



Mid-Columbia Community Action Council

Suzanne

Suzanne* and two children had been living in a trailer in a friend's driveway since last spring when she first came to MCCAC. Her youngest son, Martin, an avid biology student, has a passion for amphibians. They arrived for a first appointment accompanied by a small tree frog in a plastic box that Martin had converted into a terrarium. With admiration and excitement, the boy demonstrated how the little frog's skin would change color, depending upon the background it was placed on. The first day of school was fast approaching; the boys were excited, but Suzanne worried that her sons would be homeless again this school year.

Finally, an apartment in a subsidized complex became available; but, it required the rent and deposit up front or they'd offer it to the next person in line. The family's \$500/month income, received at the start of that month, was long spent. After all, it costs much more to feed a family when you have no stove and no refrigerator for storing food. MCCAC used new EHA-RRH funds to pay Suzanne's first month pro-rated rent and her security deposit. With this investment of only \$347, the boys started school in a stable, safe, affordable apartment.

The food stamps were helpful....but severely hindered by the realities of my situation...With little exception, you can only buy stuff that needs to be prepared at home... If you're homeless, that means it's kind of like one of those cruelly ironic wishes granted by a genie.

Source: House the Homeless, Inc. Homeless Eating Advice, 2015
(<http://www.housethehomeless.org/>)

*Community Action Agencies, like Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, Inc., support low-income individuals and families, both directly and through partnerships with community organizations. **Read more about how Community Action Agencies are helping Oregonians find safe, stable, and affordable housing at www.caporegon.org.***

* All names changed to protect privacy.

