

Businesses to assist homeless

Local businesses can report the homeless to outreach services rather than to police

By Tricia Duryee
Community Reporter

For as little as \$1 a day, local businesses will be able to contact outreach services 24 hours a day for the homeless as part of a cooperative project between local businesses and government.

The program, Safe and Sound, provides an alternative to calling the police to report people in need of services such as shelter and medical treatment or those who need access to sexual abuse or exploitation consultation.

"The various problems businesses face with street kids, panhandlers, mentally ill and homeless people can be reduced through timely intervention, treatment and prevention strategies," said Steve Manela, program manager for the Lane County Human Services Commission.

The commission has been looking for an solution to the problem for a while, and in July it started to look at the idea for the Safe and Sound program.

"I have a good feeling about this one. Given the current fiscal environment, this kind of partnership provides financially for these services," Manela said.

He said the three-year project, which starts in July, will cost \$1.4 million. Sixty percent of the costs come from grants and public funding, but Manela said he hopes at least 250 businesses will come forward in the next couple of months to pay the remaining 40 percent of costs.

The program is asking businesses to make at least a \$1 per day donation for the 24-hour response service for such providers as Looking Glass Youth and Family Services, Sexual Assault Support Services, St. Vincent de Paul and White Bird Clinic.

"I think for a business in the Downtown Mall, or in downtown Springfield and at the University,

this program is a more critical issue than for others," he said.

The additional funding doesn't actually create new services, but instead goes toward increasing the services already available.

"The beauty is that we aren't creating any new services," Manela said. "We are expanding the capacity of services that already exist."

According to Manela, the funding will help substantially. He said with the new budget more staff and beds will be available to homeless youth at the Station 7 branch of Looking Glass Youth and Family Services.

"Looking Glass Station 7 gets three more beds, two street outreach staff and two staff at the station," he said. "That's 132 youth a year and 786 nights of shelter."

"This is a sustainable service. There is a fee for the service. Initially we are fund-raising, but it is a service that will benefit businesses and the greater community."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Woman arrested on child abuse charges

A Eugene woman was arrested on child abuse charges Wednesday following an investigation involving her three-year-old child.

Vicki Lynn Banks was taken into custody after a warrant for her arrest was issued March 30 and served Wednesday. In mid-February, police allege she caused injuries to the child by holding his left hand and forearm in hot, scalding water, resulting in second- and possibly third-degree burns.

The medical facility treating the child reported the injuries to authorities because of the suspicious nature of the injury and the explanation Banks gave for the injury.

The incident was then reported to the Eugene Police Department, and violent crime detectives began further investigation February 23.

Men charged with robbery, kidnapping

Eugene police arrested two men in relation to a takeover-style robbery at a Taco Bell restaurant last November, a police news release stated.

Jeremy Nguyen Hansen, 23, and Daniel William Moir, 19, were charged with two counts of first-degree robbery and two counts of first-degree kidnapping.

On Nov. 2, 1997, two suspects wearing dark clothing and head coverings resembling ski masks confronted two female employees as they were preparing to open the business, located at 215 Division Ave., according to the release.

The suspects, both armed with knives, held the females for an extended period of time until access could be made to money within the business.

— compiled by Jesse Sowa

Law school makes effort to diversify

By Ben Romano
Higher Education Editor

In a continuing effort to cultivate minority interest in attending law schools, the University School of Law is hosting the eighth annual Minority Law Day this Friday at Grayson Hall.

This year's Minority Law Day includes a variety of panels and workshops focusing on the role of mass media in shaping public opinion about legal practitioners and the fight against affirmative action. In addition, the event will expose high school and college students to the facets of law school and legal careers.

Events such as "The Trial of Goldilocks," hosted by law Professor Wayne Westling, will give students a chance to observe and participate in a mock trial.

The event targets minority high school and college students with some interest in the law.

The event has drawn 40 to 50 people in past years, but Katherine Jernberg, director of admissions and an event coordinator, expects a substantially larger turnout this year.

The larger expected turnout is due in part to a cooperative effort between the law school and Oregon high school counselors, Jernberg said. The law school has chartered a bus to accommodate the large number of Portland high school students making the trip to Eugene for the event.

Dave Hubin, University executive assistant president, commended the law school for its efforts to recruit minority students. "[Minority Law Day] is a very effective and very important initiative on the part of law school," Hubin said.

A donation from the Law School Admission Council, a national administrative body located in Pennsylvania, helped fund the event. Other supporters of the event include the Oregon State Bar Association; the University's Office of Multicultural Affairs; and the Race, Labor and Economic Justice Conference.

"It's never too late to register," Jernberg said. Students interested in attending Minority Law Day can register by phone at 346-1558.

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Telephone registration starts May 4.