Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Officers confront an individual playing the part of an active shooter.

Training: 'Communication is key because it's mass chaos'

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Officers attended classroom lectures at Knappa High School on mass shooter response before heading to nearby Hilda Lahti and arming themselves with rifles and pistols loaded with simulation rounds. The officers practiced moving in formations and clearing hallways and rooms.

Craig Miller, a maritime enforcement specialist with the Coast Guard, spent Monday as a responder and Tuesday as a mass shooter stopped by responding officers.

Local agencies would respond to a mass shooter event on base along with the Coast Guard's security teams.

"Communication is key, because it's mass chaos," Miller said.

Around 600 police from more than 30 agencies responded to the shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999, said Sgt. Jason Hoover during a classroom session. But responses in rural areas often depend on whoever is closest, regardless of agency, and officers don't have time to wait for backup.

"You may be on your own, and chaos will reign," Hoover said. "Your No. 1 job at that point is to reach the threat" to limit casualties.

Participants had to make life-or-death decisions to engage shooters surrounded by innocents.

"You rely on muscle memory," Deputy Siscilee Gouge said of making such split-second decisions.

Stephanie Baldwin is a library assistant at Knappa, where her own children attend school. She played a victim fleeing and directing officers toward the shooter, while her husband, Nathen, a sheriff's deputy, was one of the responding officers.

She spent the first scenario hunched in a corner, watching how it played out. Listening to the approaching gunshots and thinking of her co-workers and children in such a situation was gut-wrenching, she said.

"It made it too real," she said. "I saw all the kids artwork on the walls as we worked, along with my own kids', and it was painful to think of any of those children being harmed. But it did make me realize that in an event I need to have good information to pass on."

Nathen Baldwin said it was especially difficult to pass his children's classrooms and wife's office, knowing they could be victims.

"I feel it was good for my wife to experience this training," he said. "We as a family commonly discuss the possibility of these horrible events happening in our community, and what our options would be. I feel this training helped Stephanie better prepare for such incidents."

County: Juvenile referrals are made by law enforcement after arrests

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several indicators, from health and child welfare to financial stability and education.

"When I look at the report, and look at all of the different data, I would say it's unfortunate that we're in a high referral rate county, but I wouldn't say I'm surprised that we are," said Greg Engbretson, the director of the Clatsop County Juvenile Department.

Obvious patterns

The county's juvenile referral rate in 2016 — 25.8 per 1,000 young people up to age 17 — was considerably higher than the statewide rate of 13.6.

For Engbretson, the report outlined obvious patterns that distinguish Clatsop from counties with lower juvenile referral rates.

Clatsop was ranked 34th last year in third-grade math proficiency, 27th in eighth-grade math proficiency, 25th in both third and eighth-grade English language arts proficiency, 25th in graduation, 24th in teen pregnancy and 29th in homeless students.

"These are not 'excuses' for the county's high rate of juvenile referrals but provide some background information regarding why they may be what they are," Engbretson said in an email.

Clatsop has long had a hard-drinking culture that can influence underage drinking. The Oregon Student Wellness Survey has found that county teenagers have higher rates of alcohol use than the state average.

Over the past few years, after marijuana was legalized for recreational use in July 2015, the county has also seen a spike in marijuana-related offenses among young people.

"This has been pretty clear to us, that ever since some of the marijuana legislation has changed — the laws in Oregon — that we have definitely seen an increase of juvenile referrals for marijuana," Engbretson said.

Oregon juvenile referral rates by county, 2016 (Rate per 1,000 youth, ages 0-17.)

County	2016 total population	Referrals 2016	Referrals 2015	Percent change
Baker	16,059	36.4	24	52%
Malheur	30,439	27.5	28.1	-2
Clatsop	**38,632**	**25.8**	**24.7**	**4**
Wasco	26,115	25.7	30.2	-15
Wheeler	1,344	25.4	15	69
Morrow	11,274	25.3	20.4	24
Curry	22,713	25.1	28.5	-12
Crook	22,570	24.8	32	-23
Deschutes	181,307	24.6	23.9	3
Tillamook	26,143	23.7	27.2	-13
Klamath	66,443	21.6	22.8	-5
Hood River	23,232	20.4	24.8	-18
Lake	7,837	20	18.5	8
Douglas	108,457	19.3	19.8	-3
Umatilla	76,456	18.7	20.2	-7
Jefferson	23,080	18.6	20.9	-11
Columbia	50,785	17.9	14	28
Jackson	216,527	17.6	19.6	-10
Linn	122,849	16.9	16.9	0
Union	26,087	16.7	14	19
Wallowa	6,946	15.4	14.2	8
Marion	336,316	14.8	16.1	-8
Harney	7,292	14.4	10.8	33
Josephine	85,904	14.2	15	-5
Lane	369,519	14.1	14.4	-2
Gilliam	1,854	13.7	14.1	-3
Polk	81,823	13.6	12.4	10
Lincoln	47,806	12.8	13.4	-4
Grant	7,158	12.1	19.9	-39
Clackamas	408,062	11.8	12.3	-4
Yamhill	105,035	11.6	15.7	-26
Coos	63,761	10.7	13.5	-21
Benton	89,385	10.7	10.8	-1
Washington	582,779	9.7	10.4	-7
Multnohmah	799,766	8.7	9.9	-12
Sherman	1,710	6.2	16.5	-62
Oregon	**4.09 million**	**13.6**	**14.7**	**-7**

Source: Children First for Oregon Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

District Attorney Josh Marquis said the county's juvenile referral rate should not be viewed in isolation or as a sign of disproportionate juvenile punishment.

"It may be that the adults are paying more attention to kids in Clatsop County than in some more urban parts of the state," Marquis said in an email. "I'm not sure that's it, but factors like that can affect the rate."

Declines

Across Oregon, juvenile referral rates have declined, part of a public-policy choice by the juvenile justice system over the past two decades to steer young people away from detention.

Some in law enforcement have complained the approach has papered over troubling levels of juvenile property crime and drug abuse and encouraged counties to dismiss referrals without sanctions or supervision.

Marquis said advocates like Children First for Oregon have clearly put a "negative value" on juvenile referrals. The county data books are financed by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which has sought to reduce juvenile detention nationally in favor of more family-focused intervention.

Juvenile referrals are made by law enforcement after arrests. Juvenile departments decide after intake — and often after consultation with prosecutors — whether to review and close a case, take some type of informal action, or formally petition the court.

In Clatsop County last year, 72 percent of juvenile referrals were handled informally, a figure that matches the statewide share. About a third of referrals involved accountability agreements that could trigger future consequences if violated, while the others were reviewed and closed.

Of the referrals that were petitioned to court, most of the juveniles who were found delinquent received probation or formal sanction, and only a handful faced placement in a youth correctional facility or residential treatment program.

Tonia Hunt, the executive director of Children First for Oregon, said the juvenile referral rate category in the report "reflects the community's involvement with youth and youth engagement with law enforcement.

"Higher referral numbers don't necessarily mean that communities have more criminality," she said in an email. "It could mean that there is more interaction with law enforcement. This data provides a baseline to examine patterns and what might be driving changes or variations in each county."