

Central Oregon Coast Victory - May 2007 Stand for Children's Endorsed School Board Candidates in Lincoln County Win

The Central Oregon Coast Chapter of Stand for Children endorsed three successful candidates for the Lincoln County School District Board of Directors in the May election. In the two contested positions, Amy Coulter, a young parent, won with 60 percent of the vote and Brenda Brown, the current Board Vice-chair, won with 67 percent of the vote. Jana Cowan, who had been newly appointed to the Board, was unopposed. We are looking forward to their contributions to our schools, as they strongly support our state and chapter goals for adequate school funding, quality education, and children's health and wellness.

We followed Stand for Children's recommended procedures for the endorsement. Our task force was charged with identifying and recommending candidates who would best meet our goals. They developed and submitted questionnaires to all of the candidates, conducted interviews, and considered their past experience, voting records, and community recommendations. After reviewing the gathered information, it was determined that this school board race would have a significant impact on Lincoln County's children. Two of the candidates believed that the schools had enough money and had actively campaigned against a desperately needed local option levy. One candidate also emphasized that she believed nutrition and wellness should be taken care of by parents and is not the school's job. She also indicated that changes might not be economically feasible. The task force developed an endorsement report that was sent to all Chapter members. It summarized the responses of the candidates and explained the recommendations of the task force. Our membership then voted via email and phone.

"I was very impressed with the thoroughness of Stand for Children's endorsement process. Stand's success with my candidacy and others, including an underdog candidate, is a testament to Stand's growing presence and strength within Lincoln County." – Brenda Brown, Lincoln County School Board candidate.

Stand for Children members supported the candidates' campaigns in several ways. We developed a media release about our endorsement that contained information about the candidates. This was published in three newspapers and appeared just before the ballots were received. We also coordinated a series of letters to the editor, which were included in all of the papers. Our group marched with the Stand for Children banner in the Newport Loyalty Days parade, and included our candidate for that area, distributing flyers for her. Several of our members also attended two candidate forums, a fundraiser, and campaign planning session for a candidate. They also helped distribute and put up a limited number of yard signs and bumper stickers.

These campaigns were relatively low key. However, our message was heard and we are confident that our endorsement played a part in the success of this election for our children, schools, and communities.

"Stand for Children helped me get my ideas and name out to every corner of the county. Members of Stand were very helpful in putting out yard signs and bumper stickers, letters to the editor, and helped with campaign strategy that was especially helpful for me as a person that was running for office for the first time. I am extremely blessed to have Stand's help and doubt I would have won with out them." – Amy Coulter, Lincoln County School Board candidate.

Billie Jo Smith
Central Oregon Coast Chapter Chair