

## NW Section 8 casualties get some relief

BY STAFF REPORTS

Nearly 300 families in Northwest Oregon got some breathing room this month - a one-month extension on assistance to keep them in housing.

In late May, the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority, NOHA, notified 285 recipients of Section 8 housing assistance vouchers that they would be dropped from the program as of July 1. The cuts from the program were caused by a shortfall in funding for the housing authority from the federal Bureau of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, which funds the Section 8 program. In some cases, NOHA was paying 90 percent of the rent for recipients.

In late June, NOHA's board of directors voted to tap \$145,000 in its reserves to pay for the month of July for the effected families. One of those families belongs to Jennifer Cherry, who had nearly all of her family's rent paid for by NOHA. She and her partner, who are recovering from disabilities, have three children.

"HUD gave us July, so we'll see what happens for next month," said Cherry, who said her landlord has also been very helpful during the ordeal.

Shortly after the announcement from NOHA, the Oregon Housing and Community Services issued \$50,000 to help the families, to be administered by the Community Action Team. Cherry says she might be getting some assistance from that funding to help with August.

HUD has said it has no funding to assist the families with rent, despite the families' qualification for housing assistance.

Patricia Roberts, a member of NOHA's board of directors, said it will do all it can to keep people in housing, but if people do have to move, she says they should notify NOHA of their new address. NOHA hopes to restore funding to the affected families at the end of this year.

The United Way in Rainier, Ore., has set up a fund to help the families that lost their housing assistance. To donate, call 503-556-3614, or write to Executive Director Kathye Beck at uwcc@hotmail.com.

## CORRECTIONS

Street Roots strives for accuracy, but we're human. So we also strive to correct errors in our paper whenever possible. Please report any errors to our managing editor, Joanne Zuhl, at 503-228-5657, or write in to joanne@streetroots.org.



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH SCHWARTZ

## Customer's kindness saves a vendor's life

BY ELIZABETH SCHWARTZ  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Vendors experience generosity from Street Roots customers on a daily basis. It is usually done out of compassion for another human being without any thought of getting something in return. John Alden calls such giving "paying it forward." This vendor profile is a thank you letter to everyone who "pays it forward," but especially to a man named "Matt," who helped John on July 1 by giving him \$10 for a doctor co-pay.

John had spent three months in Salem this spring helping a disabled friend prepare her house for sale and doing some landscaping. The house sold in mid-June, allowing his friend to move to a handicap accessible apartment. After the house sold, John returned to Portland and began selling Street Roots outside Starbucks on NW 12th and Glisan.

Even though his corner doesn't have much traffic, John likes his chosen spot. He gets there around 7:30 a.m. and sells papers for about three hours. Then he goes to the park, a coffee shop, or library and writes his autobiography while resting his legs. He returns to Starbucks about noon and sells his newspapers, picking up just enough money to survive on.

### VENDOR PROFILE John Alden

It's a long way from his days as a young student at the Culinary Institute of America in New York City. Alden says he went on to chef at Trader Vic's in Beverly Hills and was the executive chef at the Marriott in Dallas, Texas. Standing all day, day after day, took its toll on his legs, however. Severe varicose veins now prevent him from keeping up the high pace of work in a kitchen. He now devotes his time to earning money to support himself while writing his story.

John has developed a few regular newspaper customers, and one man, Matt, buys him a cup of coffee most mornings. On June 29, a Douglas fir splinter that John had gotten while landscaping in Salem began hurting badly. He had neither health insurance nor a doctor, so he turned to the Rose City Resource Guide and discovered that his low income would probably allow him to be seen for \$10 by a doctor in the Gladys McCoy Building downtown. He did not have \$10.

John continued to sell papers on June 30

and early on July 1, hoping to earn enough to see a doctor. He had some newspapers and \$4 in his pocket when Matt arrived at Starbucks and asked John how he was. John said he showed Matt his swollen left hand and an ugly red line that ran from his thumb up the inside of his arm, nearly to his elbow. Matt gave John \$10 for the co-pay.

He had blood poisoning. John used his \$14 for a taxi from the doctor's office to the Good Samaritan's emergency room, where he was immediately admitted into the hospital.

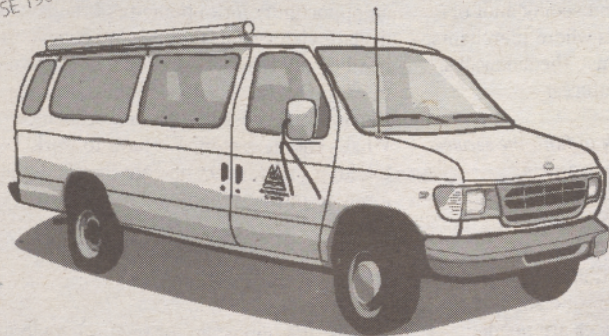
He was in the hospital for two days waiting to see if the IV would kill the bacteria before it reached his heart and killed him. The pain was severe enough that he had morphine in the IV the first day, but the physical pain was minor compared to the pain of lying there with a telephone within arm's reach.

Even though I have noticed that loneliness seems to be a common denominator among the vendors I have interviewed, I did not understand why having a telephone was so painful until he explained it to me.

It never rang. And he had no one to call.

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