

COMMUNITY

Program to assist crime victims

By Rebecca Merritt
Oregon Daily Emerald

University senior Angela Mart decided she no longer wanted to attend law school after she volunteered to work with crime victims.

Instead, Mart said she is considering a job in social services so she can help people directly. A career in law, she said, would be too frustrating because the judicial system often blocks lawyers from helping others.

"I enjoy working with people," Mart said. "It's very rewarding."

Mart is one of 17 volunteers selected last year by the Lane County District Attorney's office for the Victim Services Program. Organized in 1985, the program offers direct assistance to about 5,500 crime victims a year, said Lori Nelson, program director.

"The idea is to minimize and alleviate what people encounter when involved in the criminal justice system," Nelson said. "Who would do this if we weren't here?"

Mart and other volunteers spend about 16 hours a week contacting victims by phone and in person to offer various types of assistance. Like other University students who have volunteered for the program, Mart is earning internship credit for her sociology degree.

Volunteers accompany crime victims to court arraignments and trials and can refer people to various agencies such as Sexual Assault Support Services, Mart said.

Victim service volunteers are responsible for informing people of new developments in their cases and for educating them about the criminal justice system. Volunteers also need to complete paperwork for a crime victim's compensation.

Mart said she works with victims of all types of crimes, ranging from robbery to rape and abuse cases. Victims who need the most support are usually those who have been sexually violated, she said.

"Any type of crime is devastating for anyone to deal with, but rape is more of a personal violation. It takes victims more time to bounce back," Mart said.

Mart said she works with about 10 victims. The hardest part about her job, she said, is keeping herself from becoming emotionally attached to victims. "It's hard not to do more than you are supposed to," she said.

For example, Mart said she is working on a case involving an 11-year-old runaway. She finds it difficult not to become attached to the girl and her problems.

"She's an 11-year-old kid and I hate to see her hurt," she said.

Since starting her internship in October, Mart said she has been surprised about the high level of crime in Lane County.

"I never realized what a crime problem we had. It's very scary," she said.

The Victim Services Program needs more volunteers for next year, Nelson said. The program asks for a one-year commitment and requires participation in a 64-hour training program.

Mart said the program is a great opportunity for students interested in law, because volunteers work closely with the district attorney. The face-to-face interaction with crime victims is beneficial for people interested in social services.

Volunteers must be at least 18 years old, Nelson said. People can apply at the district attorney's office in the Lane County Courthouse. Applications are due Feb. 25. For more information, call 687-4523.

Education, taxes in Albrecht's campaign

By Michael J. Wilczek
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Education, taxes, the environment and equality topped John Albrecht's list of priorities for Oregon in 1995.

Albrecht, who considers himself the most liberal Democrat in the race for the 40th seat in Oregon's House of Representatives, explained the main thrust of his campaign at a press conference Tuesday.

"Education in Oregon has been exceptional, but because of Measure 5, serious work must be done to take care of our educational system," Albrecht said. The University is not an Ivy League school and shouldn't cost like one, he said.

"It's time to bite the bullet and use the big 'T' word," Albrecht said. "Oregonians are not overly taxed. To have good government we must pay for it."

He suggested broadening property tax and raising income tax to make up for budget shortfalls.

With regard to the environment, Albrecht warned that drastic steps must be taken to protect Oregon's environment, including restrictions on cars.

Albrecht also spoke on equality. He supports the Oregon Legislature and its attempt to block local anti-gay measures.

"Equality and justice are under attack by those who claim special knowledge of lifestyles that are as old as man," he said. "We

must continue in the tradition of the Oregon and U.S. constitutions."

Until a week ago, Albrecht, a 62-year-old retired teacher, was the regional vice president of the Sierra Club.

Along with two other Democrats, Mike Sherlok and Floyd Prozanski, Albrecht has gathered the 450 signatures necessary to be on the May 17 primary ballot.

The three men are competing for the seat left vacant by University associate professor Carl Hosticka.

Since 1986, Albrecht, a 20-year Eugene resident, has been a precinct committee member and a member of the County Democratic Central Committee.

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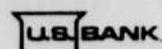
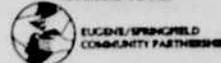
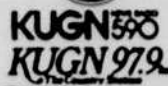
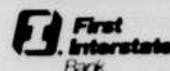
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