

Oregon Daily Emerald

Wednesday, October 4, 1989

Eugene, Oregon

Volume 91, Number 25

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Parent anti-drug group gathers at Mac Court

Frohnmayr speaks at rally

By Rosemary White
Emerald Contributor

McArthur Court was the scene Tuesday night for the Parents Rally Against Substance Abuse, with many concerned people from the community attending and demonstrating their support for the campaign to make a stand in Lane County.

Only about 2,000 of the expected 10,000 people attended the rally but organizers said they were still happy that many families and local organizations had come to pledge their support.

The scale of the problem in Oregon was addressed by the first speaker, state attorney general Dave Frohnmayr, who gave statistics to justify his description of the problem as an epidemic.

Frohnmayr told the audience that Oregon is one of the top drug producing states in America, with one out of every five crack-making laboratories in the country located here. Oregon currently produces \$600

million worth of marijuana a year, making it a large cash crop industry.

The problem is especially serious in the Portland area, which has had the highest per capita heroin death rate in the United States for the past two years.

These statistics correspond with crime figures, with 75 percent of criminals in Oregon testing positive for drugs. Oregon also had the third highest number of bank robberies in America in 1988.

The rally aimed at helping parents cope with the battle they face in bringing up their children without them becoming involved in drugs.

Speakers ranging from Doug Harclerod, Lane County district attorney, to Paul Palazzolo from the Student Assistance Program at Sheldon High School offered guidelines on how to detect symptoms of drug abuse, to be aware of the effect of "gateway" drugs such as alcohol and tobacco, and to understand that the solution depends as much on parents' efforts as on law enforcement.



Photo by Martin Thiel

Only 2,000 of an expected 10,000 people showed up for Tuesday's Parents Rally Against Substance Abuse, but organizers are still calling the event a success.

CAHOOTS to deal with problems on the streets

By Sam Silverstein
Emerald Contributor

When there is trouble on the streets of Eugene the police may not, in some cases, be the most appropriate people to call.

Since early July, a transport van staffed with trained medical and mental health technicians has been sent instead of Eugene police or ambulance crews to the scene of problems involving seriously intoxicated, disoriented, confused or despondent people.

The Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) program was put on the road to help the city's public safety system handle "issues that aren't criminal," said Bob Dritz, coordinator of the White Bird human services center, from which the van operates.

"It is a first response rather than the police," Dritz said.

Instead of sending Eugene police officers into situations for which they are not always trained or comfortable to handle, he explained, the CAHOOTS van is dispatched. The van operates Tuesday through Saturday evenings, from 4 until midnight, and is equipped with seats and some medical equipment.

It has been most often called upon by the police to transport intoxicated or disruptive people to the appropriate place — detoxification centers, shelters or homes.

The idea is based loosely on a similar program in Portland.

"(In 1986), White Bird proposed the idea that the classical public safety system — police, fire and ambulance — could use some enhancement," Dritz said. "A more effective response could come from the human services system."

After a delay of almost three years, the van was purchased this spring and hit the streets in July for a four-month trial. At the end of October, the program's initial funding will run dry and a decision will be made according to Dritz, whether to continue with some changes, or stop.

"It's been an interesting trial period," he said. "I think it has been successful in a lot of ways, and smooth in terms of the nuts and bolts."

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Changes sought for the homeless

Mental illness, hunger two of many problems

By Janis Joseph
Emerald Reporter

Every day students walking down 13th Avenue are confronted by the problem of homelessness.

Every day students see people asking for, sometimes demanding, money. And every day many students ignore the problem, never looking beyond the people to find its cause or its solution.

Homelessness has been a problem in Eugene for years. In many cases, however, being homeless is only part of the problem. For some, homelessness is combined with mental illness.

"A strong 10 to 15 percent of the homeless are mentally ill," said Ernie Unger, director of the Eugene Mission, an emergency homeless for the homeless.

The first week in October has been designated Mental Awareness Week, according to the state Mental Health Division. The theme is "A Time for Change."

Change is what the 1989 Oregon Legislature tried to bring about. The Legislature approved an increase in funding for a variety of programs dealing with the care of the mentally ill, said Peggy Sand, public relations director for the Mental Health Division in Salem.

Oregon's mental hospitals are "severely overcrowded, and more than half of the chronically mentally ill in our state remain unserved," said Richard Lippincott, administrator for the Mental Health and Developmental Disability Services Division.

Damascus State Hospital in Wilsonville lost Medicaid funding because it could not meet the federal requirements for the pro-



Photo by Steve Card

The myriad of problems faced by the homeless will compound as winter approaches.

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