



## Metropolitan Family Service

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Metropolitan Family Service Hosts International Delegation through the Visitor Leadership Program**

Portland, OR—April 25, 2011 — Representatives from 16 countries are touring the United States to visit organizations with well developed volunteer programs. Executive directors and program managers from countries as far away as Egypt, Liberia, China and India are participating. These service agencies from around the globe are studying volunteer engagement. Their visit to Portland is the only site visit that will focus on the role of older adult volunteers.

The visitors will hear from a panel of volunteers 50+ from several Metropolitan Family Service programs including: RSVP, Experience Corps and Project Linkage. RSVP is a national program that places volunteers in a variety of community sites. Experience Corps has won national recognition for its effectiveness in the classroom, and for the documented benefits to the health and well-being of older adult volunteers. Project Linkage is an assistance program for older adults and people with disabilities; providing transportation, friendly visiting and minor home repair

Metropolitan Family Service is recognized for its pioneering efforts to engage older adult volunteers, beginning with its adult homemaker services in 1969. Today, Metropolitan Family Service has over 600 older adult volunteers working to build a stronger community. The visit from the Council comes at a time when Metropolitan Family Service is launching new efforts to support older community members through new volunteer approaches to promote healthy aging for the 1,000 older community members their programs serve.

The visit was organized by the U.S. State Department through the International Visitor Leadership Program. The group will visit service organizations throughout the United States starting in Washington D.C. The primary objectives are to learn best practices in volunteer recruitment, retention and management. The delegation

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will learn about the widespread role and impact of volunteerism in the United States, and how volunteers are inspired to foster a culture of service and civic responsibility. The nonprofit sector in the United States is unique in the level of social entrepreneurship and in ventures that promote social change. The visit by these delegates is expected to ensure mutual sharing of information and to further volunteer initiatives in other countries around the world.

This group's visit to Portland, Oregon, has been arranged by the World Affairs Council of Oregon, a member of the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV), under the sponsorship of the International Visitor Leadership Program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). ECA promotes international mutual understanding through a wide range of academic, cultural, professional, and sports exchange programs.

### **Background Information**

About **Metropolitan Family Service (MFS)**: For over 60 years, Metropolitan Family Service has played a vital role in the lives of children, families, and older adults. We provide services at more than 88 sites, including 57 schools.

Metropolitan Family Service makes connections that strengthen the lives of 33,000 individuals and families each year.

For more information contact Pat Kaczmarek, Marketing and Communications Manager at 503.232.0007 ext.170, or visit us online at [www.metfamily.org](http://www.metfamily.org).

About the **World Affairs Council of Oregon**: Since 1950, the World Affairs Council of Oregon has facilitated International Visitor Leadership Programs, ranging in subjects from journalism to sustainability to rule of law.

The goal of the International Visitor Leadership Program, as with all people-to-people exchanges of the U.S. Department of State, is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people of other countries.

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