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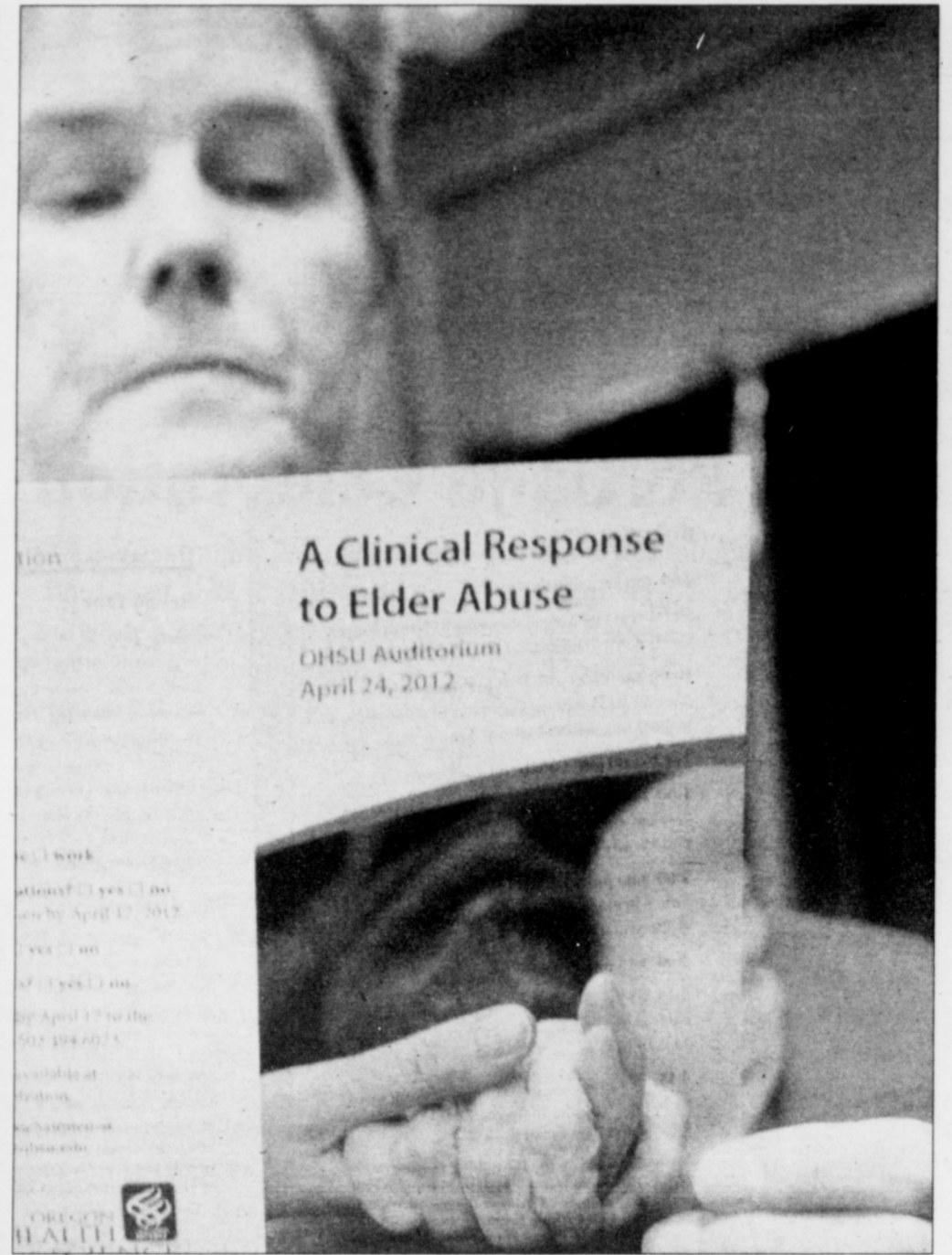


PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
A public forum addresses elder abuse. According to Multnomah County, 84 percent of crimes against the elderly went unreported last year.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE MINISTRIES



Pastors
Jerry & Annie
Gutierrez

We would like to invite you to our
**Good Friday
Passover Service**

Join us for this very special night of celebration!

First Fruits Offering
Friday, April 6th at 7pm

New Song Community Center
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For directions or more information, call 503-488-5481
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Crimes against Elderly

continued ▲ from front

markers and indicators of abuse and to protect the victims of abuse," he said.

Looking around the room on Friday, he said more than 50 organizations, including police officers, state and local politicians, non-profits and medical caretakers showed up to partake in the forum.

"We hope to reduce the incidents of abuse in Multnomah County and the whole state of Oregon," he said.

According to Sgt. Margaret Bahnson of the Portland Police Bureau's Vulnerable Adult Unit, the community needs to be educated on what is going on, so prevention can begin to take place.

"I am here to network and share information to see what we can do collaboratively to come up with ways to reduce abuse to vulnerable adults," she said. "We know these cases are underreported."

Bahnson said her unit, which is comprised of two detectives and two officers, is working at capacity, with cases averaging one per hour.

"A lot of what we actually seem to be doing the most are financial exploitation cases," she said. The most recent one involved a man with a developmental disability encouraged to invest in a scam company. "He lost about \$40,000," she said.

Another common crime is stealing money from elderly parents or

grandparents, by "tricking them, basically," she said. "Prevention is the most effective tool available to combat this kind of abuse."

Holly Freewynn, who works for Multnomah County Adult Protective Services, agreed.

Throughout the week, Freewynn conducts a number of unannounced home visits to investigate allegations reported of financial exploitations.

"We are required by statute to visit if we get referrals, and the screeners are the ones who decide how quickly we go out after someone calls in," she said. "My goal is to prevent financial exploitation because it is so devastating to our seniors."

Freewynn said one reason she is so dedicated to her work is because the abuse has been proven to affect the longevity and health of an individual's life.

"I'm really passionate about financial exploitations because people who are exploited tend to die earlier and suffer more illnesses than their peers who aren't," she said.

According to Freewynn, the calls about elder abuse come from every type of person and organization within the community, including the police, case workers, care takers, family members, and banks. "They come from everywhere and anyone concerned," she said.

For more information on ways to recognize crimes against the elderly or to report an incident, visit multco.us/ads or call 503-988-3646.