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monthly stipend.

Outside the Tillamook shelter, vegetables for resident meals grow in newly constructed garden beds, and children run around a playground, complete with jungle gyms, slides and swings. Several reentry program residents congregated on the back porch.

"In Newport, they need a Helping Hands for girls," said a woman, extinguishing her cigarette before she rushed inside to keep the cake from burning.

Those in reentry learn how to find and apply for jobs, which in Seaside and many other coastal towns is fairly easy because the demand for employees outweighs the supply. It helps that Evans' Seaside office building is shared with an employment agency.

After demonstrating the nonprofit's database that updates daily bed counts and tracks client demographics, Brown scrolled down a list of the hundreds of classes that participants were offered last year – everything from resume writing and healthy cooking to parenting and coping skills, as well as specialized job training programs tailored to area industries.

"I have heard from our farmers that they've had really good experiences hiring people from Helping Hands," said Sarah Beaubien, an executive at Tillamook County Creamery Association. "We have a ton of respect for that organization." She hopes to develop a training program at Helping Hands that will allow participants to easily segway from Helping Hands to jobs at the creamery.

Once participants are employed, they pay \$200 a month in rent, which helps cover overhead costs. With 190 beds and some flexibility for adding more when it has to, Evans said Helping Hands never turns people away from its emergency shelters.

"Each of our facilities has overflow that we hope we never touch, but at times we have to," he said.

In recent years, however, Brown said, "We have been concerned at the capacity we've been operating."

Last year, Helping Hands saw an 18 percent increase in seniors and a 30 percent increase in families accessing its services.

"We can see an increase," said Evans. "I think more people are in need of the service because more people are falling out of the system. ... 19 percent of the people that walk in our door have a full-time job. Think about that."

Brown said she worries a new cannery opening up in Clatsop County, along with the new Walmart in Warrenton, will worsen the situation. "We're just looking at all these people that they're going to try to employ, and we're wondering where they're going to



Gary Carlson manages Helping Hands Tillamook Reentry House. He credits the nonprofit with giving him a reason to live. Carlson is pictured here in the Helping Hands garden.

PHOTO BY EMILY GREEN

house them. We feel like we're staring down the end of a barrel at the moment."

To ease the burden, Helping Hands has purchased the five story Uniontown Boarding House building in Astoria that will serve as its 12th facility and the only year-round shelter appropriate for families in town.

"Astoria has lost almost all of its manufacturing. That's one contributor to why there's a lot of homelessness," said Elaine Bruce, executive director of Clatsop Community Action in Astoria. Her agency is working with Helping Hands to fund the building's remodel. When it opens this fall, it will provide 65 to 70 beds.

While about half of the families Bruce works with in Clatsop County are locals, the other half are not. "It's amazing, we have people that just show up here and they'll say, 'we don't have any job but we wanted to live by the ocean,'" Bruce said. "And they'll pull up with a car full of kids."

While Helping Hands operates an eight-bed men's program in

Lincoln County, it's primarily for inmates exiting out of state prisons.

Along that stretch of coastline, there are no year-round shelters for single adults or unaccompanied youths experiencing homeless, but a family-centered program is achieving an equally-high rate of success with its formerly homeless graduates.

In Newport, Samaritan House offers families a 10-month program. It too operates efficiently, with a yearly budget of \$150,000. This is in part because the Presbyterian Church deeded the nonprofit the apartment building where it houses the 11 families in its program.

Its director, Lola Jones, said old promotional material from the shelter

indicated it typically had about 50 families on its waitlist before she took the helm in 2012 at the age of 26.

Today, there are 250 families waiting to get in.

"Most are coming from their cars, tents, abandoned buildings – it's a reality that's difficult to sit with every night because I see the drawer full of applications and I know what's happening," said Jones. "There's a huge temptation to go quicker than the process will allow, but everyone who lives here deserves every second of this program."

While Helping Hands will make decisions about failed drug tests on an individual basis, because Samaritan House works with Oregon Department of Human Services, Jones adheres to a strict zero-tolerance policy.

"In this post-financial crisis reality, the reason you are homeless has a lot to do with how you were brought up," said Jones. "We see a lot of the multi-generational poverty element, but also see a lot of people who are ill-prepared and ill-equipped to deal with life in poverty because they weren't brought up in poverty."

Residents are required to come up with a \$100 refundable deposit for their apartments, put 60 percent of their take-home pay into a savings account that Jones oversees, and for the last six months they enter into a legal lease agreement, which builds rental history.

"We're trying to mimic what the real world feels like, but on an accessible level," said Jones. But for the first 30 days, all her families have to do is come up with a case plan. "This de-escalates their crisis brain and gets them thinking in a long-term sense," she said.

More than 85 percent of her clients are single parent households – mostly moms.

"I had a mom here, she was working in middle management at Taco Bell, barely making enough to pay for child care. One of her paychecks she actually owed more to her childcare provider than was on her check," Jones said. But that woman was able to get her certified nursing certificate while

she was staying at Samaritan House, and now she supports her family with a better paying job in Corvallis.

"There has always been a fundamental inequity of income to housing cost in Lincoln County – there always has been," said Jones.

But when you combine that with Lincoln County's economic decline in fishing and timber, along with its above average rate of drug and alcohol abuse, Jones said, "you get this powder keg."

Of Samaritan House families that graduate, 80 percent are still in housing one year later.

About a half hour north of Newport, Family Promise of Lincoln City is able to shelter about 14 people at a time. It doesn't have an overnight shelter, so it partners with 12 local churches where families in its program sleep at night. Each morning, a van picks them up and brings them to the nonprofit's facility, which has a kitchen, showers, living room, play room and offices.

Family Promise is a national model based on networking, building relationships and trauma-informed care.

Like Helping Hands and Samaritan House, sobriety and active participation is required, although it serves as more of an emergency shelter than long-term program. When there's availability, director Elizabeth Reyes said she sends families south to Samaritan House. About 80 percent of the families she shelters are able to maintain housing after they exit, she said.

Reyes said the majority of people who live in Lincoln City year-round are one to two paychecks away from needing her services.

"All it takes is a car repair," she said.

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