

Family housing gives a helping hand to parents

A co-op day care is one way the University tries to ease the burden on students with children

By Stefanie Knowlton
Oregon Daily Emerald

The rise in non-traditional students attending the University has initiated a change in the way administration perceives student housing. Family housing has become a significant part of student housing at the University.

Unlike traditional student housing, family housing is located in five off-campus sites: Spencer View, Westmoreland, Moon Court, Agate Apartments and several vintage homes located east of campus. These 816 residences cater specifically to the needs of student parents.

"Students with children have the hardest time with school," said Frank Gaddini, director of Spencer View and East Campus Housing. "We at family housing try to make it at least a little easier for them."

Spencer View, the newest and most innovative family housing site, features on-site child care and central playgrounds that are designed to be seen by every kitchen window. These are just a few of the strategies employed to make University Housing parent-friendly.

"Family Housing at the University of Oregon is one of the top programs in the country," Gaddini said.

One of the most essential considerations in family housing is day care, a feature that makes the Spencer View complex unique. The complex uses cooperative day care.

Of the staff at the co-op, 96 percent are either students with work

study or parents. From washing dishes to substituting in the classroom, parents are involved in the day-to-day aspects of the co-op.

Parents also head the board of directors, which makes final decisions in the way the co-op is being run.

"This is an opportunity to be an active part of your child's day," said Suzy Blanchard, director of the Spencer View Co-op Center.

In addition, this program offers parents an opportunity to save up to 25 percent on their child care bill in exchange for work done at the co-op. This meets the goal outlined by Gaddini of making life easier for parents.

Blanchard also believes that the work exchange develops a relationship between the parents and the co-op.

"People are attracted to this program because it is about community," Blanchard said.

Similar programs at Oregon State and Lane Community College have been based on this model of day care.

The Housing office also offers residents an opportunity to work. "We use students to run the front offices and maintenance," Gaddini said.

"We are here to provide households with children an opportunity to achieve academic success," Gaddini said.

In addition to the co-op day care and providing work opportunities, Spencer view also has family housing-sponsored events such as a parents' night out, pizza parties and trips to the Oregon coast. Gaddini said that all of these events are designed to form a sense of community at Spencer View and family housing at the University.



Tyler and Hope, both 3 years old, play together at the Spencer View co-op child care center.

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