

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Jill L. Carpenter for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
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Title: The Employment and Career Situation of Women, Age  
40 and Older, Who Have Received Services From A Rural  
Displaced Homemaker Program.

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The literature defines a displaced homemaker as a woman who has worked primarily without remuneration to care for the home and family (U.S. Congress, 1977). Federally funded displaced homemaker programs are provided to help these women move from dependency to self-sufficiency (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1986).

The purpose of this study is to examine the employment and career situation of women, age 40 and older, who have received services from a rural displaced homemaker program.

Qualitative research by unstructured interviewing was the primary method used for gathering data. An ecological framework, proposed by Bronfenbrenner, 1979, was used as a guide for interpreting and describing the findings. The

sample consists of 18 women, age 40 and older, who had participated in the Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) Displaced Homemaker Program in Coos Bay, Oregon.

The findings indicated that the majority of women interviewed never expected to be working for pay. Most women exiting the program are employed at part-time minimum wage jobs without benefits and little chance for advancement. A mentorship program is needed to help women advance from a minimum wage job to a more desirable occupation.

The program at SWOCC is understaffed. Formation of a volunteer group of past program participants could help meet the need for assistance. Academic advisors outside the program are not aware of the background and capabilities of the displaced homemaker. Greater importance should be placed on advising these entering students in their selection of college courses.

Age, location, and health care are critical barriers to their personal and professional development. Once the women leave the program they are suddenly cut off from a support system. A follow-up system should be developed to provide a support system. Further recommendations and a model for a follow-up system for SWOCC is presented.

The Employment and Career Situation of  
Women, Age 40 and Older, Who Have Received  
Services From A Rural Displaced Homemaker Program

by

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# THE EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER SITUATION OF WOMEN, AGE 40 AND OLDER, WHO HAVE RECEIVED SERVICES FROM A RURAL DISPLACED HOMEMAKER PROGRAM

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

I'm 51. I've raised four children, two of which still live at home. After 27 years of marriage my husband said, "I want a divorce so I can go and find my happiness". I was struck dumb; that doesn't do a lot for your self-image. I work four mornings a week cleaning a doctor's office and I'm a substitute cook in the school district for little more than minimum wage. I'm just trying to make ends meet. Do I fall apart? Or do I dust myself off and say... "well, here I am world. What do I do now?" (Case Study #8)

The woman in the above narrative is what social scientists call a displaced homemaker. The term refers to an adult, usually female, who has worked primarily without remuneration to care for the home and family (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987; U.S. Congress, 1977). She usually has diminished marketable skills and is not gainfully employed and has had, or would have, difficulty in securing employment. Many of these women have been dependent on the income of another family member but are no longer supported by such income because of divorce, separation, widowhood, disability or long-term unemployment of a spouse, or loss of eligibility for public

assistance (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987; Oregon Department of Education, 1987b; U.S. Congress, 1977). The many interpretations and definitions of a displaced homemaker can be found throughout the literature and in various State and Federal laws and programs across the nation.

Currently, it is estimated that over 15 million displaced homemakers rely on their own earnings (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987). The majority of these women are older and are unemployed (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981). Shields and Sommers (1978) describe the plight of the displaced homemaker: "Because homemaking is not recognized as legitimate labor, these midlife (40-65) former homemakers lack a record of paid employment, have a low image of their abilities, lack the skills and education needed for a career, and face age discrimination in a youth-oriented society" (p. 87). Even if these women do have all the necessary skills for successful employment, they may face an additional problem of living in a small rural community where employment opportunities are scarce, and where competition with younger job seekers and those who have been employed for many years may further exacerbate their situation (Bruyere, Pfof, & Stevens, 1984; U.S. Congress, 1986).

Federal recognition of these women began in the

mid-1970s as a part of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973 by designating displaced homemakers as a special target group deserving priority services. Currently, the Job Training Partnership Act (JPTA) of 1982 (which replaced CETA) and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (Perkins Act) of 1984 are the primary sources of federal support for displaced homemakers. These two sources of funding complement one another. However, the list of services that may be offered under the Perkins Act is impressively broad and flexible and it thus becomes the major source of funding for displaced homemaker programs (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1985; Middleton, 1986).

Today, more than 700 programs nationwide serve displaced homemakers (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987). The primary goal of all programs is to help displaced homemakers reach the point of becoming employable and self-sufficient (Arnold & Marzone, 1981; Displaced Homemakers Network, 1986; Oregon Department of Education, 1987a; U.S. Congress, 1983). The dictionary defines the term self-sufficiency as having the necessary resources to get along without help (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1988). To reach this goal, many barriers faced by these women must be overcome and a number of intermediate needs met. Information is sparse about the status of the displaced homemaker after she exits the

program. In addition, systematic evaluations of displaced homemaker programs, some of which are now over 10 years old, do not exist. Follow-up research is especially scarce for determining the employment and career situations of women after receiving services from programs.

In 1984, the National Displaced Homemakers Network interviewed 20 program directors across the country to learn about program needs, concerns and effectiveness. The program directors felt there was a need to reach out more effectively to special subgroups of displaced homemakers who are not being adequately served, especially rural and older women (Cahn, 1979; Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987; U.S. Congress, 1986).

Rural women are not only hard to reach, but have special needs for service. Many have no local public transportation and few if any local job opportunities. Some may benefit from special assistance in creating their own jobs or businesses. (U.S. Congress, 1986, p. 432)

Older former homemakers who are 'hard to employ' precisely because they are older women. . . need specific services provided to them or the. . . programs will fail to serve fully the older target group. ( Shields & Sommers, 1978, p. 96)

Whether or not programs are truly meeting the needs of women, age 40 and older and living in rural locations, deserves extensive study (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1986; Gross, 1981; Olson, 1983; U.S. Congress, 1983).

To conduct an extensive study on this special subgroup of women, research techniques must be qualitative in nature. Unstructured interviewing has been identified as the best approach for reaching this population. Women who become displaced homemakers are a result of many social factors and influences. By using qualitative methods, these influences are presented through the use of a theoretical framework. An ecological framework, proposed by Bronfenbrenner, 1979, will be used as a guide for interpreting and describing the findings.

#### Statement of the Problem

Some general statistics and facts exist for the displaced homemaker population as a whole. However, there is no research and information on special subgroups of displaced homemakers, especially for older women living in rural locations. Little is known concerning their ability to become employed as a result of participating in a displaced homemaker program (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987).

The purpose of this study is to examine the employment and career situation of women, age 40 and older, who have received services from a rural displaced homemaker program. The resulting information will help program providers better target future services to older, rural women. It is also expected that the follow-up and evaluation procedures, as well as information gained from and used in the present study, will be useful in the

continuing improvement of programs for the rural displaced homemaker.

### Rationale

The need for this study was observed during work done by the researcher in 1987. This work resulted in a research report for the Oregon Department of Education entitled, "Oregon Women: A Report on Their Education, Employment and Economic Status." The work associated with this report required extensive communication with 11 Directors of Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Programs in Oregon. After some general statistics about this population were gathered, it became apparent that information was completely lacking on special subgroups of displaced homemakers including women living in rural locations and older women, and their ability to become employed as a result of participating in a displaced homemaker program.

Further evidence of need for this study is found in the "Evaluation Report on Single Parent and Displaced Homemaker Programs in Oregon" prepared by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) for the Oregon Department of Education. Research for this report was conducted between May 1986 and October 1987. Based on the evaluation of 10 displaced homemaker programs, the report identified two areas for improving program effectiveness: (a) a more systematic follow-up procedures on participants, and, (b) a better tracking systems of

services received by individuals. By examining the employment and career situation of women who have received services from a displaced homemaker program, ways to improve these areas can be clarified and firmly established.

Administrators of displaced homemaker programs receiving funds under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act urgently need data if they are to prepare accurate applications for continued federal funding. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act does not specifically require regular reports on services provided to displaced homemakers, and the rulemaking U.S. Department of Education also has no such requirement. But the National Assessment of Vocational Education (NAVE) study of the impact of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (which is due for reauthorization in 1989), will focus a major portion of the investigation on how well special populations are being served by the Perkins Act. Issues raised include whether displaced homemakers are provided comprehensive services needed for economic independence or are they channeled into training for low paying jobs (Wider Opportunities for Women, 1987). Evidence is clearly needed as to whether or not services of rural displaced homemaker programs have helped older women acquire the skills and ability to stay out of poverty, and achieve employment.

### Objectives of the Study

This study pursues the following objectives:

1. To review literature related to the topics listed below in order to support the need for the study:
  - The history, legislation, and relevant statistics of women in the labor force both nationally and in the State of Oregon.
  - The history, legislation, and relevant statistics of displaced homemaker programs both nationally and in the State of Oregon.
  - The employment of older women, women living in a rural location and related issues pertaining to a woman's ability to becoming satisfactorily employed and economically independent.
2. To identify and design appropriate follow-up research procedures and instrumentation for examining the employment and career situation of women, age 40 and older, who have received services from a rural displaced homemaker program.
3. To conduct the research through case study interviews of 15 to 25 women, age 40 and older, who have received services from a rural displaced homemaker program.
4. To interpret the findings and prepare conclusions and recommendations based on these findings that will have future use in rural displaced homemaker programs.



### Definition of Terms

Displaced Homemaker: "an adult who has worked primarily without remuneration to care for the home and family and, for that reason, has diminished marketable skills" (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987, p. 2).

Self-Sufficiency: "having the necessary resources to get along without help" (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1988, p.1219).

The Ecology of Human Development: "the scientific study of how the individual develops interactively with the immediate social and physical environment, and how aspects of the larger social context affect what goes on in the individual's immediate settings" (Garbarino, 1983, p.9).

### Delimitations

This study is delimited to women who have received services from the Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) Displaced Homemaker Program located in Coos Bay, Oregon. By definition, it is further delimited to women, age 40 and older, living in a rural community.

### Limitations

Some limitations are inherent in the procedures and methods of the study, associated with the interviewing methodology. Good (1963) points out the usefulness of the interview, but indicates factors affecting the reliability of information obtained:

1. The desire of many interviewees to make a good

impression, particularly in answering questions relating to generally accepted standards of behavior.

2. The reluctance of many subjects to reveal highly personal information that might appear damaging to the interviewee.

3. An attitude of confidence in and respect for the interviewer, on the part of the interviewee.

The participants who volunteer to be interviewed in this study may not truly represent other displaced homemakers who received services from the same program, or displaced homemakers who did not seek assistance from the program. Potential users of study results should review the procedures and methods utilized in this investigation before applying them to their situation.

### Summary

Displaced homemakers are predominantly older women who are widowed, currently childless, lacking education beyond high school, unemployed or underemployed, and living in poverty. Because homemaking is not recognized as labor, many of these women lack a record of paid employment. They have a low image of their abilities, lack the skills and education needed for a career, and face additional problems of living in small rural communities where employment opportunities outside the home are scarce (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981).

Federally funded displaced homemaker programs are designed to help these women gain the skills and abilities needed to move from dependency to self-sufficiency (Arnold & Marzone, 1981; Displaced Homemakers Network, 1986). Due to limited data collection and the scarcity of procedures by which effectiveness of these particular kinds of programs can be evaluated, it is not clear that participation in a displaced homemaker program results in a greater chance of being employed and earning a living above poverty levels. This study proposes to compile this information so it may aid program providers in targeting services to older, rural women in the future.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I was raised that prince charming would come along and take care of me. I was never directed to think of anything other than marriage (Case Study #11, Age 48).

To fully understand the above perspective it is important to illustrate the social and cultural life events of women over 40. During the 1930's and early 40's, women were exposed to the concept of working outside the home. Economic need caused by the Great Depression of the late 1920's and the necessity of women working during WW II created a new perspective and life situation for women.

After the war (1945) and for the next three decades women were socialized into believing a woman's life focus was marriage, home, and family and that their husbands were the sole providers (Elder, 1974; Jacobs, 1979). If women did work outside the home, the work was secondary, and was performed for socially acceptable reasons such as augmenting the husband's income or sending children to college. In the 1950's and 60's, the fundamental job of the American woman remained being a good wife, homemaker, and mother. She was only secondarily an economic provider. This philosophy was the American way of life (Jacobs, 1979; National Manpower Council, 1958; Sawhill, 1977).

Events of the 1970's, however, began to change this philosophy. In a period of less affluence, nearly half (45%) of all mothers with children under 18 were in the labor force in 1975, compared with 35 percent in 1965, and 28 percent in 1955 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1979). In 1979 divorce rates soared above the one million mark forcing women to enter the labor market out of economic need. During this time, the women's movement sent strong messages for women to enter the workforce (Jacobs, 1979; Shields and Sommers, 1979; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981).

Women who bought the American dream of motherhood and homemaking and lost, began to increase in numbers during the 1970's and 80's (Bodeen, 1978). The displaced homemaker began to emerge:

A displaced homemaker is a woman whose principal job has been homemaking and who has lost her main source of income because of divorce, separation, widowhood, disability or long-term unemployment of a spouse, or loss of eligibility for public assistance (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987, p. 3).

Furthermore, she may not be eligible for Social Security if she is not old enough; probably not eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (if her children are grown); usually not eligible for Supplemental Security Income (she is neither blind nor disabled); not eligible for unemployment insurance (her homemaking was unpaid labor); and not eligible as a beneficiary under her absent spouse's

pension, retirement, or health plan (her dependency status is gone) (Peltier, 1981; Shields & Sommers, 1978).

An advocacy group called the Displaced Homemakers Network conducted a national study in 1987 to gather demographic statistics on the displaced homemaker. Approximately 15 million women were identified as displaced homemakers, with 79 percent over the age of 45. Displaced homemakers come from all social classes, races, and ethnic groups. Two-thirds of all displaced homemakers were widows. Nearly one-fourth of displaced homemakers (22%) have minor children at home. Eighty percent of displaced homemakers with minor children were under age 45. Older displaced homemakers have consistently less education than their younger counterparts. Fifty-six percent of all displaced homemakers lacked a high school diploma and 22 percent of that group had never completed the eighth grade (Displaced Homemakers Network, 1987).

The Displaced Homemakers Network study (1987) further identified unemployment and underemployment of these women is the major factor leading to poverty. Overall, 66 percent of all displaced homemakers were unemployed, and the older the displaced homemaker, the greater her chances of staying unemployed. Of the displaced homemakers who were working, 40 percent had children under 18 years of age in their care.

According to the 1980 census, the poverty rate among

older women was 19 percent, the highest rate for any age group in the United States. In 1987, the Displaced Homemaker Network indicated that nationally over 40 percent of all displaced homemakers were living below the U.S. Department of Labor's poverty level of \$9,300 for a family of three and that another 20 percent are below the Bureau of Labor Statistics living standard of \$13,950 for a family of three. It further stated that minority displaced homemakers had a much higher poverty rate than their white counterparts; over 60 percent of the displaced homemakers who were black, hispanic, or native American have incomes below the poverty level.

When these women lose their major source of economic support, they are ill-equipped financially and personally to cope with the idea of making a living on their own (Betz & Hackett, 1981; Blai & Boris, 1981; Shields & Sommers, 1979). Services essential to addressing the employment needs of older workers are intensive vocational counseling, skill assessment services, peer support group, referral to other community resources, short-term training, job seeking skills training, job development assistance and job placement (U.S. Congress, 1983). Displaced homemakers need these services but they should not be confused or identified as having exactly the same needs as unemployed male workers or married re-entry women. Unemployed male workers have work experiences outside the home. Married

re-entry women often search for employment as a second income or from a desire to pursue a career after their children are raised (Keniston, 1976; Yankelovich, 1981).

In contrast, the displaced homemaker must earn enough to pay the rent or mortgage, support children (and sometimes elderly parents), and meet all other expenses of a household. She usually has little if any work experience outside the home and lacks the ability to search for employment, develop a resume and interview for a job, let alone have the appropriate clothing and necessary transportation (Brown, 1978; Knox, 1983). She may have a fear of returning to school or of competing with more experienced workers. Additionally, she may be without family support or the financial resources needed to change her present situation. This is especially true if she lives in a rural area where educational and employment opportunities are minimal (Ekstrom, Marvel, & Swenson, 1985).

Research has identified many internal and external barriers that inhibit women's occupational aspirations and vocational choices. DiSabatino (1976) identifies the internal barriers as fear of failure, poor self-esteem, role conflict, and the perceived consequences and incentives for engaging in achievement-related behaviors. Traditional socialization tends to condition women to have a low self-concept and to be nonassertive (Betz, 1982; Betz &



Hackett, 1981; Verheyden-Billiard, 1974). DiSabatino points out that because a woman lacks confidence and self-esteem, she is more vulnerable than a man to the fear of failure. Studies have identified a significant correlation between the fear of failure in childhood and adulthood among women but not among men (Hoffman, 1974; O'Leary, 1974).

Adler (1976) points out that women are taught to place work secondary to family and men have been raised to assume they will have a career; the nature of their choice is which career. Gender and age stereotypes of middle-aged and older women contribute to their selecting a narrow range of career and educational choices (Aslin, 1976; Ekstrom, Marvel, & Swenson, 1985; Turner, 1977).

Many displaced homemakers lack support from family members and have few if any outside social networks (Shields & Sommers, 1978). Garbarino (1983) describes a social support network as a set of interconnected relationships among a group of people that provides enduring patterns of nurturance (in any or all forms) and provides contingent reinforcement for efforts to cope with life on a day-to-day basis. Friendship groups have been identified as the primary social network for single women. Without these social support networks, women have no one to turn to for mutual assistance and communication about problems, stress, or challenges, such as coping with a new job or reentering college for the first time. (Garbarino, 1983).

In several studies, family needs and responsibilities constitute a serious obstacle for women wanting to seek paid employment or further education. Research by Faver (1981) concluded that career values are more likely to be high among women who are young, single, or childless; whereas, family values are more likely to be high among women who are older, married, or the mothers of preschool children.

Knox (1983) conducted a study of 160 women to identify factors affecting disadvantaged women in their efforts to gain long-term employment or to complete vocational and technical education programs. Two factors consistently identified were (a) the lack of marketable skills and (b) the lack of support services, such as child care and transportation. Other inhibiting factors identified included financial difficulties, inadequate socialization to working outside the home and a general lack of employment information and educational opportunities.

Additional external barriers include sex and age discrimination in educational institutions and the labor market (Arnold & Marzone, 1981; DiSabatino, 1976; Knox, 1983). Often women are trapped in low-paying jobs owing to factors such as lack of education or sex discrimination. They cannot afford the additional schooling they need to lift themselves out of their predicament (Ekstrom, 1972, p. 47). O'Leary (1974) presented research suggesting that:

Men in positions of authority, who make most of the promotional decisions affecting women, frequently have sex-role stereotypical attitudes toward competency that inhibit women's occupational advancement. Persistent myths concerning the sincerity of the commitment on the part of the female worker continue to influence promoters' perceptions of her and to have a detrimental effect on her chances for advancement (p. 811).

Educational barriers such as admissions, financial aid regulations, curricular offerings, student services, and faculty and staff attitudes can create special problems for adult women (Ekstrom, Marvel, & Swenson, 1985). Bias against women among counselors and professionals to whom they turn for employment information or training for a career is documented (Arnold & Marzone, 1981; Crites & Fitzgerald, 1980; Fretz, 1981; Schlossberg, 1976). Verheyden-Billiard (1974) suggested that current theories of career choice cannot adequately explain the vocational behavior of women. Consequently, special knowledge and expertise of women's career behavior is needed by counselors.

Bagby (1979) described six adjustment processes displaced homemakers often go through that inhibit their ability to seek educational help or counseling:

1. The emotional process is the shift from hurt and pain at the death of a relationship and loss of familiar

duties and habits to a feeling of being worthwhile, independent and capable.

2. The legal process is the shift from being uninformed, uninvolved, and confused about legal matters to questioning.

3. The economic process is the shift from being dependent on a breadwinner's income, credit, and financial planning to establishing independent financial and vocational skills.

4. The parental process is the shift from being overly responsible and protective to supporting children's existing ties with other adults, building new support systems for one's children, and fostering their self-reliance.

5. The social process is the shift from dependency on the status and relationships of husband and children to building independently a circle of one's own friends and social supports.

6. The psyche process is the shift from fear, despair, and loneliness to hope, purpose, confidence, and a sense of security. (p. 9)

The factor most needed is time; time to remove psychological blocks and change the focus from personal loss to positive gains before progress can be made within any of the above adjustment processes (Bagby, 1979; Cox & Heatherly, 1985; New Jersey State Department of Education, 1979).

Welfare becomes a barrier for women wanting to advance in their job or further their education. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps and medicare are the programs commonly called welfare. Together they constitute the core of public assistance in the United States. In 1981 Congress passed into law the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) which significantly reduced expenditures in social welfare programs serving the poor and implemented the new Workfare Program.

Recipients must find the first available job under the Workfare Program, mandating all welfare recipients to work in a designated place for a specified number of hours before receiving an allotment. Allowances are not made for persons desiring training. Women receiving welfare are unable to participate in education and training programs or they become sanctioned (Ferraro, 1982; Sarri & Zinn, 1984). As a result many women are unable to participate in retraining programs, thereby denying them the opportunity to work toward freeing themselves of welfare dependency.

Without work experience and the necessary education, these jobs usually pay only minimum wage. Kamerman (1984) found that jobs paying only minimum wage, plus the associated costs of working, usually including child care and transportation, actually yielded less than the combination of AFDC allotments, food stamps, reduced

housing and medical benefits. This can become a powerful work disincentive for women.

Sarri & Zinn (1984) add that if a woman leaves the welfare system to take a job, she has incredible bureaucratic difficulties getting back into the system should she lose her job. The amount of red tape involved in establishing AFDC eligibility provides a strong added incentive for women to remain in the system, once enrolled.

Another barrier for women wanting to work or further their education is their geographic location. Many displaced homemakers living in a rural area are faced with the fact that higher paying jobs are scarce and costs to relocate may be prohibitive. Lack of financial resources, family support and the inability to relinquish existing obligations (such as owning a home or children in school), adds to the problem of relocating (Ekstrom, Marvel, & Swenson, 1985).

Since the mid 1970's, special programs have begun across the nation to address the needs of the displaced homemaker and the many barriers they face. Most programs are located in educational institutions such as community colleges or vocational technical schools where they can be indirectly supported by that institution. Women seeking these services represent a diverse group in age, education, and financial background (Forsythe, 1978-79; Jacobs, 1982).

The most effective displaced homemaker programs provide personal counseling; support groups; job readiness

training; up-to-date career information about the wide range of occupational choices; support services for child care; transportation and emergency needs; skills assessment and transference; skills training; basic education assessment and training; job development and placement; and follow-up services (Arnold & Marzone, 1981; Cox & Heatherly, 1985; Women In Transition, 1983).

In 1986, a report by the U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, described the various causes and effects of displacement on homemakers and programs for displaced homemakers. Interviews with 20 displaced homemaker program directors revealed that services offered through their centers were uniquely targeted for the displaced homemaker. Local program directors have also indicated that different kinds of services are appropriate to meet the needs of different types of clients: rural women; long-time recipients of welfare; minorities; widows; and older women. But most programs do not offer separate program components for different subgroups of women because of the lack of staff and funding to do so (U.S. Congress, 1983; U.S. Congress, 1986).

Results of a study of 30 displaced homemakers who had participated in a 1985 Kentucky Job Exploration Program indicated that women were very insecure during the first year on the job and that a lack of self-confidence was evident. The study concluded that the program would be

more effective if expanded to include communication skills and self-image building (Cox & Heatherly, 1985).

Government programs to assist displaced homemakers are little more than a decade old. In 1975, California passed the first law to fund programs for these women (Shields & Sommers, 1979). The first Federal legislation was the 1976 Amendment to the Vocational Education Act, and in 1978 CETA made them a target group for employment and training (Wider Opportunities For Women, 1985).

Today, the largest source of federal support is the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (Public Law 98-524), which redesigned the Vocational Education Act of 1976. The Perkins Act contains the largest set-aside of vocational training dollars targeted toward female populations in U. S. history.

The services emphasized in the Perkins Act are vocational education and training, including basic literacy instruction; counseling, including self-assessment and career planning and guidance; support services such as child care and transportation; and stipends for students who have acute economic needs which cannot be met under work-study programs. The Perkins Act also encourages training in secondary and post-secondary schools in nontraditional occupations. The purpose of this segment is to give women an alternative to low paid, traditionally female jobs. For more detail on the Carl D. Perkins



Vocational Education Act see Appendix A.

Another source of funding for displaced homemakers is through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which replaced CETA in 1982. The services most prominent in JTPA are training in job-search techniques; job development and job matching; and on-the-job training (Middleton, 1986; U.S. Congress, 1983).

Issues and concerns of how funds are being distributed and used and if federal support will continue for the displaced homemaker is always a question. The age eligibility, at age 40 and older, was proposed in the U.S. House of Representatives, H.B. 10270, on the grounds that both younger and older women are likely to have more options and resources than those in their middle years. In 1986, the U.S. Congress addressed the age eligibility issue by saying women over 64 are generally eligible for some form of Social Security or pension. Younger women, with recent training or work experience, are often more employable. If they have young children, they may qualify for public assistance. And, they are more likely to remarry (U.S. Congress, 1986). However, within six months, when H.B. 10270 was introduced as an amendment to CETA, confusion over the definition of a displaced homemaker, whether intentional or not, had become so widespread that it was necessary to remove the age limitation of women, age 40 and older, to a broader definition of women of all

ages (Shields & Sommers, 1978).

Urgent issues in the Perkins Act are data collection and evaluation. Systematic evaluations of displaced homemaker programs do not exist. The largest study in existence is a descriptive, not evaluative, account of the 47 displaced homemaker projects funded under CETA in 1980 (U.S. Congress, 1986). The act does not specifically require regular reports on services provided to single parents and homemakers, and the U.S. Department of Education has no such requirement (Wider Opportunities for Women, 1987).

The Displaced Homemaker Network (1985) and research by Middleton, 1986, identified major concerns about JTPA's ability to address the special needs of displaced homemakers. The major shortcoming of JTPA is the tendency of program officials to select participants who need only minimal training and who would probably find jobs on their own. Also, JTPA legislation does not have a clear mandate to serve displaced homemakers. Such services appear to be optional.

A lack of information exists about JTPA since displaced homemaker programs and the women they serve, are not sufficiently tied into the local JTPA system. Displaced homemakers are not being served under the 10 percent window for people who face barriers to employment but are not low income. Many JTPA contracts do not pay the contractor until the client is placed in a job, but many

women cannot wait that long to be paid and the job placement rate set by the U.S. Department of Labor for JTPA training, and adapted by States, is too high. JTPA does not provide support for child care and transportation, which seriously hampers the ability of many low-income and single parent women to participate in the program.

Although JTPA assistance to Displaced Homemakers is weak in many programs, a number of displaced homemaker programs are funded jointly through JTPA and vocational education funds. JTPA strongly emphasizes job search assistance and prompt employment for many displaced homemakers needing a job as soon as possible (Middleton, 1986).

Women, in comparison to men, are largely concentrated in a small number of low paying, low-status occupations which present few opportunities for advancement (Betz & Hackett, 1981; O'Leary, 1974; Oregon Department of Education, 1987b). On the whole, these jobs are weighted toward traditionally female, generally low-paid jobs in the clerical, retail sales, and service fields. For example, a fact sheet from the State of Minnesota in 1984, indicated that of the displaced homemaker program clients who are placed, 42 percent are in service jobs, 30 percent in clerical work, and 14 percent in sales. Many need a source of income immediately, and without training stipends or loans, they are forced to accept low-paid jobs with little prospect of

advancement.

In the past few decades there has been a fundamental shift in the job market. As a result of technology, traditional entry-level jobs have diminished and major growth has taken place in service delivery, both in the private and public sectors (National Alliance of Business, 1986). Many such jobs already exist in areas such as home health care, child care, and nursing home care. However, such employment is usually poorly paid, dead-end, and physically demanding, condemning most of those who perform such needed service to an age of poverty (National Alliance of Business, 1986).

In an effort to match women's life experiences with related jobs, Ekstrom (1981) developed an instrument called the Experience Description Summary (EDS). Following the administration of the EDS to 155 adult women seeking employment, he found that adult women have a wide variety of life experiences through which they acquire skills and knowledge relevant to employment and to vocational education. A follow-up survey of these women who obtained jobs indicated that their job performance was equal to or above that of all recently hired persons (Ekstrom & Gruenberg, 1981).

The displaced homemaker has been in a nurturing role for a number of years and seeks a similar role in the workplace. Many cannot identify with nontraditional

employment which offers higher pay. In 1983 the California State Department of Education indicated that few older women are interested in nontraditional jobs, but for those that are, placements are in a variety of nontraditional occupations.

Joynes (1983), director of a displaced homemaker program in Florida called New Options, conducted a survey of 200 employers to find out their needs and attitudes about displaced homemakers. Findings indicated employers wanted applicants with employability skills and a desire to work steadily and enthusiastically, qualities displaced homemakers already have. The survey further revealed that employers had positive feelings toward hiring the mature woman as an employee, but they did not know the meaning of the term displaced homemaker or the problems they faced (U.S. Congress, 1983).

In the absence of any full-scale national program evaluations, program personnel appear to rely on their own experience and the results of studies done within various states. The Indiana State Office of Occupational Development (1981) conducted research to determine the adequacy of employment and training programs to displaced homemakers. The research also assessed displaced homemaker characteristics, and the effectiveness of past and current programs. Findings indicated that existing training and employment services were adequate but

potential participants were not served due to lack of programs in many areas of the state. Also, many women were not served due to eligibility requirements. The typical displaced homemaker was over 35 and white, had no more than a twelfth grade education, earned less than \$5,000, and was unskilled or semi-skilled and currently unemployed. In 1980-81, seven programs were operating in Indiana.

The question of how successful these programs are in helping women toward self-sufficiency is still unanswered. A major reason for the lack of follow-up studies on displaced homemakers is related to the difficulty of contacting women, or keeping in contact with participants. Once participants leave the program, the lack of program staff and funding to collect needed information (and the need to assure confidentiality among program participants), have combined to highlight the need to develop new methods for gathering follow-up information for this population (New Jersey State Department of Education, 1979; Oregon Department of Education, 1987a).

Traditional quantitative methods (usually using a mailed survey or questionnaire) typically provide information on a woman's job title, hourly wage, and related demographic data (Gross, 1981). However, in order to gather needed data and information on the ability of displaced homemakers to become self-sufficient, and to be able to evaluate program effectiveness, a more appropriate

research approach is offered by certain qualitative methodology (Bogdan & Taylor, 1984; Cox & Heatherly, 1985).

Rist (1977) describes qualitative methodology as more than a set of data gathering techniques as used in quantitative methodology:

1. Qualitative research is inductive. Researchers develop concepts, insights, and understanding from patterns in the data, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories. They begin their studies with only vaguely formulated research questions.

2. In qualitative methodology the researcher looks at settings and people holistically; people, settings, or groups are not reduced to variables, but are viewed as a whole. The qualitative researcher studies people in the context of their past and the situations in which they find themselves.

3. Qualitative researchers are sensitive to their efforts on the people they study. In in-depth interviewing they model their interviews after a normal conversation, rather than a formal question and answer exchange.

4. Qualitative researchers try to understand people from their own frame of reference.

5. The qualitative researcher suspends, or sets aside, his or her own beliefs, perspectives, and predispositions.

6. For the qualitative researcher, all perspectives are valuable.

7. Qualitative methods are humanistic. When we reduce people's words and acts to statistical equations, we lose sight of the human side of social life. When we study people qualitatively, we get to know them personally and experience what they experience in their daily struggles in society.

8. Qualitative researchers emphasize validity in their research. . . quantitative researchers emphasize reliability and replicability in research. It is not possible to achieve perfect reliability if we are to produce valid studies of the real world.

9. For the qualitative researcher, all settings and people are worthy of study.

10. Qualitative methods have not been as refined and standardized as other research approaches. There are guidelines to be followed, but never rules. The methods serve the researcher; never is the researcher a slave to procedure and technique (Rist, 1977, p. 6).

What the qualitative methodologists study, how they study it, and how they interpret it depends upon their theoretical perspective. The task of the qualitative methodologist is to capture this process of interpretation and tie their perspectives to a theoretical framework or school of thought in the social sciences (Bogdan & Taylor, 1984).

The ecological framework proposed by Bronfenbrenner



(1979) offers a useful approach for sorting out the data, highlighting the issues, and formulating the questions asked and answered in qualitative research. This approach goes beyond the immediate settings of family, friends, neighborhood and school to the influence of social attitudes, and government policy that directly or indirectly affect the individual.

Four general types of environmental systems represent this framework, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, each categorized by their effects on the individual and their environment:

1. Microsystem: This level is closest to the individual, and is made up of relations between individuals and their environments in an immediate setting, such as the family, neighborhood, school, and workplace.

2. Mesosystem: These relationships between microsystems in which the individual experiences. Important mesosystems include relationships among home, peer groups, school, church, work, and neighborhood.

3. Exosystem: This is composed of social structures, such as the media, government, and school boards, that make decisions affecting the individual but do not include the individual in the decision-making process.

- 4). Macrosystem: This is composed of shared beliefs and attitudes of a culture. These include the cultural beliefs, religion, and assumptions about "how things should

be done" in a society.

Rubin's (1976) qualitative research of the working class family used the ecology of human development perspective for understanding the interplay of person and social influences. Rubin describes this use in her book, Worlds of Pain:

The interviews conducted with young adult men and women center on the problems and pride in their lives, painting a portrait of a certain type of American. All four systems can be seen as they come together to describe and delimit the voices of the subjects. . . qualitative research is an important contributor to our understanding of human development (p. 6).

#### Summary

Literature reviewed pertaining to the displaced homemaker was presented in this chapter. The displaced homemaker's situation is a complicated one. These women are generally perceived to have rendered valuable services to their families and to society as homemakers and mothers. They move abruptly from dependence or interdependence to being alone. They often have to adjust to a reduced standard of living and a new self-image. They lack the marketable skills or recent paid work experience that would enable them to get a good job. They are faced with both internal and external barriers to becoming economically independent.

The needs of a displaced homemaker are many and can best be addressed through programs designed specifically to

meet those needs. There is a paucity of literature relating the successes (or failures) of programs designed to help displaced homemakers achieve self-sufficiency.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes how the study was organized and conducted. Qualitative research by unstructured interviewing was the primary method used for gathering data. Discussed are the population, sample, and the data collection and analysis procedures.

#### Population

The study population consisted of displaced homemakers who had participated in the Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) Displaced Homemaker Program in Coos Bay, Oregon. This center was selected because of its rural location. Also, it has been in operation since October 1985, longer than any other rural displaced homemaker program in Oregon. During the three year period, preceding this study, approximately 398 women have received services from this center. Further details about Coos Bay and the SWOCC Displaced Homemaker Program is found in Appendix B.

#### Sample

Thirty-eight women, age 40 and older, who had received services from the SWOCC Displaced Homemaker Program between October 1985 and April 1988 were contacted by mail and asked to participate in this study. Twenty-two agreed to participate, 18 women were

interviewed, yielding the actual sample size of this study. The sample does not fit the literature definition of a displaced homemaker which describes the majority of these women as being widowed and childless.

Age: The age of the participants ranged from age 41 to 60 years with a median age of 45.

Ethnic Background: Sixteen (16) interviewees reported their ethnic background as White and two (2) reported ethnicity as White and American Indian.

Marital Status: Ten women were divorced: four were separated; two were widowed; and two reported being married, with one spouse disabled and the other spouse unemployed. Out of the 16 women who were separated, divorced, or widowed, one had been on her own for less than a year, nine reported being on their own between one and five years, and six reported more than five years.

Number of Children: All 18 women reported having children, with numbers ranging from one to six each. Two respondents had the greatest number of children still at home: one with five children and the other with four. The majority, nine women, had one or two children living with them, and seven women had no children living at home. The youngest child living at home was three years old at the time of the interview.

Household: Of the 18 women, three reported having someone other than their children or spouse living in the household.

Two women had male friends living with them and one woman operated a boarding house in which four other adults paid rent to live in the home.

Education: One woman had a sixth grade education and the other 17 had a high school diploma or GED. Two women had technical certificates, one in bookkeeping, the other as a certified nursing assistant, and two women had associate degrees, both in business and marketing.

Employment Status & Income Level: Thirteen women were employed at the time of the interview but only four were working full-time (35 or more hours per week). Hourly wage income was the major source of income for those working and was reported as being the most consistent form of support. Spousal support through alimony and child support were the second largest sources of income, and AFDC, grants, self-employment, and other public assistance such as food stamps were all supplemental sources of income. Most women had a combination of the above income sources. Fifteen women reported their monthly household incomes: Seven had incomes of less than \$500 a month with the lowest income being \$230 a month, and six had incomes of less than \$1,000 a month. The highest monthly income received by one woman working full-time was \$2,000 a month. Another woman received a combination of alimony and child support of \$2,500 a month. She was raising six children at the time of the interview.

### Data Collection

Qualitative interviewing was the primary method of data collection. This research method was chosen because it is nondirective, unstructured, nonstandardized, and open-ended, allowing the researcher to understand the interviewees perceptions about their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words (Bogdan & Taylor, 1984; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Greenwood (1980) explains why she chose this research method when studying women, work, and powerlessness:

I found the qualitative interview method extremely valuable for getting a good understanding of issues involved. The interviews were often like spirals. We would turn around similar themes in various parts of their lives and, at each turn, I would gain deeper insight into the issue at hand. (p. 44)

By using this research method, concepts, insights, and the emergence of common themes in the data occurred, as opposed to collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories.

To form a sample population, a letter, endorsed and mailed by the Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) Displaced Homemaker Center Director, was sent to all women, age 40 and older, who had entered the program and received some form of assistance. The letter (Appendix C) described the purpose of the study and asked for

voluntary consent to participate in a personal interview.

An Interview Guide of general questions pertaining to one's present employment and career situation was developed and used as a reference for the unstructured questioning and for collecting and comparing data gained through the interviews. Unstructured questioning allowed the respondent to discuss the topic at length and topics could flow into the next without being specifically questioned. Structured interviewing, on the other hand, involves predeveloped questions that require more or less specific responses from interviewees (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The topics for questioning were reviewed by the State Sex Equity Specialist and the 11 Displaced Homemaker Project Directors in Oregon. The Interview Guide was field tested by interviewing three women who had received services from the SWOCC Displaced Homemaker Center. The Interview Guide used in this study is included at Appendix D.

The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the women participating. The majority of the interviews were conducted on the SWOCC campus. Only one interview was in a woman's home and two were located at restaurants. The length of an unstructured interview, as described by Mangold and Zaki (1983) is very dependent upon the purpose of the interview and that no optimum period of time can be fixed. The purpose of this study was to examine the employment and career situation of women who participated



in the SWOCC displaced homemaker center. Consequently, the interviews varied in time as each woman described her special situation. However, the average interview time was approximately one hour.

Guba & Lincoln (1985) suggest that validity and reliability can best be attained through member checks, phenomenon recognition, "the recognition of a phenomenon as 'real' by those who experience it," and by auditability (p. 186). Member checks were used during the interviews, which involved checking the perceptions and experiences of one respondent against the experiences and understandings of the other respondents. During the interviews another check, called phenomenon recognition, was used by the researcher. This involved presenting researcher observations and assumptions to the respondent and asking whether they did, indeed, represent their common and shared experience. Auditability requires that the work of the researcher be reviewed on a continual basis by a person (or audit) outside the study. Consistency without alteration of the data provides at least some form of reliability to qualitative inquiry.

All interviews were tape recorded in preference to hand written notes in front of the interviewee. A study by Belson (1967) showed no significant differences between interviews which were tape recorded and those that were not. Similarly, the interviewer's own participation may be

interrupted or blocked by having to write notes.

Following each interview the tapes were transcribed by a typist (or audit), who was someone other than the interviewer. This approach helped to ensure credibility by keeping the recording of information reasonably consistent.

An interviewer's journal was also employed as part of the research methodology. Following each interview, notes were made in the journal by the interviewer outlining emerging themes, interpretations, perceptions, and nonverbal expressions observed during the interview. These notes became part of the data and supported data analysis and interpretation.

Respondents were asked to complete a short questionnaire at the time of the interview to gather demographic data including age, educational level, and marital status. These data were used to describe the sample. To assure confidentiality, names were not used in the results of this research. Instead, the questionnaire was coded in order to keep names separated from the recorded interview transcripts.

### Analysis Procedures

In the qualitative interviewing method, coding is the next step in developing and refining interpretations of data. The coding process involves bringing together and analyzing all data from the interview transcripts, field notes, and the researcher's journal. "What may have initially been vague

ideas and general questions can now be refined, expanded, discarded, or fully developed during this analysis stage" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1984, p. 136).

The following analysis procedures outlined by both Bogdan & Taylor, 1984, and Guba & Lincoln, 1985, were used directly in this study:

1. Development of coded categories: Each idea, theme or question was a category with an assigned number-letter code given to it. For example, the number 17 might refer to the category "employment barriers," wherein a number and letter refers to specific types of employment barriers: 17a age discrimination; 17b education, and so on. As data were coded, the coding scheme was refined, collapsed, or expanded to fit combined information. The data were never rearranged to fit the coding scheme.

2. Sorting the coded categories: Sorting the coded categories was accomplished by manually cutting up a copy of the coded transcripts and notes. All the coded data were then assembled according to each category.

3. Refining the analysis: After the data were coded and sorted, all remaining data were analyzed to see if anything was left out. Themes, concepts and propositions clearly began to emerge, while other topics did not fit the data at all. Bogdan & Taylor (1984) explain that one should not try to force all the data into an analytical scheme if they do not fit. He also points out that there are no

guidelines in qualitative research for determining how many data are necessary to support a conclusion or interpretation.

Bogdan & Taylor (1984) describe the final phase in qualitative analysis as one of determining the data's credibility by discounting the data, that is, interpreting the data in the context for which they were collected:

1. Solicited or unsolicited data: "Looking at whether people say different things in response to the questions as opposed to when they are talking spontaneously" (p. 140).

2. Who was there: The difference between what people say and do when they are alone as opposed to when others are around.

3. Direct and indirect data: When analyzing the data, both direct statements and indirect data (themes, interpretations, or propositions) are coded. "The more you have to read into your data, to draw inferences based on indirect data, the less sure you can be about the validity of your interpretations and conclusions" (p. 142).

4. Sources: It is wise to distinguish between perspectives held by one person and those of a broader group of people. When findings are written, it is best to define the number of people holding that perspective, such as "one informant," "some people," "most informants," and so on.

5. Personal assumptions and presuppositions: One's data requires some understanding of one's own perspectives, logic, and assumptions. This is why it is important for

researchers to record their own feelings and assumptions in a researcher's journal throughout the study as a check on themselves.

### Summary

This chapter includes a description of the sample population, and the data collection and analysis procedures. Qualitative research by unstructured interviewing was the primary method used for gathering data.

A sample size of 18 women, age 40 and older, who had participated in the SWOCC Displaced Homemaker program agreed to be interviewed. All interviews were tape recorded and averaged one hour in length. An open-ended interview guide was field tested and used as a guide for collecting the data, and a short questionnaire was also administered during the time of the interview for collecting demographic information. Field notes and nonverbal notations of the researcher's observation were written in a researcher's journal that was also used as part of the data base. All data were coded and sorted into categories with similar themes. Data were then analyzed according to the context in which they were collected, and several cross-checks were used for assessing credibility. In the next chapter, the data are reported and summarized.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The results of this study are reported in two sections. The first presents a profile of each respondent, totaling 18 case studies. The second section provides an analysis and summary of interview responses.

#### Section One

Case Study #1: The woman in this case study is 45 years old, divorced less than five years and has three children with one still living at home.

I grew up in Medford-- I came out of a marriage to being displaced-- all of a sudden it is wake up time-- after 20 years of marriage-- not having anything to do and trying to get a good paying job is major-- let me tell you, you cannot support one child on \$3.30 an hour-- you really can't.

For 3 months I was on welfare-- if your grant is \$380 a month, you make \$350 all they are going to give is the \$30 you didn't make-- there is no way for advancement-- no way to get out of the mud puddle-- you can't get above \$350 even if you're getting child support-- they will take it-- they would not give me anything but the monthly allotment to a dependent child-- you have to go out and look for a job-- a town the size of Mrytlecreek-- there is not a lot you could find-- if you didn't go out and hunt for a job-- they would sanction you -- you can't go into job training or education-- they sanction you-- they don't make it easier for you to better yourself and at times I think they like that stigmatism-- they like to get their hook

into you-- especially the ones with very young children-- hey you can survive on that-- especially if there's a boyfriend. Why do any more if you can sit at home and pull in \$400 bucks a month?

Then I found this program-- I need the support group-- in case I get down-- usually about third week into the term I'm in a bucket of tears for about three days because everything catches up and I don't have enough time --I am only three weeks into the term but I am six weeks behind in everything-- and this was the first term that it didn't hit me-- so I must be doing something right! I've been two years in school.

I've almost reached the end of the tunnel-- I'm very determined since I only have 17 credits left-- if you had asked me how I was doing at the beginning of the first term I could have come up with 150 of them (barriers). The major thing is where I'm going and having the funds to get there-- because it takes money to move-- and I'm doing it!

My sister wants me to come back to Wyoming-- my mother would probably disown me if I went back there-- she lives in Medford, Oregon-- my sister says there are 3 openings in the County Courthouse-- one is an administrative assistant-- they all are administrative assistants-- it is \$1200 a month and I went "Oh"-- I'm just amazed \$1,200 a month-- my sister said I would get hired in a minute-- my mother was in the background all the time telling my sister don't you tell her to move over here to Wyoming-- my sister said if we can get you to move over here I know we can get Mom to move over here too-- the other place-- I think Medford would be more of a choice for me than Eugene because I have family in Medford-- I'm sure I still have friends down there-- In Eugene I know no one-- if I should get hired and they wanted me to move to such and such place-- we would move you--

there would be no problem.

I could be a professional student-- I really could-- I talked to my advisor today about going to summer school or waiting till fall and he was saying-- you could go on-- I was thinking-- ya, I could go on to bigger and better things-- I think probably what I would like to do is get a full-time job with a good salary with the benefits and then slow down like I see other people on campus-- that have their jobs and they've been through the program or they were lucky and didn't need the program and they're continuing with night school-- and I could perceive me doing that-- probably more so than being a full-time student.

I like the beach-- I like to read-- I really like to read-- I like walking the beach-- crocheting-- good video, the tear jerker type-- I did buy a bicycle for \$15.00 at a garage sale and (son's name) and I go riding around the lake once in while-- close by-- I keep telling him wait till I get through school-- we will have a house instead of an apartment and you can have a dog-- he wants a dog.

A successful business woman-- you know I don't have lofty ideas-- I just want my very own desk and have my very own pictures and drawers and stuff like that-- to have my own little nitch-- I'm not going to have to take the \$3.30 an hour job-- even if I find something to get me on my feet it is going to be more than minimum wage-- and its a stepping stone to get the right one-- right now the only thing that could possibly stop me would be major medical-- that I couldn't function-- I have even tried the mind trip of curing myself and I've done it-- like a cold or flu I don't have time for this and it works-- it really works-- it's a lot to do with your attitude.

I'd like to be self-supporting and financially



independent-- to be able to take in a movie and not on an economy price and buy the popcorn and buy the dollar candy bars instead of buying them at the grocery store and smuggling them in.

Field Notes: The minute she walked in the room I received a feeling of instant joy and excitement coming from her-- she wanted to tell me how much the program had helped her-- the one thing I noticed was her ability to hide the pain and talk about her situation through her sense of humor-- she had a very positive outlook on life and she'll be very appreciative to one day find the job that will give her a desk she can call her own.

Case Study #2: The woman in this case study is age 45, divorced more than five years and has two children with no children living at home.

My father is a commercial salmon fisherman and I was raised here on the coast-- I'm like a person with a foot in both worlds--my father is the hunter-gatherer and my mother is a graduate of college and teaches school-- so between the two there was definite emphasis on higher education-- yet from my father there was living off the land sort of a thing-- being the oldest girl-- no boys-- I inherited the deck position on the boat and I spent my summers from my early childhood following my dad-- who followed the fish and I spent a lot of my summers camping-- living over an open park. When I got to be about 13 years old I went on the boat with my dad-- partly because he needed a boat puller and partly because I was getting a little wild-- my mother wanted him to keep an eye on me-- he knew where I was every minute on a boat.

I have two sisters both younger-- one went through

college and the other one went into the army-- they didn't have to encourage me to work-- I was organizing plays and wrote newspapers in pencil-- sold popcorn-- I was the babysitter-- I always had money and worked at something-- I graduated from High school enrolled in Corvallis and wanted to major in Anthropology-- then as life came and went I took night classes as I could-- for awhile I had my own business in craft work-- batik work and painting-- batik gave me the widest range of things I could produce for market-- so I have a little experience.

At one point-- when I was first married-- I was given more material goods than most women manage to accumulate in a lifetime-- I'm talking good stuff-- we didn't have a lot of money from our incomes but we did have a lot of good stuff-- china, silver and antiques but we were not happy-- the marriage broke up-- I started the first pre-school in Newport, Oregon that . was far back when there was no concept for pre-school in Newport-- I wanted them to get the idea that children at the age 3 are ready for enrichment-- so I started one-- it took money, magic and time-- I worked hard for that center-- I stayed in Newport with the children until their father took the children and disappeared and I didn't have 11 years of raising them-- I didn't have the usual time to take care of children-- they were taken illegally-- he sold off a large tract of land and the whole clan disappeared-- I didn't know where the children were-- until my sons turned 18-- they were able to contact me and come back-- when you miss out on most of their life you don't get close-- I have two sons-- they were gone from about age 7 to 18-- that is 11 years of having a nightmare at least once a week-- waking up with a nightmare wondering if they were dead or alive-- because I didn't know-- that part of my life was spent on the road trying to seek out where they might be-- I've taken a lot of strange jobs and moved a great

deal-- I've been able to do a lot of things-- I worked as a waitress, fish cannery, tree planter-- I worked restoring totem poles in Alaska-- cocktail waitress-- bartender-- lots and lots of restaurant and bar experience because you can make good money-- you can walk into a town and have a job, money in your pocket and food and you meet a lot of people who can put you in touch with what you need-- so quite often when ever I made a jump, the first place I landed was in a restaurant job and from there I blossomed into the community-- It's very easy for women to find work-- it's just that they can't make a living-- they have two or three kids and they're still at poverty level working for \$3.35 an hour-- it's hard.

I don't qualify for benefits-- I have extreme hostility in this area because the jobs I've done are too low on the pay scale-- you don't get dental and you don't get medical working in restaurants-- in fact throughout my entire experience of different kinds of jobs I have never come across one where it was offered-- never-- in five states and two countries-- the closest I came was in Canada where they have socialized medicine-- it's almost like the professionals have distanced themselves so from women-- the untrained women-- unless the government steps in and pays with some sort of medical program, you're dead in the water-- and the dentists do the same thing-- I can understand it because. . . it must be obvious to everyone-- I mean, look at all the education and suffering they've had to go through-- well, you want suffering?-- work 16 hours in a fish cannery! So. . . that doesn't wash-- I feel there is a controlled priesthood amongst the professionals-- they've distanced themselves-- the dental and medical profession stand between what you can legally get and what you can't get-- I get around it by trying to live a life that's basically preventive-- I look for preventive medicine as opposed to curative drugs-- it's been working just great for me-- probably

the only area I get discouraged is when I want to go in for the most scientific mechanical diagnosis and I can't afford it-- I don't even know if I could get into the hospital-- one area I couldn't cure is an attack of appendicitis or a broken arm-- I don't know what I'd do?

When I worked-- I worked really hard-- when you work as a waitress-- you have nightmares and worry how you will take care of all your tables-- it's real stress-- I would work for three months and then travel and I'd work for three months and then travel-- hitting seasons-- and then I took a look around after I realized I wouldn't be able to find the children-- someone pointed out the center as a possible source of funds for some classes I wanted to take-- I had zero cash resources -- I've never had the option to even think in those directions-- because at the earning potential I have as an untrained female-- the most money I have been able to make is at general waitressing-- it is very difficult to put eight hour shifts on the floor and then get up and go to class-- so when I found there was help and the college-- it just all fell together-- finally school.

When I went in I met all the people-- they were very supportive ladies and I had met one of them in the community-- (director) had always been really jovial and a warm and easy person to be around-- the other people in the program one who I liked was (staff person) also very warm and very supportive and nurturing-- I'm sort of a victim of circumstances-- I'm 45-- I already have grandchildren-- I guess because I was a product of the poverty cycle-- that is how I applied-- they have been giving me small subsidies and my participation has been basically in the support groups-- I have an image of myself as not being able to do any more-- I have a pretty fair self-image and it's much stronger than when I was 20

or 22-- so I am looking back at these ladies who are in their early 20's and think-- what a titanic struggle these young ladies are going to have to get out of it-- and the group is excellent for that-- very good-- If there had been a group like this-- I remember crying being at home crying with my little babies-- I liked being with them-- housework wasn't that hard-- but the idea of doing it for the rest of my life and never developing my mind-- I felt I had this one shot at being alive and there was this giant globe and I was confined to a living world-- if this group had been in my neighborhood when I was in my 20's-- it's quite possible I might have been able to save my marriage and I could have raised my kids all the way through-- if I had a group of professional older women that were saying-- here's what is possible-- you're worth it-- you can do it-- we can help you-- I think in those early setting your path years-- its bound to be really beneficial-- I think I'm living proof that it's helpful even at age 45-- this is long overdue concept of women helping women and it's just great-- it's particularly necessary here on the coast-- having grown up on the coast having a real clear life experience of what that does to a woman for her earning power, for her independence, and for her kids-- it's just possible that I have a tiny more of an edge than a lot of the girls that are going through it-- in fact I know I do-- this is blue collar country.

I asked for funding for a Computer class that was to take place that summer-- they said no-- we have decided for your main goal in marketing it would be better to give you the money to take any workshops or seminars on marketing that comes into this area-- I was elated because the area was bringing in speakers that were really very good-- \$25 is a lot of money and that was what it cost to bring some of them in-- I spent 3 months going to these different seminars-- I want to work as a Marketing Representative for people

in cottage industries and crafts-- the Oregon coast is an incredible good place to produce-- I figure maybe I could be the bridge and let them stay in their studios and workshops and let me take their business out to others-- whatever is needed for people who want to work in cottage industries in this area-- I would like to be sales and distribution-- because that is a real important thing-- going out there on I-5 and traveling up and down where the money is-- helping them target markets outside of the area-- I am amazed how a lot of people live in one town forever-- it's always a surprise to me-- so you see-- there are a lot of things you never pick up on unless you are out there-- and I have had a little more experience-- I've been in Canada, Alaska, Hawaii, Arizona, California and etc. and I have dealt with craft markets and now I'm expanding my horizons on whats out there through my classwork-- Yep!

I am enrolled full-time-- I have got 12 credits-- was carrying 18-- I'm working for a degree in business and marketing-- I found out I can get funding for four years so now I am thinking in terms of a Bachelor s degree-- it is so exciting-- I'm able to support myself partly on grants and I stopped to work-- took a term-- stopped-- worked-- and took a term-- and now I'm getting grant money and this summer I will be working workstudy-- they are putting me hopefully in a beautiful job-- I think I'll be working upstairs-- as long as I can get funding I am going for it-- the one thing that will help me is if I will be able to find enough classes-- upper division classes and work experience-- jobs with really professional type people-- so far things have been going well and I just have faith that they probably will.

I found I over extended myself when I did so much volunteer work-- so I decided to prioritize school and I've dropped all outside commitments to the

community more or less-- and then I have friends who come to me and everytime I volunteer I learn so much-- that it's really difficult to say no-- I'm an old hippy and I hate the word old-- I can look at the expectations of the women around me who were middle age when I was young and I can look at them now and feel we have more options and I'm seeing a better health level then I use to and more mental snap-- I don't find age a problem-- I think the only problem is going to be if I were to go out and try to be employed by a corporation if a big wage and medical benefit and a pension were important to me-- I think starting at the age that I am would be a detriment, however, I plan to work for myself and I've a feeling that as long as I can keep producing creative work-- I'll be able to make a living-- I feel I'm a lot better off than when I started the program-- I would say my needs have become a great deal less.

Recently I went into the center-- I just mentioned that when I was at the last seminar people were already asking for a business card-- even though I'm saying I'm not going into business until next summer-- the staff said "Oh, you need business cards-- go down and find out how much they are"-- they think of things that can help me quite often before I even know I need them and they are right! I've already been helped so much-- it's time for me to really start paying back-- I figure when I'm about 60 years old I'll be a real adult and until then I still see myself as a learner-- a real learner.

Right now I'm in a relationship with a man who is extremely supportive-- in fact, he is the one who said go for it-- go for a Bachelor's degree-- he's great-- he's a teacher-- for the time I'm associated with the Coos Bay Area-- my parent's are old and in this area-- I came back because I thought my Dad was dying-- I was going to come back for two or three years just to

help and now I'm here and well there are a lot of other things I would rather be doing-- but here I am-- so I will do the best I can.

I've reached 40 and this is the time when I begin my final and most important career-- I took a look at the situation-- in fact, I remember I was sitting in the desert in Arizona in the winter time and thinking the likelihood that there will be Social Security that I can actually rely on when I hit that age is minimal-- and I started remembering different places I had been and I would listen to these retired people who have worked their fingers to the bone-- they would be coming in their RV's and meeting each other-- they had three topics of conversation-- where they had been, where they were going, and the rest of the conversation was on what they did before they retired-- I thought Wooooo there is something wrong here-- what I am going to do is put myself on a program of semi-retirement while I'm young and then work like hell when I'm old-- cause I don't want to turn into a vegetable-- the older people that I admired were those who were still awake and alive and had responsibilities-- they were still using their brains-- I did not admire what I was seeing in the RV parks-- I was seeing these pear-shaped vegetable people who were just mooing at each other and had no clue and were drinking a lot-- that is not for me-- I will chop wood and carry water till I'm eighty-- and now when I turn 40 it's time to get serious-- real serious-- I've come to the point where I need the paper-- every time I turn and see the really fun creative stuff-- you need a piece of paper to even get in the door-- that is fine-- I will get it-- now that I can get the money.

Field Notes: I was surprised to hear she was 45 years old-- she had an appearance of youth, about 5'4", long brown hair curling down her back, wearing a jean jacket and tennis shoes and carrying a back pack-- but



the minute we started talking I knew she was intelligent and had an awareness about others and life in general-- she needed guidance and financial help to reach her goal-- once she received this I felt she had a sense of direction-- she was hesitant at first to tell me about her children-- there was still this feeling of sadness within her-- then she would speak about the present and her tone would change to positiveness and true excitement-- I really enjoyed listening to her.

Case Study #3: The woman in this case study is age 46, separated less than one year and has three children with one at living home.

My parents are still married-- four sisters and a brother-- family was very important-- my dad was a workaholic-- mom was the homemaker-- it took me a long time to see that there was not a lot of emotional contact-- we were close physically and everyone had to do their part to be a part of family-- but both parents had no emotion-- really cold to us and it took a long time for us to see what they had passed on-- I went to my parents when I was hurting but never talked about anything that was bad or hurting-- only the happy thoughts were allowed-- it took a long time to realize this-- that we had to be perfect-- it took me awhile through that process-- we are still close.

I was the oldest-- I was never expected to do much for younger children-- Mom was always so mean and I'm now realizing that she always taught us to be responsible for ourselves and pick up after ourselves-- my mother felt she was not put here to clean up someone else mess-- so that was how we were raised-- I never felt I was a caretaker or a babysitter-- I was not encouraged to finish school-- not to work-- it was disappointing not to be able to go

to college.

I was married 20 years to an alcoholic and I'm getting a divorce-- somehow his needs always came first even when he would be in a crisis-- after going through the support group I have felt release from this-- my needs are important and I need to see what I can do-- there is a whole world out there.

I have a clerical background-- Children's Service Secretary-- also and my husband had a veterans grant that matched my money I earned dollar per dollar. I would leave so I could get myself together and work for myself and then my husband would go through a recovery crisis-- then when he recovered once again he would need his family and me back to support and care of him-- so I would always drop whatever I was doing as far as work and go back to help him-- I have done a lot of things-- I even home taught my daughter from the eighth grade on-- I had to prepare all the assignments and be advisor, teacher, administrative person-- it was a lot of home work on my part-- I tend to down play that in my resume-- I shouldn't-- something the skills program helped me with-- home teaching was needed because she didn't fit into classes-- she checked out very high.

I'm very anxious and excited-- I'm so worried that my husband will try and get me to go back-- but this time I am feeling emotionally and spiritually free-- so I'm anxious to get a good job and be my own boss.

I've not gotten a divorce yet-- I'm still living in the same house as my husband and it is very very stressful. I just have a 15 year old that is finishing up her GED and she is also living at home.

I have family in Roseburg-- a sister in that area and my daughter and her husband-- they keep telling me

how smart I am and they're really supportive-- I quit school when I was sixteen-- got married-- eight years later I got my GED-- in 1979 came back to school and went to secretary school-- word processing my major is office administration.

I would start at \$3.60 maybe with benefits-- I could do well but I don't want to fall back into this type of work as Alcoholic Secretary-- I don't want to be one of the working poor living on food stamps-- I don't want to live with my husband and have to take care of him because he can't hold down a job-- I want to make my own way-- I have helped too many years.

When I first moved back to Coos Bay I read an article in the World-- well I didn't need the program at the time but I was really impressed. I even tried to find out who I could talk to just to say go. But I didn't. So that is how I knew about it-- when I was preparing for a divorce and I needed to go back to work I went to an agency that pointed me back to SWOCC and the first people I met was a group of Displaced Homemakers. I know people who were emotionally worse off than I was-- and I know what it means to them to have a safe entry back into the world.

I have had a lot of skills but I never used them until I was back in school-- I had gone to school in the past and taken data processing and bookkeeping but I had forgotten I had those skills-- so much I had forgotten and when you live so long in a dysfunctional situation you start doubting yourself-- you know? Why would I be here if I was bright?

I started in January-- I went to the class that built up my confidence-- let us know who we are-- I didn't need to worry about babysitters but I did use the gas vouchers made available. The staff are hand picked and each have a great function. I started with the

first semester and just recently withdrew because of the stress at home and because going back and forth to Rosesburg and trying to get all my ties covered there that I had to withdraw for a period of time.

Emotional well being-- physical well being-- being independent-- and liking to be expected to support yourself-- I never dealt with it very well-- I knew I could do it but I didn't know when-- but maybe I am not as smart as I think I am-- why am I living here if I can go out and do it-- the main thing this program did was to help me see myself as I really am-- faults and all.

The skills classes let me know that I am bright-- I didn't know I could make it in college and when I did-- I made it on the honor roll-- it just built up my confidence-- a lot of things are geared toward looking at your skills-- seeing things you can do with them-- I knew a lot of these things but putting it out on paper and pointing it out to you really helps.

That is one thing that is really important-- It's easy to get into a support group when you are first in skills class and seeing your reflection of your own growth with each other-- then you are in classes-- it doesn't become a priority after while. You need it and it is really a support group. I like it because there are so many people like myself that want to succeed-- I want to do well-- you gain so much more and hear of women so much worse off and what they are going through. It was not good at night to meet-- so many of the women have little kids.

I've discovered who I am-- my personality has always been the caretaker-- I'm discovering that my needs are just as important as someone elses-- so I think my needs have changed-- I want to take care of myself.

I consider it a challenge to be aware of peoples needs-- I learned so much about helping others in the program and they helped me so much, I want to give it back-- I really want to give it back-- build up people's confidence and let them see who they are-- through my eyes. They need to see who they are-- not mother, not who you are married to-- but who they are.

The first thing we talked about is that I know that I can do it-- that I am bright-- I care-- in seeing a reflection of myself compared to what I see in other people-- they are in a lot worse condition than I am-- I have always been involved with the community-- and I'm much more aware of what is going on-- I think-- a lot of people just stay home to feel safe-- I do have an out because I have been out in the community-- I think we do a lot of judging of ourselves by what we see others do in the same position.

I would have been continuing here but I just felt that I needed to be in Roseburg and get out of Coos Bay because of the divorce and everything-- I have made everything to transfer to Umqua Community College-- so I have gone through some steps of networking to get a job-- I'm interviewing for a secretary job in an Alcoholic recovery program-- I have a lot of experience in that type of program-- it seem really strange to be able to be a Secretary in that field.

I do a lot of writing-- I write lyrics-- I find I like to do things just for myself-- not that they will contribute but doing some things just for me.

To have a job that I would feel good about-- and advance-- if I could take a job where everyone in the office needed me as much as I would need them would be my ideal.

There are a lot of older women working-- women older

than myself-- people do not want to spend a lot of money in training older people but if you have the ability and basic skills they will hire you-- if you have the strength and the wisdom-- that comes from being a little older.

I would like to have benefits for me and my daughter-- I'm on the State hiring list and that will get me the benefits if I can get in there-- the first thing I thought of-- being 46 years old, is to have benefits-- I have more skills than minimum wage but because jobs are so scarce-- I will take minimum wage to get in the job market and then move up from there.

The economy here is terrible-- Roseburg is not much better-- bigger cities would be better-- lots of work has closed down and so many unemployed people.

I see myself investing a lot of myself in whatever job I have and put back what I have learned-- to help others and maybe get married again.

I love computers and I like bookkeeping-- if I go to work as a receptionist I am not sure what work will be involved-- I couldn't be happy doing only that type of work-- I wouldn't be satisfied enough.

Right now I would like just a good job and enough money to get me one-- If they have enough night classes at Umqua CC I could keep my full time job.

I am constantly amazed how people offend each other and they are not even aware what they have done-- this person needs dignity-- respect-- I will do well working with people and helping anyone who needs it.

Field Notes: I felt she was willing to be here and share her thoughts about the program but there were times when I felt she was holding back and hesitant to

tell me certain things about her personal life-- the main thing I picked up from her was her fear of not wanting to return to the same situation she just pulled herself out of-- I could tell she really needed more emotional support such as a support group-- she was very positive about the program, especially the support group telling her she's a valuable, worthwhile person-- I felt she had a hard time believing it.

Case Study #4: This woman in this case study is age 60, married and has a husband that is self-employed.

We lived on a farm in Missouri-- so everyone worked-- Parents decided to come to Portland in WW II and work in war effort-- both worked when I was a teenager-- both were welders in shipyards-- I went to five high schools-- family means more to me than a lot of people-- no ties-- when I was a child the Lord was looking after me when I went from the country to the big city-- I can't stand to travel-- my parents worked nights so we could have done anything-- no supervision-- so I made a vow then that if I had children I would not work and I didn't all the time my daughter was growing up. My mom was a Christian but a very weak one-- I always wanted to go to church but my mom hid it from my dad-- until I came to a church that had a bible study I never felt so strong with my faith.

I have two sisters, my dad is dead, my mom is almost 84 -- I'm the middle child-- I know all about the middle child syndrome-- either you are very strong or you don't make it at all. I am 60 years old-- married-- husband self-employed-- one child-- high school education background-- husband only support-- salary support from husband \$40,000 last year-- sells tools.

My husband's self-employed and he was sick and we

had just made in the last few years a bad investment that had lost about all our retirement and I went all to pieces-- I didn't have a nervous breakdown but I was close to it-- and so with my husband sick and me thinking I would have to get a job and I haven't worked any in my life time to speak of in public-- so that is where I was.

The only way I participated was in the session-- in the group skills-- I think mainly what I needed was a little boost in my self esteem-- I know it helped me to realize I wasn't completely worthless-- I mean I got that much out of it.

I think I have grown spiritually and that helps because the people who aren't spiritual think I have a crutch. What I thought was a real bad thing wasn't-- I was far from trouble-- I got a new perspective on what money really is. Right now if I needed to go out and work in the world, I believe I could-- until I went to that I didn't have anything to offer-- they showed me I did, showed me if I needed it-- how to get a job and if I were in a position I had to go get work-- I think I would even at my age get more education.

Income now is not as important to me as it has been-- getting a job that would be enjoyable and be worthwhile is important now-- I found the more I give the more I like myself.

I worked at odd jobs which would total up a year of work-- If I was going to look for a job I would say that I am honest and that I am well disciplined probably. I like to see things well organized-- so if I was searching for something I would like to work at something that is well organized. I just don't want to baby-sit. The lady at the Mrytlewood shop said she liked to train her own help-- that experience was not necessary. She said I've had these young girls that



come to work-- they don't do the job like someone my age. I don't feel I could work up and make an enormous income but I really feel now I could go out if it was really necessary. It wouldn't be like we are living now.

I love to go fishing, I love to work in the yard and garden. What I really like to do is to volunteer one day a week in the church office. Currently I am raising a puppy-- we have a Border Collie-- If I had to move I would cry-- I have things I enjoy doing gardening and working at the church and raising a puppy. I have two bible study groups one in the morning and one in evening once a week-- and without that I don't know how we would make it-- I think family is very important-- like I say, I get more enjoyment out of giving than receiving.

Field Notes: I drove to her house to visit with her-- she was more than happy to talk and show me her nice home and the beautiful view of Coos Bay-- but she seemed rather hesitant and unsure-- she was blunt, cold and not a lot of smiles-- very serious about her statements-- she had a lot of concern about the program because of her faith in God-- after we started talking, she eventually felt at ease and warmed up-- I think the main thing she got out of the program was the emotional support and reassurance that she could go out and work if something were to happen to husband and his job.

Case Study #5: The woman in this case study is age 41, divorced less than five years with two children living at home.

Both mom and dad are living-- I have 3 brothers and 3 sisters-- I am the middle kid-- I feel like I have been

grown since ten-- mom worked and I acted the parent of mom-- my dad worked off and on-- in jail and gone a lot-- my mother was the head of the family-- I got married when I was 18-- finished high school-- I tend to think I am a lot like my mother-- I blame a lot of my problems on her-- I can always call and tell her what is going on but not my dad-- she is still working in the civil service and now she owns her own bakery-- she has always worked-- I never was taught how to have goals-- to do something with my life-- I was the kid that never gave them trouble-- I just helped out the rest of the family-- I got good grades in high school-- I have a high school diploma-- never wanted to be anything-- got married-- not that I really loved him-- but it was the thing to do-- I got married in high school-- I worked in a bank as a coin roller-- after high school as a bookkeeper-- was a church secretary for 3 1/2 years and then starting driving school buses-- worked at a second hand store. in Northbend doing cashier-- I've worked in supermarkets a lot of my life-- last summer I was a cook in a fast-food restaurant-- it's a lot of working off and on while I was married.

I was married 16 years and it was my decision to quit the marriage-- I grew up and wanted more out of my marriage-- got a divorce-- I was always married and all of a sudden I didn't know what to do-- it was kind of neat because I started figuring out that I could do things-- I have two kids-- a daughter who is 14 and a son who is 11-- my kids don't see a lot of me but we seem to find time to talk and they do homework the same time I do-- my daughter likes to read like I do-- so we do our homework together-- it's great-- she and I go to breakfast on Sunday mornings-- that's our thing-- we go to the shows-- just myself and my kids-- I also like going to baseball games-- it takes out a lot of frustration-- I like to drive and explore by myself-- I love to look at antique shops and go to the

beach.

My support left when my husband left-- he makes a lot of money working in the paper mill-- he paid the house payment instead of child support-- but now he only pays child support of \$350 a month and that is it-- no alimony.

A friend at work had gone to SWOCC-- she was not involved in the program herself-- she knew about it from being on campus and she kept saying if you need some help go down there and talk to them-- I finally did-- it kind of snowballed from there-- they offered all kinds of help-- I enrolled in a Skills for Success program-- it was learning about yourself-- learning what I'm capable of doing-- it was like 6 weeks in the summer-- what it gave me was enthusiasm I was afraid-- it was even scary going to the campus to register-- I put it off a long time because I didn't know what to do-- to see 18 and 19 year old kids running around makes you feel really dumb-- that is why the program was so good-- the program helped me get my tuition paid for-- I get a state grants each term about \$750 and that pays for books, tuition and some left over for living expenses.

I already had a job driving a school bus but its only 9 months out of the year-- they were quite willing to help me with a resume and also help me find a job-- basically it came down to just getting started to enroll in school and whenever I was upset or down I could come in and talk-- sometimes just going by and seeing (the director) wave at me really helped-- it'd get me going-- I'm going to school now because I can't support my family only on school bus money-- I have a medical plan that I pay for myself and my children are covered by their dad.

The administrative foul up was really bad-- my papers

to apply for a Pell grant were never sent on time and I kept waiting and waiting and months went by and they hadn't got information back and then they found it in the file-- they were going to mail it off again and I finally sent my application off by myself the 3rd week of August-- I had to go ahead to apply for a emergency loan because when tuition is due-- it is due-- the papers for the grant and application came back OK'd so I went in and signed the papers-- it really wasn't anything really serious but it was important for me-- so I'm now working and going to school-- I wasn't involved in a support group because of my work schedule-- I never fit into a pattern and it really bugs me.

I learned in the Skills class to make time for myself-- even if it's five in the morning or ten at night-- make time for yourself-- I looked for a 2 or 3 bedroom house because I knew I needed my own space and to not share a bedroom with a 14 year old girl-- I can come in from work and shut my door and the kids know not to bother me for a while-- and I go off and have girlfriends and maybe a date or two-- these are things just for me-- I have a couple of really good girlfriends who tell me I can do it-- and then (the director) seems to always be there to smile and wave or catch your eye-- which gives you a supportive feeling-- she told me to make a list and see how I can accomplish it-- I've learned to write it down and deal with it.

I'm a full-time student in Business Management with a Marketing option-- it will be an Associate of Science-- I have no idea what I intend to do with it-- when I think about it, I'm a small town person with a small town mentality get a job in a grocery store or waiting tables at a restaurant-- I want something more then that-- I took 12 hours first semester and I'm taking 20 this time-- I'm barely keeping my head above water-- it's too much this time-- 26 hours a

week driving school bus-- 20 hours of school and then studying on top of that-- it's too much this time-- I have night classes too-- this is my third term-- I have thought about moving to the University of Oregon but I feel that I'm not ready for that and I don't want to take my kids away from their dad-- they are so close and he is able to see them when he wants to.

I liked to work-- kids are in school and you're alone so I feel I need the challenge in a job-- once you figure out how to deal with problem-- the challenge is gone-- even driving a school bus-- so that is why I'm going to school to find a new challenge and a new job-- I spend a lot of my time worrying about money-- I'd like a nice fat bank account-- I would like to finish school here-- a man doesn't figure into it-- they will not let you finish school because most men think you don't need a job-- even to raise your life to a new challenge.

All my friends just see themselves as a housewife and if they have to work-- just being a waitress or driving a bus-- they're satisfied by just getting by-- there are no cultural things in a rural community-- it has a small town mentality I'm the only single person from a group of five girlfriends that were always close-- I'm the last one that is single-- not all of them are happy-- some of them sold out just to be taken care of-- the others have boy friends they get money from-- I'm out of the circle of my friends-- some of these friends don't act the way they feel-- mainly because they feel they have to act out a part to fill the need of a boy friend-- Yes I'm an outcast-- but it doesn't bother me-- I take a lot of ribbing about not having a boyfriend or a husband-- but I've gained their respect at times-- I do have some men friends who are only around to give me emotional support-- a man would be the only barrier-- you get married and you're a small town housewife and you stay that way-- I'm

not willing to settle at all for being just a housewife-- I don't want to give up my identity and my independence-- I don't know anyone who would let me be myself without trying to put a choke chain around my neck.

Everybody needs encouragement-- it's a continuing need --especially me-- I feel sometimes that I am being pulled under and they help you survive-- I've been thinking about how I could help the program and how I could volunteer in it-- I take things one step at a time and I feel they're all positive steps-- I'm going to finish school-- I'm really going to finish school-- this degree is not that great-- but it's a start-- it's great to me.

Field Notes: She was not very excited at first about being tape recorded-- then she forgot it was even on and she really enjoyed telling me about her situation-- I sensed a fear of not wanting to be involved with a man if she had to drop everything, yet I felt she probably would if she received strong enough encouragement-- I felt she wanted some independent friends and/or a support group to help her reach her goals.

Case Study #6: This woman in this case study is age 42, divorced less than five years with five children, four living at home.

Most of my family live in Colorado-- my son is living there-- my folks are in Parachute near Grand Junction-- I grew up there-- I've been here almost three years-- my dad worked when I grew up-- my mom went back to school and got her LPN and then took care of my grandparents-- my dad and mom got a divorce for eight years-- now they're back together-- I

got three sisters-- younger then me-- I was never encouraged to work when growing up except to babysit-- I was from the typical family in the 50's and 60's-- mother stays home as the housewife and dad works-- I think I was kind of brainwashed about education-- it wasn't too important-- I didn't complete high school-- in fact-- I got my GED last August-- so outside of menial jobs throughout a real rough marriage-- that's all I've done-- waitress work, babysitting, maid work and etc.

I was married for 17 years to the same person-- divorced-- we lived here ten years ago and I knew the cost of living in Coos Bay was low-- so I moved back-- I just wanted to come back-- my husband was an antique dealer and a brick layer-- when we separated it was a real rough time and I had to get away from home-- so I came back here-- I have five kids at home and will have number six soon-- their ages are from 3-5-8-11-16-- I'm finding my kids are not cooperating as far as things getting done-- my kids are on ADC-- I got sanctioned when I came to school-- I'm living on what I get from the kids-- my tuition and books are paid for by financial aid-- I couldn't do it if I had to also work-- it's kind of scary for me and I'm going through the new prenatal clinic-- thank God for that-- the baby will be paid for-- I don't have dental-- just paid it off because of having my teeth fixed two years ago.

I found the program when I got here after 8 or 9 months-- I'm looking forward to working after I go through this program-- my neighbor was involved in it last year and she told me about it-- first I went to the Skills to Success class-- during the summer-- and as soon as that was over it was time to register for fall term and it just snowballed-- child care just started this term and it's going to work out really great-- we filled out papers for financial aid in the displaced

homemakers group-- they then processed them-- there are a lot of young people running around here and it makes you wonder-- then there are people my age and even older people-- I've really been impressed with.

I take my kids to school and I'm going full-time-- I'm taking courses in Human Services-- I would like to work with battered women in the Crisis Center-- I don't know how it will work out but most of it is volunteered right now-- which I can't afford-- I will be getting an Associate Degree by the end of next year-- if everything goes-- I'll try to find a job after that-- but I'm also trying to figure out if I want to go on for another degree-- but that means uprooting the kids-- which I don't want to do at this time

I don't think I could do it without the gas vouchers and child care-- the baby sitting is the main thing-- I could walk if I had to because I live close-- I am really hoping the program will help me get employment when I'm finished-- the support groups are real nice but just to chit chat and not anything solid-- I had too many things to do just to visit with them-- one of my friends had to drop out-- but she's still one of my biggest support fans-- I can still talk to her-- she is a real good listener-- in fact I met her here in the Skills class and we've been very good friends ever since-- I think this term they had mandatory groups once a week and I felt that is too often-- especially when there is so much to do-- I haven't had any free time-- I'm too busy making sure kids are where they're suppose to be.

I'm having trouble now with my kids to get them to cooperate-- they seem to pick up a book and WW III breaks out-- you know-- but I only have about two more weeks to deal with that and then we will have the whole summer to get things organized-- that is why I decided not to take classes this summer-- I can start fresh in the fall-- Oh, I think it will work out



alright-- I hope my resume and papers will do me well-- hopefully I will be well situated-- keeping the same job-- I think because my kids are still little I need a 9 to 5 job-- I would like to stay in this area-- if I had to move I would-- I don't think I would move to get more education-- it would depend on what my interest was.

Right now I don't have any big stones or stumbling blocks in my way-- I'm doing ok in school-- these last two weeks are going to be real hectic-- I have gone this far-- not even giving birth will keep me from going next fall-- I have the child care for Tommy now and the new one-- they don't take them that small but hopefully my girlfriend will take care of him-- she just may be my sitter-- my girlfriend was going to school and hopefully between our two schedules we can work it out for both of us-- I can watch her child when she is in school and she can watch mine-- I feel good about the way things are going.

They do have a crisis center in this area and they've moved and got a bigger house for a shelter home-- so hopefully that's going to be going forward just about the time I will be graduating-- I hope to be able to provide them with services as soon as I graduate-- I'm trying to keep a positive attitude-- you know-- I've come this far and I'm not going to get bogged down-- that is about all I can think of.

Field Notes: She's medium height and about seven months pregnant-- her teeth were real crooked in front but not offensive-- she was shy, timid and very watchful-- she never looked directly at me, if she did, her eyes would dart away and look down in her lap-- I could tell this was a very big step for her to agree to an interview-- she would not give lengthy statements and she did not want to give away too much information about her personal life-- I did feel she

was determined to leave her past and make a new start-- even though she was not very positive about a support group, maybe because it was a group, I think she would appreciate a follow-up from one person on a continual basis.

Case Study #7: The woman in this case study is age 50, widowed more than five years with one child, and no children living at home.

I was born in Nashville, Tennessee-- my parents were sort of hitch-hiking hippies-- I've a brother that is 17 months older than I am and my dad did a lot of hopping around-- he took us all and that is how I began my life-- I went to school in the Mid-west-- but I still went to 17 different schools and I felt that I didn't have any basis for friends or roots for a home-- my dad inherited a long line of newspaper people and it was a natural way of thinking in my life but I was never encouraged to go into newspaper work-- I was encouraged to take care of the family and do the babysitting but nothing else-- my mother worked in the flower business but I was told to stay home-- I got pay for babysitting-- I worked for my mom in the greenhouse when I was little and I got paid for that-- I can see how important it is to have been encouraged work as a child and to earn money by doing so-- I was never told or explained what work was as a child-- I was told I was to take care of everybody else so I wouldn't have to work for money to take care of me-- iron clothes, mend clothes, wash clothes, cook and clean-- I remember as a child I had the feeling that women weren't worth anything-- that all they were there for was to wait on men and now I'm learning the hard way-- that it's not so.

I was raised in a family that didn't do anything fun and

there wasn't laughing-- there was no kidding around or teasing-- I never learned how to do fun and I feel uncomfortable at parties if I have to have fun-- I think now when people are really talking about having fun it has something to do with drugs and alcohol and those things are not part of my life-- so fun I don't know-- I don't do fun--

I graduated from high school and I always took classes that were offered by the Community-- whatever my husband would allow me to do-- I was married for 21 years and he died-- I have never been divorced-- I don't relate very well to people who have-- the day I got out of high school I went to work for a bank for years-- even after I got married I worked at the bank-- my husband was in the National Guard so we moved to Texas and only worked part-time then-- I had ten years of marriage before any children came along and then I had one child-- I really wasn't suited to staying home and taking care of a child-- I was 28 when my daughter was born-- my husband died at 40 from a heart attack and it was such a blow-- I had a retirement check from my husband's work and it helps-- my daughter received some money before President Reagan came to office and then that was taken away-- I went to work at Radio Shack for 5 years-- it was nothing that I enjoyed.

I went to the University of Utah after my husband's death-- they have a building there that is called Women's Resource Center and they have a program similar to SWOCC's and I was apart of that-- I took some classes-- it seemed like they had more classes that were apart of the program and a lot of support and counseling.

I came out here once for vacation and I liked it-- I went back to Utah and things were happening in my life that I didn't like-- mainly it seemed to be my

husband's place and everytime I looked at things I felt bad because he was dead-- so I came out here-- didn't know a soul-- I had to leave my daughter when she was 16 because she was abusing me verbally and physically-- it wasn't good for her-- so I solved it by leaving-- I really believe in the Tough Love concept-- I've seen it work from both sides-- my daughter had a teenage pregnancy-- she was abused by her husband very badly-- she came out of it and found her way to school and has become a great person-- but she would not listen to me so I just said I love you and good-bye-- she accomplished a lot from pain and hardship-- she's doing very well graduating from Nursing School and getting married the same day.

I can support myself-- especially with a job I really like and that is what I'm trying to reach-- I hate office work though-- I was called "Killer" when I worked at a warehouse lifting a lot of goods-- I just laughed-- I have zero benefits and I feel that I need to take it one day at a time and not to be overly concerned about it-- unless I can eventually buy some insurance.

I liked the ocean so much that I walked on the beach everyday.

I saw a little thing on the bulletin board which is a TV advertisement run on our local station and it said something about the Displaced Homemakers program-- I came on the orientation day-- I got to stay and be a part of it.

I ended up taking journalism and word processing, speech and things that would help me in my area-- I was also a part of the Skills for Success class-- anytime I went there I could get counseling-- also they had a used clothing exchange which I took advantage of.

The classes were helpful-- the part of the program that helped me the most was the support and encouragement from these people and their confidence in me and assuring me-- I could do almost anything I wanted to-- and I wasn't too old or too poor.

I'm taking Speech now-- I'm not taking anymore classes for awhile-- I'm so afraid of Speech so I just took it-- it really helped me a lot and now I feel so much better-- when the American Diabetes Association called me and asked if I would give a speech on Nutrition and Weight Lifting-- I said Yes-- and I did real well-- so they say.

I get a lot of support any time when I come to this campus and particularly from the displaced homemakers group of women or from the counselor-- I always feel welcome and I get a lot of encouragement-- I would like to see it opened up to more variety of classes that homemakers could take-- my needs change about every 5 minutes-- they've changed a lot-- I would like to take more classes-- more college classes and more skill building classes-- if the program could have more programs like Skills for Success where you could have group discussions which just pertain to us-- it would be just great-- they found two jobs for me that were very technical jobs-- which I could not do-- I can work in an office which I have done for seven years-- I can type and I can file-- they put me in a place of employment with office work and at this point I would only be able to stand it for one hour a day-- I do not want anymore of that type of work.

I teach women over the age of 40 weight lifting and nutrition and health-- it's a support group also and I am in charge of it-- it takes place at the Athletic Club and the name is Fit and Forty-Plus--I'm planning

to change it to Fit and Fifty now-- since I'm now 50 years old. I advertised in the newspaper and got 98 calls in an area this size who wanted to lift weights-- it isn't a lot of money-- I have problems accepting money from people and I am trying to overcome that-- when I was raised I was taught that people who did things for money were not good-- an attitude that I was raised to believe-- I'm trying to work on re-programming my life about money-- in my youth I was never interested in the usual kind of sports-- I don't know why-- but batting balls around never appealed to me-- where jogging was great-- I jogged for ten years and with weight lifting I found my place-- I just love it-- I find these women really blossom with this weight lifting.

I would like to have my own place-- a building and equipment-- it would take several more years of building a reputation with Fit and Forty Plus and using someone else's facilities-- then having all these references and background to someone who would listen and back me-- there seems to be such a need for the older women and the baby bommers are 40 or older and they really enjoy exercising and fitness-- it seems to me to be a real need for it-- also the small business work in the college might help me or at least tell me where to go or what to do-- I feel this area will be growing more in the next few years-- age is a great advantage for the kind of work that I'm interested in-- I feel I'm more credible because I'm 50 years old.

I like being alone, I like walking along the beach-- I relax in my walking-- I only like to read about diet or nutrition or any other kind of book I've never read.

I think we're working on an attitude change right now and it's going to take some time-- I'm frustrated that the change hasn't taken place faster-- it seems like

women have had a hard time being women and being accepted in being a woman-- we've almost had to not be women for several years now-- so we can be equal-- I'd like to see the attitude change quickly-- I'm happy at least fifty percent of the time-- I think that's great.

Field Notes: From her appearance it surprised me she was into weight lifting-- she's of medium height and very thin-- I sensed she really wanted to take more classes on self-image and positive thinking.

Case Study #8: The woman in this case study is age 51, divorced less than five years with four children, two living at home.

My mother died when I was nine and my dad just put us in an orphanage in New York-- my younger sister and younger brother and myself-- I worked in the orphanage-- each child was assigned a job-- when I was 13 years old I went to live with my aunt in California-- I lived with her for 2 years-- my sister and brother went to live with an aunt in Oregon-- then they lived with me-- I had the responsibility for them until they became old enough to go out on their own-- I'm tired of the responsibility of taking care of kids-- now I don't even want to take care of my grandkids-- it's a shame-- my ex-husband doesn't want to help or even try to help with his 16 year old son-- it's all up to me to get him through school and it's sad for my son.

My husband was 16 years older than I-- I got married when I was 21-- we've been married 27 years-- I knew eventually I would work-- my husband said I want a divorce so I can go and find my happiness-- I was struck dumb-- he was 63 at the time-- he said he'd been unhappy all that time-- that doesn't do a lot for

your self-image-- my friends really helped me and I found out who were my true friends-- then one day when he came to the house I said, Don, I want to thank you for the greatest thing you could ever give me and he said, "What do you mean?" and I said, my freedom and my wonderful kids-- I've found my happiness-- it really bugs him when he sees me with someone else and that I'm laughing and smiling-- I guess he thought I would just sit home-- I'm myself and I like myself-- I take one day at a time-- I'm not changing for nobody and that is a fact--I really resent the fact that I was married and never had anytime to call my own-- my husband always acted the part of the father I never had-- now I found out through counseling that I'd been married 27 years to a man I didn't know except with a father image-- it's really scary-- we still get along as friends but that's all-- it's just now that I'm finding out about myself.

I have been on my own since September of 1986-- I always had someone to do things with and all of a sudden I was alone-- do I fall apart? or do I dust myself off and say-- well here I am world what do I do now?

I would like to go back and someday graduate from high school-- I have a sixth grade education-- but I need to get more stable before I go back to school-- all I have is alimony and my kids get child support through their dad-- this month will be the last for my daughter because she graduates in June-- so I will be cut back-- I have a 16 old boy at home and a 18 yr old girl-- I also have two married sons in California-- years ago I worked in an Insurance Company-- when I was in California I worked in the school district as a cook-- some waitress work.

In an advertisement in the local paper called the world (she learned about the displaced homemaker



program)-- we met as a group and discussed certain things about our feelings and what we wanted out of life-- to me it was educational and I found out a lot about myself-- with a divorce you loose your self-esteem-- all of a sudden I realized I could get my self-esteem back on my own-- I'm a better person than I think I am-- I'm seriously thinking of going back and taking a refresher course-- it's been a couple of years-- I've been trying to get my one girlfriend to go but she won't go yet-- I told my friend she would be able to let her ex-husband go after she had this course-- right now I'm going through a program over there about redoing my resume and new ideas that can be put on the computer disk-- it's a great help-- and they are so nice to you-- I feel the two best programs they have over there are the Displaced Homemakers and the Job Finding program.

I'm working four mornings a week cleaning a doctor's office-- it only takes me about an hour or two and that one pays \$5.00 an hour-- I'm also a food service employee substituting as a cook in the school district-- it pays good-- I think it is \$4.00 and something an hour-- it's more than minimum wage-- my hours vary which I like too-- I'm just trying to make ends meet-- it's hard because I don't drive-- I walk or take a taxi-- I have friends that take me home at night and during the day I take the shuttle bus downtown-- I've put in applications and been turned down-- when they see your age on a resume-- even if I am more settled and no little kids at home-- they still look at your age and say no.

I got several friends that are really good and when I found out that I had some medical problems in January-- I was thrown into a tail-spin because they couldn't put a name on my illness-- now they say everything is ok-- it was my friends who really pulled me up-- my nerves were stretched to a thin

rubberband-- I don't want to talk about medical-- I just had a large medical bill and no insurance-- welfare paid part of it-- so it wasn't as bad as it could have been-- I told the doctor-- I will pay what I can each month and get it paid off.

Most of the time I come down to the restaurant and dance and go out to dinner-- I have to take time out-- I read and do volunteer work at the hospital when I can-- I crochet--it's a different pace-- my kids really know when I need space and quiet time-- I have one friend that I call when I'm depressed--we'll just go out and drive and I'll talk and he will listen and then I'm ok-- I also let my friends know that I'm there to help them too-- I'm the best bitching post around here-- I'm thinking of getting a T-shirt and have painted on it "Bitching Post".

I'm happy with the way I am-- I'm not a woman to go out and work at a good paying job-- Five years from now I don't plan to be single--I really don't have any career goals to meet-- I figure if I can get my kids through school then I got it made and then I can have time for myself. I learned in the class that I would have my good days and my bad days and hopefully you will have more good days-- I 've told my kids I may fail along the way but in that failure I'm going to learn along the way-- that is what life is all about-- I could kick myself at times for waiting so long-- then I wake up in the morning and say... you will make it! I even look in the obituaries and I don't see my name-- so I say what a great day ahead for me!

Field Notes: She was very excited to be interviewed-- we met at her favorite restaurant where she felt very comfortable-- she is very tiny, about 5'0" and thin-- she looked like a little china doll-- her personality is very out-going and she possesses a good sense of humor-- I felt she was happy to be given a second

chance to discover herself and do the things she missed out on earlier in life-- she would like a follow-up to know someone was interested in how she was doing.

Case Study #9: The woman in this case study is age 43, divorced less than five years with six children, five living at home.

My mother and father were divorced --so I grew up without my father-- my mother remarried when I was 14-- my stepfather is like my real father-- I had two step brothers and three step sisters-- we are very close-- my mother worked the whole time we grew up and my father worked as a carpenter-- I joined the Mormon Church when I was 15 years old. I've had a year of college--then got married and helped my husband get through dental school-- I worked during that time for a carpet company in Chicago-- then I worked for my husband when he got out of school to help set up the office-- I was married 20 years-- I have five boys and one girl-- the oldest one is 20 and my daughter is second to the youngest-- I managed apartments with my husband and I worked for the telephone company-- being a Mormon we emphasis the mother staying home if at all possible-- so that was what we were always looking for-- I could stay home and raise the children-- my husband used to be a Mormon.

I was divorced in 1984-- I was encouraged to go to work when I was young but I become very frightened when it comes to the interview-- I really didn't realize how many skills I had until I went to the resume program-- I'm spoiled-- working 8 to 5 does not appeal to me with raising my kids-- I don't have a very realistic view of working. I'm 43 and I know I will have to have a job and retirement and it scares

me even though my alimony covers me for life-- I don't have any medical to speak of-- my kids are covered by their father-- I have to pay for myself-- I'm used to the best dental work and now I don't have it.

I started the program in 1985-- found through an advertisement-- they took me in and helped me when everything in my life was falling apart-- I don't qualify for the program like most of the women who need the money-- but they really helped me a great deal-- any education you can get here is really valuable-- I think they need more quick programs-- you can't learn a lot in 18 months if you don't have the time--quick programs where you are out in 12 months and you can go to work if you have to-- I'm going to go full-time next year and then I will be able to graduate with an Associate degree-- you can't walk into an office and get a job with an AA degree-- I want to be a librarian-- they put me working part-time in my field in the Coop Library-- I will have to have a masters degree if I plan to really have a good job in a Library-- I'm not working right now-- I have six children and had to move-- it's very hard to find a house to rent for six children-- it's terrible not to have anybody to bounce your thoughts off of-- it really takes two people to raise kids.

Next year when I come back I will surely get in touch with (the director)-- I think it would be good to be with a group again-- to go to some group discussions would be nice-- I'm a mormon and the church is my support system-- they are great-- I don't count on my older children because they are in and out-- my family helps to be my support team-- I've lived here for 15 years-- I'm a loner-- I have a lot of friends but I still like to go to the show alone, go out to dinner alone-- I like to go to Eugene and stay overnite alone-- it doesn't bother me at all.

I had to make a major decision either stay here where my Kids grew up and have them finish here or move to Eugene and I go to school full-time and get a major degree-- next year I will have my AA degree and then I will go through a program at Eastern Oregon through SWOCC and then hopefully get work-- I'm lucky my husband is a dentist and he pays child support and alimony-- I've gone to the career counseling center but I still want to be a librarian-- I feel safe working on the campus--the worst part is having to go someplace else for that four year degree-- I think there are jobs out there and I think it's just a matter of having what it takes to get the job-- I take one day at a time.

Field Notes: She was happy to be interviewed and share her story-- she was well groomed but very overweight-- her goal to become a librarian and go on for a four year degree will one day be attained because she has a real positive sense about herself and what she wants to do in life-- one thing that might be a hindrance is her fear of being interviewed for a job-- her priority right now is with her six children.

Case Study #10: The woman in this case study is age 43, divorced more than five years, with two children. One child is living at home with four other adults.

Dad's Polish and my Mom is Quaker-- upper middle class-- my dad was an inventor of many useful things-- he made sundials for fun-- played the organ-- he always wanted to go to college-- mom was typical-- she worked when she needed to-- baked bread and home things-- very traditional-- two sisters and one brother-- one sister is a nurse-- the other works with the handicapped-- my brother is a deacon in the Quaker church and also a sheriff-- all of my family are in caring fields-- I worked in the cannery all the way through high school-- I was 14

when my folks told me never to talk politics at their table again--so I never talked politics at anyone's table.

In the course of the ten years of marriage my husband had a real drinking problem-- it was bad and I ended up really becoming an abusive parent-- I thought I would end up killing my daughter-- the counselor said I needed to see the outside world with my daughter so we both went to playschool because I could volunteer there-- I had to fight everyday with my husband about my car to even do the volunteer work to help both myself and my daughter-- because I was so good at childcare the counselor felt I should put my application in at the childcare center and get paid for my work-- I nearly got killed because of getting a job-- but I assured him there would be no males on the job-- all women and children-- I worked for 12 years in childcare-- then I changed jobs because it was not filling my needs-- my parents pretty much disowned me because of the divorce-- I do see them sporadically-- I see a lot of women when they are free from their unhappy homes making wise choices and some unwise-- but mine seemed good-- the whole divorce made me angry-- my husband ended up paying \$125 a month even though he wasn't working and was mentally disabled-- I only wanted \$50 for a telephone for our daughter-- I walked out of the courtroom and called the custody clinic and told them I have just now given custody of my daughter to her father and she is now living with him-- then we went home and it ended up that my husband pays \$50 for the telephone and our daughter lives with me and all is happy-- I don't know if I believe in marriage-- I do not know about putting myself in the position that I would be vulnerable again.

I've lived here 26 years-- my son is 25 and my daughter is 18-- they are my friends-- I lived in a coop house since I divorced-- my husband worked at

the mill making \$2,000 a month and I did baby sitting work for \$300-- when we got a divorce I still ended up working and making about \$300 and that was all I got-- so five years ago I just formed a boarding house coop-- we have a coop garden-- we canned-- we glean fields with fruit in them-- we're on food stamps-- we have a greenhouse-- we have coop cooking each weekend-- and we're all in the same position just coming out of a bad marriage-- men or women-- it is unfortunate when you get a divorce that women usually end up with the kids and men the cars-- most men end up without a home so we try and have a home attitude when men move in-- everything is run very smoothly-- I have my own room and it is only my room-- all my boarders and children respect my privacy-- I wake up real early in the morning-- the night before I make coffee so in the a.m. I drink my coffee and visit with my children.

I don't feel we ever get past the obstacle of just surviving-- low wage or part-time minimum wage jobs are harder work than you will ever do in an office-- there are so few feedbacks with a low wage job or no personal benefits either-- low income people are so plentiful that unless you work every waking hour at a job you will be given the book-- I was on welfare and I hated it-- I want to see it possible for women to get off of welfare and be good in their work and get paid for good work-- poverty has created situations which I work on and spread the word to all my friends when there is a vote in the House of Representatives-- before this, I wouldn't pay any attention to these situations-- women need a fund for emergencies-- medical assistance of any kind would help-- who can afford a dentist and a doctor. Welfare medical card does not cover an emergency doctor call-- I think it is upper middle class that can afford medical and we need it down at our level.

I went to Southcoast Business Employment and they sent me to the displaced homemakers program-- I joined the program and they helped me get started in filling out college grants and enrollment in the college-- I was also a student advisor on the board-- I only needed financial help the first term-- the initial push-- the career center was a big help to show me what type of classes I should take and what type of career I should pursue-- I had been out of high school for 25 years so I didn't think of myself as being academic-- I have such a good network of friends-- which has given me a high self-esteem-- I don't feel I really needed the support group-- I took classes so that in a year and a half I got my AA degree-- some people could have done the same but it was required of most to go to the support group sessions-- I hang around a lot-- the networking of people it has become a hangout and a place to compare thoughts other than diapers and dishes-- people come into my life constantly that are on the street-- it's a resource for me that I can send them to and know that they can at least have that extra choice-- I now help my friends do it-- it's hard to find a job when your front teeth are knocked out-- your eardrum broken-- bruises on your face and cuts also-- now that we have a place we can go and get help-- it's great for women-- I have a portfolio with all the stress management papers and anything which will help other people who cannot get involved with the program at this time-- it has made me a much better peer counselor to my neighbors.

I'm working for the campus doing research on the needs of the adult population in this district-- and that is fun-- my working hours are from 8 to 5 and sometimes I take my work home-- I receive benefits and I have dental and medical-- it's only for a term--for the first time I'm really seeing that I may go on to school-- I love it-- I would like to work at a shelter for teenagers sometime-- I would like to go



from this college into a next-- I'm still taking classes-- I'm taking a writing class and a volunteer management class and this summer I feel the need for a computer class and typing-- I'm chairman of the homemaker single parent advisory group and that is very interesting-- and I'm about to become a grandmother-- my daughter plans to go with me to SWOCC next year-- I finished my AA in Human Services and will then go to a 4 year college while my daughter will go to a two year college. I have found a partner who also will have his AA in Automotive and he wants to go on to get something in Engineering with me and then find some place here in Oregon to work.

Right now I need to find a job for the summer and then I would like to try and see about going out to school again-- I really have a very hard time living from the constant crisis of day to day-- I had to move 7 times in three years-- I would rent houses-- fix them up and then they'd be sold-- if I have any dream in life-- it's to own my own property and build a house and never move again-- that is what I work for.

If I would go to a more metropolitan area I wouldn't have any trouble getting a job-- the economy of this area is very low-- women can only find work that will pay minimum wages and some is only part-time work-- I would like to see more cottage industry in this area-- I won't be satisfied with any job like the past-- now that I have extended my mind a little bit-- I'm taking classes every term-- I love it-- I will keep on trying and people around me will help-- more tuition readily available would also be nice.

I read constantly-- I dance twice a week-- I like to go to some of the bars-- I scuba dive-- I love to backpack, hike and camp and play chess-- I am good at writing and I enjoy keeping a journal-- it has organized me in everything I do-- I have to work so I

will have a retirement plan and that is when I really will do some writing-- school is really my thing and I feel I will complete that-- my life changes every two weeks and I don't even want to think about it-- I hope I'll still be smiling.

Field Notes: She looked ten years younger than her actual age-- she was very soft spoken-- she has a very caring nature about her, not blaming anyone for anything-- she was very knowledgeable on surviving with little or no money-- I sensed she wanted a female mentor, such as myself, to help guide her through a four year college.

Case Study #11: The woman in this case study is age 48, separated less than five years and has one child living at home.

I have a mother, father and brother-- my father became an alcoholic and my mother prepared for it-- my father worked in the woods and mother worked part-time-- after 25 years my mother divorced my dad-- they both came from large families-- this all happened when I left home--we moved every place because my dad always thought it was greener over the next hill-- my mother remarried and he also drinks-- but very nice-- it's hard to handle because my husband drank-- when I was growing up anything you did in the home was not considered work-- I was a very good student-- I was never encouraged to do anything-- even my art scholarship I got out of high school-- nothing counted that I wanted to do-- I baby sat while I was in high school-- never encouraged to be creative at all-- just get married-- have kids--I never thought about supporting myself-- I was raised that prince charming would come along and take care of me-- I was never directed to think other than marriage.

I loved my brother very much-- he was killed when he was 14-- that could have had a lot to do with the things I went through-- I had many relationships because I was looking for someone to be just like my brother-- I got married right out of high school for a period of six months and then I got a divorce-- I moved to San Francisco and went to school and took art classes there and was studying and got married again-- my second marriage lasted 22 years--all was forgotten when I married-- I wasn't me after I got married-- never give up your last name-- it's a real physical jolt-- you are somebody else and somebody's wife-- I am definitely a feminist.

I just kind of packed up the car one night and took my kid and drove 2,500 miles and came here-- I should have done it a long time ago-- it is very difficult to find work in Coos Bay-- mainly it's part-time work-- you can really loose your self-esteem when you realize you only can get a job with a minimum wage and you know you can't live on that-- without something like this here there is no hope-- bigger cities you may have a better chance.

The program was advertised in the newspaper called World-- I did get the help I needed-- to me it was just the fact that it was there-- it was a safe place to go-- I had no job because I didn't have any confidence in what I could do and how to do it-- since you have come in with a hopeless condition you do what you are expected to do and find out where you fit in and what direction you want to go-- you are rediscovering yourself-- I couldn't have found employment without assistance-- my resume was terrible-- my clothes were bad-- there are a lot of tricks in getting a job-- the people who come out of this program have learned stability and to access the jobs they go for and ask themselves... is it right for me.

It continues to help me because I'm working here and it's like family-- you get all the input you need-- if I'm depressed I can go in and talk to someone--I have changed my educational plans three times and that's ok because I haven't found what I want to do yet-- for the program we need a professional for counseling that is not connected with the college in any way-- we counsel but we're not certified-- I'm working and going to school-- I work here 30 hours a week and take one or two classes in the evening-- I have a 17 year old daughter which takes up a lot of my time in the evenings-- I also sew for people-- I want to be completely self-sufficient-- I don't get child support it is called maintenance until our divorce is final-- I was married for 22 yrs and so I should receive some alimony from my husband because of the time we've spent together-- I would rather have a small amount which will see us through and get it each month than a larger amount which we'll never get.

I completed high school and took an awful lot of college classes here-- I started art classes in San Francisco one time-- didn't go very long-- I didn't have any direction-- I hope to finish a 4 year college degree now-- I'm paying for my education instead of grants-- I may go into counseling-- I enjoy working-- I had my own business sewing for six years-- it was hard work and it was successful and fun! I would never be happy just sitting at home-- I have a perfect job-- I just love it-- I work 30 hours a week-- I receive medical and dental benefits and I feel so great-- I would not be happy with a job that was always the same.

My support group was split into two different age groups -- the younger women would accept our views because we were more their parent's ages-- also they could see we too had problems and we were trying-- class age was a plus-- you can get lost in your own

problems when it is all the same age group-- we became very close friends-- we really got to know ourselves-- my daughter has become very aware of how I have changed and how much we can now share--also I have learned to do a lot of listening to my teenager and that is the best thing anyone can do.

I do a lot of things-- I used to be an artist-- I sew-- I walk for my health-- I go to the beach-- I enjoy sitting listening to my daughter--she sings-- she is very gifted.

Women creat a lot of problems themselves by playing the subservient role throughout their marriage-- then when a divorce comes they're lost-- they just let a lawyer take over-- it isn't right-- also it's very important that before women get married they can take care of themselves-- if something should happen in the marriage.

Field Notes: I sense that she is truly happy about her present work situation-- she really enjoys helping women.

Case Study #12: The woman in this case study is age 44, married and has a disabled husband. They have four children with no children living at home.

I was born in Powers-- during WWII-- my dad worked as a logger and my mom worked part-time in a dress shop and ceramic shop and filled in at high school as a cook-- I was never even allowed to babysit-- jobs were scrutinized-- never got to work in Powers besides there was not much for kids to do-- I never expected to go on to college because my family-- like all others-- had traditional thinking-- only women who worked were in restaurants and bookkeepers-- there was no need for women to work and I never thought any different-- I married and was pregnant at 16-- I was told to hurry and get married and that was the thing to do-- I've been married 16 years to the same man and have four kids.

Dropped out of high school because I had hepatitis and couldn't go to school-- then I started to show that I was pregnant so I never went back to school-- I never even dreamed of going back to school-- it did bother me that others were in college-- so when I lived in Chicago I took a correspondence course-- two years to finish my GED during my last child-- in 1973 I wanted to be more than a housewife so went to school at College.

I have a disabled husband-- his disability income is \$857 a month-- there was not enough for me to go back to school-- my husband allowed me the freedom to go to school-- I was taking part-time classes at SWOCC-- I was unhappy with my job-- working at a hardware store only earning \$5.20 an hour-- no personal growth for the future-- there is a medical policy on my husband and what it doesn't pay for medicare will pick up-- medicare doesn't pay for his

insurance-- car and house insurance and we have large taxes on the house-- then I found out about the program-- I filled out financial aid forms and they helped me plan for future goals-- it was possible to go to school with the pay vouchers that paid for my first year of tuition, books and transportation-- all my education was paid by the program the first year-- scholarships the second year-- the biggest reason I got a scholarship was because the program helped me apply for them-- advising me on schedules of school-- gave me letters of recommendations-- they really supported me in what I wanted to do.

My kids are my best support group-- my son helps with my husband at times-- I go to school and then come home-- I don't feel comfortable having my husband sitting home by himself in a wheelchair-- I cook for him, do bills, fix the house, and even fix his wheelchair.

Last term they sent out a post card about support group meetings-- it was mandatory that I go and I couldn't make all of them-- anytime you tell a person my age which is 44 that it's mandatory to go to meetings or you are out-- really turned me off-- one of the meetings was with a Mary Kay Cosmetics woman-- I thought that was in poor taste for women like me who are in need-- how can something like that be mandatory? Also the support groups could be done a lot more efficiently-- it seemed everyone came in the same day and talked about different things-- nothing really positive out of it all-- I felt we needed to have a purpose for being there.

When they moved over into their new office-- it's so small we couldn't be comfortable visiting with each other-- the space you have to talk is so small that it's hard to be with the director in private-- also the secretary is overwhelmed-- not enough employees to

make people feel at ease and be able to talk in private to them-- they lost something since they moved over there-- they need a big couch and space.

I will put in for financial aid and work part-time at the University of Oregon in the field I am interested in-- it will be like an internship-- I'll finish coursework as a junior-- I'm interested in vocational rehabilitation -- helping people-- I see working plus maybe going on to graduate school.

I'm 5'5" and I need to take care of my weight-- I'm obese-- this is a real big problem-- I'm also getting behind on the taxes-- if we sold the house and moved to Eugene I could start at the U and start working in my field my senior year-- I shall pick a job carefully so I can get on permanent.

Field Notes: I felt she was very happy and proud of her accomplishments and determined that nothing was going to hold her back-- she wants to make a liveable income above poverty for herself and her husband and expressed true appreciation for the program's help.

Case Study #13: The woman in this case study is age 50, divorced more than five years and has four children, no children are living at home.

Mom went to a Normal school and my father worked-- they stressed reading-- but no education was stressed to me-- I got married when I was 15 and lived in Idaho-- I was married for 25 years and I regret not getting a divorce earlier-- I missed a whole segment of life that everybody else had.

I didn't work at all until I was 27-- that was my first job-- it was like someone 17 years old out in the world-- I got a taste of freedom and I could see that



there were other things to do and maybe that was my downfall-- then I worked at other kinds of jobs and I've never had a job that could support me in the way I wanted to be supported-- and --I was divorced for three years before I came down here-- I didn't know about any support systems to help me-- I had property out here so I came.

When I was asked for my first resume I thought he was kidding and it was only a minimum wage job-- I wouldn't have been able to go to school if it hadn't been for my boyfriend-- they make it hard out there in the world for you-- you have to have the right clothes, transportation and childcare-- it can make the difference of going or not going to work.

I found out about the program on TV and talked to (director)-- she was very helpful and I signed up for the class, Skills for Success-- I wasn't very impressed with the class--I also went to the first initial support group-- it just kind of gave me some self-confidence and also showed me what things were available.

I took the placement test for school and I scored very high because I read a lot-- but I found I was still very lacking in the basics-- but the teachers won't listen to you-- I felt they gave out a lot of false information that first year in the homemakers program-- they had people registering in classes that they should not have been in-- and there was no financial aid when they said all you had to do was sign up for it-- the only way you get financial aid is to sign up for a degree and take 12 credit hours-- they had me signed up for 20 credits-- which no way could I do it.

I think the support for older women is needed-- I felt they gave support to younger gals with kids that were in the program-- they seem to be focusing on getting

employment-- the job I got doesn't have anything to do with education out here and it seems alright so I sometimes feel it was a waste of time and I'm saddled with \$1,000 that I have to pay back-- but then again maybe it's good experience for people to go through-- I was enrolled two years ago-- follow-up is probably needed.

I think what the year taught me out here is how much I am lacking in education-- I got my GED last year-- I got my CNA this spring which is Nursing Assistant-- I could work as a nurse assistant until I retire but nothing has come up and I can't get a 40 hours in.

I have a full-time job and I don't need to grub for money now which I was-- I'm working with retarded people in a transitional house-- I'm getting \$4.80 and in June I'll get \$5.20-- no benefits-- I just hope I don't get sick-- it's interesting but I didn't get it through the school program-- finally South Coast Employment placed me and that is where I've been and I like it-- I've never been around retarded people-- we teach skills basically-- it's good and it worked out-- I've applied to be a manager in Motel 6 so we shall see-- I'm trying to get out of Coos Bay-- anywhere else where I could make more money and have benefits.

My boyfriend is totally supportive and we've lived together for five years-- he's retired and has a small disability income-- he always pushes me out to do things-- my children are supportive-- but they don't live here.

Age is a problem and every employer asks you-- now Motel 6 is looking for mature people for managers and I'm 50-- my boyfriend is 51-- so we may have a better chance than a younger person-- I think if you get up around 60 it is a very real problem-- I feel that looks should never enter into whether you are hired or not--

being neat and clean and well groomed should really be at the top of the list.

I think it's a lot better than it was 5 and 10 years ago-- I would have gotten a divorce 10 years ago but I didn't know there was any support system to fall back on and I didn't know there was a way out for me-- maybe the women are smarter now-- I don't know! Sometimes I think that if the wood industry would just fold-up-- it would force people to reach out and do other things-- lots of tradition with typical roles here in Coos Bay.

Field Notes: She was happy to participate in research that would help women and she wanted to express her opinion of the homemaker program-- it was not a positive experience-- she needed a follow-up and more personal guidance.

Case Study #14: The woman in this case study is age 46, separated less than five years with two children, no children are living at home.

Mom was home-- Dad executive of a company-- I have a twin sister, one older sister and an older brother-- mother was abusive and dad was gone all the time-- my dad was higher middle class-- he finally became the dad he should have been then he died--I was close to my sister-- mother would always abuse me because I would always fight back-- she was mental, emotional, and physical abusive and my dad never stopped her-- my sister married twice and she also has become very abusive-- my older brother is a psychologist-- at one time I was close to him-- then when he got older he disowned the whole family-- he knows my situation but has only called once in 12 years-- he said he would not help in no way-- my dad made lots of money and always told me "go to college

and be a third generation nurse"-- my mother said no-- good girls don't leave home until they're married-- I went into nursing and also married-- I've been married for 20 years-- I dropped the nursing and he left me to go home to his mother.

I had a number of jobs-- I didn't know I was manic depressant for 30 years-- I had a job in market research-- a job in a nursing home and a job in home health care aid-- did janitorial work--telephone research work-- office help doing surveys and waitress work-- when I go back to work I would like to stick with one job in one place and retire and grow with it-- it all depends-- I seem to have a recurrence of my illness about every two months-- it could mean I would be permanently disabled.

I learned about the homemaker program from an advertisement on the TV-- they helped me find a job . and they were all for me-- they even told me I could get some free clothes at the center which I badly needed-- they helped me write a resume-- once I got the clothes and my resume together I went out for a job interview-- the gal (employer) called the program-- I felt I was dressed really nice with suit and everything-- they helped me find a job as an executive assistant-- in my job I learned computer typing, public relations, telephone, I called major resorts putting together vacation packages for my employer, and typed letters.

My marriage was falling apart at this time-- and after I let my husband back into my life he forced me to quit my job-- he was very abusive-- so I quit my job and I felt disabled again-- for three weeks-- by that I mean I have a mental illness which is called Bipolar Disorder, Manic Depression-- I'm on medication called Lithium-- I have trouble sleeping-- I was all set to go back to work again but again-- I had to quit my job

because I had a run-in with my husband-- again this episode lasted three weeks-- my husband emotionally abuses me and it's just like physical abuse-- I knew I wouldn't be able to work for quite awhile.

In January of 1986 I tried going back to school-- I took a class in human relations-- didn't know I was manic until I had a severe episode-- usually I did quite well with the public and when I was feeling good I would be on a high and then if I got depressed I would have an episode of my illness-- I was told that my illness was genetic and when someone was abusive to me I went into a decline-- I'm glad I could get help at that time-- I was on General Aid which was worse than welfare because I only got \$239 a month-- I'm up for review for a possible increase.

I'm 46 and in this town they respect older workers because they know they'll stay longer on the job-- the rent is low--I pay \$130 for rent-- I have electric bill, phone bill and car insurance to cover-- I was lucky that when I went into the program I got a job and clothes and food right away-- I did have problems at work because of being a manic depressant and that was mainly due to stress-- when I am not working I like to sleep off and on all day-- I enjoy gardening and I like to read.

I have many friends and also I really am supportive when I take Lithium--I know a family that is good to me-- it's the family I didn't have-- they understand and accept me and God has provided it.

Field Notes: She had a very positive attitude about her future due to the support she has from her friends and her strong faith in God-- I enjoyed visiting with her and she was very willing to talk about her situation-- she was so appreciative and positive about the help she had received from the program and hopes to return

for more assistance.

Case Study #15: The woman in this case study is age 49, widowed less than five years and has three children with two living at home.

My mom was a homemaker-- my dad was a millworker in this area-- my mother raised eight children-- I'm the fourth-- four of each-- I was never encouraged to work when young-- even in schools in those days there wasn't a lot of talk about careers for women-- I wish I could have gone to college instead of getting married and have a family.

I finished high school and got married two weeks before I graduated-- then I did work sometimes-- my husband was a millworker-- after my oldest boy graduated out of high school I went to SWOCC and took some classes-- I almost got my 2-year degree but was so tired I had to quit-- I was wife, mother, worker, and a student all at the same time and something had to give.

I was married 21 years and I worked off and on but nothing was training me for a future-- I can't see that I really expected to have to work full-time-- I have three kids all grown-- and next month my home will be paid for-- that is nice.

I have two boys living at home and they don't understand my needs emotionally-- they're not supporting me financially and I'm not supporting them-- I have a group of friends that I can visit with-- they're truly supportive just like I'm supportive of their needs-- for awhile I felt quite isolated from those of my friends who were married-- I didn't feel a part of that group-- I had a male friend who would visit with my husband all the time but

when my husband died he never contacted me or talked to me and that really hurt-- I don't think there is a man in the world that understands what a woman goes through at the loss of her husband.

I had a psychologist tell me about this program-- he heard that I was just recently been widowed and felt this program was really what I could use-- I came into the program two years ago-- I took the orientation that was offered once a week for six weeks-- I didn't need financial help because I had a grant but they did give me moral support which I needed-- they did get me a job and I mean they were the only ones that helped-- the girl that was in charge of the displaced homemakers group worked really hard-- she sent me out to be interviewed many times and she gave me that help and the job I got is due to the displaced homemakers program-- they're directly responsible for my employment.

I think the way you can have access to school books that have been used by women before you is just great-- I gave mine to a lady who couldn't afford the \$20 for new books and that seemed to be a practice in the displaced homemakers program-- the clothes basket is just great-- I didn't use any of them because none of them fit at the time-- but a lot of women really used them-- one thing they did do that was wonderful-- they gave me gas allowance vouchers-- that was such a great help.

I would have liked more help in planning and testing-- I wish it could be more personalized so you really had an idea of what you were best at-- I think they need more research in the career fields that are open for women in different age groups-- I still feel I could use the support group-- knowing they were there and that they cared when I was in a great need was just wonderful-- knowing that they helped me get a job-- I

would have liked a follow-up to see how I am doing and maybe they could offer more suggestions as to what job would be more interesting.

I'm a cashier at Payless-- the pay is decent but not real great-- you get your pay raises according to the hours you work and I've been with them for one year-- I'm now getting \$4.95 an hour-- then I can work up to top scale and get \$7.00 a hour-- but that's where it stops unless you go into management-- I think the employers are trying to use more part-time workers so they can save money on insurance-- this seems the way a lot of employers are all going-- I do get benefits working for Payless and that is great-- I really haven't felt discriminated because of my age-- I feel I have had a fair go.

I like where I am-- I only have about 13 years before retirement and I really don't have any large career future-- on the other hand my doctors say I need a job where I'm sitting down because of a bad knee-- I'm on my feet all the time-- I don't know what else I really want to do-- but I hate to move to another job because I do have good benefits-- my working hours are pretty steady-- I'm working around 30 hours a week-- the cashier job guarantees more permanent hours but sometimes I have to call and remind them I'm available-- I don't mind working-- I really would like to branch out-- but right now I just want security and benefits and retirement-- I would like to earn a little bit more though.

I have thought I'd like to be a nurse-- but not at this age-- I don't like to be real stressed-- I have thought a lot about coming back to SWOCC and take a class or two each term-- that is about all I can handle-- I would like to take some more accounting classes-- I'm still trying to find what I really want to do-- I would move if the move made me a better life.



I like to read-- I like to work on my computer chess game-- I beat it once-- I could entertain myself because I'm really a loner-- I love to sew-- I would just love to travel-- I have a chance to go to Arizona in September-- that will be fun and I would also like to go to Australia.

I just keep searching for that one special place or job I'd look forward to going to work every morning-- I love people and would like to work with them-- only not as a cashier-- I'm not trying to set the world on fire-- I like my safe niche.

Field Notes: I felt she was happy to have a job with benefits but with a little encouragement she would return to college and pursue a career.

Case Study #16: The woman in this case study is age 50, separated less than five years and has one child living at home.

My mother was a beautiful person-- Irish in Boston-- lots of difficulties-- she became an alcoholic-- she married my father who was a doctor-- she was the city person and he was the country doctor-- I was neglected because my parents who were very rich didn't have time for me-- I have a half sister up here we're about eight years apart-- Children choose their roles in the family-- I was the bad guy-- my father had custody of me-- he was killed making a house call-- road was icy-- he was the old breed to make house calls-- I was 30 when he died-- very emotional.

I was not encouraged to think of myself as a human being-- I was not consulted about money matters-- I was always under the assumption that someone would come along and take care of me-- I have since changed

very much-- it has taken hard work-- I was in therapy eleven years-- now if a relationship came along I don't think I would want it-- I treat them badly-- I choose people that remind me of my mother-- irresponsible-- good looking-- playmates-- but not real grown-ups.

I came up here after a failed relationship-- I learned that our relationship was hopeless and I was really beginning to hate Southern California-- when I was a kid I chose Oregon and I came out here and flunked out of Reed so I have always loved it-- and my sister has been here for 20 years and I had an old car and knew I had to go somewhere-- I had to get my child away from him-- he was a good man but he is that classic American type maverick sort-- he sells cheese cakes and has never filed an income tax for 20 years-- he has a lot of trouble with emotions-- he could never make a living--I ended up doing 80 percent of everything-- it was awful-- instead of working on it, anymore--I have really tried too hard--I read "Women Who Love Too Much" and I finally stopped telling other women to read it--and decided to put it to use in my own life-- I had an idea that I would love to go to school and didn't think it possible-- anyway my sister has lived here for years-- so I came up-- got a job-- which didn't work out and then I heard about SWOCC-- I heard and talked to a woman who was going through the program and she told me about it and so here I am.

I took the Skills for Success-- I did fine and then I took other programs but mostly the support groups-- they helped me a great deal-- one was the help with child care-- I would like to see as usual a greater expansion of the child care issue-- and the other was the business of having people to talk to about my situation with whom I didn't have to explain anything-- they knew-- it does help.

I felt more secure here because there are people I

could go to with my insecurity-- the academic business has been a little rough--I was not very well advised-- I know the group of people I want to be involved with-- probably alcoholics and drug users and I won't run out of people in my life time-- but they let me take intermediate Chemistry and I flunked it and I have to make a C in every class-- thank God I have an A in every term that really helps-- I took Chem 100 and the instructor was just great so maybe I can retake the one I flunked-- I flunked out of about four colleges-- to young.

I have two more years but I would like to get a job in a hospital and finish up with their two year program-- I am sure the hospitals will help me-- I think I will move in 2 years to Eugene to finish my education-- I love all of Oregon-- Yes, I am very self-motivated.

I feel very very lucky-- I like 95% of the women in the nursing program--only a couple who are too young-- I have some good friends that help me with personal things-- like I met a woman whose husband helped with the ignition of my car-- saved me a lot of money-- so I typed his resume.

I've worked most of my life-- I've always wanted to take care of myself-- I love it-- I learned on the job as a legal secretary-- I always wanted to be a writer-- I hope to be-- I do a lot of reading-- I never want to retire-- after retirement age maybe I could join the Peace Corp-- I enjoy traveling very very much.

I do a very small job-- I work as a minute taker sort of a secretary for Ark of Oregon-- it is for retarded people of the area and I'm helping a woman on a volunteer basis to start a group called Help finders-- the idea is to get people who are falling through the cracks-- I'm taking 12 credits and I can't work and carry that load-- it really isn't a lot but the courses

like anatomy and chemistry are hard-- chemistry would have come a lot easier for me if I had been working on this in high school.

I make time for myself by taking PE this term-- I get addicted working out-- all we do is mostly exercise-- sometimes we run for 25 to 40 minutes and I'm finding it's just great-- I find the group thing helps me I get more competitive-- particularly someone fatter than me.

I was able to get housing subsidy-- I live adjacent to these Lakes-- an apartment complex has its drawbacks and bothers some Oregonians who want privacy so much-- but having lived in New York it doesn't bother me-- Empire lakes park is my backyard-- I charge around the park each day.

My son has been acting up and a lot of defiance-- it takes up a lot of my time-- I need to have time to study--I need a boarding school atmosphere for him for about the next 3 weeks-- I don't have help with babysitting and it is rough right now and he is still young-- you have to say to yourself-- just get through this day-- but being a single parent is much more work than the media makes it look-- it's even tough with two parents-- it's twice the work for a single parent and it's rough on the child because he doesn't have two people-- and it also makes them insecure-- I know my son worries what would happen to him if anything happened to Mom.

There is no great big brother program here in Coos Bay-- I do feel there should be something to help mothers of male children to have appropriate role models-- My son is going to grow up to like women because he hasn't a male role model-- and what is really the trouble is that women feel they are not valid if they don't have a man in their lives-- I know

them and I talk to them-- they think I am crazy for being independent.

I don't think I will be without work as a nurse-- I'm not interested in a great big amounts of money-- I get so tired I start fantasizing about the lottery-- I would like to have the money so we could travel once a year-- I want to make a decent living for myself and my son-- I have tricks to get him to college-- do his work in a hospital which is associated with a University-- that is great-- I intend to make him a scholar-- if I possibly can-- he is awfully good in math and boys keep it when girls don't sometimes use it enough.

I need financial help-- I have a gum disease that will take some money-- I will probably get a bank loan.

One thing I want to tell you is that nothing has given me such joy as being able to go back to school-- doing this is the most positive thing I have ever done.

Field notes: She is very positive about herself and her goal to become a nurse-- she wasn't afraid to give her opinion -- very open-- she enjoyed sharing her personal thoughts and philosophy based on a number of books she's read-- she wants to be a nurse in an alcoholic, drug abuse center and feels she could really help in that area because of her personal experience of being raised with an alcoholic mother.

Case Study #17: This woman in this case study is age 58, divorced more than five years and has five children with one living at home.

I was born in Texas-- one of eight children-- I was the 8th-- we were farm workers-- cotton pickers-- my parents had no schooling at all-- parents were always

working-- I went 3 months of the first year of high school and stopped and got married-- I was 16 when I got married-- I had children right after I was married-- I was always encouraged to work-- I sold fruit in San Francisco in the market place-- I picked cotton-- overseer for Mexicans on a fruit ranch-- I washed glassware in a restaurant-- janitor work in a motel-- kitchen in a hospital-- worked at the newspaper and got injured-- I was injured in 1985-- I couldn't go back to work and I didn't have any education to get any other kind of work-- I was married for 33 years-- I have five children-- I'm divorced now-- my two sons and my daughters are very supportive about me going to college-- my youngest son lives with me and helps by paying the rent-- I had helped him through some college and he now has a good job helping me.

When you only have \$175 a month to live on then you need money--the money I got was alimony-- I have no insurance of any kind or benefits-- last year I found that I was a diabetic-- that ran my bill up to \$600 before I knew what was happening-- now I have to find out how to pay it-- no dental and I would like to go to see a dentist but not at this time.

Not until I had the divorce did I expect to be supporting myself-- even though he pays some alimony it will only be a fraction of his salary-- he has always worked-- I've always been in the home without a salary-- I'm out on a limb living on his alimony check-- it can't be done.

My son heard about the homemaker program on his pick-up radio-- when he got home he told me about it-- my son is 27-- I went to all the meetings-- I did a job search with people I thought I would be interested in working with-- I went through the program learning about self-esteem-- we had fun-- the program helped me to know I could still do things

and I could still go to school and learn more and have the self-confidence to do it-- I want to support myself and do something for myself-- I needed a light weight coat that wasn't a long style and some shoes and a dress and they provided that for me-- free of charge-- I needed a textbook a while ago and they bought it for me-- they're always very supportive in anything I do-- I can come in for support and they listen to my problems.

I got my GED in 1981 through SWOCC-- I'm going to school full-time-- working 15 hours a week at the college printing office-- I have a grant-- they like you to work on campus when you can-- I like working-- I enjoy doing a job that is productive and I prefer to do it well first because I don't like to go back and do it over-- if I can get a job-- I figure I'll be working until I retire-- when I get through school I would like to get a well paying job.

I'm now working for a bookkeeping certificate I think they call it-- I don't think I want to get into accounting-- bookkeeping is more my speed-- I'm hoping to get a good wage like \$1,000 a month or maybe more-- I would feel so rich-- I would like to finish school so I can put on an application that I've finished-- the only time I think about my age is when I have to tell the age of my kids-- my oldest is 42-- I'm now 58 years old-- I have one or two semesters yet to go but I would like to start looking around-- keep an open mind-- I'm willing to move to earn what I want-- my son lives in Corvallis and I've thought of moving to Newport too.

Field Notes: She has a very positive outlook about her future-- I feel she will reach her career goal.

Case Study #18: The woman in this study is age 43,

divorced more than five years and has four children, no children are living at home:

I have a wonderful mother and two brothers and I have a father that I haven't see in many years-- I grew up in Oregon and graduated from high school in 1962-- I met my husband in 1964-- married 17 years-- I worked and then had a baby-- then worked nights and had a babysitter during the day that helped me-- I had three children-- my husband also had been married before me and after we had been married for a few years I was given the full care of a 17 year old son and a 15 year old daughter plus our three kids-- we decided to come here because we had visited here-- so when we settled down we finally got a divorce-- I had the trucking job then so the kids and I did very well-- I always liked to work-- I was going to school at SWOCC-- and raising 3 kids-- it just got too much-- I couldn't keep up with my classes and that is when I dropped school.

I had been manager for a freightline company and was making wonderful money all the time my children were growing up-- after I left that company my boyfriend and I were going to go to New Mexico-- on the way he had a stroke and died-- when I came back here I didn't know what to do-- I lost my trucking job because they filed for Chapter 11-- then I started dealing blackjack on a part-time basis-- my kids worked too-- I have the best family and I have a lot of friends-- they give me extreme confidence-- they are always there when I get down and I do get down at times-- they're always there offering me support and love-- I've never given up-- but I've known frustration.

I learned from one of my girlfriends about the displaced homemaker program-- I called them up and asked them what the program was and how it could



help me-- I came in and filled out an application and was accepted-- they gave me some money and then I had to take some tests-- I was working only part-time-- so I enrolled here for the high-tech computer courses-- not only did it give me the computer background it also gave me confidence in myself that I could do it-- when you go to school you meet the people who have the same problems-- even much worse-- I would not have found out how to grow and think better of myself if it weren't for the program-- I have a job today that was due to my being in the displaced homemakers program and I'm very happy with it.

I worked for a bank at \$4.00 an hour with no benefits-- I worked 40 hours a week-- what really made me upset was when I was working in the bank and they would hire women who were in their 20's who would end up being my supervisors-- that really hurt me-- and I think that was degrading for me-- through the job search program I found a wonderful job-- I'm an International Trade Specialist-- I work in forest products and I'm the log buyer-- I also travel all the time-- I work full-time from 8 to 5 making \$2,000 a month-- and I have all the benefits.

The only thing I don't like dealing with any more is the pressure--I love my job-- there is pressure with anything that pays good I guess-- you have to decide what is most important for you to make you feel good about yourself-- I'm going to have to come to terms with myself and with my pressure-- for the moment I am happy--I'm just going to try to be the best I can at what I am.

Field Notes: From her jovial and out-going personality, I could tell this woman has zero fear or problems working in a nontraditional occupation.

The following case studies are interviews with three program staff employees at the Southwestern Oregon Community College Displaced Homemaker Program.

Program Employee #1:

I have a father-- my mother was mentally ill her whole life and I have two wonderful brothers-- very protective-- my brother missed Christmas with his family to come down and check out my husband-- another brother called all over creation to find out about my husband-- I had worked in the psychiatric ward at the hospital for two years-- I felt I could handle this job-- my masters is in Recreational Therapy-- by mid last year I was basically running the program.

It's been too much work this year and I still don't know if it is all worth the stress I go through-- it has caused me some liver dysfunction-- it was important that I continue with the program this year-- even at the cost of my health-- --I don't know about the future-- I live from day to day and we will see what happens.

I can't listen to these stories for 5 more years-- I don't have anything that protects me from the pain-- do you? I had a lady come in for help that had been beaten within a inch of her life every moment of her childhood and keeping quiet while it was done-- I had two women come in last week that were really in terrible trouble and then I had a grant to write and by the end of the week my shoulders were really hurting and up tight-- I haven't made a decision whether to stay for next year.

The college wants us to do outreach-- I'm not excited about outreach because we have more people than we

can handle now-- we already have 100 people coming in each term and we can't handle anymore-- you remember the integrity of the program at all times-- women won't leave messages but they do have a way of leaving messages with the switchboard-- they also call back.

My one concern was that being so small-- I didn't have a closet I could basically talk with people in private-- but we're now very respected by the administration-- I had to prove everything we did in the program to my manager but now he doesn't question what we do and he sends people to me to ask questions and trouble shoot-- he even asks the counselors to come talk to me-- ho-ho-- the program is institutionalized now and we're solid-- we're part of the college-- we're probably one of the most important reasons the college continues-- I feel isolated from the other programs in the State because we are so far away from them-- our staff of two is very small and we cannot share our problems with other displaced homemaker directors.

I won't refer women to the women's crisis center-- they're not consistent-- some of them do very good work-- some don't-- I had a woman who had been isolated for 7 years-- a woman who hadn't been able to talk to people and had received extreme verbal abuse-- she went to the women's crisis center and they told her she hadn't been beaten up-- they could not help her-- this lead to physical abuse-- her baby was dropped on its head on concrete-- fortunately it lived-- then the woman got beat-up-- we basically had to deal with the problem-- we have a small town and it's very hard to maintain confidentiality-- I've found we're the only program that does-- so basically everything that comes in here-- stops here-- a women's shelter is being built and should be ready for next year.

We use Healthline a lot--it's a referral where people can call and talk to other people or counselors-- my husband and I are on the line--we stress confidentiality--we use community action-- we've had three referrals from the welfare department since I've been here-- now does that tell you anything?-- we now have a rebel director down here-- I'm on the welfare advisory board-- he and I are going to have everything in line so when there is work money we're going to have all our homework done-- he hopes that in three years women will be able to get an education and still be on welfare.

One thing people do a huge amount of is personal development and then it slacks off-- the administration wanted me to do a study on support groups -- they sent out letters demanding work in a support group-- I was very upset-- the letter said mandatory-- I feel there has been a lot of resistance to the support groups-- I handled it by saying registration is mandatory but attendance is not--I have to keep telling them it's ok to miss some of the support group sessions-- it is up to them-- it's not mandatory-- then what happens-- people get totally independent-- by the next year they apply for their financial aid ahead of time-- they don't need money from us anymore-- it makes them very independent and that is great-- it would be nice if they could still stay in contact with us so we know where they're going-- they come back to ask us what other classes are being offered.

Advisors only look at the academic student-- they don't look at the total thing and if I don't get that information to them during the skills class and if they sign up for what their advisor recommends-- 16 or 18 hours-- they're in trouble. I'm adamant that they only take 12 hours the first term-- we try and do some personal intake with them-- if their scores are low I

usually have them take 1/2 term skill courses-- then when they get that down-- with a good grade-- then they can go on to basic requirements-- the program is individual-- each person gets her own guidance.

The best thing we can offer these women is "hope"-- they can make a choice if they want things to be different-- you are there because you choose to be there-- you are not there because it's mandatory-- once they've decided to get started-- they'll usually follow through-- once somebody is taken in, they are never dropped-- some never want to do anything for themselves and this can be a big problem-- a woman who kept repeating the same type of relationship realized it was a problem and knew she needed to do something about it-- but she choose not to-- we take one day at a time and even when the staffing is short we still take them-- I want to see us under an umbrella which has single parent, homemakers, re-entry students and academic disadvantaged students-- the services we do are so valuable to others.

One question that was brought up at a directors retreat was "if we serve men what different services should we give them?" I didn't understand what they meant by different-- they have the same equality and are made up the same-- I was just mad because I had just finished working with a man who came in from being on the prison probation list and in one term he was on the Dean's list of good students-- we have a man who is a millworker-- he is great-- he's a good parent-- has two children-- he just needed some boots so he could apply for this job-- I had one staff person in the program say that this guy couldn't be in the skills class because he was too cute and that the women would make eyes at him--what a perfect time to let people see what men are like and what women are like.

We have an influx of young and old-- some are young just going through a divorce-- it just depends-- the next were 35 and older who were looking for a job and who even left the skills class to work-- the next group would be young-- groups stay together the whole time-- we do basically the same thing for each group-- age doesn't enter into it-- we have the same outline-- each group gets their own identity-- the most rewarding student is around age 45 to 55-- they are so excited to be here-- there is some hope-- they seem to get younger and younger as they complete our program-- I love it!

#### Program Employee #2:

My teaching work put me in touch with many women needing skills to get jobs-- young and old-- widows, unwed mothers all had zero work skills-- working with people firsthand I became extremely aware of the need.

We started with \$100,000 per year for two years-- was not excessive but good---real important for program planners-- hard part is getting the program institutionalized-- lots of turf problems were here when starting-- skepticism-- agencies not knowing about clients, etc.-- Federal grants are real hard-- once programs prove themselves the college takes over-- still, Federal grants are needed for student fees, child care, etc. and the college can match these dollars.

(The director) has really done a great job-- managing on a smaller budget-- she has... step by step been able to get faculty accepting the program and recognizing that women are coming into all other programs at the college.

Timing was important--the minute we had any public information there was a flood of calls--non-stop telephone calls-- everytime media was out-- when you're the director-- you have to maintain quality of program --a small amount of staff can't do the job with clients-- so you have to down play the media and attention-- people are camped on our doorstep-- people drove in for miles to get help-- it really scares the program staff to help and still maintain quality-- you can't turn someone away-- to add staff at that very point you have to go through a hiring process.

It would be a real mistake if you mandated (staff to have a) counseling certificate-- there are counselors and there are counselors--one must have an education-- someone who understands the education system and expectations of the institution-- we also need a person who can relate to the clients-- the differences in client needs vary-- some are escaping from a battering situation-- they have an immediate need to get out-- the widowed need time to sort through and recover from shock-- usually too premature for services-- others-- maybe all they need is a little brushing up on skills-- this has to be the strength of the program-- to keep focusing on individual needs-- a needs assessment is the first thing the program must do to help match needs up with a person--personal one to one help-- it may take an hour or so-- we did have a half-time job placement person to get women out-- but lost money to keep her --someone who knows community-- who can match jobs available with women-- this is needed-- informal-- subjective matching-- a good placement person.

Original hope was to have follow-up groups-- I still think it's needed-- but the logistics are hard to do-- if there was money to carry extra staff-- the reality is that they take jobs when and where they can get

them-- it's hard for them to be in support groups-- I haven't figured out how to make follow-up happen-- at one time we had a florist send a flower to women on the job-- this immediately gave them a boost and they'd call-- people are eager to leave behind the awful part of their lives so they don't respond back.

### Program Employee #3:

First of all I started last spring with the single parent program-- it has kind of evolved here on campus-- we don't have a placement service but we're trying to find employment for them once they've gone through the program-- we had a grant which was putting two part-time jobs together to make a full one-- it worked good for the single parents who were in school-- in fact for all of them-- they could add these jobs for some basic money-- some were career type jobs but most of them weren't-- the thing I notice from most is that they've been out of the work force for a long time-- most of the time I spent working with these people telling them they can do it and to think positive-- trying to get to apply for jobs and with such negative attitudes-- (another staff member) works so well with them getting them dressed properly-- the older people are very negative when it comes to interviews.

I tell these students not to lose their positive thoughts the first week they go to work because the second week will become so much easier for them-- they still will have a little struggle but to hold in there and it will work out and they will be able to deal with it-- we always hope it will be a good experience for them-- when people are over 40 they think they're really old and all of a sudden they know things will not be getting better-- I tell them "you have to make the best of it"-- you're all of a sudden in school with 18 year olds and it's a real shocker-- employers are



really looking for people that are 35 and younger and it's hard to break into the job market when you're over 40-- we're even having a group of them that are 60-- there are laws that should not discriminate against them but mostly they are their own worst enemy-- they start looking for lower type jobs-- if they don't get the job then they think it is because of their age.

This area has been notoriously behind-- we're so affected by the timber industry-- even if you're a fisherman-- we have seen some businesses come back but not like they have in other communities-- I've traveled to Portland and even visited Nebraska who had tops, a 6% unemployment rate and we have a top of 21%-- some people weren't even on the list-- they had drawn their unemployment, then left town-- so we can't count them-- we feel that all the abuse, welfare, male unemployment and the single parent story is all a result of this-- it's hard to get people to come to school and be retrained-- most of them will say school is not for me-- they have a mental block about school-- there are some that think that because they've taken a couple of courses with us-- that will be the answer to all of their problems.

I think the major thrust is to help them get their life together and then think about employment-- reprogram their thinking is of major importance-- most of them come through really battered-- I don't think I have ever seen such low self-esteem as the women that have come to us for help-- (director) is so wonderful to convince them they can do it-- it's sad because most of them will come in and say... all I ever wanted to do in life was be a good wife and mother and now look what has happened-- obviously they didn't choose where they are now-- most of them want to get married again but it might be too big a price to pay-- so we say why not take this time in between and take a few courses so you can become independent and work

until you find your situation changed-- we had one lady from our program who got a job as a secretary and in a few months she found herself the head of the trucking firm office-- she called us and said she needed someone from the program to take over her job-- we felt that said a lot for the program.

It's hard for people to estimate what they've done in their lives that is worth mentioning on a resume-- if you've been a parent or a housewife there will be things to list on a resume-- most people have worked in their lifetime-- I can't think of one person who hasn't worked sometime in their life-- but so many of them are reluctant to draw from their experiences.

Some women are their own worst enemy when they come in carrying a chip on their shoulder-- they will go out and have a couple of interviews and they won't get the job and that makes them even more negative and then I tell them the facts of finding a job and how they can help themselves more-- they sometimes will go out for an interview and they become angry-- they come across in the interview angry and they lose their chance of a job-- also an employer will tell them I will call you in a day or two-- that leaves anger in these people and they will say "will you really call me?" and there goes their chance of a job-- I tell them to go into the interview positive-- make your employer feel comfortable and be up-front about everything-- you have a great chance of landing the job-- employers will always give a job to the person they feel comfortable with.

I taught last spring Job Search Skills and I've taught Retailing-- I love doing the job search-- you really are rewarded in that program-- they have a portfolio and capabilities after this course and they're ready for anything-- both men and women in this class-- there isn't much in a person's life that is as important and

as meaningful as their work-- their ego's change so much-- they are told if they have a chip on their shoulders to bury it now and forever-- sometimes I can work one on one with them-- I wish I could do it more but there isn't the time.

Displaced homemakers who are over 40 go in thinking I'm going to do it all for them-- they haven't been allowed to do their own thinking and they've been taken care of all their lives-- "little girl syndrome"-- they're thinking I'm going to get them a job right off and do it all for them and take care of them-- instead I make them think for themselves and they have to do it all themselves.

## Section Two

An unstructured interview guide (Appendix D) of general questions pertaining to one's present employment and career situation was used during each interview. The responses from the interviews were organized according to these broad categories: Program, Current Employment, Future Plans and Barriers, Support Systems, Personal, General Comments, and Comments from Program Staff. This section summarizes the interview responses within each category.

### Program

How did you first learn about the SWOCC Homemaker program? The majority of the women interviewed learned of the program through the media and referrals from people associated with the program. The media used was a community service television advertisement, the radio and in the local newspaper called the World. Referrals were made through agencies, friends, past program participants, and the staff at SWOCC. A comment about advertising the program through the media from staff members:

The minute we had any public information out about the program there was a flood of phone calls-- non-stop telephone calls-- people are camped on the doorstep-- people drove in for miles to get help-- it really scares the program staff to help and maintain quality at the same time-- you can't turn someone away-- and to add staff at that point you have to go through a hiring process-- so you opt to down play the

media and attention.

The college wants us to do outreach and I'm not excited about outreach because we have more than we can handle now-- this would mean we would be bringing in people from outlying areas-- we already have 100 people coming in each term and we can't handle anymore-- you must remember the integrity of the program at all times.

How did you participate in the homemaker program? The Skills for Success Class and the Support Groups were the major components of the program in which women participated. They are an essential key to helping women take the next positive steps to becoming self sufficient:

It gave me the encouragement because I was afraid... it was kind of neat because I started figuring out that I could do things.

I told my friend she would be able to let her ex-husband go after she had this course.

It also gives women a chance to believe in themselves and to realize they're not alone:

It gave me confidence in my self that I could do it-- when you go to school you meet the people who have the same problems and even much worse-- so because of the program I would not have found out how to grow and think better of myself.

Women also received help with job search and job placement, advice and help with completing and filing forms to continue their education, college textbook exchange and money for books, clothing exchange, gas vouchers, and child

care services.

What part of the program did you feel helped you the most?

Overwhelmingly, the answer to this was help in gaining one's confidence, moral support, encouragement, coaching and back-up, helping women realize they're not worthless and giving women that initial push:

Support and encouragement from these people and their confidence in me and assuring me I could do almost anything I wanted to and I wasn't too old or too poor.

It helped me to realize I wasn't completely worthless.

What part of the program do you feel helped you the least?

Some women felt the support groups were the least helpful:

The support groups--real nice-- but just a chit chat and not anything solid.

Support group meetings-- it was mandatory-- I couldn't make all of them and anytime you tell a person my age which is 44 that it is mandatory to go to meetings or you are out-- it doesn't set too well with me-- It really turned me off....

A comment from the program director about support group meetings:

The administration wanted me to do a study on support groups-- a letter was sent out saying mandatory participation in support groups-- that really upset me-- I feel there has been a lot of resistance to the support groups because of that uncalled for letter saying the word "Mandatory"-- I handled it by saying registration is mandatory but attendance is not--

sometimes the women feel they don't need us-- which is great-- but it would be nice if they could still stay in contact with us so we know where they are going.

Also some of the administrative procedures such as not filing papers on time and having vouchers on a schedule were stated as least helpful.

What would you like to see added or changed in the program?

Most comments were: More follow-up, support groups managed more efficiently, more support for older women, more space such as a lounge or place where women can come and meet others and talk and study.

Support groups could be done a lot more efficiently-- I felt we needed to have a purpose for being there-- some things you want to keep private--to get into your personal life is too personal.

Not as comfortable going in there-- lost something since we moved over there-- need a big couch and space. When they moved over into their office it was much smaller than where we were in the child care center and because it was so small we couldn't come and go and be as comfortable when we stopped to visit-- the space to talk to (program employee) was so small and it was hard to be with her.

A comment about moving the program location from a program employee:

I knew we needed to move to Delwood Hall to make the program more institutionalized and solid in the college system-- my one concern was that being so small I didn't have a closet that I could basically talk with people in private-- but we have made some great moves and we are now very respected by the

administration.

Some additional comments were related to better advising for classes, offering more variety of classes in the homemaker program, needing a professional counselor for the program that is not connected to the college and providing medical assistance of any kind.

I took the placement test for school and I scored very high because I read a lot-- but when you score high on a test it covers up the fact that you don't know a lot of basics-- but they won't listen to you-- then they advertised that there were tutors but I found there were no tutors-- I feel like the year I spent out here-- well-- I felt they gave out a lot of false information that first year in the homemaker program-- they had people registered in classes that they should not have been in-- they had me signed up for 20 credits which no way could I do it. The only way you get financial aid is to sign up for a degree and take 12 credit hours.

A comment about moving the program location from a program employee:

Advisors at the college only look at the academic student-- if I don't get that information to them during the Skills Class-- they sign up for the 16 to 18 hours their advisor recommends-- I am now telling women to only take 12 hours the first term-- the program is individual-- each person gets her own guidance.

Have your needs changed from when you first entered the program at SWOCC? The answers to this question were "Yes" the needs have changed from thinking they were in a hopeless situation to thinking positive about themselves and



understanding what to do next:

Once you are able to eat and sleep and feel like an adult and those needs are met then you need guidance with school and work and concrete things-- then you go to counseling and find how you can accomplish what you want to become, like self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence. You learn how to get around problems-- those are the intangibles that we all have to learn-- you learn ways to handle things.

How could the program continue to help you? The program could continue to help these women through a follow-up and letting women know they still care, by offering more skill building classes or a refresher Skills for Success Class, and a lot of women wanted to be with a support group again.

Future needs from the program is to go to some group discussions.

I think it would be good to be with a group again.

Follow-up to see how I'm doing.

Do you have any need for more career information or need for some assistance in choosing and planning a career? The majority had already developed career plans through the program but needed continued support and assistance for reaching those plans:

I am hoping the program will help me get employment when I'm finished with school.

Did the services of the program help you find employment?

Directly: For those women who wanted immediate

employment, the program helped them find a job:

They did get me a job and I mean they were the only ones that helped-- I was signed up with unemployment with the state and I received no calls from them and the girl that was in charge of the homemaker group worked really hard and she sent me out to be interviewed many times and she gave me that help and the job I got is due to the homemaker program -- they were directly responsible for my employment.

Yes, I worked for the Security Bank and it was really at the bottom of the line for \$4.00 an hour-- 40 hours a week and I never got the benefits and after 7 months, I quit. Through (career center director's name) I found a wonderful job and now I'm an International Trade Specialist and I have all the benefits and I travel all the time-- I work in forest products and I'm the log buyer-- I work full-time from 8 to 5 and I make \$2,000 a month.

All were satisfied with the programs help except one individual:

Yes, but dissatisfied-- they found two jobs for me that were very technical jobs and which I could not do-- I can work in an office which I have done for 7 years, I can type and I can file-- they put me in a place of employment with other people like office work and at this point I would only be able to stand it for 1 hour a day-- I do not want any more of that type of work.

Indirectly: All women responded "Yes" to the program helping them indirectly find employment. The program helped women rediscover themselves by building up their self- confidence, plan for future employment by furthering their education, and developing job skills such as putting a

resume together, dressing for employment and practicing job interviews.

Oh yes, definitely-- I couldn't have found employment without assistance-- my resume was terrible-- my clothes were bad-- and they teach you how to do job interviews-- we'd do practice interviews-- the people who come out of this program have learned stability and to access the jobs they go for and ask themselves if it is right for me.

### Current Employment

What is currently happening in your life in terms of being employed or having a career? Women were going to school full-time, working part-time, working full-time, or staying home taking care of their children or home due to their health.

Money & Hourly Wage Comments: For those women working, the majority are working at minimum wage jobs with no benefits:

I don't feel we ever get past the obstacle of just surviving-- low wage or part-time minimum wage jobs are harder work than you will ever do in an office-- there are so few feedbacks with a low wage job or no personal benefits either-- low income people are so plentiful that unless you work every waking hour at a job you'll be given the boot.

You get your pay raises according to the hours you work and I have been with them for 1 year and I'm getting \$4.95 an hour, but then I can work up to top scale and get \$7.00 an hour-- that is where it stops unless you go into management. I do get benefits and that is great.

I'm having zero trouble at work but I don't see myself having a promotion or change.

Benefits: Benefits are of major concern for these women.

Only a few receive benefits from employment. The majority have no benefits:

I have no insurance of any kind or benefits and last year I found that I was a diabetic and that ran my bill up to \$600 before I knew what was happening and now I have to find out how to pay it-- no dental and I would like to go see a dentist but not at this time.

I don't have any to speak of, but my kids are covered by their father.

No-I have zero benefits-- I take one day at a time.

Did you ever expect to be supporting yourself someday?

Some women did expect to eventually work and support themselves, but the majority never expected to be working for pay:

I never thought about it really-- I would say probably not-- I was raised that prince charming would come along and take care of me.

### Future Plans & Barriers

Do you have any future goals or plans for yourself? Most have definite plans, others are still making those plans:  
I'm still trying to find what I really want to do.

It is up in the air now.

Being on campus and living in Coos Bay are safe for these women:

I'm working towards a degree in Marketing with options from SWOCC-- I don't want to strike out on my own in a new place yet.

Next year I will have my AA degree-- I feel safe working on the campus.

They have a good sense of humor but with real truth to their statements:

To be able to take in a movie and not on an economy price--and buy the popcorn and buy the dollar candy bars instead of buying them at the grocery store and smuggling them in.

What would help you obtain your future goals? Mostly women felt they needed more education, training, support and guidance:

Finding enough upper division classes and work experience jobs with really professional-type people is hard.

A support group in case I get down.

I need time to study.

Employers hiring older people.

If I sold my house and moved.

My own initiative and keep going.

What would keep you from obtaining your future goals?

Weight, health, a man, myself, age, money, family (kids and elderly parents):

I'm obese, a real big problem.

Attack of appendicitis-- I have no medical coverage.

Has age ever been a factor in job hunting? Some said Yes,  
age is a factor:

When I was working in the bank and they would hire women who were in their 20's and they would end up being my supervisors-- that really hurt me-- and I think that was degrading for me.

South Coast told me they get the most federally funded money from the 18 to 25 age group and then the age group over 60-- South Coast also made it a point to look you over and would take the sweet looking young girls over someone who is somewhat older.

I have put in applications and I've been turned down when they see your age on a resume-- even if I'm more settled and no little kids at home they still look at your age and say no.

Others say No it hasn't been a problem:

I really haven't felt discriminated because of my age-- I feel I have had a fair go.

It hasn't with me-- in a way it's an advantage.

Depends on how you look at it-- I'm 46 and in this town they respect older workers because they know they will stay longer on the job.

Age is a great advantage for the kind of work that I'm interested in-- I find people feel I'm more credible because I am 50 yrs. old.

Age in the Skills for Success Class:

The younger women would accept our views because we were more their parents ages-- also they could see we too had problems and we were trying-- class age was a plus-- you can get lost in your own problems when it is all the same age group.

Is living in this coastal, rural location a problem? All agree that living in a coastal, rural location is a problem:

It is very hard because of the economy and women can only find work that will pay minimum wage and some is only part-time work.

You bet-- it has got a small town mentality-- friends just see themselves as being a housewife.

It's very easy for women to find work-- it's just that they can't make a living.

The economy here is terrible-- bigger cities you have a better chance.

The only positive comment was:

First the rent is low-- I pay \$130 for rent.

Would you move if you knew you had a good job waiting for you in another city? Most would move if they could get a decent job and a better life:

I think it would be kind of interesting to get away and so yes, I would move if the move made me a better life.

If I had to move I would cry.

### Support System

Do you feel you have a support system? Family and children,

friends, male friends, church and God, the program, campus and classes:

Connected with the college and being a student you meet a lot of people and then living in a small community you have a network to make friends.

How does your support system help you? Support, encouragement, and helping with personal things (a form of bartering takes place among friends):

We talk to each other-- my good friends help me with personal things-- Like, I met a woman whose husband helped with the ignition of my car-- saved me a lot of money-- so I typed his resume.

What kind of help do you give others? By giving, listening and offering support to others:

I consider it a challenge to be aware of people's needs-- I learned so much about helping others in the program-- they helped me so much that I want to give it back-- I really want to give it back-- build up people's confidence and let them see who they are-- not as a mother, not who they're married to, but who they are.

Do you have any time to yourself? A lot of the women have learned to make time for themselves as a result of the Skills for Success Class.

What do you do for fun? The fun activities mentioned are all ones without the expense of money: Writing, reading, walking on the beach with a dog, bicycle riding, sewing, gardening, fishing, baseball games, playing music, playing cards, volunteer work, crossword puzzles, joining a P.E.



class, exploring antique stores and having their own room to sleep in.

Do you ever feel a sense of isolation from others? Mainly from old friends and friends that are married or have boyfriends:

For awhile I felt quite isolated from those of my friends who were married or something-- I didn't feel a part of that group-- I had a male friend who would visit with my husband all the time, but when my husband died he's never contacted me or talked to me and that really hurt-- but I don't think there is a man in the world that understands what a woman goes through at the loss of her husband.

That has been on my mind the last few months-- I am the only single person from a group of five girlfriends that were always close-- I'm the last one that is single-- Yes, I'm an outcast-- I take a lot of ribbing about not having a boyfriend or a husband.

### Personal

Describe your family background... and Who in your family worked? The majority of the women lived in a traditional family setting: Mom homemaker, dad worked.

Born in Powers--my dad worked as a logger and my mom worked part-time in a dress shop and ceramic shop and filled in at the high school as a cook-- I was never even allowed to babysit-- jobs were scrutinized-- never got to work in Powers besides there was not much for kids to do-- I never expected to go on to college because my family like all others had traditional thinking.

Various family backgrounds: alcoholic father, alcoholic

mother, mother abusive, dad in jail, mother died so put in an orphanage, raised in the Mormon church, raised in the Quaker church, both worked nights so no supervision, no emotional closeness so no support, wealthy parents didn't have time for child-rearing.

My parents were sort of hitch-hiking hippies of the 30's and 40's. I went to 17 different schools and I felt that I didn't have any basis for friends or roots for a home.

I was neglected because my parents who were very rich didn't have time for me.

Were you ever encouraged to work at a paying job when growing up? Marriage was stressed, education and work at a paying job were not:

My mother said "No" good girls don't leave home until married.

As a child I had the feeling that women were not worth anything -- that all they were there for was to wait on men and now I'm learning the hard way-- that it's not so.

It was disappointing not to be able to go to college.

I was a very good student-- I even had an art scholarship but nothing counted for what I wanted to do-- I was never encouraged to be creative at all-- just get married and have kids.

I was not encouraged to think of myself as a human being.

What has been your work experience? Traditional minimum

wage work experience such as: Retail clerk, presser, seamstress, waitress, babysitter, clerical, factory worker, cook, and janitor.

How do you feel about working? The majority like and enjoy the idea of working for pay:

I love it-- I have always wanted to take care of myself.

Yet some have expressed apprehension and fear:

It scares me, I'm spoiled-- the 8 to 5 does not appeal to me with raising my kids-- I don't have a very realistic view of working-- I'm 43 and I know I'll have to have a job and retirement and it scares me even though my alimony covers me for life.

I'm very anxious and excited-- I'm so worried that my husband will try and get me to go back but this time I'm feeling emotionally and spiritually free so I'm anxious to get a good job and be my own boss.

When did you decide you needed a job or help from the program? Divorced, death of husband or friend, husband disabled or sick, and in need of a new start for self.

What is your educational background? One woman has up to a 6th grade education, all the other women interviewed have a high school diploma or have earned a GED.

I think I was kind of brainwashed about education-- It was not too important-- I didn't complete high school in fact I got my GED last August.

What do you see yourself doing in 5 years? Working at

something enjoyable, staying with the same job, and a few mentioned they may even remarry.

I see myself investing a lot of myself in whatever job I have and put back what I have learned to help others and maybe get married again.

Successful business women-- I just want my very own desk and have my very own pictures and drawers and stuff like that-- to have my little niche.

Some answers were not as definite:

My life changes every two weeks and I will probably still be talking and smiling.

At this point I can't say because things do change.

What are some positive things you've gained?

I mainly found out that I am not too old to learn.

I've gained self-confidence.

That I know that I can do it-- that I am bright.

What are some positive steps you will be taking for yourself in the future? Answers were summarized as: Finishing ones education, getting a good job, finding security, benefits and retirement.

Just getting a job-- coming out of a marriage to being displaced and getting a good paying job is major.

I figure when I'm about 60 I will be an adult and I'll be a real adult-- until then, I still see myself as a

learner-- a real learner.

Just try to be the best I can at what I am.

General comments were made about being on welfare, physical abuse, fear of being on campus for the first time, a desire to return the help, and wishing there had been a program sooner:

I was on Welfare and I hated it and I want to see it possible for women to get off of Welfare and be good in their work and get paid for good work.

It's hard to find a job when your front teeth are knocked out-- your eardrum broken-- bruises on your face and cuts also-- now that we have a place-- we can go and get help-- it is great for women.

It was very scary going to the campus to register-- I put it off a long time because I didn't know what to do-- to see 18 and 19 year old kids running around makes you feel really dumb-- that is why the program is so good.

What I've been thinking about now is how I could help the program and how I could volunteer in it-- I want to turn around and help instead of being centered on myself-- they have helped me so much.

If there had been a group like this when I was younger-- I remember crying being at home crying with my little babies-- I felt I had this one shot at being alive and there was this giant globe and I was confined to a living hell.

General comments about program staff:

The staff are hand picked and each have a great function.

I must say that (program employee) has a capacity to know about us and she is good-- she is very very good with what she does.

They are very very personable people--(SWOCC faculty member) is really the lady that talked to me and got me going where I am today-- she really cared.

(program employee) was really jovial and warm and an easy person to be around-- the other people in the program such as (SWOCC faculty member) was also very warm and very supportive and nurturing-- everyone in that group were totally positive and supportive.

Comments from program staff:

The strength of the program is to keep focusing on individual needs...

I feel isolated from the other programs in the State because we are so far away from them-- our staff of two is very small and we cannot share our problems with other Displaced Homemaker Programs-- most programs have been around in the college system for a long time where ours is so new.

It has been too much work this year...it is important that the program continue this year even at the cost of my health-- I don't know about the future-- I live from day to day and we will see what happens.

The best thing that we can offer these women is hope-- they can make a choice if they want things to be different because things can be different-- you are there because you choose to be there-- you are not there because it is mandatory.

We take one day at a time and even when the staffing

is short-- we still take them.

We have an influx of both young and old-- sometimes groups stay together the whole time-- others do not-- we do basically the same thing for each group-- age does not enter into it-- each group gets their own identity within a group-- the most rewarding student is around 45 to 55 and they are so excited to be here-- there is some hope and that there are some changes that can be made for them-- they seem to get younger and younger as they complete our program-- I love it!

I don't know if we have more need but we do have fewer resources-- we have a small town and it is very hard to maintain confidentiality-- I have found we are the only program that does-- I feel it is important with our small town to be sure everything is confidential-- everything that comes in here stops here.

Our original hope was to have follow-up groups-- I still think it's needed-- but the logistics are hard to do... Trying to get women to communicate back to us-- this is difficult-- We had a florist send a flower on the job-- this immediately gave them a boost-- they then called in... People are eager to leave behind the awful part of their lives so they want to forget their involvement in the homemaker program too.

We use Healthline a lot-- it is a referral where people can call and talk to other people or counselors-- my husband and I are on the line-- we stress confidentiality-- we use Community Action-- we have a community resource directory-- we have had three referrals from the Welfare Department since I've been here-- does that tell you anything?

Women take jobs when and where they can get them-- it's then hard for them to be in support groups-- I

haven't figured out how to make this happen.

In terms of counseling women-- there are counselors and there are counselors-- it would be a real mistake to mandate a counseling certificate for those that are doing counseling-- one must have an education and someone who understands the education system and a person who can relate to these women.

We did have a half time job placement person to get women out-- but we lost money-- this is needed-- someone who knows the community-- who can make matches with women and jobs available.

### Summary

Qualitative research by unstructured interviewing was used for gathering information on 18 women who had participated in the Southwestern Oregon Community College Displaced Homemaker Program in Coos Bay, Oregon. The various issues such as family background, self-image, support systems, job skills, barriers to employment, future goals and dreams, and one's ability to survive can be read throughout the data. An interpretation of these issues are discussed through the use of an ecological framework in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Never forget you are the people in your life. If you amount to anything, it's because of the human beings fate happened to throw in your path (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The purpose of this study was to examine the employment and career situation of women, age 40 and older, who had received services from a rural displaced homemaker program. The literature on how successful these programs have been in helping women toward self-sufficiency is very limited, especially for subgroups of women who are older and living in rural communities.

Qualitative research by unstructured interviewing was the primary method used for gathering data of 18 women who had participated in the Southwestern Oregon Community College Displaced Homemaker Program in Coos Bay, Oregon. The results were reported in two sections; a profile of each respondent and an analysis and summary of interview responses.

This chapter will examine the various issues that contribute to the respondents present employment and career situation. The Ecology of Human Development, using an ecological framework, will be used to guide this interpretation. It goes beyond the immediate settings of family, friends, neighborhood, and school. The influence of

environmental forces such as laws, social attitudes, and government policy that directly or indirectly affect the individual are also taken into account. The ecological framework uses four general types of environmental systems; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and the macrosystem. Each are categorized by their effects on the individual and the environment. Figure 1 illustrates the findings using this framework and the four environmental systems.

Microsystem: The level closest to the individual, is a relationship between individuals and their environment in an immediate setting, such as the family, neighborhood, school, and workplace. There are many microsystems directly affecting these women and their ability to become employed or pursue a career:

1. Negative Self-Image, Fears, and Poor Attitudes:

I have an image of myself as not being able to do any more.

I become very frightened when it comes to the interview.

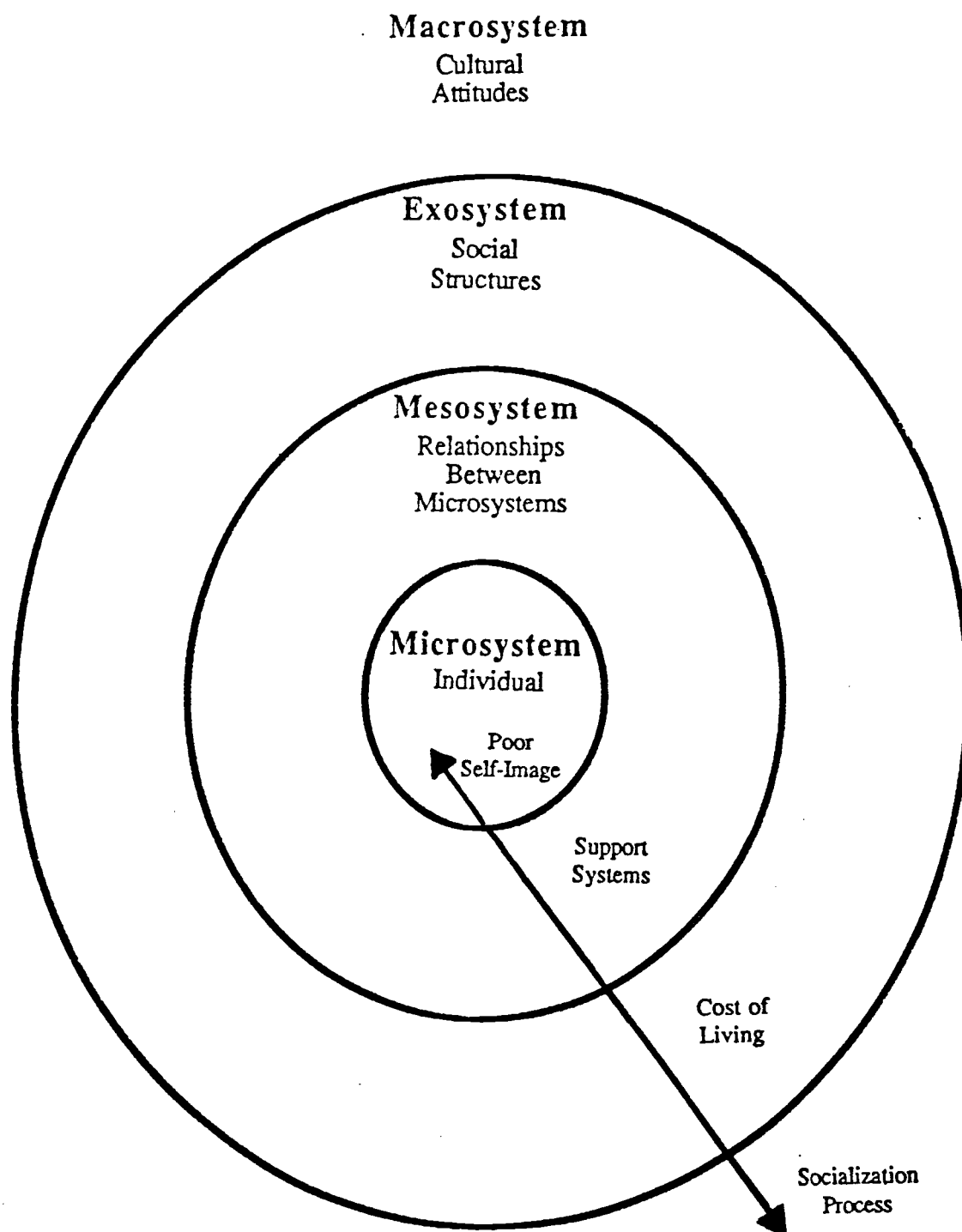
I was raised to believe money was not good-- an attitude I'm trying to work on.

The older people are very negative when it comes to interviews-- I don't think I have ever seen such low self-esteem as the women that have come to us for help.

2. No support system:

Everybody needs encouragement-- it's a continuing

FIGURE 1



need-- especially me.

It would be good to be with a group again-- to go to some group discussions would be nice.

I still feel I could use the support group.

My parents pretty much disowned me because of the divorce.

3. Health Care:

The only thing that could possibly stop me would be major medical.

I didn't know I was manic depressant-- it could mean I would be permanently disabled.

I have a gum disease that will take some money.

Last year I found I was a diabetic.

4. Husband Dependent Upon Care:

I'm so worried that my husband will try and get me to go back.

5. Husband Disabled:

I have a disabled husband-- I don't feel comfortable having my husband sitting home by himself in a wheelchair.

6. Lacking Education:

I've come to the point where I need the paper.

We filled out papers for financial aid in the displaced homemaker group-- they then processed them.

I would like to go back and someday graduate from high school-- I have a sixth grade education.

I took the placement test and scored high-- but I found I was still very lacking in the basics.

7. Child Care:

I have five kids at home and will have number six soon-- I'm finding my kids are not cooperating as far as things getting done-- child care just started this term and it's going to work out really great.

8. Lack of Transportation:

I don't think I could do it without the gas vouchers.

It's hard because I don't drive.

9. Inability to Move:

It takes money to move.

10. Lack of Housing:

I was able to get housing subsidy.

It's very hard to find a house to rent for six children.

11. Appearance:

They had a used clothing exchange which I took advantage of.

I need to take care of my weight-- I'm obese.

I needed a light weight coat that wasn't a long style and some shoes and a dress.

12. Current Employment:

I have a perfect job-- I just love it-- I receive benefits and I feel so great.

I don't have a very realistic view of working.

I would have liked more help in planning and testing-- I keep searching for that one special job.

13. Religion:

Being a Mormon we emphasis the mother staying home if at all possible-- so that was what we were always looking for-- I could stay home and raise the children-- my husband used to be a Mormon.

I think I have grown spiritually and that helps.

Mesosystem: Relationships between various microsystems make up a mesosystem. Important mesosystems include relationships between family and work; school and peer groups; church and neighborhood.

The many microsystems combined together contribute to the present employment and career situation of these women. Decisions made about one microsystem will affect other microsystems, such as quitting school because of other responsibilities, waiting to pursue a career until the children are raised, staying in a dead-end job because age is a factor in accumulating retirement benefits, or continuing to work at the risk of one's health.

1. I almost got my 2-year degree but was so tired I had to quit-- I was wife, mother, worker, and a student all at the same time and something had to give.
2. I've thought of moving to the University of Oregon but I feel that I'm not ready for that and I don't want to take my kids away from their dad.
3. The first thing I thought of-- being 46 years old, is to have benefits.

4. It was important that I continue with the program this year-- even at the cost of my health.

Exosystem: The social structures, such as the media, government, school boards, etc., that make decisions affecting the individual but do not include the individual in the decision-making process. The exosystem can clearly be seen when the respondents in this study are not involved in policies or decisions.

1. (respondent) For 3 months I was on welfare-- you can't go into job training or education-- they sanction you-- they don't make it easier for you to better yourself and at times I think they like the stigmatism.

(program employee) I'm on the welfare advisory board-- we now have a rebel director down there-- he hopes that in three years women will be able to get an education and still be on welfare.

2. I don't qualify for benefits-- you don't get dental and medical working in restaurants-- it's almost like the professionals have distanced themselves so from women-- unless the government steps in and pays with some sort of medical program, you're dead in the water.
3. (respondent) If I would go to a more metropolitan area I wouldn't have any trouble getting a job-- the economy of this area is very low-- women can only find work that will pay minimum wages and some is only part-time work.

(program employee) We're all affected by the timber industry-- we feel that all the abuse, welfare, male unemployment and the single parent story is all a result of this.

4. (respondent) When they moved over into their new office-- it's so small we couldn't be comfortable visiting with each other-- they lost something since they moved over there.

(program employee) My one concern was that being so small-- I didn't have a closet I could basically talk with people in private-- but we're now very respected by the administration.

5. (respondent) Last term they sent out a post card about support group meetings-- it was mandatory that I go and I couldn't make all of them-- anytime you tell a person my age which is 44 that it's mandatory to go to meetings or you are out-- really turned me off.

(program employee) The administration wanted me to do a study on support groups-- they sent out letters demanding work in a support group-- I was very upset-- the letter said mandatory-- I feel there has been a lot of resistance to the support groups.

Macrosystem: The shared beliefs and attitudes of a culture. This includes the cultural beliefs, religion, and assumptions about "how things should be done" in a society.

The majority of the women in this study grew up in a small town and were encouraged to do one thing, get married and have children. Repeatedly, statements such as "I was never encouraged to work or finish school" can be read



throughout the data. Also, negative attitudes are expressed about age and ones ability to become employed or pursue a career as a result of their age.

1. All my friends just see themselves as a housewife and if they have to work-- just being a waitress or driving a bus-- they're satisfied by just getting by-- there are no cultural things in a rural community-- it has a small town mentality-- I take a lot of ribbing about not having a boyfriend or a husband.
2. When I was growing up anything you did in the home was not considered work-- I was never encouraged to do anything-- just get married-- have kids-- I never thought about supporting myself-- I was raised that prince charming would come along and take care of me.
3. My dad worked as a logger-- I was never allowed to babysit-- jobs were scrutinized-- never got to work in Powers-- I married and was pregnant at 16.
4. Sometimes I think that if the wood industry would just fold-up-- it would force people to reach out and do other things-- lots of tradition with typical roles here in Coos Bay.
5. I have thought I'd like to be a nurse-- but not at this age (49 years old).
6. (respondent) I've put in applications and been turned down-- when they see your age on a resume-- even if I am more settled and no little kids at home-- they still look at your age and say no.

(program employee) Employers are really looking for people that are 35 and younger and it's hard to break into the job market when you're over 40-- but mostly they are their own worst enemy-- they start looking for lower type jobs-- if they don't get the job then they think it is because of their age.

7. Displaced homemakers who are over 40 go in thinking I'm going to do it all for them-- they haven't been allowed to do their own thinking and they've been taken care of all their lives-- "Little Girl Syndrome"-- instead I make them think for themselves and they have to do it all themselves.

The events in each case study reveal how and why these women need help from a displaced homemaker program. After applying the ecological framework, we can begin to make connections between their present employment or career situation to a much broader context. Governmental or political decisions and cultural beliefs and attitudes have directly or indirectly influenced their present situation. From this perspective, we can begin to understand how best to serve the displaced homemaker. A program employee summarizes her understanding of how the displaced homemaker program helps women by saying:

I think the major thrust is to help them get their life together and then think about employment-- reprogram their thinking is of major importance-- most of them come in really battered-- I don't think I've ever seen such low self-esteem's-- it's sad because most of them will come in and say. . . 'all I ever wanted to do in

life was be a good wife and mother and now look what has happened'-- obviously they didn't choose where they are now-- most of them want to get married again but it might be too big of a price to pay.

### Limitations of This Study

1. The total sample size in this study is limited to 18 women from the Southwestern Oregon Community College Displaced Homemakers Program in Coos Bay, Oregon.
2. The study is limited to those women agreeing to be interviewed.
3. One visit was made for interviewing each respondent.
4. An interview guide was used for guiding the interviews instead of an open-ended dialogue between two people.
5. All interviews were conducted by one individual, the researcher.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the data and information represented by the findings of this study:

1. There should be a guidance/mentorship system to help women advance in a job or pursue future goals. The majority of women interviewed never expected to be working for pay. Most women exiting the program are employed at part-time minimum wage jobs without benefits and little chance for advancement. Their employment situation is not at the income level that

provides for self-sufficiency.

2. The program at Southwestern Oregon Community College is understaffed. Participants apply for help, but the program lacks adequate staff to provide these women with the needed assistance.
3. The program itself is their support system. When the women leave the displaced homemaker program to enter employment, they are suddenly cut off from the support the program provides.
4. All of the women in this study gained important coping strategies. After participating in the program they were able to cope with the everyday stress in their lives.
5. The women in this study discovered that working for pay provided them with a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. Previous to entering the program, for most, marriage and family was stressed as the only career for them. Typically, the importance of education and work was not only missing but discouraged by their parents.
6. A number of barriers are still keeping these women from obtaining their goals. Age is generally perceived as the most insidious barrier to finding employment and pursuing a career for these women. Other key barriers are health, money, children, and the lack of self-confidence.

7. For the women in this study, location places a special limit on their ability to find full-time employment above minimum wage with opportunities for advancement. For them, living in a coastal, rural area has been another critical barrier to their personal and professional development. It also limits the amount of education they can pursue without having to move.
8. The ability to pay for medical and dental care is a major problem for these women. One of the main fears they have is of illness or disability without a means for supporting themselves and their children.
9. Academic advisors outside the program are not aware of the background and capabilities of the displaced homemaker. Consequently, women are advised to take difficult courses and heavy credit loads.
10. Specific and often restrictive requirements of the welfare system are keeping a number of women from furthering their education. This prevents many women from earning an income above minimum wage.
11. Not all the individuals that seek help from the program are displaced homemakers, as defined by the literature. The program has become a resource center for helping people overcome the initial barriers to entering employment and pursuing a career.

### Recommendations

The above conclusions are the basis for the following

recommendations:

1. A mentorship program should be created to help women advance from a minimum wage job to a more desirable occupation. Professional women currently employed in various occupations could volunteer their time and expertise to women exiting the displaced homemaker program.
2. To provide assistance to an understaffed program, a volunteer group of past program participants should be implemented. It would provide part of a support system for past program participants and could reinforce the fact that they are worthwhile and needed. The volunteers could assist program staff with individuals entering the program for the first time.
3. A follow-up system should to be developed. It should include phone calls on a regular basis plus on-the-job visits and could be performed by the proposed volunteer group. Follow-up would also let women know that continued assistance is available and that someone still cares.
4. Coping strategies taught in the skills class of the displaced homemaker program should be continued and emphasized. The women in this study indicated a desire to attend more such classes.
5. A professional counselor should be employed to help

women in the program to overcome cultural and social attitudes that become barriers to entering employment or pursuing a career.

6. Greater importance should be placed on advising students for college courses. All student schedules should be reviewed by program staff before they become final. A follow-up on student progress should be conducted on a regular basis.
7. The restrictive requirements in the welfare system that become barriers to training and education for pursuing a career above minimum wage should be reviewed.

Recommendations for The Southwestern Oregon  
Community College Displaced Homemaker Program

In the context of the displaced homemaker program at Southwestern Oregon Community College, SWOCC, the following actions should take place to implement the recommendations previously outlined.

1. A mentorship program should be implemented by SWOCC and operated out of the Career Placement Center, which is in the same building as the displaced homemaker program. Mentorships should start out slow by matching one program participant and one mentor at a time. Then build a pool of mentors willing to volunteer their time and expertise to women exiting the program. Advertisements asking for mentor

volunteers should be in the local newspaper, on the radio, and through presentations to local business organizations.

2. An organized volunteer system of past program participants should be incorporated into the displaced homemaker program. First, a model of this volunteer system should be designed specifically for the SWOCC displaced homemaker program. The model should be developed by the program staff, their advisory committee and the State Equity Specialist. Based on this model, a volunteer program could be implemented.
3. More stress management, survival skills, and coping strategy courses should be offered through the SWOCC adult education program offerings. Not only would this be of benefit to displaced homemakers, it would also provide assistance for adults re-entering college for many reasons.
4. A professional counselor that deals specifically with women's issues should be employed at least one day a week for the displaced homemaker program. The counselor should be hired from the community where she is practicing her profession on a regular basis instead of being hired within the existing counseling staff at SWOCC.
5. Since there is an inconsistency in the SWOCC faculty advising of students from the displaced homemaker



program, there should be a mandatory review of all course schedules made by the displaced homemaker staff. A mid-term review on student progress should also be conducted by the program staff members.

6. A follow-up system should be added to the SWOCC displaced homemaker program. It should include telephone surveys, a mailed questionnaire, and personal indepth interviews. These different forms of follow-up would provide the needed information on a woman's ability to become self-sufficient after receiving help from the program. It would also give past program participants a feeling that someone still cared and wanted to help, if help was needed. Presented in Appendix E are the different forms of follow-up specifically developed for the SWOCC displaced homemaker program.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

1. The follow-up model designed for the SWOCC Displaced Homemaker Program should be further tested in order to be generalized to a broader population.
2. Using the same qualitative methodology, research could be conducted on displaced homemakers in an urban setting.
3. A longitudinal study on a displaced homemaker's employment and career situation could be conducted using a qualitative indepth interview approach.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act has the following nine purposes:

1. Improving and modernizing the vocational education system to meet the demands of the work force;
2. Increasing access to vocational education for individuals who have traditionally been underserved;
3. Promoting greater cooperation between the vocational education system and the private employment sector;
4. Improving the academic foundations of vocational education students and the applications of new technologies in the vocational education system;
5. Retraining employed and unemployed workers in new skills for which there is labor market demand;
6. Targeting vocational education resources to economically disadvantaged areas of the nation;
7. Assisting States to promote the utilization of support services, special programs, guidance counseling, and placement in vocational education;
8. Improving consumer and homemaking education and reducing the effects of sex role stereotyping on occupations, job skills, levels of competency, and careers; and

9. Authorizing national programs to strengthen research and to meet special needs within the vocational education system (Marano, 1985).

To accomplish these purposes, the Act is organized into five titles:

In Title I, the provisions of particular significance for women are located primarily in Part B of the title, which defines the state organization and planning responsibilities including the duties of the Sex Equity Coordinator, the make up of the State Council on Vocational Education, and the state planning process.

The role of the Coordinator was strengthened in two ways by the new Act. First, the assignment of program and administration for the Title II programs for single parents and homemakers and sex equity is a new responsibility for the Coordinator in most states, where Sex Equity Coordinators had no program or budget authority in the past. Secondly, the emphasis on technical and non-traditional training has been increased.

Title II, Part A, contains the development of services for two target populations which are largely female, single parents and homemakers; and individuals who participate in programs designed to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping in vocational education. These two provisions are the largest source of federal dollars targeted to vocational training for women and girls in U.S. history.

States have a great deal of leeway about how to

provide these services and how best to expend these funds. The law requires only that the Sex Equity Coordinator administer the program, that the state emphasize services to the most financially needy of the target population and to displaced homemakers. The law also defines the two populations. Homemaker is defined in Title V, Part B as "an individual who, a.) is an adult, and b.) has worked as an adult primarily without remuneration to care for the home and family, and for that reason has diminished marketable skills." Single parent is defined in the same section as "an individual who a.) is unmarried or legally separated from a spouse, and b.) has a minor child or children for which the parent has either custody or joint custody." (Marano, 1985):

Title III: For the first time, the Perkins Act authorizes in Part A of Title III, funding for joint programs linking local education agencies and community based organizations. Community based organizations are defined in Title V, Part B of the Act as any such organization of proven effectiveness described in section 4 (5) of the Job Training Partnership Act. It includes reference to agencies serving displaced homemakers, organizations operating career intern programs, and other private non-profit groups which provide job training services.

Career guidance and counseling, Part D of Title III provides states with funding for conducting career guidance and counseling programs, perhaps the most relevant issue

for women and girls in the counseling and guidance part of the Perkins Act is a set aside of twenty percent (20%) of the funds received by the state for activities to eliminate sex, age, and race bias in guidance and counseling and to make vocational programs more accessible to under-served populations.

Title VI of the Perkins Act provides funding and mandates for a variety of programs administered at the federal level by the Department of Education. These include: national research and demonstration projects, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, model centers for vocational education of older persons, the Vocational Education and Occupational Information Data Systems, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education and a national bilingual vocational training program.

Title V provides the federal administrative procedures for payments, judicial review, maintenance of effort, audits, and includes definition of terms throughout the Act (Marano, 1985).

## APPENDIX B

### Coos Bay

Coos Bay separates two entirely different types of coastal terrain. North of the bay are shifting sand dunes, and from the south, rugged cliffs and rocky coves line the shoreline. Geography and natural resources play a dominant role in the region's economy. Logging and forest products are the major industry in Coos Bay along with fishing, tourism, dairy products and cranberries.

Unemployment along the southern Oregon Coast is subject to seasonal ups and downs during the year. The seasonal nature of the area's basic industries plays a major role in the unemployment rates of Coos Bay. Joblessness in Coos County soared to 4,600 by 1981 with an unemployment rate of 16 percent, the worst economic recession since the Great Depression of the 1930's. It gradually fell to about 3,600 by 1985 with an unemployment rate of 13 to 14 percent as the economy improved. During this same period, the unemployment rate for the State of Oregon was 8 to 9 percent. Future employment gains will depend upon trends in new world markets for wood products, seafood, and energy (State of Oregon Employment Division, 1988).



Southwestern Oregon Community College  
Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program

Goal: The goal of SWOCC's highly successful Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program is to help individuals overcome their barriers and gain vocational education and employment for economic self-sufficiency.

Program Model: The program model incorporates a four phase process. Participants begin with phase one and proceed through the other three at a pace best suited to their ability, experience and goals.

1. Prevocational Phase: 5 weeks
  - a. Application, assessment, aptitude, interest and placement testing
  - b. Career planning, advising, counseling
  - c. Skills for Success Workshop which includes time management, assertiveness training, resources and their use, goal setting, stress management and study skills brush-up, financial aid application and orientation to vocational education options including nontraditional careers for women.
2. Selection of Options:
  - a. Information and referral
  - b. Other services as needed
3. Vocational Education/Training Phase: (Selection of one option)
  - a. Short term training, 5 to 20 weeks
  - b. Long term training, 1 to 2 years
  - c. On-the-job training
  - d. Home based business

#### 4. Job Placement Phase:

- a. Preparation for Job Search
- b. Job entry
- c. Follow-up services

#### The college provides the following services:

Skills For Success Workshops  
 Career Center Services  
 Placement Services  
 Counseling  
 Testing and Assessment  
 Developmental Educational  
 Skills Brush-up  
 Advising  
 Financial Aid  
 Access to Vocational Programs

#### Career Training Options Available

Skill Development: Training that leads to economic self-sufficiency and placement in jobs with advancement potential is emphasized. This generally requires some developmental education at the beginning as many participants lack high school completion or have not functioned in an academic setting for a long time.

Career Selection: Ample opportunity for career exploration is provided so each individual will select the career area best matched to her/his interests, aptitudes and abilities. The project provides testing and test interpretation for each participant along with Career Center activities, informational interviews, small seminars with individuals employed in various fields and tours of work sites.

Nontraditional Programs: Opportunities to consider nontraditional programs are provided in several ways. Tours of the welding, forestry and machine tool shops, speakers from those areas, literature, displays of success stories and a variety of materials available through the career center contribute to this effort. Extensive career planning occurs at the beginning. Forestry, electronics, accounting, and business management programs have all attracted participants.

This individualized approach is important in a small community. It prevents a saturation of job seekers in any one field. It also helps serve the local job market which insures more rapid job placement. One of the program strengths is this diversity of options. Training and job placement has occurred in a surprising variety of fields.

Some fields are listed here. Real estate, insurance, banking, tree farm management, accounting, government procurement, plywood mill work, electronics, printing, writing, health/exercise, retailing, parks supervision, marketing, nursing, human service, production sewing, health and exercise instruction, nursing, data processing and various office occupations.

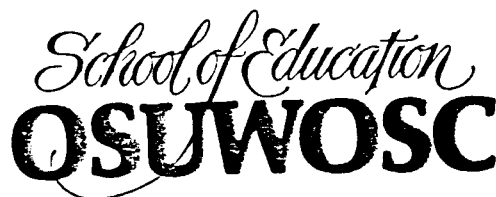
Students each have an advisor for their selected program who can coach and offer academic and career planning advice. In some cases a mentor role is assumed and sources of funding and jobs are shared. The participants

through work study often have on campus opportunities to work in their field in labs and workshops thereby gaining valuable experience, earnings and job performance feedback before launching into the business sector.

A home based business option is available where some individuals have begun a Bed and Breakfast operation and others have started a small Production Sewing business. This has utilized the resources of the Small Business Center along with other departments, Activities such as these will continue.

Job Placement: Assistance with job search and placement is a key element in this program. The Job Placement Specialist spends fifty percent of the time in the field connecting with employers, picking up job leads, finding out the employers needs, matching the participant with the firm and the job. Preparing the participant for this phase is crucial. Skill assessment, resume writing, interview techniques, informational interviews, wardrobe prep using the clothes bank, coaching in telephone skills and job etiquette are all included. Special meetings and panels of employers give the participants opportunities to see them outside the employment setting.

## APPENDIX C



A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

LETTER OF PARTICIPATION

April 18, 1988

Dear -----,

Please allow me to introduce myself, I am Jill Carpenter and I'm about to complete a graduate degree at Oregon State University. As a part of my degree, I will be preparing a research paper describing the employment situation of women who have been in the SWOCC Single Parent/Homemaker Program. To do this, I need to interview several persons from the SWOCC Program.

I would like to visit with you about your ability to become employed. **What you have to say is important!** It should take no more than two hours and we would meet at your convenience during the month of May. All information will be kept confidential. Please give Gerry Livingston a call (888-2525) if you have any questions.

An orientation gathering will be held for those who agree to be involved in the study. This will give us a chance to meet each other and arrange for individual interviews. **I hope you will agree to an interview!** Please fill out the enclosed card and mail it back to me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

✓

Jill Carpenter  
1050 SW Jefferson #1  
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

Reply Post Card

<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px 5px;">21</div>	
Yes, I agree to be interviewed: <input style="width: 50px;" type="checkbox"/>	No, I do not agree to be interviewed: <input style="width: 50px;" type="checkbox"/>
Best time of day to call me: _____	
Telephone Number: _____	
I cannot be reached by telephone, please write to me at this address: _____	
Best time for me to meet for an Orientation Gathering would be: (Please Circle) (It will be approx. 1 hour)	
Day:            Mon.        Tues.    Wed.    Thurs.    Fri.    Sat.    Sun.	
Time of Day: Afternoons 3:00 to 4:00 Other? _____	
Evenings 7:00 to 8:00    Other? _____	
Location:        SWOCC                      Sawmill Restaurant    Other? _____	
<i>Thank You For Replying!</i>	

Jill Carpenter  
 1050 SW Jefferson #1  
 Corvallis, Oregon 97333

## APPENDIX D

Interview Guide1. Program:

- a. How did you learn about the SWOCC Single Parent/Homemaker Program?
- b. In what ways did you participate?
- c. What part of the program did you feel helped you most?
- d. The least?
- e. What would you like to see added or changed in the program?
- f. Have your needs changed from when you first entered the program at SWOCC?
- g. What do you think caused your needs to change
- h. How could the program continue to help you?
- i. Did the services of the program contribute to your finding employment?  
Directly--placing you on the job....  
Indirectly--helping you with skills to find a job yourself....

2. Personal:

- a. What is currently happening in your life in terms of being employed or having a career.....
- b. Do you feel you have a support system--someone that cheers you on?  
(What do they do to help you? Do you have help at home?)
- c. What kind of help do you give to others and how do you think they feel about that?
- d. Do you have any time for yourself?
- e. Describe your family background....  
(Do you have a mother, father, brothers, sisters, In-laws...)
- f. Who in your family worked?
- g. Were you ever encouraged to work at a paying job when growing up?

h. What has been your work experience...

i. When did you decide you needed a job?

j. How do you feel about working?  
(Do you enjoy working?)

### 3. Current Employment:

a. Tell me about your job....

b. How did you find this job?

c. How long did it take to find?

d. How satisfied are you with your present job?  
(Are you having any problems with your present job?)

e. What are your working hours?  
(part-time, full-time, time of day, number of days/week, vacation?)

f. Do you receive any benefits? (dentist, medical, insurance?)

g. How do you view your opportunities for promotion or change?

h. Had you ever expected to be supporting yourself and others?

### 4. Future Plans:

a. What do you see yourself doing 5 years from now???

b. Do you have any future career plans? (short range, long range?)  
(What would you like to do?)

c. What would it take to do this?

d. What type of work do you feel capable of?

e. Do you have any need for more career information or need for some assistance in choosing and planning a career?

### 5. Education:

a. What is your educational background....

b. How well do you feel your education has prepared you for work you're now doing?

c. For work you would like to do?



- d. Do you need more training?
- e. Would it increase your hourly salary?

**6. Barriers:**

- a. What would help you obtain your future goals?
  - b. What would keep you from obtaining your future goals?
  - c. Have you found any serious problems obtaining employment or advancing in a career?
  - d. Is age a problem?
  - e. Is living in this coastal, rural location a problem?
  - f. If a job required you move to another part of the state would you?
  - g. Are there any other barriers?  
(family, education, experience, poor career counseling....)
  - h. What are some positive things you've gained by working or striving for a future career?
  - i. Do you ever feel a sense of isolation from others?
  - j. What do you do for fun...something you enjoy just for yourself...
- 7. WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE STEPS YOU WILL BE TAKING FOR YOURSELF IN THE FUTURE?**

GENERAL INFORMATION FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_.

Code #: \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Ethnic Background:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ White
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ Black
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ Asian or Pacific Islander
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian or Alaskan
3. Current Marital Status:
 

	<u>If married:</u>
a. _____ Divorced	spouse disabled _____ Yes, _____ No
b. _____ Widowed	employed _____ Yes, _____ No
c. _____ Separated	unemployed _____ Yes, _____ No
d. _____ Married	
4. How long have you been separated, divorced, or widowed?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ Not applicable
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ From one to five years
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ More than five years
5. Do you have any children:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, how many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_.

Number of children at home: \_\_\_\_\_.

Age of youngest child: \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Does anyone other than children and spouse live in your household?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ No

How Many? \_\_\_\_\_.
7. What is the highest grade completed in school?  
 Circle the number of the grade:
 

<u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u>	<u>9</u> <u>10</u> <u>11</u> <u>12</u>	<u>13</u> <u>14</u> <u>15</u> <u>16</u>	<u>17 or more</u>
grade school	high school	college	graduate school

---over---

8. What is the highest educational degree or certificate you have earned?

- a. ☐ None
- b. ☐ High school diploma or GED
- d. ☐ Technical certificate
- e. ☐ Apprenticeship/military/vocational school
- f. ☐ Associate degree
- g. ☐ Bachelor's degree
- h. ☐ Graduate degree

Training in: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are you the primary source of support for your household?

☐ yes ☐ no,

If no, who else in the household provides support:

\_\_\_\_\_. Amount of support in \$: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. Amount of support in \$: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you currently employed? ☐ yes ☐ no

11. If you currently hold a paid job, are you working:

- a. ☐ Part-time (1 to 34 hours per week)
- b. ☐ Full-time (35 or more hours per week)

12. Check all categories that make up your present income: (Rate in amount of support and consistency of payments, 1=large amount of support and very consistent)

- a. ☐ Salary Income
- b. ☐ Spousal Support (Alimony)
- c. ☐ Child support
- d. ☐ Pension/retirement
- e. ☐ Unemployment compensation
- f. ☐ AFDC
- g. ☐ Other public assistance (e.g., food stamps)
- h. ☐ Social Security
- i. ☐ Disability
- j. ☐ Other (family, friends, savings, dividends, interest, insurance, rental income, etc.)

13. What is your net monthly household income at this time?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

FOLLOW-UP FOR SWOCC DISPLACED HOMEMAKER PROGRAMTelephone Interview Guide

Name:\_\_\_\_\_.

Program:

1. How did you learn about the SWOCC Single Parent/Homemaker Program?
2. In what ways did you participate?
3. What part of the program did you feel helped you most?
4. What helped you the least?
5. What would you like to see added or changed in the program?

Personal:

6. What is your current family situation:
  - a. Number of children at home:
  - b. Marital Status:
  - c. Number of Household Members:
  - d. What are your present sources of Income: (circle)  
Salary Income, Spousal Support, Child Support, Pension/Retirement, Unemployment Compensation, Public Assistance, Social Security, Disability, Other:
  - e. What is your net monthly household income at this time?

Employment/Career:

7. What is currently happening in your life in terms of being employed or having a career.....

If Currently Employed:

- a. Tell me about your job....
- b. How did you find this job?
- c. How long did it take to find?
- d. How satisfied are you with your present job?  
(Are you having any problems with your present job?)
- e. What are your working hours?  
(part-time, full-time, time of day, number of days/week, vacation?)
- f. Do you receive any benefits? (dentist, medical, insurance?)
- g. How do you view your opportunities for promotion or change?

**Education/Career Goals:**

8. What is your educational background....
9. Do you have any future career goals or plans?
10. What would help you obtain your future goals?

**Barriers:**

11. What would keep you from obtaining your future goals?
12. Have you found any serious problems obtaining employment or advancing in a career:

**Closing Questions:**

13. Do you have any need for more career information or need for some assistance in choosing and planning a career?
14. What are some positive steps you will be taking for yourself in the future?
15. Are there any other comments you'd like to make?

Mailed Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your current family situation:
  - a. Number of children at home:\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Marital Status:\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Number of Household Members:\_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Circle the sources of income you presently receive:  
Salary Income, Spousal Support, Child Support, Pension/Retirement,  
Unemployment Compensation, Public Assistance, Social Security,  
Disability, Other:\_\_\_\_\_
  - e. What is your net monthly household income at this time?\_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you currently employed?
  - a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_, b. No\_\_\_\_\_
 If not, could the center help you find employment?
  - a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_, b. No\_\_\_\_\_
3. Please describe your job: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How did you find this job? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Working hours:
  - a.\_\_\_\_\_ Part-Time (1 to 34 hours per week)
  - b.\_\_\_\_\_ Full-Time (35 or more hours per week)
6. Please circle the time of day that you work:  
Weekdays, Weekends, Evenings, Other:\_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of days you work per week:\_\_\_\_\_
8. Please describe the amount of vacation time you receive: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you receive any benefits, such as dental, medical, or life insurance?
  - a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_, b. No\_\_\_\_\_
 If yes, please describe the benefits you receive: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are there opportunities for promotion or change in your job?
  - a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_, b. Some\_\_\_\_\_, c. No\_\_\_\_\_
11. From a scale of 1 to 3, please rate how satisfied you are with your  
present job?      1                                      2                                      3  
                                 very satisfied                      somewhat satisfied                      not satisfied
12. What is your present educational level:  
(please write down any college degrees or certificates you have earned)
13. Do you have any need for more career information or need for some  
assistance in choosing and planning a career? a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_, b. No\_\_\_\_\_

### Indepth Interview Guide -- Tape Recorded

Name: (optional)

Program:

1. How did you learn about the SWOCC Single Parent/Homemaker Program?
2. In what ways did you participate?
3. What part of the program did you feel helped you most?
4. What helped you the least?
5. What would you like to see added or changed in the program?
6. Have your needs changed since you first entered the program?
7. How could the program continue to help you?
8. Have you found employment since you've been in the program?
9. Did the services of the program contribute to your finding employment?
  - a. Directly--placing you on the job....
  - b. Indirectly--helping you with skills to find a job yourself....
10. Could the program help you find employment?

Personal:

11. What is your current family situation:
  - a. Number of children at home:
  - b. Marital Status:
  - c. Number of Household Members:
  - d. What are your present sources of income:  
Salary Income, Spousal Support, Child Support, Pension/Retirement,  
Unemployment Compensation, Public Assistance, Social Security,  
Disability, Other:
  - e. Ask permission in a very friendly manner before asking the following question: What is your net monthly household income at this time?

Employment/Career:

12. What is currently happening in your life in terms of being employed or having a career.....

**If Currently Employed:**

- a. Tell me about your job....
- b. How did you find this job?
- c. How long did it take to find?
- d. How satisfied are you with your present job?  
(Are you having any problems with your present job?)
- e. What are your working hours?  
(part-time, full-time, time of day, number of days/week, vacation?)
- f. Do you receive any benefits? (dentist, medical, insurance?)
- g. How do you view your opportunities for promotion or change?

**Education:**

13. What is your educational background....
14. How well do you feel your education has prepared you for work you're now doing? --or-- For work you would like to do?

**Career Goals**

15. Do you have any future career plans?
16. What would help you obtain your future goals?
17. What would keep you from obtaining your future goals?

**Barriers:**

18. Have you found any serious problems obtaining employment or advancing in a career:
19. Is age a problem?
20. Is living in this coastal, rural location a problem?
21. If a job required you move to another part of the state would you?
22. Are there any other barriers?  
(family, education, experience, poor career counseling....)

**Support System:**

23. Do you ever feel a sense of isolation from others?
24. Do you feel you have a support system--someone that cheers you on?



- 25. In what ways do they help you?
- 26. Do you have help at home?
- 27. What kind of help do you give to others and how do you think they feel about that?
- 28. Do you have any time for yourself?
- 29. What do you do for fun...something you enjoy just for yourself...

**Family Background and Work History:**

- 30. Describe your family background....  
(Do you have a mother, father, brothers, sisters, In-laws...)
- 31. Who in your family worked?
- 32. Were you ever encouraged to work at a paying job when growing up?
- 33. What has been your work experience...
- 34. How do you feel about working?  
(Do you enjoy working?)
- 35. When did you decide you needed a job?
- 36. Had you ever expected to be supporting yourself and others?

**Future Plans:**

- 37. What do you see yourself doing 5 years from now?
- 38. Do you have any need for more career information or need for some assistance in choosing and planning a career?
- 39. What are some positive steps you will be taking for yourself in the future?
- 40. Are there any others comments you'd like to make?

## APPENDIX F

Personal Observations Based On Field Journal Notes

I thought I knew what a displaced homemaker was. I walked in with my own biases and personal assumptions based on readings and stories, only to wake up to the reality of their plight. All the literature in the world could never describe what I experienced and learned first hand.

I knew what a displaced homemaker program was supposed to do, but I never knew the full impact this program had on so many lives. I didn't know it meant being able to escape physical abuse and find clothes for a job interview. The program has helped these women begin to change their lives with the initial need for direction, guidance, and support. The struggle of the displaced homemaker is an ongoing struggle. It's difficult to change a lifetime of learning overnight.

With every interview, I found these women had a will to survive and persevere. They want their own little niche in life, they want to belong, and be loved by those around them. The caregiving and nurturing they once gave to their families is now being transferred to those they work with.

This research is based on interviews of 18 women, a tiny sample of the overall population. It's overwhelming to realize just how many women are actually out there in need of guidance and support.