

ASUO and Piercy to lobby for child care

■ Since Rep. Kitty Piercy became a legislator and a mother, she has committed to putting children first

By Brian Goodell
Oregon Daily Emerald

Flanked by a basket of Valentine's Day cards in the EMU Child Care Center, Rep. Kitty Piercy, D-Eugene, and the ASUO announced plans Monday to lobby the state legislature for a \$3.9 million student child care grant.

ASUO State Affairs Coordinator Arlie Adkins has lobbied with the Oregon Student Association and Piercy to send the bill (HB 3256) to the house floor for a third time.

"Currently, the state of Oregon contributes nothing to child care for student parents," Adkins said. "Students are calling on Gov. Kitzhaber and the state legislators to make state funding for child care a priority."

Piercy and the ASUO fought for and received confirmation that Kitzhaber has agreed to make this an issue and will put it on his agenda.

"We're going to win this battle this time," Piercy said. "This is a worthy fight for the good of student parents and their children. We need to develop appropriate, affordable child care."

Piercy, who worked as an early childhood educator before turning to politics, said this bill is a chil-

dren's rights and women's rights issue. A mother of two adopted children, Piercy said she has been involved in working for children at many levels.

"When I became a legislator, I went with the commitment to put children first," Piercy said. "Children need to be at the front of our legislative agenda."

Jan Eliot, the creator of the nationally syndicated comic strip "Stone Soup," was also on hand to support the day's events. Eliot graduated from the University's Honors College in 1977 and was a working mother while she attended school. When Eliot was in school, students could receive child care subsidies. But funding

like what she received is no longer available to students.

"Without child care subsidies, I could have never gone to school and become a syndicated cartoonist," Eliot said.

Kathleen Workman, a student mother and ASUO Non-traditional Student Advocate, has worked with Piercy and the OSA to improve child care for students.

Although the funding is not available to student parents now, students like Workman manage to go to school and raise a child at the same time. But Workman said the current lack of funding for student child care limits access to higher education for a large number of people.

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Condom

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condoms and answered questions from curious students.

Students took a condom quiz, received free condoms, examined the display of unsafe condoms and participated in a condom-popping contest to demonstrate the level of stress the average condom can be put under.

The free condoms proved to be popular. Peer health educators estimated that they'd handed out almost 300 condoms by 1:30 p.m.

The main message was to encourage students to have safe sex, Weinsoft said.

"It's OK to have fun, but if you're going to do it, be responsible," she said. "I kept hearing about people who got pregnant or got STIs, and they're not that hard to prevent. I want people to know how to use condoms, that they're here, they're available and not to feel stupid about asking for them."

The biggest barriers to getting most people to use condoms are probably that people are embarrassed to buy them or they think they're too expensive, said Jennifer Olson, a peer health educator.

Olson said that while some students refused the free condoms the health educators were handing out, she was encouraged that others took them to pass on to friends.

"I think that people are a little embarrassed, and maybe don't



Kristina Riccio (left) and Anna Seeley stand in the bathroom of Hawthorn hall. Their hall won a decorating contest in honor of Valentine's Day and National Condom Day.

want to be seen taking condoms," she said. "But everyone should be responsible for their own sexual health, because you can't assume the other person's going to do it."

The most effective part of the awareness campaign was having one of the peer health educators dress up in an attention-getting giant condom costume and distribute free condoms around campus.

The awareness campaign also carried over to the University residence halls. In Walton Complex, residents were urged to decorate

their hall for National Condom Day and Valentine's Day, to promote safe sex in general. The halls were judged on their creativity and how closely they followed the safe-sex theme, said Sharon Loschiavo, Walton Complex resident director. The display in the winning hall, Hawthorne, had safe-sex pamphlets, valentines and demonstrations of both broken and whole condoms.

"It was very tastefully done, and very educational at the same time," Loschiavo said.

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