

Celebrating 50 Years of Changing Lives

In 2014, Centerstone and the Community Action Partnership are celebrating 50 years of fighting poverty and creating opportunities for people in need. Centerstone was founded in 1964 with just three staff members as part of the first generation of community-inspired organizations funded by the Economic Opportunity Act and holds the distinction of being the oldest surviving independent agency launched in that era. While we take a moment to acknowledge all of the accomplishments of the past 50 years, we are also looking ahead to our vision for a better tomorrow.

We invite you to be part of our year-long celebration and here are 5 ways you can get involved:

- 1. Take a tour** of our recently renovated historic firehouse building and view our tribute, A Journey Map to Celebrate History
- 2. Post your favorite photos and memories** on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/centerstoneseseattle
- 3. Come to our grand celebration event** on September 20, 2014, The Gala on 4th Avenue to be held at the W Hotel Seattle
- 4. Make a \$50 birthday gift** to Centerstone this year to support our mission
- 5. Join our Community Taking Action movement!** There are a number of ways you can take action: volunteer at Centerstone, host a food drive at your workplace, or tell others about Centerstone's positive impact in the community



About Centerstone

Centerstone serves a diverse group of low-income families, seniors, refugees and immigrants, and people with disabilities in Seattle through advocacy and programs. We help people of all cultures to meet their needs for food, housing, and financial education. We're committed to ending the cycle of urban poverty by helping move more families towards stability and self-sufficiency. Our programs include:

- **Energy Assistance:** Helps Seattle households with home-heating costs and improving energy conservation.
- **Home Heating Repair Services:** Provides repair and replacement of broken furnaces.
- **Housing Assistance:** Prevents homelessness through eviction prevention and move-in assistance.
- **Food Bank:** Provides nutritious food four days a week and through our home delivery service.
- **Financial Education:** Provides coaching to help people learn how to manage their personal finances effectively, stretch their dollars further, and reduce debt.

Learn more at www.center-stone.org.

Go Digital with Centerstone! Sign up for our email list and help us save money on printing and postage. Email rebekah@center-stone.org to be added to our email list and removed from our direct mail list.

The Gala on 4th Avenue is September 20, 2014

Experience the finest Seattle culture at our 50-year Anniversary Gala and Auction in the heart of downtown. Be mesmerized by innovative cocktails and vibrant drinks at our reception. Awaken to the best organic and local ingredients at our contemporary dinner. And for our grand finale...get swept away by the sounds of our live swing band! If you would like to be an event sponsor, table captain, or make a tax-deductible auction donation, please contact Tim Orth at timothy@center-stone.org or call 206-812-4998.



Upcoming Events

- ▶ Baby Boost for low-income parents in Centerstone's Food Bank (May 5)
- ▶ Bike Works: Bike tune up for low-income kids at Centerstone (May 11)
- ▶ Hopscotch CD (May 31)
- ▶ 2014 Annual Auction Event - The Gala on 4th Avenue (September 20)

Staff Spotlight: Lydia Jocson

If you have ever visited Centerstone and walked up the north stair case towards the Energy Assistance waiting room, then you probably saw Lydia, Centerstone’s accountant for the last 14 years. Though she is usually diligently working away in her office, she is always ready to pause and assist clients who get turned around and need directions. Hailing from the Philippines, Lydia moved to the land where “America’s Day Begins,” also known as Guam, after completing her Bachelor’s in Business Administration, where she found work as an accountant at a private shipping line. For over 20 years Lydia lived and worked in Guam with her husband and three children, until her children were accepted into colleges in Washington State.

In 1999, Lydia came with her children to the United States and settled in Seattle, while her husband remained in Guam. Within a few months, she found a job at Centerstone, and has remained with the organization through all the changes of the last decade. Lydia enjoys working at Centerstone and appreciates the diversity of the staff, working with a team that speaks 14 languages and come from many different countries. Lydia’s hope for Centerstone in its 50th year is to secure strong funding sources (always the accountant at heart!) so that Centerstone can expand its programs and help people move from poverty to self-sufficiency.



Volunteer Spotlight: Gauravi Kulkarni

A graduate student looking for a project. A nonprofit in need. The result: a perfect fusion of talent and vision, all towards a common goal, to help improve Centerstone’s customer service and usher the agency into the digital age.

Gauravi Kulkarni, originally hailing from Mumbai, India, joined Centerstone’s volunteer corps last summer, offering to develop a web and mobile app for Centerstone as a capstone project for her Master’s in Computer Science degree from Seattle University. Centerstone leapt at the chance, harnessing Gauravi’s technical expertise and desire to give back to her community. Together Gauravi and Centerstone’s Energy Assistance Program Manager designed an app that allows Centerstone’s 10,000 annual Energy Assistance customers to check the status of their applications online, granting them faster, more accurate information, while simultaneously reducing the toll on staff, who respond to hundreds of status calls every week. Another perk: Centerstone will save over \$5,000 a year in postage costs with this app!

Gauravi spent over 180 hours over the course of three quarters developing the app, which went live on April 1, 2014. For Gauravi one of the biggest challenges of developing for a nonprofit was the pressure.

“The responsibility of delivering a high quality application is greater with a nonprofit. A nonprofit may not be able to fund full-time developers in the future to add on new features or make modifications, so the app needs to be robust and suit all their needs at the same time.” For Gauravi, this was also great practice for her future career in software development, learning to meet the needs of her clients.

Centerstone could not operate without our many fabulous volunteers. In any given week, over 30 dedicated individuals donate time to Centerstone, totaling 11,079 hours in 2013. With a volunteer’s time valued at \$22.69 in Washington State, that makes our volunteer base our largest donors, with over 250k in donations last year. Thank you volunteers!



How Can You Help?

We’d like to invite you to donate items through our Amazon Wish List! By purchasing from our list you help us to provide much-needed items to our Food Bank clients. Examples from our list include:

- Breakfast cereal
- Baby diapers
- Infant formula
- Assorted toiletries

Our Mission

Centerstone is dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other as they move from poverty to self-sufficiency through programs and advocacy. We seek to create a healthy, thriving world free of poverty. Our organization values excellence, compassion, responsiveness, innovation, resiliency, and diversity.

Learn about Centerstone Online

- Visit www.center-stone.org
- View our Annual Report
- Download our Strategic Plan
- Read client stories and the latest news on fighting poverty in Seattle
- Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/centerstoneseseattle

Contact Us 722 18th Avenue • Seattle, WA 98122 • (206) 812-4940

▶ **If you are interested in volunteering at Centerstone, please visit <http://center-stone.org/give/volunteer/> or call (206) 812-4943.**

SKIP LUNCH FIGHT HUNGER

Did you Skip Lunch on April 7?

With cuts to the Food Stamp Program, the Government Sequester, and reduced unemployment benefits, we are seeing an increase in the number of people needing assistance to feed themselves and their families. In response, Centerstone launched Skip Lunch/Fight Hunger, an exciting event to raise awareness and support for our Food Bank. On April 7th, we asked people in Seattle to skip lunch and donate their lunch money to Centerstone. Thank you to all of the local residents, organizations, and businesses that supported us during this campaign!

“Centerstone helped me when I really, really needed it. Because of you, we still have a place. We would have been kicked out without your support. I’m extremely grateful. You helped us in a lot of different ways.”

- Emmanuel , Centerstone Client