

Seaside students step up for Laundry Love

High-schoolers volunteer for local program

By **KATHERINE LACAZE**
For EO Media Group

SEASIDE — What can a handful of coins, some laundry detergent and friendly service do for a person? Two Seaside High School students have spent months learning the answer to this question by volunteering for the local Laundry Love program.

"It's a small way to make a big difference," senior Marysol Alcantar said.

Alcantar and fellow senior Channene Prendergast are doing their Pacifica Projects with Laundry Love, a nationwide charity that has been administered at the local level by nonprofit At the Water's Gate for about four years. It is held from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. the second Saturday of each month at The Laundromat off U.S. Highway 101.

The students' involvement began in October 2016, when they helped sort clothes and set up for the annual Winter Cloth-

ing Giveaway at the November Laundry Love. Since then, Alcantar has attended and assisted with each Laundry Love event, an ongoing experience that has had an impact on her.

"To me, this was new," she said. "I had never really volunteered in any way, and I like it a lot. I feel like I'll probably keep going still, even after we graduate."

Her desire to continue helping with the program is fueled by the response of the people who are served, about 20 to 25 per month. Many of them are regulars who come each time.

"They're just as excited to get their clothes cleaned as they were the month before," she said. "It's nice to see how they react toward the help they get."

In addition to providing funds for each individual or family to do two loads of laundry, the program also offers free hygienic products — including socks, soap, deodorant and toothpaste — and coffee and snacks or a small meal. As many of the people who attend the Laundry Love events are homeless or underprivileged, "we definitely want to look out for them," Prendergast said.



Submitted Photo

Seaside High School senior Marysol Alcantar feeds coins into a machine at The Laundromat in Seaside for a client during a Laundry Love event in April. Alcantar is helping with the local Laundry Love program for her Pacifica Project.

Prendergast, who usually works on weekends, mostly is aiding the program from behind the scenes. She assists Shirley Yates — who runs At the Water's Gate with her husband, Carl — at the office. Some of her responsibilities include organizing supplies, updating records, shopping for hygienic items, contacting news outlets, advertising the monthly events and other administrative work.

Diving in deeper

As with any Pacifica Project — a requirement for grad-

uation at Seaside High School — the students must tie in their volunteer work to the topics of their senior papers.

Alcantar's senior paper is focused on school bullying. At first, she said, she wasn't sure how the two would relate, but while gathering information, she learned how students can be bullied for their clothing or appearance. Alcantar discovered that "for them to struggle not to be able to have clothes or wash them as often, they could get bullied at school for it," she said.

Prendergast's paper explored the idea of gender equality in the workforce. During her time assisting with Laundry Love, she came to find most of the other volunteers also were women. A question she addressed in her paper was whether socially reinforced stereotypes about compassion or nurturing being feminine qualities played a role in that outcome.

"I discovered it's mostly society that stereotypes genders into thinking they have to do things," she said, adding these stereotypes then often perpetuate themselves.

A change of perspective

Both students expressed how their experiences have led to greater insight into concepts of homelessness, gratitude and service.

"You always know not everybody has everything you have, but it's more realistic once you're there and see people struggling," Prendergast said. "You realize how good you actually have it. It makes you want to appreciate the things you have, even a thing as simple as being able to

wash your clothes at home."

Going forward, she wants to continue to target her donated time toward organizations or service projects that benefit homeless individuals, such as food banks, building homeless shelters or programs like Laundry Love. Alcantar agreed that was a population that is underserved.

"People don't really take them into consideration, and they don't get as much help as they should," she said.

There is even a tendency for people of privilege to dehumanize those struggling with homelessness, Prendergast added.

"They just kind of see them as not helping themselves, so we shouldn't help them," she said. "They don't realize that some people need a little bit of help before they can help themselves."

"You will see the difference that it makes in (people's) lives, just by giving them three quarters to put into the machine," she said, adding no matter how many times a person hears about the benefits of the program, "you won't really realize it until you're there helping."

Oregon legislators await Tuesday's quarterly revenue forecast

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau



Josh Lehner

SALEM — Lawmakers are anticipating the next quarterly revenue forecast, which is due to be released Tuesday.

The quarterly forecast provides an outlook both for revenue and for Oregon's overall economy.

It's the last forecast before the Legislature adjourns in July. As such, it provides the clearest picture of how much revenue legislators can expect to work with, and how much they must raise, as they hammer out the state's budget. It will

also provide lawmakers a clearer idea of whether Oregon's "kicker" — the personal income tax kickback that occurs when receipts exceed projections by 2 percent — may be triggered this year.

In a recent post on his blog, Oregon Economic Analysis, state economist Josh Lehner called the May forecast "the single most important thing our office does."

The last quarterly forecast showed a \$1.6 billion gap

between expected revenues and the cost of maintaining state services at their current levels. That figure could go up or down with Tuesday's forecast.

Cutbacks, tax reform

There's some public disagreement among legislators and among interest groups over how to close whatever gap is projected.

Although talk of "cost containment" has come to the fore in the past few weeks, with legislators and the governor touting their plans for cutting back on spending, so too has tax reform.

Lawmakers on a bicameral tax reform committee are dis-

cussing a commercial activity tax in lieu of the state's corporate income tax, combined with decreases in income taxes.

Speaker of the House Tina Kotek, D-Portland, unveiled a plan May 4 to raise \$2.1 billion by taxing certain businesses

through a commercial activity tax. Under her plan the money would be spent on education and social services.

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