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Area groups aid student renters

By SUE SWEGAR
For the Emerald

Housing is one of the nation's No. 1 businesses and perhaps students' leading consumer problem, but six organizations in the Eugene area can help the student from getting lost in the shuffle.

At the University of Oregon, Off-Campus Housing, the Office of Student Advocacy and the People's Law School all help students with housing difficulties.

Off-Campus Housing runs a free rent referral service with listings of houses, apartments, rooms, studios and quads for rent, along with roommate-wanted situation.

The office also provides literature on finding housing, tenant's rights, small claims court and deposit refunds along with lists of Eugene-Springfield landlords.

The office counsels anyone with landlord-tenant problems. If the problem is too complex it is referred to the Office of Student Advocacy.

Off-Campus Housing is located in Suite 3 of the EMU, and is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. All services are free. Both students and non-students may phone the office at 686-3731.

In addition, Off-Campus Housing works on legal matters so that the Office of Student Advocacy can concentrate more time to people needing legal assistance.

OSA employs an attorney to assist students in solving housing disputes. The office, located in 16D of the EMU--just past the Footnotes office-- is open 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and can be reached at 686-4273.

The People's Law School offers classes on many legal problems on Wednesday evenings from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Lincoln School (at W. 12th Avenue and Jefferson Street). Classes are free and no registration is needed.

The Nov. 1 class will focus on small claims court, which may be helpful in gaining return of an apartment deposit. For more information call 343-5539.

City organizations can also help students tackle housing problems. The Eugene and Springfield housing inspection departments will send inspectors to dwellings residents feel are below standard, according to Eugene housing inspector Ray Willard. A housing check can be made within two days of the complaint, and if the building is substandard, the housing authority will notify the building's owner.

In Eugene, call 687-5444 and in Springfield call 726-3753 for housing inspection.

Other Eugene businesses offer housing services to the community too. Switchboard can help people looking for housing with its broadcast listings and referral boards.

Switchboard handles "about 500-800 people a month needing housing and 300-500 offering housing," said Larry Wheeler, a Switchboard employee. The office is located at 454 Willamette St. and can be reached from 10 a.m. until midnight, every day, at 686-8453. Referrals are free.

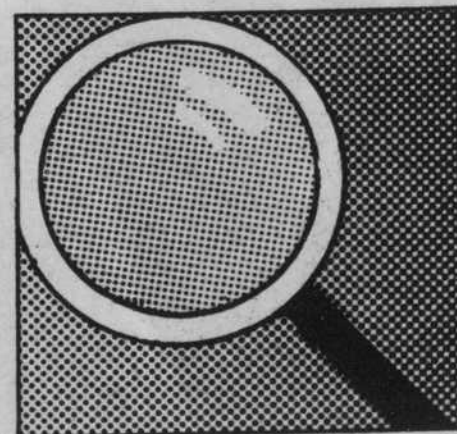
White Bird E 12th Ave., offers an informational referral service and a legal department. The office has no housing listings but often refers people needing emergency housing to organizations including the Eugene Mission, Family Shelter House and Christian Liberation House.

People needing legal services can talk to the staff at White Bird and arrange to see a volunteer lawyer if necessary.

Regular office hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The office can be reached by calling 342-8255. White Bird also offers a 24-hour crisis clinic at the same number.

CARES, 170 E 11th Ave., 687-4000, also offers an information referral service and can suggest several alternatives on seeking legal help or finding housing.

The office is open 24 hours a day.



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