

\$3.7 million award to aid local youth homelessness

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI
Of the Keizertimes

Increased services and resources for youth experiencing homelessness are coming to the Marion-Polk area after a \$3.7 million grant was awarded to the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance earlier this month.

While the award was first announced on Sept. 15, Mayor Cathy Clark, who is also the Alliance Board Chair, shared the good news during the Sept. 20 Keizer City Council meeting.

"This is going to be a fantastic opportunity for programs here to take it up to another level of service and effectively meet the needs of our youth and young adults," said Clark. "Congratulations to the Homeless Alliance. This is an effort that was because we are all working

together we were able to be one of the two in Oregon that were awarded this demonstration grant."

The award came from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, which awarded \$142 million nationally to end and prevent youth homelessness. Lane County was awarded \$3.3 million to fight youth homelessness as well.

"Seventy percent of our region's homeless adults reported being homeless as a youth. Yet we have very limited resources for youth. There are no youth shelters in Polk and rural Marion counties, or host homes where families can shelter youth in their homes," said Clark.

According to Oregon Department

of Education data from the 2019-2020 school year, nearly 2,000 students attending publicly funded schools in the Marion-Polk area were identified as homeless. More than half of those students came from the Salem-Keizer School District.

Keizer City Councilor Laura Reid, who is a McNary teacher who also sits in on the Homeless Alliance meetings, said the last two years have been especially difficult for students faced with homelessness.

"It's very difficult for homeless kids because if they don't have regular access to the internet and can't see online videos and homework, it's very tough," said Reid. "Also, when you're focusing on basic survival needs such as food and shelter it makes it hard to

think about much else."

While Reid said more local resources are needed for youth experiencing homelessness, there is also a need to connect them with the available resources.

"Homeless teens have very different needs than adults. They need their own kind of shelters and facilities, which we are starting to build that up but definitely need more," said Reid.

Currently, according to Mid-Valley Resources, the only homeless service in Keizer is the Simonka House, which serves as an emergency shelter during extreme weather situations.

You can learn more about the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance's mission at mwwhomelessalliance.org.

Keizer Police responds to rollover crash

On September 21st at approximately 5 p.m. the Keizer Police Department responded to a motor vehicle crash in the 200 block of Cummings Lane N.

Officers arrived and conducted an investigation, which led to the arrest of 20-year-old Luke Peca.

It was determined that Mr. Peca was driving east on Cummings Ln. N. when he lost control, struck and sheared off a power pole and then rolled his vehicle into a parked car. A portion of

Cummings Ln was closed and power to the area was out for approximately two-and-a-half hours.

Mr. Peca was arrested and charged with:

- One count of reckless driving = \$5,000
- One count of driving under the influence of intoxicants = \$5,000
- Three counts of reckless endangering = \$15,000
- Three counts of criminal mischief

in the first degree = \$30,000

- One count of assault in the fourth degree = \$5,000
- One count of driving while suspended = \$440
- One count of driving uninsured = \$265

Investigators believe that drugs, alcohol and speed were contributing factors to this incident.

SUBSCRIBE

Keizer news in your mailbox
only \$35 a year*

Call 503.390.1051
keizertimes.com/store

*Rate for inside Marion County

Your First Choice for Orthopedic Care



Call today to make an appointment
503.769.8470

1377 N 10th Ave, Stayton • SantiamHospital.org

 **Santiam Hospital & Clinics**
embrace HEALTH
Orthopedic Group

Santiam Hospital & Clinics accept all insurance including all Medicare Plans, OHP, Kaiser Permanente & Blue Cross