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Fire: American Red Cross helps students find shelter

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Beck, who said he doesn't have renter's insurance, returned Wednesday afternoon to survey the damage. He kicked at the melted plastic lining the doors of his 1989 BMW sedan that his father gave him a little more than a month ago.

He is staying at his father's house in South Eugene but he hopes to use winter break to find another studio close to campus. He was able to retrieve his textbooks from the apartment after the fire but wasn't able to go upstairs later in the day.

"I think the main concern was, you know, the fire damage to the floor and how sturdy it was," he said. "That's basically what the fire department said, too."

Beck said there was "really no fire damage" in second-floor apartments, but firefighters knocked out walls, leaving damp drywall on the ground.

"In my apartment, like all the walls are coated with black. I don't know if that's from the smoke or from the ash," he said.

Beck said he didn't know Huddleston but thought Huddleston shared the two-bedroom apartment with a roommate.

Amy, a University sophomore and complex tenant who asked that her last name not be printed, said she has been friends with Huddleston for about five months. The couch appeared outside his

apartment about two weeks ago, she said.

Rob Bennett, owner of Bennett Management Company, said this was the first he'd heard of the couch. Generally, "the rental agreement does not allow for furniture outside," he said. There is no "full-fledged on-site management," and no one regularly checks for infractions.

"You hope people follow the rules," he said. "As a management company, we visit the site from time to time."

Although each unit had a working fire detector, Bennett said the building, like many low-rise buildings, had no external fire alarm.

Beck said he didn't hear a fire alarm. Amy said she tested her smoke alarm about two weeks ago, but "it just didn't activate or something."

Bennett said it's "going to be awhile" before students can move back, although they will be able to retrieve some items.

"There's a tremendous amount of cleanup and demo work that has to occur before we can start building it back," he said.

His company will try to help the displaced students find other apartments.

"We're trying to help a little. I think people are generally, on a very basic level, basically on their own," he said. "It's an unintended and very difficult situation for everybody."

editor@dailyemerald.com

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HIV: Gordon tries to save others from getting the virus

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Soon after returning home, his stepfather kicked him out, he said. With his last few dollars, Gordon boarded a bus heading to New Orleans.

For the next few months, he lived on the street, surviving by selling his body for sex. During this time, Gordon had sex with 50 to 70 men. Most of those encounters were unprotected.

Then, a man in New Orleans encouraged him to move to Eugene. He did, but he soon found himself on the streets again.

He was visiting Looking Glass New Roads, a local drop-in shelter for homeless youth, when a representative from HIV Alliance offered him \$10 to get tested for HIV.

The test came back positive.

At 18, when Gordon first started having sex, he said, he did it for attention and "just wanted to feel important."

The first time he had unprotected sex was around Mardi Gras of that year, he said.

"I was more focused on the attention and didn't feel like putting up a fight about asking about protection or not," Gordon said. "If he didn't want to use a condom, we didn't use one."

Today, in his workshops with

at-risk youths, Gordon stresses that everyone is important enough to ask about protection.

"I didn't have that," he said. "It's too late for me, but I can use my experience and my story to protect someone else."

Gordon is not afraid of living with HIV, and he wouldn't change anything about his past, even if that meant never becoming infected, he said.

"Maybe the reason why I've gotten it is to save someone else," he said.

Niki Martin, youth educator and outreach director for HIV Alliance, said Gordon has been a "phenomenal asset."

"He has done more in six months than I've seen been done in a long time," Martin said.

Gordon said he really likes Eugene and is looking forward to attending the University next term.

"I always tell people that Eugene is the cocoon that's changing me from a caterpillar to a butterfly," he said. "And although, like the butterfly, my life may be short, I plan on making it a beautiful one."

Contact the crime, health and safety reporter at kgagnon@dailyemerald.com

WORLD AIDS DAY EVENT

In support of World AIDS Day, the ASUO Women's Center will host a talk and slide show by world-renowned public health educator and photographer Lindsey Reynolds.

The event takes place today from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the EMU's International Resource Center. Reynolds will share her experiences of working with AIDS victims in Africa, said Stefanie Loh, Women's Center spokeswoman.

Reynolds is also the co-director of the non-profit organization Thembanathi, which cares for orphans and other children made vulnerable by AIDS, the organization's Web site stated.

For the past three years, Reynolds has worked in South Africa on HIV prevention projects to provide care for orphans and children with AIDS.

In South Africa, 21.5 percent of adults are HIV positive and 370,000 adults and children died of AIDS in 2003, according to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS.

Admission to the event is free.

"World AIDS day is this big official event," Loh said. "This brings it down to a more personal level."

— Katy Gagnon

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