

Interfaith: The car camp's absence helped fund Interfaith

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faith shelter system.

"It took a while to get to used to all of this," she said. "I had heard that shelters were more like prisons instead of homes. But once I got here, it wasn't like what I thought it would be. The people here make it feel like a home. They made us feel welcome."

The Interfaith program, a day-and-night web of shelters involving 48 churches in the Eugene-Springfield area, works to help family members such as Reynolds restore their confidence during tough, uncertain times.

"Our method is not to play hardball," said Terry McClintic, assistant director for Interfaith. "Our first line of reasoning is that we don't condemn them because their clothes are dirty, or they have no place to stay."

McClintic said the absence of a car camp has forced some families that might stay at the camp to seek assistance from Interfaith. But even if the car camp were operational this winter, Interfaith would still struggle to meet demand because of the influx of families that are homeless, he said.

About 400 families used Interfaith last year when a car camp was available, and people were still being turned away then, he said.

McClintic said the shelter has been full since opening in July. The shelter system serves approximately 2,000 people per month and provides up to 90 days of housing. Help is on a first-come, first-served basis.

"I get here at 7:30 in the morning, and there are four families already waiting in front of the door," McClintic said. "By the time we begin processing them at 9 a.m., all our available slots are taken by 9:15. We turn 20 families away per day."

Hate: Aryan Pride president attended Monday's meeting

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by several meeting participants who noticed his red shoelaces, Fighting Irish baseball hat and German cross ring — typical attire for members of the group.

When Bill Washburn, ASUO University affairs coordinator approached the man, he identified himself.

"He said 'I'm the president of Aryan Pride,'" Washburn said. "He kept trying to argue that his viewpoint is purely political. But I know the reality is not true. Because of these histories [of violence] we're discounting all of the rhetoric he was saying."

Washburn said while the man did make an impression on the group, he will not deter efforts to prevent hate-crimes from happening on campus.

"They want us to show that we're afraid of them," Washburn said. "We want to focus on the positive. I mean 45 students went to this last meeting. This is one bad apple who can throw us off onto a whole other tangent."

Shorr said the coalition is currently focusing on letting students know that Aryan Pride flyers have been distributed on

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I had heard the shelters were more like prisons instead of homes. But it wasn't like I thought it would be.

— Michele Reynolds

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Ironically, it was the absence of a car camp that allowed Interfaith shelter system to continue its services year round. When the Eugene City Council voted last fall not to fund the car camp this winter, it did pass a motion to give \$40,000 to Interfaith.

McClintic said the money helped Interfaith free itself from debt and gave the program more "bang-for-the-buck" with little or no cost to families in need.

At night, a rotating system of local churches provides beds and hot dinners for up to 10 families per week. During the day, families go to First Place Family shelter at 1995 Amazon Parkway where they have access to free day care, laundry facilities, telephone, mail services and transportation for kids going to school.

The shelter also hires tutors to teach resumé writing and computer skills and woos local businesses into hiring family members who are staying at the shelter.

Thanks to Interfaith, Reynolds is now staying at a 48-unit, transitional-housing facility. Between working two temporary jobs, she scans the newspapers searching for permanent housing. The wait isn't over yet.

"I run into barriers every day," Reynolds said. "If I keep trying, I can run into that person who does understand and that's all I can hope for now."

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I don't think people would stand for this if they knew it was going on.

— Manya Shorr

Jewish Student Union Director

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campus. She said she thinks many students are not aware of the flyers' message or of their presence on campus.

"I don't think people would stand for this if they knew it was going on," she said. "If we show [Aryan Pride members] they're really not wanted, and there's no interest here, they won't come back."

Shorr said it is also important for student groups to come out in opposition to the flyers. "There are so many groups on this campus that do not have an option to take a stand on this that it's frustrating that groups that do have options aren't taking a stand."

The next meeting of the anti hate-crime coalition will be next Monday at 7 p.m. in the Multi-cultural Center.

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