

Hope

Continued from A1 rideable.

They walk a half-mile — three times a day — to get the children to three different school bus stops.

Their RV home is outfitted with a scrap wood entry attached to keep the cold out. A black mailbox symbolizes home wedged into the rungs of a ladder at the entrance. A bouquet of fake flowers greets visitors.

“It’s pretty small in there,” Moon said, pointing to the dark interior of the RV. “It’s a tight squeeze for us. But luckily, someone gave it to us. Some people here (in Central Oregon) have had it hard.”

It’s not the life she imagined for her children. It’s not the life she imagined for herself, growing up in Tualuma.

There have been times when she’s had to humble herself for diapers or food. She’s stood on street corners or in parking lots with a cardboard sign asking for help. One time, a woman yelled at her to get a job. Another time, a woman handed her \$200 to buy Christmas presents.

Moon does what she can to make the site homey. On Easter, she hid plastic eggs filled with candy for the children. And sometimes the children spend the weekend with her



Tessy Moon and her daughter, Seaira, 6, in their camp on public land outside of Redmond.

Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

mother, who lives in Central Oregon.

“Anyone can become homeless,” Moon said. “Don’t judge me.”

The path to homelessness for Moon was paved with

nearly three years of domestic violence that finally ended in divorce. Finalized in May, the court awarded Moon possession of a mobile home in Redmond. That was after more than 30 court hearings,

all occurring in the middle of the pandemic.

Her divorce took a long time because there were criminal charges against her husband for the domestic violence. Her ex-husband is

now serving a jail sentence.

The mobile home that the couple bought several years ago has been sitting vacant since November 2019, when the court prohibited the family from living in the home

on NW 35th Street in Redmond until the health violation caused by the leaking septic system is fixed, according to court records.

Raw sewage was seeping on the ground and into a neighbor’s property, according to court records. The court also posted a lien against the home because of back taxes owed.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Moon paid the \$2,000 in back taxes, she said. One hurdle down. Another to go.

The repairs could cost as much as \$20,000, she said.

“I couldn’t do anything,” Moon said. “That’s how we ended up here. My kids are so good with this. It’s been amazing.”

So now she hopes the county or NeighborImpact will help her with the repairs on the leaky septic tank and then provide proof so the family can move in. But there’s a process and an application.

If she can pull together the resources and fix the septic system, they could move back to the mobile home park before the next school year. The kids could go to the same schools they go to now and never have to camp again.

“We’re getting closer,” Moon said. “I’m hoping we can get in our home soon.”

■ Reporter: 541-633-2117, sroig@bendbulletin.com



Photo by Tim Trainor

Forrest Reading practices on a flight simulator located on the Hillsboro Aero Academy campus at the Redmond Airport. Reading was preparing to get behind the controls of an airplane for the first time on the following day.

Flight

Continued from A1 train 250 students a year and offers each a \$25,000 stipend to cover the cost of a commercial pilot license. It also includes low-interest financial aid to help cover additional expenses. Students who graduate from the program get a conditional job offer at Horizon Air, with the opportunity to work for Alaska Airlines, once they have the requisite hours and training.

The the new program was crucial to Heidi Roth, who is midway through her education at Hillsboro Aero. Roth

grew up in Salem, watching her father pilot a small plane for fun and recreation. She graduated high school and worked in health care for awhile, but always kept her eye on the sky.

She said the cost of getting all her necessary licenses felt overwhelming, and wasn’t sure there would be a job for her at the end of it. But last year she decided to plow ahead, after hearing about the pilot shortage and the new offerings to make school more cost-effective.

“It also makes the process more of a straight shot,” she said. “It was a clear route to

getting the job.”

There are about 220 students at Hillsboro Aero in some part of the process — some getting their instrument ratings while other aiming for a full commercial pilot license. Roth and Reading are two of the first few to go through the Ascend Academy, but Kresse said they expect it to be a popular program for future students.

“We need a big scale up,” he said.

Kresse said Ascend will help the company increase capacity, as well as increase interest from prospective students. He said the company is put-

ting staff and planes in place so they can continuously start new cohorts of students and begin moving them down the path toward becoming professional pilots.

“The more efficient we can be with their time, the more cost effective it is for them,” he said.

Kresse and Roth both said Central Oregon is a great place to learn to fly. There’s lots of great weather and beautiful views. Roth said she enjoys cruising around Mt. Hood and taking off over Smith Rock.

“That’s what you should do on your first flight,” she told Reading.





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