Having fruits and vegetables is a priority now."

Together

WE CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Kaiser Permanente believes that lasting change is made on the grassroots level. We support **Civic Engagement** efforts that bring local impact issues to light, strengthen relationships, and enhance local movements that help our neighbors build safe and healthy communities.



Neighbors become more like family at monthly Ladies of the Valley gatherings.

Valley of hope

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS (2007)

- 59 grants awarded to support employee volunteer involvement in community-based programs.
- \$25,000 in technical assistance grants given to local organizations for capacity building.
- \$477,000 invested in the community through Kaiser Permanente's annual Community Giving Campaign.

Beth was a single mother with no job and no family or friends to help her. Her battle with drug addiction made matters worse. Then she saw a flyer for a meeting of Ladies of the Valley, a social support group in her Fruit Valley neighborhood in Vancouver. After sharing a meal and her story, she felt accepted. With compassionate encouragement from new friends, she is now employed and on the road to recovery.

"The purpose is to give women a safe place to share their life issues," says Cheryl Gibbs, founder of Ladies of the Valley. The group meets once a month for a free dinner, a practical lesson, and a fun activity. Children are welcome and join in games and crafts of their own.

The Fruit Valley Foundation received a Kaiser Permanente Gives grant, given to organizations where Kaiser Permanente employees volunteer. Gini Graham and Matthew Suronen, opticians who share a passion for bringing people together, were the sponsors. As volunteers, they organize dinners, children's activities, and annual outings to the beach and to a pumpkin patch at Halloween.

"These women come from a part of life we sometimes ignore," says Gini. "Through Ladies of the Valley, they've found comfort in each other. And that makes for a stronger neighborhood."

The funding supported outreach mailings, bought healthy food for the monthly meals, and allowed them to assist in ways never before possible. "We helped one woman get out of an abusive relationship by purchasing a gas card for her," recalls Cheryl. "We could not have done that without the Kaiser Permanente grant."

Northwest Health Foundation's

Kaiser Permanente Community Fund Grants



The Kaiser Permanente Community Fund advances the health of communities served by Kaiser Permanente Northwest by addressing factors in the social, policy, and physical environments that affect community health.

Often referred to as the social determinants of health, these factors have been shown to play a major role in the development of health disparities based on race and socioeconomic status. An approach that prevents the need for clinical services will result in healthier communities and less expensive health care for all.

Research by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and many other organizations has found that health status is largely determined by factors outside our health care system. While high-quality clinical care is important, underlying and chronic stressors (like poverty and racism) play a significant role in the development and progression of disease.

The Kaiser Permanente Community Fund takes a preventive approach, investing in conditions that promote health—public safety, secure employment, environmental quality, social capital, affordable housing, and community organizing.

The Northwest Health Foundation is an independent, charitable foundation that administers the grants. Since the Community Fund's inception in 2005, \$8.5 million in grants have been made to community-based organizations.

KAISER PERMANENTE COMMUNITY FUND GRANTS HIGHLIGHTS (2007)

- Awarded \$2.97 million in grants.
- Established the endowed chair for health disparities research at the Center for Health Research in honor of Merwyn R. (Mitch) Greenlick, member of the Oregon House of Representatives.

1000 Friends of Oregon

Healthy Communities Policy Project—Ensures that state and regional land use planning frameworks support active lifestyles and access to healthy nutrition options.

Adelante Mujeres

Adelante Chicas—Provides a support network for young Latina girls, enhances their self-esteem, and promotes options for a positive future.

Central City Concern

Benefits and Entitlement Specialist Team—Increases access to housing and health care for the homeless.

Community Solutions for Clackamas County

Villebois Community Integration—Supports the integration of individuals with mental illness into a new planned Oregon community.

Ecotrust

Upstream Action in the School Lunchroom—Improves the nutritional content of school meals in two districts to encourage the Oregon legislature to fund related programs.

Human Services Institute

Juntos Podemos Family Cooperative—Supports Latino families who have children with developmental disabilities in Marion County.

Mt. Hood Habitat for Humanity

Jubilee Commons—Provides affordable home ownership opportunities, educational advancement, and community-building opportunities to low-income clients.

Neighborhood House

Portland CASASTART—Aims to prevent substance abuse and violence among at-risk 8- to 13-year-olds and to reduce drug-related crimes.

NW Regional Education Service District

Washington County School-based Health Center Initiative—Supports the development of three school-based health centers in Washington County.

Portland Bureau of Housing and Community Development

HOT Money/Cool Jobs—Expands a proven model of poverty reduction and economic opportunity in North and Northeast Portland, in cooperation with the Urban League and Portland Community College.

Portland Impact

Parent Child Developmental Services Head Start Readiness Enhancement—Increases Parent Child Developmental Services' capacity to address the primary barriers to children's ability to enroll and remain in Healthy Start.

Sisters of the Road

Systemic Change Program—Changes social policies and attitudes to support ending homelessness through awareness, engagement, and education.

Volunteers of America

Home Free: "Housing First" Transitional Services—Helps the victims of domestic violence and their dependents transition into safe, stable, and permanent housing.

Community Partners Reinvestment Project—Provides wrap-around services to young adults who are being released from prison.

Together

WE MAKE LIVES BETTER

Kaiser Permanente is committed to the health and vitality of the communities we serve. By investing in partnerships that address critical needs, we fulfill our responsibility for service. These engaged, caring relationships with local and national organizations elevate important issues and strengthen the fabric of our community.

We make the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday a day on, not a day off. We also provide meaningful opportunities for college students, support fundraising events, and advocate for healthy children. As leaders in promoting healthy living, honoring diversity, and encouraging corporate volunteerism, we live up to our promise of making lives better.

At the heart of healthy living

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Oregon and Washington. As a health care provider, Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to fighting it on all fronts.

Our Thrive campaign helps educate communities about the power of prevention.

Our members have access to proven treatments when preventive measures aren't enough. Our new heart surgery program at Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center opens in the spring of 2009 and is the first to offer high-level heart care in Clackamas County.

As the presenting sponsor of the American Heart Association's 2007 Start! Greater Portland Heart Walk, we supported efforts that will bring the next breakthroughs for heart disease and stroke patients. More than 4,000 people walked the streets of Portland and raised \$282,000 for research and education. Kaiser Permanente teams accounted for more than \$20,000 of the tally.

Kaiser Permanente also sponsored three tables at the American Heart Association's annual Heart Ball. Our participation raised more than \$10,000 and illustrated our devotion to heart health.

Victory is crossing the starting line

From lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels to elevating mood and boosting concentration, the health benefits of physical exercise are remarkable. Kaiser Permanente encourages fitness for all ages and at all levels. That's why we sponsored the 2007 Kaiser Permanente 5 Miler at the Portland Marathon.

We encouraged our community to get fit by walking or running on the same course as world-class marathoners, a challenge that Kaiser Permanente employees took seriously. More than 300 employees finished the 5 Miler and more than 100 volunteered at our water aid station.

The Portland Marathon is the largest marathon east of the Mississippi and consistently ranks among the best for being family and walker friendly. Whether the goal is the 5-mile marker or the 26.2-mile marker of the marathon, we believe that victory is crossing the starting line.



MLK Day of service

For the third year in a row, Kaiser Permanente honored the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a day on instead of off. More than 600 staff provided free medical care and volunteered for community causes in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

One of the people who benefited was 16-year-old José Bracamontes. José had been having a tough time seeing far away during class at Madison High School but has no health insurance. His mother saw a flyer about free eye exams at Wallace Medical Concern in Gresham. Thanks to Kaiser Permanente, José and more than 50 other people got vision checks. Some even went home with donated frames.

Our medical providers saw patients at Wallace Medical Concern, the Free Clinic of Southwest Washington, Outside In, and the North by Northeast Community Health Center. Our dentists provided free exams for more than a dozen middle and high school students at our North Interstate Dental Office.

Other employees made a difference by sorting food at food banks; preparing food, clothing, and hygiene items for farm workers; helping seniors with yard work; cleaning donated bikes; and painting daycare centers, social service agencies, and schools.





Athlete, activist, scholar

Eli Ettinger missed qualifying for the Paralympics by a mere second and a half. But that didn't dampen his competitive spirit for one moment. Instead, he harnessed it to break down barriers for alter-abled students at the University of Oregon.

A scholarship from Kaiser Permanente's People with disAbilities Staff Association helped him pursue his studies in family and human services. "The funding also gave me time to explore ways to create opportunities for myself and other students with disabilities," says Eli.

The Portland native and wheelchair racer was born with spina bifida, a birth defect caused when the spine does not close during early pregnancy. In Eugene, known to many as "Track Town," Eli found few opportunities to participate in intramural and intercollegiate sports. So he did something about it.

Eli won approval for the Adaptive Sports Club. The club will offer wheelchair racing, tennis, basketball, and handcycling. He will help oversee its development while completing his graduate work in special education. "My career goal is to help others with disabilities transition from school to work," says Eli.

Scholarship awards are just one way Kaiser Permanente staff associations celebrate diversity and strengthen ties to our community.



INROADS intern and future nurse-midwife Ta-Nisha Covington holds newborn Justine Norton at Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center.

Birth of a dream

How many interns can say they've had the opportunity to "catch a baby"? Nurse-midwives use that expression to describe bringing an infant into the world because moms "deliver" babies and midwives "catch" them.

Ta-Nisha Covington is a nursing student and INROADS intern who learned all about that firsthand. With close supervision from her Kaiser Permanente nurse-midwife mentor and permission from the mother, Ta-Nisha participated in her first birth at Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center.

"I almost cried," says Ta-Nisha when asked about holding the baby as he took his first breaths.

Ta-Nisha knew at age 8 that she wanted to be part of that experience. Her brother was born with complications, and the kindness of the neonatal nurses never faded from her memory. At first, she wanted to become a doctor, but her internship helped her realize that becoming a nurse-midwife was a better fit for her personality.

The INROADS program matches talented minority youths with internships in their chosen career field. Ta-Nisha has spent summers and other school breaks in Kaiser Permanente's Specialty Services department since 2005. "Everyone has been so supportive," she says. "They've given me opportunities I couldn't have gotten anywhere else."

Ta-Nisha will graduate from Howard University in Washington, D.C., with a double major in nursing and community health education. After gaining work experience in community health, she'll apply to Oregon Health & Science University's midwifery program.

"I feel like my education and internship have prepared me for my dream," says Ta-Nisha. "And my coworkers have become like family."



Healthy kids, healthy communities

Kaiser Permanente has made a long-standing promise to improve the health of children in our communities. One way we live that pledge is by backing reforms that increase access to health care, improve nutrition, and boost physical activity.

CARING FOR OUR FUTURE

We stood in support of Oregon's Measure 50 with the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and other advocates. The proposed constitutional amendment sought to increase the tobacco tax by 85.5 cents per pack. The tax would have helped pay for health care for 116,000 uninsured children through the Healthy Kids Program.

Increasing the price of cigarettes is a proven way to stop kids from starting to smoke. This fact contributed to the tobacco industry's record-breaking \$12 million media campaign to defeat the measure. Though voters did not pass Measure 50, we continue to push for affordable health care for all children.

ENDING OBESITY

One in three U.S. children is overweight. Childhood obesity is to blame for an increase in type 2 diabetes and other chronic health conditions. As direct providers of health care, we see these alarming trends firsthand. That's why we lend our voice to efforts to raise nutrition and activity standards in schools.

In Oregon, we endorsed the Healthy Foods for Healthy Students bill that cut the junk food from cafeterias. We helped set the bar for physical education by supporting HB 3141. The resulting law requires 150 minutes of physical education in elementary schools per week and 225 minutes per week in middle schools. A grant program was set up to help school districts meet the new standards.

We believe that healthy communities begin with healthy kids—and we put that belief into action.



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest.
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