

EVERY DAY COUNTS

Last year 13,129 children in Oregon spent at least one day in foster care. These abused or neglected children depend on the child welfare system and the community to ensure that they live in safe, healthy and permanent homes.

Although every month should be, May was National Foster Care Month. The Citizen Review Board (CRB) consists of community members like us who give their time to review cases of children in foster care to ensure that every child has safe, loving and permanent homes. We see how resilient foster children can be. They have an extraordinary capacity to overcome many challenges — but only if they have the support of caring adults who are willing to advocate for them. Without permanent, nurturing relationships with adults, foster children are far more likely than their “non-foster” peers to experience homelessness, poverty, compromised health, unemployment, incarceration, and other adversities after they leave foster care.

To all foster parents, Court Appointed Special Advocates, CRBs, mentors, and those who help in other ways, we’d like to thank you. Your caring commitment is critical for ending the cycles of neglect, abuse, or other family crisis issues that often prevent a child from reaching his or her full potential. We appreciate your dedication and hope you recognize, as we do, the valuable role you play in building brighter futures for America’s next generation. We challenge the rest of you to find out how you can become involved. Every day counts in the life of a foster child.

*Ellen Hyman & board members:
Peggy Bellinger, J. Norton Cabell,
Nancy English, Nancy Johnson, DVM,
LouAnn Martin, Joy McDowell,
Dr. Daniel Phillips & Roz Slovic*

DISTILLED ISSUES

Oh, thank you for Gordon Lafer’s sassy, knowledgeable Viewpoint piece in the May 26 EW. I hope you will invite him to contribute regularly. I felt so satisfied by the way he framed Jennifer Solomon’s absurd claim to be “tapped out,” and I think he distilled the issues nicely while avoiding the (sorry) bland, proper intellectual style of so many EW contributions.

*Heidi Schultz Haider
Eugene*

ORGANIC LEGACY

Three years ago May 31, David Minor was killed in a most unfortunate bicycle-automobile collision at the corner of Willamette and 13th. A ghost bike memorial still stands there in his memory, as a reminder to all to keep eyes and awareness open for bicyclists on the street.

The week that he died, David’s family started a memorial fund with the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (WFFC) to honor his passions for local food and social justice. To date, \$15,000 has been raised in David’s memory. Awards have been made to local projects and programs that increase access to locally grown foods for families in need.

In addition to supporting WFFC staff time in the Healthy Corner Stores Initiative (a collaborative project of the Lane Coalition for Healthy Active Youth and DariMart), awards have been made to Victory Gardens for All, FOOD for Lane County Gardens Program, Huerto de la Familia, and the That’s My Farmer Low-Income Fund. A contribution from David’s fund was also made to the UO’s Food Justice Conference in February. This week \$1,000 will be given to the Courthouse Garden Project, which teaches gardening skills to individuals in transition within

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

the criminal justice system, gives hands on experience in running a community garden to UO landscape architecture students, and produces food for the community and the Relief Nursery of Lane County.

To read more about David’s organic legacy, or to contribute, see lanefood.org
*Lynne Fessenden, Executive Director
Willamette Farm and Food Coalition*

GLENWOOD IS PRIME

Glenwood. Anyone driven through there lately? Hasn’t changed in about 40 years. Jeff Simmons brought it up in his letter to the editor in the June 2 issue in relation to a new Fred Meyer. I’ve been contemplating it since I started driving through there daily for the last eight months.

It’s prime riverfront property that is being underutilized, and is poorly developed

and unsightly. EMX already running there successfully. It is accessible to the University, Eugene and Springfield. It’s on a major highway and has freeway access, and there’s room for plenty of parking, too. So let’s build the new up-scaled Fred Meyer store there, the Veterans Administration clinic can be central without disturbing downtown, Oregon Research Institute can have their waterfront site close to the University, the YMCA can build there, too. We could even move the Civic Stadium there and the city could sell the current site for something more in tune with that neighborhood. Hell, I’d even go for moving the Matt Arena there — it feels so cramped in where it is (why did that ever happen, anyway?). And I believe Planned Parenthood is already thinking of developing an up-to-date site there — and it doesn’t extend urban growth boundaries.

Viewpoint BY ELIZABETH GERRITY

An Unfair Stigma

Few with mental illness are violent

Don’t feel badly about yourself if you don’t know better than to think that homeless people are lazy, stupid and/or violent people. Confusion is so easy. After all, understanding people is difficult when a limitless number of possible factors contribute to the mannerisms, behaviors and characteristics of people.

The error of widespread stigmas doesn’t help understanding. For example, one stigma associated mental illness with violence. However, it’s statistically proven that 90 percent of violent crimes are committed by persons without a mental illness. Also, the percentage of mentally ill persons who do commit violent crimes is truly very small, considering the large number of persons who really have a mental illness.

I think that “coming out” as persons with mental illness will help to clarify misunderstanding. Coming out isn’t simple, though. This might not be easy to understand if a person hasn’t experienced the social banishment that many persons with mental illness aren’t free from.

Persons with mental illnesses are usually very peaceful people who often don’t know how to protect themselves from abuse. According to Wikipedia, mentally ill persons are much more likely to be abused because of their own vulnerability than they are to abuse other people. It’s sad that many people don’t know this.

On a similar note, it might not be easy to understand that persons who don’t express compassion for vulnerable people are usually peaceful. People who appear to be insensitive are often overly sensitive and have difficulty resolving personal issues like insecurity and a fear of powerlessness. These people need help.



Homeless people might not understand insensitive people easily after surviving social neglect/abuse even though they experienced the sufferings of an often cold and always hard resting place, exposed to elements and the violence of perpetrators, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These people need help.

When people who have homes and stability understand the tragedy of this, they often take action to help. People like this helped me. Although social opposition is in many places, Eugene shelters helped me regardless of my dissociative disorder which is a mental illness, my traumatic brain injury that created difficulties that sometimes resembled a mental illness, and long-term experiences of being abused that confused me. My relentless determination to be safe made welfare services available to me.

Many homeless people avoid the few existing shelters because of various factors, including prejudicial treatment. Better shelters can be made.

Surviving trauma affords many people insight that can benefit society when allowed. Together, we can overcome social obstacles to benefit everyone. May we all receive the care we need.

Please help in any way you can to support a new, secular shelter to benefit all the homeless, including the 33 percent with mental illnesses, the 33 percent who don’t make enough money to rent or purchase a residence, the 33 percent who choose to be homeless, and the persons with substance abuse issues. We will all benefit from this.

Thanks for your assistance.

Elizabeth Kathleen Gerrity of Eugene was educated at three different colleges in Arizona, Hawaii, and Oregon, studying two-dimensional art, culinary arts and graphic design, while she experienced multiple disabilities. Find information on her Anutuk’s Homeless Shelter project at <http://bit.ly/gzPNbP>