

a Code 3 call for assistance and Stuart-Pope says, “It wasn’t minutes — they (EPD) were there in seconds. They swooped in from everywhere, fast.”

The team tells other rugged stories as they cruise the street, scanning the pavement for those in need. These tales stiffen the hairs on your arm, like the time Alvarez and CAHOOTS worker Matt Eads were dispatched to an alley to remove a lone trash bag stuffed with bloody plucked bird feathers, surrounded by and full of dirty syringes. Or repetitive incidents involving a homeless man who feels the compulsory need to masturbate openly while waving to passing drivers at busy intersections.

There’s the call to help a mentally ill man who believes the squirrels of Eugene are telepathically manipulating him for the purposes of world domination, or the guy who masochistically hacks at his arm with a machete and then passes out in random parking lots, or the neo-Nazi who (after being roused from an unconscious state by CAHOOTS team member Brenton Gicker) physically attacked the CAHOOTS van. Or the client Alvarez tackled in order to prevent him from taking a swan dive off a local overpass. There are many other stories too, some so disturbing that I cannot morally reconcile telling you. CAHOOTS employees have seen their share of hard work.

## REQUIEM FOR A BOX

Back in the van, the team heads to White Bird. Alvarez says he wants to show me something. We hop out and step into the alley beside the clinic’s main building. Stuart-Pope stays in the van, carefully eyeing a group of men standing outside, one of whom recently offered to trade her shift partner (Alvarez) a tall-boy of Budweiser for her, um, affection. Stuart-Pope is an attractive young woman. She says that sort of stuff happens all the time.



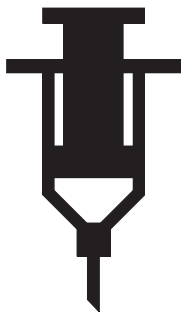
MATT EADS

PHOTO BY ROB SYDOR • DIGITALLATTE.COM

## DURING THE PAST YEAR

55%

of CAHOOTS client contacts have been with homeless persons



41%

have involved substance abuse



30%

have dealt with mental health issues

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