

MY VIEW



Founder Wayne Fortin



NOTE: TIP NW is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Remarkable!

In an effort to understand the “secret” to this Affiliate's longevity, I interviewed June Vining TIP NW's longtime Executive Director. June has led her Affiliate through “thick and thin” from the beginning. I think we can all learn from her experience about how to develop a resilient TIP Affiliate.

Q. Can you describe your affiliate “by the numbers” ... # of jurisdictions ... # of monthly calls ... # of volunteers?

A. Currently we have 212 active volunteers. 18 are TEENS. We are responding to an average of 180 each month.

Q. What is the geographic area served by TIP NW?

A. In Oregon, we cover all of Multnomah County, Clackamas County, part of Washington County, Hood River County, and Wasco County. In Washington, we cover Clark County, Skamania County, and Klickitat County.

Q. How was TIP established 30 years ago?

A. My understanding of how TIP began in Portland is that there was a commissioner vying for re-election. He saw the NBC national news piece highlighting TIP and thought this would be his “claim to fame” and help him get re-elected. He reached out to Wayne, and they entered into a contract for \$10,000 to bring TIP to Portland, the first chapter outside of San Diego. It was run by a recently retired Fire Lieutenant and the contract included office space in the Portland Fire Bureau.

Q. How has TIP NW survived and thrived for 30 years i.e., what is the “secret sauce?”

A. TIP NW has survived and thrived for 30+ years for so many reasons.

1. We were immediately provided office space within the system, so we were visible every day.
2. This affiliate is operated as a business and not a “mom and pop” organization. Meaning – an active Board of Directors, engaged Advisory committee, annual reviews of each volunteer, statistical reporting to all agencies on a regular basis, participation in committees and groups where we are seen and appreciated... i.e., Child Fatality Review Board, Suicide Prevention and Postvention Review, Child Collaborative, COAD, Multi District partners in law enforcement, presenting at roll calls, new police and fire academies, offering EFA seminars, engaging and building relationships with user agencies and chiefs.

Q. How is your affiliate celebrating its 30-year anniversary?

A. Our annual HWH event is coming on 10/22/22 – this will be the first time we are back in-person since 2019. We have made a really big deal about acknowledging and celebrating 30 years of service. Right now, we have over 500 registrations. We have added some special things to our event to raise money and also added a band, dancing and dance lessons at the end to party!

Q. How is your affiliate promoting this remarkable achievement?

A. Press Releases, New Articles, social media – FB, IG, Snap etc.

Q. How does your affiliate remember and honor its history?

A. We take time at least once a year to share the TIP Story – the Maxwell video and other news clips to share where we came from and where we are now. We run it as a movie night, and it is great. We are anxious to have Wayne come and share this history from the FOUNDER's perspective.

Q. What one or two innovations have improved how TIP NW operates?

A. Going electronic with our calendar and call logs has been the biggest change. Having dispatchers, debriefers, staff and volunteers all connected to the log and calendar is a huge time saver. Creating the TIP Annual Review was another big win. Treating each volunteer with respect and honoring their time and service every year with their stats and feedback letters from clients and their support team is invaluable to keeping volunteers happy and continuing to give their time to volunteer.

Q. What about TIP NW would cause a visitor to the Affiliate to have a WOW experience?

A. The longevity of the volunteers, the inclusiveness of the group with long-time volunteers and trainees, the camaraderie of staff, the passion and respect of user agencies. That TIP NW is viewed and treated like one of the team.

Q. TIP NW has a history of expanding. How has that happened?

A. Why do jurisdictions decide to join TIP? Reputation and Service. One area/jurisdiction sees or witnesses what TIP volunteers DO and they want it. They check us out and ask around. We have a stellar reputation along with the service we provide.

Q. What is a major challenge your affiliate is facing?

A. One challenge that turned into something great was training and moving to TeleTIP during COVID and our local lock down. We quickly pivoted and added a 30-day follow up call to our clients. It became so valuable from the client's point of view and from those TIP volunteers making the calls that we have now incorporated a 30-day follow up call on every TIP request. The challenge is this literally doubles our call volume, and we now have a team of 10 TIP Volunteers who cannot go out on calls – because of compromised health, one is legally blind, and one uses a wheelchair – this has been a perfect way to incorporate them into our TIP community.

Q. What role has "luck" played in TIP NW growth and success? Can you describe a "lucky break?"

A. Many times, when I participate in committees/meetings, I often find myself saying "*Is this a good use of my time?*" or "*What is TIP getting from this?*" I have NEVER been disappointed. If there is any luck – it is networking and building relationships when you don't even know you are doing that. You show up and participate and then months later – they remember and recommend TIP and BAM you have a new user agency.

Q. What is the most important advice you would give a new TIP Leader about how to lead a TIP Affiliate?

A. Be a leader and not a friend. We have high expectations for a reason, and we need to stand by those and enforce our policies. Lead the group as a community – not a family. When we use the term "family" it insinuates so much more. A community is a group of people with common goals/interests. As I learned early on – be soft on the person and hard on the issue. Cut off the head of the snake before the venom spreads through the group. Always build people up and see the best in them. Love them in and love the out. A leader has to make tough decisions – be a leader – even when it's hard.

Q. How has TIP NW supported other TIP Affiliates and the TIP network as a whole?

A. TIP NW has always supported new managers, affiliates, and trainers. When we share our successes – people don't have to make the same mistakes we did. Talking with other affiliates, mentoring, and coaching them is an honor.

Q. What role has TIP National and other TIP Affiliates played in the success of TIP NW?

A. TIP NW wouldn't be celebrating 30 years without the leadership and support of TIP National. We have walked the path, asked for help, and sometimes change, appreciated the materials, training, guidance and direction at every moment. Other TIP Affiliates have helped TIP NW by sharing "what works" in their affiliates and allows TIP NW to combine, compile or add to great ideas and make them our own. We are all here because Wayne had a vision. I am here because he believed in me and saw something in me. He encouraged me, trained and mentored me into becoming the leader I am today.

Q. How do you see TIP adapting to the changes in society and in policing? How do you see TIP looking/operating differently 10 years from now?

A. We saw a huge change with cell phones, and then email and then electronic calendars and call logs. I imagine we will move forward with some kind of automated call outs through 911 centers. We are just beginning to get more training from police to respond to the violent, gun/gang related calls. In the past few years, in our area, we have seen a huge increase in requests to congregate housing, the houseless population, schools and businesses experiencing a crisis. I think 10 years from now, TIP will be an automatic button that gets pushed – just like police/fire/medical.

Q. What are the TIP staff/board of directors doing now to ensure TIP NW continues long after you and the current staff are retired?

A. A few years ago, the Board and me participated in a workshop to create a "strategic plan" of "What happens when..." I have worked really hard the last 20 years to make sure that TIP is known as a powerful nonprofit, and not just June – the TIP lady. So, in addition to updating our Operations Manual every year with details on how to do each of our jobs, the board has a succession plan as one moves off and another moves on; and staff has a plan for if something happens to one of us. If I die and TIP falls apart – then I haven't done a good job as a leader. This biggest compliment I feel is that I can leave town or leave the country and TIP keeps going. I believe when my grandchildren have children – TIP will be a vital, powerful, successful program that was started with a vision and had firm foundations to grow well beyond me.