

# VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE FLU SHOTS TO THE UNHOUSED

A handful of local organizations have come together to help administer the flu vaccine to people experiencing homelessness.

Bruce Tufts, a registered nurse at White Bird Medical Clinic and a volunteer at Egan Warming Center, started a conversation with other volunteers last year about the role they could play in addition to basic medical care.

One topic stuck out — access to the flu vaccine. According to Sue Sierralupe, the clinic manager at Occupy Medical (OM), one of the volunteers at Egan wrote a grant request to the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, and they received a \$500 grant for the vaccines.

From there, they were also able to partner with the Rite Aid pharmacy off 29th and Willamette. The pharmacy sold flu vaccines to Egan at a discounted rate and agreed to store and administer the vaccines at the building where OM is currently located as needed.

According to Tufts, they have been able to purchase 25 vaccines so far. “We’re hoping some community members will donate to Egan Warming Center and specify that they

want it to go to the flu vaccines,” Tufts says.

Many times, homeless individuals don’t have a place to recover if they get the flu, Sierralupe adds. “They have to stay on their feet no matter how they’re feeling because in this community, it is illegal to sleep, sit or stand in one place,” she says. “It’s called loitering, camping or trespassing.”

The goal is mainly a preventative measure to keep the flu from hitting the homeless population, and to help give the unhooused access to the vaccine in an environment where they feel comfortable.

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**Homeless individuals don’t have a place to recover if they get the flu.**

— SUE SIERRALUPE, OCCUPY MEDICAL

“It’s the first year and it’s kind of exciting,” Tufts says, “because so many community members have come together.”

So far, there are five organizations working together. Egan Warming Center attained the grant from the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, Rite Aid pharmacy is storing and administering the vaccines, Occupy Medical is providing a safe place to receive the vaccine, and White Bird Medical Clinic is letting OM use its old CAHOOTS building for the next several months. Tufts and Sierralupe say they hope to double the partnership by getting 10 different community organizations to collaborate on this issue.

“Please, if you need it, come and get it,” Tufts says of the flu vaccine.

Volunteers say there is only one requirement to receive the vaccine: a pulse. ■

*OM is located at 509 E. 13th Avenue, and people will have access to the vaccines from noon to 3 pm on Sundays for the rest of November. The White Bird Medical Clinic is also available for other medical needs and is located off 14th Avenue and Mill Street. To donate to the vaccine effort go to [occupy-medical.org](http://occupy-medical.org).*



HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL

**KRISTIN K. COLLIER**

On Sunday, Nov. 20, from noon-2 pm, Tsunami Books will host a book release celebration for Kristin K. Collier of Eugene, author of the memoir *Housewife: Home-remaking in a Transgender Marriage*. After high school graduation in Eureka, California, Collier’s planned odyssey to New York to study theater took her only as far as Wyoming, where she met the son of a rancher. They got married and moved to Eugene, where she studied English and he majored in architecture at the UO. They both found work, in autism care and architectural design, respectively, and she gave birth to two sons, Trinidad and Sam, in 2000 and 2003. “Thirteen years ago, my husband told me he wanted to wear women’s clothes,” she says. “It was shocking. And I thought I was open-minded.” Her book chronicles his transformation from husband and father to Seda Collier, her transgender female parenting partner, and the changes it has brought to their family, in a series of episodic chapters, poems and blog posts. Their household now includes Kristin’s romantic partner Richard Bartlett, a chef who cooks for the family five days a week. “I wanted to share a story of how to deal with such a transition compassionately,” says Collier, who spent seven years writing the book while working full-time as social group coordinator for Bridgeway House, serving autistic children. “I feel that the book relates to everyone. We all have transitions in our relationships and need to cultivate resilience.” At 3 pm that same afternoon, Collier will be a keynote speaker at a Transgender Day of Remembrance event at the Hult Center, honoring those killed due to anti-transgender hatred.

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