

HOMELESS: Definition is more expansive than many are aware

Continued from page 1

liaison. She explained that this term includes children and youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”).
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters, or abandoned in hospitals.
- Staying in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Under law, homeless children and youth have certain rights and protections to help ensure that they have access to education and other services. This includes transportation to school, any services for which the child/youth is eligible including nutrition, talented and gifted support, English language programs, special education, and more.

Family Access Network is an important support for many of the families who are defined as being homeless, according to Cooper. FAN assists with school supplies, clothing (including winter coats and supplies), accessing healthcare, and much more.

Cooper says that the biggest misunderstanding locally is that many people do not know that Sisters has an issue with homelessness among children and youth. People may not be able to see or know that we do have children living in vehicles and in tents or are doubling up in houses with other families. Last year 22 of the students fell in the “unsheltered” category, while 12 were doubled up and seven were “unaccompanied” individuals. Unaccompanied means that a minor is somewhere without a parent or legal guardian.

Not surprisingly, according to statewide data for Oregon, homeless students lag in attendance rates at school and subsequently do not perform as well on measures of learning or on being on track to graduate on

time. However, according to the Oregon Department of Education, the gap has lessened in recent years, in part because of better awareness and support on the part of school districts.

Theresa Slavkovsky, who works for FAN as a family advocate along with Cooper, said, “Any homeless client (individual, child, family, couple) is served in the same manner as any client coming to FAN. The process of a simple intake and then referral to local, county, and/or state services to assist with their situation.”

She says that she has seen the arrival of more affordable housing helping previously homeless families.

The source for immediate help locally for people lacking shelter in the winter months is the Sisters Cold Weather Shelter, which opens each evening during the coldest months for people, including families in need of protection from the winter elements. Doors open at 6 p.m. A meal is provided in the evening along with a warm, safe place to sleep if people choose to stay the night.

Operation of the shelter is shared by some churches in Sisters. According to the NeighborImpact website, the Sisters shelter will be held at the New Hope Christian Center campus, which is managed by Westside Church, through February 1 before rotating to the Church of the Transfiguration Episcopal Church. Both facilities are located on Trinity Way west of downtown Sisters.

So far this year, the shelter has not housed any children according to John Miller, one of the volunteers.

Volunteers with the shelter have also helped people acquire shelter, including a couple of camp trailers and cold-weather gear, which has resulted in fewer people coming in for help at the shelter itself, according to Miller.

In addition, the relatively mild weather has kept the numbers at the shelter relatively low this winter, averaging fewer than six people checking in per night for a meal or to stay over.

For those seeking more information about resources for the homeless, the Homeless Leadership Coalition is a regional service provider for homeless people. Their website has a comprehensive list of resources for individuals and families, as well as information on how to volunteer to help.

Says Cooper, “As a community we want to make sure people — children and youth in particular — are provided with shelter, food, safety and education here in Sisters.”

The Nugget Newspaper Crossword

By Jacqueline E. Mathews, Tribune News Service

- ACROSS**
- 1 Come across
 - 5 ___ and ends; hodgepodge
 - 9 Goose ___; zeros
 - 13 ___ spades; high card
 - 15 Give off a strong odor
 - 16 Dictionary man Webster
 - 17 About 39.37 inches
 - 18 Put down; malign
 - 20 Suffix for keen or mean
 - 21 “___ Miss”; southern univ.
 - 23 Plundered; ransacked
 - 24 Recluse
 - 26 Texter’s giggle
 - 27 Fake
 - 29 Chaos
 - 32 Endures
 - 33 Makes booties
 - 35 Beanie
 - 37 Flying saucers
 - 38 Chairs & benches
 - 39 Soft cheese
 - 40 Jewel
 - 41 Marshmallow chicks
 - 42 Lying face down
 - 43 Renovate; make over
 - 45 Baby’s underwear
 - 46 “___ we there yet?”
 - 47 Dirtiness
 - 48 Follows stealthily
 - 51 ___, dos, tres...
 - 52 Word attached to meal or cake
 - 55 Last month’s holiday
 - 58 ___ scraps; meal remnants
 - 60 Bumpkins
 - 61 Finales
 - 62 ___ up; blunders
 - 63 ___ as an owl
 - 64 Like pinkish cheeks
 - 65 Ariz.-to-New Mex. direction

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Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 1/15/20

- DOWN**
- 1 Achieves ___; becomes well-known
 - 2 Frosts a cake
 - 3 Irritating
 - 4 Female animal
 - 5 Neatness
 - 6 Shameful grade
 - 7 Lion’s lair
 - 8 Frying pans
 - 9 ___ in; register for
 - 10 Billy ___; male animal
 - 11 Fence opening
 - 12 Small outbuilding
 - 14 Palm leaves
 - 19 Deliver the ___; produce results
 - 22 Actor ___ G. Carroll
 - 25 Pitcher’s delights
 - 27 Sink stopper
 - 28 Not as risky
 - 29 Tiny pieces
 - 30 Fear of heights
 - 31 “The Pine Tree State”
 - 33 Preserve
 - 34 Short rest
 - 36 One’s equal

— Last Week’s Puzzle Solved —

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38 Part of the school year

39 Unruly youngster

41 Yellowstone & Yosemite

42 Lindbergh & Earhart

44 Suitcase

45 Racket

47 Persnickety

48 Cargo sailboat

49 Asian language

50 Kennel sounds

53 European range

54 Trial run

56 L-P center

57 Commercials

59 Tavern order

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