



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Kitchen supplies sit on the counter of the women's section of the sober living house.

Sober living: Tenants to stay focused on recovery

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Unlike in many sober living environments, the people in the Warrenton house will get their own bedroom with a door that locks. A secure space can mark a major step for people trying to take ownership of their lives, Neal Rotman, the agency's housing services manager, said.

"Once you have a place to be, and you can move on with your life, that really changes everything," Rotman said.

Tenants will have a measure of personal freedom. They won't be monitored 24/7 or have curfews.

But there will be rules and structure.

Urinalyses and Breathalyzer tests will be done regularly. Men and women can meet outside — the backyard is fairly large — but they cannot cross over into the other unit. The single beds are meant to discourage overnight guests.

Every week, tenants will gather for a house meeting to divvy up chores, resolve conflicts, celebrate personal suc-

cesses and talk through challenges. They will check in one-on-one with the peer recovery allies, who serve as case managers, to discuss their goals and the barriers to reaching them.

At least five times a week, tenants must attend programs like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous to stay focused on recovery.

"What we don't want to do is just have someone isolated and locked in their room for 24 hours a day, spinning out in their brain, because they don't know what to do next," Boudon said. "That's the most terrifying thing as a recovering alcoholic or addict, is not knowing what's going to happen next."

A key part of the program will be the presence of the peer recovery allies — a man for the men's side, a woman for the women's side — most of the week. The peers, who are recovered addicts, will be there to hang out with tenants, chat with them. "Even just be like, 'Hey, do you just want to sit and talk about how your

day went? I'm sensing that it wasn't a good day,'" Boudon said.

And as tenants' stays come to a close, agency staff will help them make a plan — composed of small, achievable tasks — to move into another living situation.

"That is the ultimate goal," Boudon said. "You're going to leave here one way or another. Let's make sure that it's a successful transition."

No one knows how the project will turn out — how many tenants will recover and how many will relapse; how many will use the time to get a job or return to school; how many will be able to save money and create an independent life when the program ends for them.

The sober living house, like the people who will call it home, is in a state of potential. And potential is what the program is all about.

Dave Hsiao, a program manager at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, said, "We're really trying to give a few people this chance to make this work."

Pyrosomes: 'The pyrosomes are just one indicator that things are changing'

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Pyrosomes remain one of the least studied of the pelagic tunicates, a group of marine invertebrates found throughout the world. But they can form dense blooms given the right conditions and they seem to graze readily — and heavily — on phytoplankton and other microscopic particles in the water.

If pyrosomes become a more familiar presence off the coast as ocean conditions shift under climate change, researchers believe they could begin to have a marked impact on the food web around them.

The pyrosomes people find on North Coast beaches are usually small, roughly the size and shape of a pickle. They are soft pink or gray, translucent, gelatinous.

Researcher Kelly Sutherland said what people find on the beach and call pyrosomes are not a single animal. Every pyrosome is actually a colony made up of many individual organisms, each about the size of a grain of rice. But pile them together and a whole colony can be a foot long — even longer in some species — comprised of hundreds of individuals.

Sutherland, an associate professor of biology at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology at the University of Oregon, said there are many basic questions to answer about pyrosomes before researchers can truly understand what it means to have them here now.

But with pyrosomes still only occasional visitors to the ocean waters off the Pacific Northwest, these questions remain difficult to answer.

Julie Schram, an assistant professor of animal physiology at the University of Alaska Southeast,

co-authored a research paper about the pyrosomes' visit in 2017 with Sutherland published in 2020. She no longer studies pyrosomes, but she still has many questions about them.

She found they carried unusually high levels of docosahexaenoic acid, or DHA, the omega-3 fatty acids you find in fish oil supplements. The pyrosomes concentrate these fatty acids in their tissues when they consume phytoplankton, the organisms actually producing the lipids.

"of how much we don't know about the ocean off our coast, which limits our ability to predict future conditions."

When pyrosomes are here in large numbers, it can be a sign of a certain set of ocean conditions, Sutherland said, and the tunicates play a role in ecosystem dynamics — even if that role remains a bit of a mystery.

But the food web is complex, with many players.

Pyrosomes' size and the fact that they wash up on the beach happen to make them more noticeable.

THE PYROSOMES PEOPLE FIND ON NORTH COAST BEACHES ARE USUALLY SMALL, ROUGHLY THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF A PICKLE. THEY ARE SOFT PINK OR GRAY, TRANSLUCENT, GELATINOUS.

But there are many other marine species that are more important to humans commercially. These have unanswered questions of their own and often take priority when it comes to the allocation of research funding and resources.

Richard Brodeur, a recently retired federal research biologist, thinks pyrosomes should move up the priority list. He believes pyrosomes represent a significant ecosystem disturbance, the effects of which researchers are only just starting to understand.

The appearance of pyrosomes in Oregon during the marine heat wave several years ago was unprecedented. Until then, pyrosomes had never been recorded here officially in at least the past 50 years, Brodeur said.

It is a reminder, he said,

"But," Sutherland said, "the community of tiny planktonic organisms is shifting all of the time in response to different environmental conditions."

"Sometimes that's because of the 'normal' patterns like the shift to upwelling conditions in the spring and El Nino or La Nina cycles, but then you have human-induced shifts in the environment happening on top of that."

"The pyrosomes," she said, "are just one indicator that things are changing."

This story is part of a collaboration between The Astorian and Coast Community Radio.



Grad rates: COVID made an impact

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"You certainly had the effect of COVID on kids that were, up to the time COVID hit, on track (for graduation) or not far off track, and it just blew their worlds up," Warrenton Superintendent Tom Rogozinski said. "... We're definitely recognizing that COVID impact, and at the same time we're trying to then dial in on, independent of that, what are the additional programs and levels of support we need to put into place?"

Rogozinski said he considers a graduation rate a great metric to work from and be informed by, but the rate does not necessarily indicate the efficacy or quality of a school or district.

After diving into the numbers, Rogozinski and his administrators determined that the state's data was out of line with their own count, and that several students were miscounted as not graduating on time.

"While we're not thrilled with 80%, that's typically more in line with where we've been, and where we want to work from moving forward," Rogozinski said.

Bill Fritz, the Knappa School District superintendent, also said the state's data for Knappa's graduation rate did not align with what the school district found.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Graduation rates declined in Clatsop County during the last school year.

The state showed Knappa as having 83.3% graduation rate, while Fritz said the district's rate was nearly 90%. Fritz pointed to two students, one of which was an exchange student, who should have not been included in the cohort.

"We always strive for 100% and continue to work student-by-student to personalize and guide them toward success," said Fritz, who noted he was particularly pleased with the success of economically disadvantaged students.

The state listed the Seaside School District as having a 77.4% graduation rate, which was below the previ-

ous year's figure of 80.3%.

The state showed Jewell School District as having a 100% graduation rate, with all seven students graduating on time. The small, rural school district also had a perfect rate the previous year.

Oregon posted the second-highest statewide graduation rate in the state's history at 80.6% during the 2020-2021 school year, but the rate declined from 82.6% the previous year, according to the state Department of Education.

The state measures on-time graduation by students who take four years to complete high school.

off all of his debts.

Just as he found himself in the position where money was not an issue, he was notified last year that he and his family would have to move out of the home they were renting.

With increasing home prices on the North Coast, buying seemed unattainable. But Caron could not

find another rental for his family that would accept his dog.

He thought about leaving the area, but he managed to buy a home in Knappa late last year.

Caron credits the success of his YouTube channel.

"It's like my whole life has changed," he said.

Caron: 'It's like my whole life has changed'

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Financial stress continued to haunt him for years, but he sought to learn about the sources of the economic struggles he shared with so many others.

When he started earning money off advertising revenue on his YouTube videos, he was able to finally pay

To test? Or not to test? WHEN TO GET A COVID-19 TEST

You've had a known COVID-19 exposure but don't have any symptoms. What's next?

If you were fully vaccinated with Pfizer or Moderna or had their booster within the last 5 months OR you received the initial J&J dose within the past 2 months:

- 🕒 Testing is recommended at day 5.
- 👤 Wear a mask around others for 10 days. No quarantine needed.

If you were fully vaccinated with Pfizer or Moderna more than 5 months ago or have not had their booster within the last 5 months OR you received the initial J&J dose more than 2 months ago:

- 🏠 Quarantine at home for 5 days.
- 🕒 Testing is recommended at day 5.
- 👤 Continue to wear a mask for another 5 days.

Regardless of vaccination status, if you test positive:

- 🏠 Isolate at home for 5 days. You must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before leaving your home.
- 👤 If symptoms are resolved or improving, continue to wear a mask for another 5 days.



COVID-19 TESTING INFO

Please remember county Emergency Rooms and Urgent Care Clinics are for treating emergencies and illnesses. We need to keep them open for those who need care. **They are not the place** for people simply looking for COVID testing.

If you need a COVID test or are wondering where to get one, please call the Clatsop County Public Information Call Center at 503-325-8500. They will triage your case and help you find the right testing resource.