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ONE DOLLAR

Desperately seeking child care



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Kimberly Libre, a teacher at Mrs. Tami's Daycare & Preschool, helps kids count to 10 during a math session.

County faces shortage in providers, both in-home and at centers

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

It's the Week of the Young Child Sunday through Friday. And child care and preschool providers are having trouble finding room for them all.

As preschools and day care centers fill up, more home-based operators are expanding, and the region's child care referral system is looking for even more people to open their homes and businesses to children.

Tara Mestrich coordinates Family Care Connection, a program through the Oregon State University Extension Service office that operates the Child Care Resource & Referral program.

"I'm encouraging parents to find friends and families for care," Mestrich said, adding she's encouraging more home providers to become licensed.

Providers exempt from licensing care for three or fewer children, not including their own. Mestrich said it's a common option, with family and friends helping take care of each other's kids.

But Mestrich is hoping to get more licensed providers through the Oregon Office of Child Care (<http://1.usa.gov/1GKsDZc>), which regulates multiple levels of child care, from registered and certified home providers taking anywhere from four to 16 children to certified child care centers.

Mestrich said Clatsop County has 26 in-home providers, four

MORE INFO

For more information on finding child care providers, becoming a provider and further training as a child care professional, Family Care Connection and the Child Care Resource & Referral program can be reached at 503-325-1220, familycare-connection@oregonstate.edu and at its website, <http://bit.ly/1tQZVjw>

of them serving Spanish speakers and four certified child care centers taking infants, but not nearly enough to match the demand from pregnant mothers, who she said are calling and trying to find care for once they return to work. Mestrich said the need is even greater outside the Astoria-Warrenton area, with few options around Knappa and Seaside and existing providers already full.

At home

Adrienne Hunter said Mestrich got her started in child care, and even sent her daughter to Simply

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JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Sophee Ernst, Becka Blacksten's 4 1/2-year-old daughter, raises her hand after winning a game of letter-recognition bingo during class at Soar With Us.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Children play and learn at Mrs. Tami's Daycare & Preschool. The building, transformed from a truck garage, is divided into different playing and learning areas for a variety of age groups.

Smith's lawyers hint at mental health defense

Attorneys ask to cancel Friday hearing because of media focus

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

The defense lawyers for Jessica Smith, the mother accused of killing one daughter and injuring another, continue to hint at a possible mental health defense.

Smith's lawyers William Falls and Lynne Morgan recently filed a notice intending to present evidence that Smith suffered a "disordered mental state," at the time of the alleged crimes.

The defense's motion states a jury would have to consider whether Smith's mind was and continues to be "disordered, chaotic and abnormal."

It would be Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis' burden to establish Smith's mental state was healthy and rational, rather than disordered and chaotic, the notice states.

The evidence of Smith's mental state may come in the form of expert testimony of a mental health professional or from laypersons with knowledge of the defense, Falls and Morgan wrote.

Smith, 41, of Goldendale, Wash., is accused of aggravated murder and attempted aggravated murder for allegedly drugging and murdering her 2-year-old daughter, Isabella Smith, and

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Knappa schools top position goes empty

Banks School Board selects Jeff Leo as its next superintendent

The Banks School District Board of Directors announced Tuesday the hiring Jeff Leo as its new superintendent effective July 1. Leo has been the superintendent of the Knappa School District since 2011.

Leo and the board are working on the terms of a tentative agreement, which will be finalized at a public meeting. The term of Superintendent Bob Hune expires June 30. Leo was also a finalist for the superintendent in Dallas, Ore., School District near Salem.

The board in Banks, along with a screening committee of staff and

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Razor Clam Society befriends Pacific Coast's favorite bivalve

By KATIE WILSON
EO Media Group

LONG BEACH, Wash. — It's been the year of the razor clam.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Department scheduled 15 days for recreational digs in April alone, and approximately 69 days of digging total from Dec. 31 to mid-May across various Washington beaches.

Coastal Lead Shellfish Biologist Dan Ayres is coming up on 34 years with WDFW "and we've never been able to offer this many days in almost that entire time," he said in a phone interview April 13.

For one group, the timing is pretty near perfect to start a nonprofit advocacy group based around the recreational harvest of Pacific razor clams.

The Olympia-based Razor Clam Society is about one week into a 40-day-long fundraising campaign to collect the money it needs to get the group off the ground. In five days, it has raised \$150, but it hopes to hit \$10,000.

The goal of the society is to "bring clambers together and connect our community to current marine biology research and the governmental departments managing the environment, licensing and fish and wildlife."

The society says there is an "unmet demand from razor clam enthusiasts for a social organization to identify with and work on their behalf," according to a press release dated April 11.

"The clamming community has a lot to talk about," a statement on the

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Submitted photo

Circa April 1948, Frances (Winn) O'Neil and Cis (Swanson) Bittner are pictured while on tour with the famous giant fry pan to promote the annual Razor Clam Festival sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce in Long Beach. This year's event is this weekend.



Jeff Leo

