

No more hotels? New housing coming for 'unplaced' Oregon foster youth

WHITNEY M. WOODWORTH
STATESMAN JOURNAL

Since mid-2016, more than 130 Oregon children have spent at least one night as "unplaced foster youth" — meaning they had no foster family to go home to.

But a soon-to-be opened temporary housing program is looking to change that.

In the past, being unplaced could mean a night spent sleeping in an Oregon Department of Human Services office.

Now, it usually requires a hotel stay accompanied by a child protective services worker.

Nonprofits Youth Villages and New Avenues for Youth announced their collaboration with the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Health Authority to create a better option: a 12-bed, 24-hour housing facility dubbed Robinswood opening mid-September in Clackamas County.

Housing unplaced youth has been a contentious and litigious issue over the years. In 2016, DHS agreed not to house foster children in hotels or its offices unless it is an emergency, following a settlement reached between the agency and lawyers representing foster children.

Earlier this year, Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum said DHS had permanently ceased the practice of

housing children in offices.

Some officials have argued that many unplaced youths are older teens who prefer the hotel environment.

But a lawsuit filed on behalf of two minors and by CASA for Children alleges that more than half of the children subjected to hotel stays are under 12 years old. Additionally, the lawsuit states, there is no limitation on the length of the stays. A 9-year-old spent 81 days in hotel limbo; a 5-year-old spent 55 days.

The plaintiffs stated they filed the lawsuit to stop the practice of placing abused and neglected foster children in hotels.

"Unplacement creates serious emotional and psychological harm to foster children," the lawsuit alleges.

The class action lawsuit remains in litigation in U.S. District Court.

Once the program opens, any youth age 9 to 20 who would otherwise be placed in a hotel will instead come to Robinswood, Youth Villages spokeswoman Crissy Lintner said.

But, she added, the facility won't simply be a place to spend the night. New Avenues for Youth will operate the housing program and provide round-the-clock intensive care. Youth Villages will provide transitional services.

"New Avenues will welcome the child, help them settle in, and assess the circumstances that caused them to be

there," Lintner said. "Within 72 hours the New Avenues and Youth Villages teams will work with other community partners to determine the supports needed to successfully transition the child back into a family setting."

Their emphasis will be on finding biological and foster care family placement.

Lintner said the services won't disappear once youth leave the facility. Specialists will visit three times a week and provide 24-hour crisis response for another four to six months.

The two nonprofits realized their complementary strengths and resources and joined forces with DHS in early 2017 to solve the longtime problem of unplaced foster youth.

The Oregon Health Authority and DHS decided they like the new approach and decided to invest in it, Lintner said.

DHS spokeswoman Andrea Cantu-Schomus said the collaboration was a "natural fit" and offers a unique, specialized solution.

Between Robinswood and partnerships with Boys and Girls Aid and Maplestar, more than 23 beds will be available to unplaced youth.

This, Cantu-Schomus said, will probably permanently abate the need to use hotels.

"We are proud to be part of this innovative solution for children who need our

help in Oregon," said Andrew Grover, executive director of Youth Villages Oregon. "Our work is designed to not only provide for their immediate needs, but goes further to address the root causes of the troubles they face."

Sean Suib, executive director of New Avenues for Youth, said their immediate focus will be to provide short-term support. But, he said, their goal is to create longer-term, lasting change.

"Young people need to be empowered and have a voice, and by listening to and partnering with youth and their community, we can help create the safety and permanence all young people deserve," he said.

In 2016, an average of 7,600 children were in foster care on a daily basis.

Cantu-Schomus said as of Wednesday, eight foster care youth were unplaced.

From Sept. 2016 to July 2017, their average length of stay was eight days.

"We're excited about this new solution to a serious problem facing Oregon's most vulnerable youth and proud to be coming together to make it happen," Lintner said.

For questions, comments and news tips, email reporter Whitney Woodworth at wwoodworth@statesmanjournal.com, call 503-399-6884 or follow on Twitter @wwoodworth

Strong economy means Oregonians to get refund

CONNOR RADNOVICH
APPEAL TRIBUNE

Oregonians will receive a tax refund next year thanks to an unexpectedly strong economy bolstered by historic tax revenue, the Office of Economic Analysis said Aug. 23.

The state's general fund revenue exceeded projections by 2.7 percent, triggering a \$464 million payout to taxpayers at an average of \$227 per person. Based on an individual's adjusted gross income, the rebates range from \$5 to \$4,900, with a median at \$89.

"We thought it was going to be a good biennium in terms of revenue growth and we got a very good biennium," state economist Mark McMullen said.

Under Oregon's "kicker" law, if general fund revenue tops projections by more than 2 percent, the entirety of the above-projection moneys goes back to taxpayers in the form of a rebate.

Next year, both the personal and corporate tax kicker rebates will come into effect, but the \$111 million that would go toward funding K-12 education per a 2012 ballot measure.

The economy grew at around 15 percent biennium over biennium, around three times higher than a typical state, McMullen said.

Among the factors that pushed revenue

over the 2 percent limit was record estate tax collections, which contributed around \$100 million to the fund, McMullen said. Oregon set the record for estate tax revenue in 2016, and then nearly doubled that in 2017.

Much of it came from the tippy top of the tax bracket.

"We're talking some of the real 0.1 percenters," McMullen said. "We saw more of those accounts cashing in this biennium than ever before."

Gov. Kate Brown said in a statement that "Oregon continues to show the world that our state is a great place to live, visit, and do business." But she added there is still work to do bolstering the economy, especially in rural and underserved communities.

McMullen said it's unclear if this biennium's estate tax revenue level is sustainable. Add that to the kicker payout and projected lower lottery and corporate tax revenue and McMullen said the state is expecting relatively modest growth for the next biennium.

"Overall the arrow is still pointing up. We're still expanding and we're seeing revenue growth," he said. "But there will be quite a bit of slow down for a lot of idiosyncratic factors."

Contact the reporter at cradnovich@statesmanjournal.com or 503-399-6864, or follow him on Twitter at @CDRadnovich.

KYAC kicks off concert series

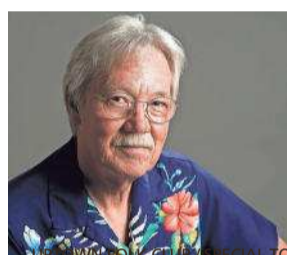
ANNETTE UTZ
SPECIAL TO THE STAYTON MAIL

KYAC Radio, 94.9 FM out of Mill City, is about to kick off the 2017-2018 KYAC Concert Series.

Singer, songwriter and storyteller Steve Spurgin will do the honors at 7 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 16, at Trexler Farm outside of Stayton.

Spurgin began performing in the early 1960s and has worked with the likes of Gene Watson and Reba McEntire. With years of experience and a boatload of awards under his belt, he continues to be an audience favorite.

The eight concert series continues with monthly shows through April 21, 2018. Season tickets are on sale through Sept. 15 or until any individual show sells out. Individual show tickets go on sale approximately 90 days before the concert date. Season tickets are \$165 and single show advance tickets are \$20.95 (both include all online fees) per seat. Tickets at the door are



Steve Spurgin.

\$25. Advance tickets are available through www.staytonevents.com.

Trexler Farm is located at 20146 Ferry Rd. SE, Stayton. Beer and wine are served during the shows so admission is for persons 21 years of age

and older. Pre-show dinners are available from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Reservations are required and have a separate charge.

For dinner reservations, call 503-859-4488. The concert room opens at 6:30 p.m. and the performance begins at 7 p.m. For more information, call Ken Cartwright at 503-507-2941. The full concert schedule can be viewed at <http://www.wvi.com/~dnielson/KYACconcerts/KYAC-seasonFlyer.htm>.

For a preview of Spurgin's appearance, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ff8E8F1sVdw>.

The support you need to find quality
SENIOR LIVING SOLUTIONS
A Place for Mom has helped over one million families find senior living solutions that meet their unique needs.

There's no cost to you!
CALL (855) 864-4711

! We're paid by our partner communities

CLASSIFIEDS

Appeal Tribune
silvertonappeal.com

The Stayton Mail

Place an ad online 24/7 at StatesmanJournal.com or call 503-399-6789 • 1-800-556-3975

Find a new job or career

JOBS

the job network
JOBS.STATESMANJOURNAL.COM

Discover your new home

HOMES & RENTALS

Homes
STATESMANJOURNAL.COM/HOMES

Turn here for your next vehicle

AUTO

cars.com

Auctions, pets, services & stuff

STUFF

StatesmanJournal.com/classifieds
in print Wednesday through Sunday

TRUST THE HOMETOWN EXPERTS AT SILVERTON REALTY

SILVERTON REALTY

SERVING THE EAST VALLEY SINCE 1975

<small>Kristen Barnes Broker 503.873.3545 ext. 326</small>	<small>Marcia Bronstetter Broker, GRI 873-3545 ext. 318</small>	<small>Mary Cam Broker 503-873-3545 ext. 320</small>	<small>Micha Christman Office Manager 503-873-1425</small>	<small>Becky Craig Broker 873-3545 ext. 313</small>	<small>Michael Schmidt Broker, GRI 873-3545 ext. 314</small>	<small>Ryan Wertz Broker 873-3545 ext. 322</small>	<small>Meredith Wertz Broker, GRI 873-3545 ext. 324</small>	<small>Chuck White Broker 873-3545 ext. 325</small>	<small>Christina Williamson Broker 873-3545 ext. 315</small>	<small>Mason Bronstetter Principal Broker, GRI 873-3545 ext. 303</small>

#A2422 WONDERFULLY UPDATED 4 BR., 3.5 BA., 2733 SQFT CALL MEREDITH AT EXT. 324, RYAN AT EXT. 322 \$418,700 (WVMLS#722076)	#A2383, A2384 CREEK FRONTAGE 2 LOTS 1.1 ACRES & 1.09 ACRES CALL MARCIA AT EXT. 318 \$179,000 & \$162,000 (WVMLS#715865 & 715869)	#A2402 WONDERFUL ESTATE 5 BR., 4 BA 3751 SQFT CALL MEREDITH AT EXT. 324, RYAN AT EXT. 322 \$549,900 (WVMLS#720151)	#A2423 OVER HALF AN ACRE IN TOWN 3 BR., 2 BA., 1986 SQFT .6 ACRES CALL BECKY AT EXT. 313 \$310,000 (WVMLS#722125)	#A2399 EXCELLENT MANUFACTURED HOME 3 BR., 2 BA 1196 SQFT. CALL CHUCK AT EXT. 325 \$52,900 (WVMLS#718600)	#A2410 VINTAGE 1950'S HOME 3 BR., 2 BA., 1760 SQFT CALL MEREDITH AT EXT. 324, RYAN AT EXT. 322 \$334,900 (WVMLS#718215)
#A2311 HOWELL PRAIRIE FARM 3 BR 2 BA 26.77 ACRES. CALL CHUCK AT EXT. 325 \$499,900 (WVMLS#706154)	#A2416 LOTS OF POTENTIAL 5 BR., 6 BA., 6057 SQFT CALL MEREDITH AT EXT. 324, RYAN AT EXT. 322 \$686,800 (WVMLS#721150)	#A2354 3 HOME INVESTMENT PROPERTY 4 BR., 3 BA 1776 SQFT CALL MARCIA AT EXT. 318 \$399,000 (WVMLS#711358)	#A2418 ONE YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR 3 BR., 2 BA 1336 SQFT CALL BECKY AT EXT. 313 \$267,000 (WVMLS#721646)	#A2424 GREAT COUNTRY HOME 3 BR 3 BA 2808 SQFT CALL CHUCK AT EXT. 325 \$645,000 (WVMLS#722233)	#A2377 OUTSTANDING COMMERCIAL LOCATION 4444 SQFT CALL MASON AT EXT. 303 \$299,900 (WVMLS#715616)