

Poverty: ‘It was the first roof over their heads in months’

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“Connect the Dots,” is held on the last Tuesday of each month from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St.

Success stories

While much of the event Wednesday revolved around how those in poverty may have been failed, Clatsop Community Action staff did share success stories.

John Coy, a veteran’s case manager, spoke about a family of four who came to CCA while living in their car. Coy helped the husband, who was a veteran, get qualified for certain veteran’s programs. From there, Coy assisted the family with transitional housing and, eventually, a permanent home.

“It was the first roof over their heads in months,” Coy said.

Case manager Viviana Matthews described her experience assisting a homeless domestic-violence victim who was a mother of three. The woman came to CCA ready to change her life, and Matthews gradually worked with her over multiple years.

“I was just another tool in her



Viviana Matthews, a case manager with Clatsop Community Action, holds up a board showing resources and needs during a group discussion session.

life,” Matthews said.

Marlin Martin, director of CCA’s regional food bank, gave a presentation detailing how the food bank is doing its part in addressing poverty.

Each year, the food bank distributes about 1.5 million pounds of food in Clatsop County, enough to produce more than

1.2 million meals. The food bank is distributing 200 percent more food than five years ago.

“We are trying to recreate a new format that we think, at the end of the day, we are providing better lives and helping people out of poverty 20 years down the road because they won’t have diabetes or some of

the diet-related diseases that are keeping them in poverty,” Martin said. “That is what we do.”

Making a fabric

The conversation started Wednesday with a talk by Jim Tierney, the executive director of the Community Action Team, a nonprofit serving Columbia,



Marlin Martin, director of the regional food bank, speaks at the Barbey Maritime Center Wednesday.

Clatsop and Tillamook counties. The nonprofit oversees Clatsop Community Action.

Tierney explained how everyone in the Barbey Center Wednesday has a role to play in curbing

poverty and homelessness.

“Together we make a fabric that represents a safety net to catch people,” Tierney said. “Weaving the fabric is what it is all about.”

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