

OSPIRG organizes local shelter cleanup

■ **EVENT:** Volunteers came together Saturday to help improve living conditions at area relief agencies

By Angie Suchy
Student Activities Editor

Buckets of paint, mattresses, a stove and a refrigerator stood lined up outside a Lane County ShelterCare home facility on Saturday. University and LCC students surrounded the scene, passing around paint rollers and handing out duties. Soon the pungent smell of paint and the chatter of team work filled the modest two-bedroom home.

Lane County ShelterCare was just one of several relief agencies in the Eugene-Springfield area where students pitched in as part of the 13th annual National Hunger Cleanup. Sponsored by OSPIRG, the event organized volunteer projects at numerous homeless shelters and relief agencies. The goal was to raise \$5,000 in cleanup contributions for the Eugene Mission and national and international hunger and homelessness relief agencies, said Laynah Tan, OSPIRG's event publicity coordinator.

Tan said the work done by students is beneficial to all parties involved.

"This event allows us to be actively involved in our community while also giving us the opportunity to raise awareness about issues that affect everyone," she said.

An estimated 100 volunteers painted, landscaped, performed repairs and worked on a few minor construction projects.

During the event's kick-off, John Simmons, from the Eugene Mission, told the volunteers, "I'm burdened by our numbers going up and up and up. Your work is going to make a tremendous difference."

Simmons said the Eugene Mission has a work therapy program to give homeless the chance to



Juniors Laura Kane, foreground, and Roberto Aguilar repaint the walls of a room at the Family Shelter House during the Annual Hunger Cleanup.

work and receive a small stipend. However, he said, "It's a shame we have to have services like these agencies."

A spokesperson from the Eugene Service Station also spoke at the event kick-off. She said the organization's day center serves an

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average of 100 to 125 people each day, ranging in age from 18 to 80.

"I believe that some people couldn't make it without our services — I hear that daily," she said. "That's why your help is so appreciated."

At Lane ShelterCare, where a group of volunteers painted and constructed a fence, University student and volunteer Vann Keo said the other Delta Upsilon members were participating because community service is important.

"We participate in activities like this because we are part of the community, and we recognize that," Keo said.

Jeff Gardner, a Lane ShelterCare community outreach director, said the organization was grateful for volunteers who "could add all the extras to make it a home." The family shelter, which is home to 29 families, offers basic needs, counseling and job search aid.

Gardner stressed that a lot of the labor at the family shelter is done by volunteers and that projects such as painting and fence building are a nice addition to the things that have to be completed.

"There is a real psychological impact on the families that live here in terms of the looks and operation of the facility," Gardner said. "We can use all the extras we can to make it a home."

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