

OCHS from 1A

Frazier did background interviews with professionals associated with OCHS and volunteers at the shelter.

He then made an unannounced site visit and was allowed free access to the kennels and cage areas of the facility.

Frazier's report is available to the public and states clearly the sequence of events that led to his involvement in the case.

He was also able to speak on the record, as the case, No. 17-5346, has been closed, and he believes that any neglect that may have

occurred in the past is no longer occurring.

"I am the main animal control person in the Florence city limits and have as much contact with the people there as anyone in town. As the dogcatcher and transporter of these animals to the [OCHS], I have never seen any behavior of any of the staff or volunteers that has caused me any concern," Frazier said. "I saw all the animals in the OCHS and witnessed no signs of neglect or abuse."

According to Frazier's report, the kennels and cages that house the sheltered animals were clean and well maintained, food for the animals was safeguarded and

the animals seemed well cared for.

Frazier said he believes there are currently no issues that require his involvement or further investigation. However, Frazier did state that any future negative information regarding the animals at OCHS would be cause to open a new investigation.

For the DOJ, another aspect of the ongoing OCHS situation is the concern by organization members that recent board appointments have been illegitimate, according to Oregon laws regarding the operations of nonprofit entities.

These concerns are the

subject of a DOJ inquiry into OCHS practices, specifically directed towards the appointment of interim members to fill vacancies caused by resignation on the OCHS board.

The DOJ currently has these issues under review and is expected to make recommendations to the OCHS Board of Directors before the next board meeting, scheduled for tomorrow, Oct. 19, at 5:30 p.m. at the Laurelwood Community Center at 1137 Maple St. in Florence.

OCHS management declined to comment as of press time Tuesday.

Death from 1A

"Most people consider an in-custody death as someone arrested and in jail," Carver said. "While the woman was technically in police custody, in this case, they remained at the hospital the entire time and she was under hospital care. And in fact, hospital staff did work on her for quite a bit of time after she started deteriorating until she deceased."

"There isn't anything that seems suspicious and there's no indicator of mistreatment. Anytime there is a death in any police custody, another agency looks into it."

PeaceHealth Senior Communications Specialist Anne Williams said, "Out of our deep commitment to the patient's privacy and in respect for the Florence Police Department's investigatory process, we will not be commenting on specifics at this time."

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90by30 from 1A

That information was compiled into a study that showed the scope of the issues the Siuslaw region faces.

The study looked at both the strengths and weaknesses regarding a wide variety of topics, including access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs, and positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support to parents and children.

The report found many positives in the community, including the Mapleton and Siuslaw school districts in the region, which provide several programs that support students and parents, along with strong support from the faith community.

But there were problems, particularly for the Upriver communities, which includes Deadwood, Mapleton and Swishome.

While there are 35 core programs that work to support families and minimize the stress caused in raising a child, including social programs like the Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County and food assistance programs such as Florence Food Share, only six of these programs were readily available to those outside of Florence.

One problem for the entire Siuslaw region was the lack of accessibility for Lane County programs, such as Lane County Public Health resources, Mann-Heintz said. Because of that, local community programs need to be utilized more.

While 90by30 will be looking to implement a whole host of programs to help with the issue, Mann-Heintz pointed out three specific strategies that it plans on implementing in the near term.

One of these programs, "Roots of Empathy," will focus on instilling empathy in school-aged children.

"One reason abuse or neglect happens is because of lack of empathy," Mann-Heintz said. "If people were empathetic, there would not be abuse or neglect or violence. Empathy is a gateway skill in ending abuse and neglect."

The "Roots" program takes place in local schools where, once a month, a mother brings her child — usually between the ages of two and four months — into classrooms. Students will interact with the mother and child, learn about childhood development and ask questions about what it takes to raise a baby.

"This enables children to learn about empathy, feelings and how we identify what someone is feeling," Mann-Heintz said.

The visit, which is facilitated by a trained instructor, is coupled with two other sessions throughout the month, a pre-visit section telling children what to expect, and a post-visit section allowing children to

speak about the experience.

These visits are repeated every month throughout the school year.

"The class gets very attached to the baby," Mann-Heintz said. "They know this baby and they see it grow. Nobody can resist babies. They really do fall in love with this baby and have ownership of its development to some degree."

90by30 will also be offering "Welcome Baby Boxes" to new parents.

"When a baby is born, the family is given a Welcome Baby Box," Mann-Heintz said. "This is a box that has been especially designed to actually serve as a sleeping place for the baby for the first six months. If you haven't gotten a crib, don't have room for one or can't afford one, you have a place for your baby to sleep from day one. The box is also full of all the little basic necessities like toiletries, diapers, clothes, wash cloths, towels, a little blanket and a hat."

It also has informational resources that help parents know what to expect with a newborn infant, a vital component in helping reduce abuse.

Statistically, newborns have the highest rate of victimization of 24.2 per 1,000 children. Parents make up 78.1 percent of childhood abuse.

"As adults, we feel it's our responsibility to keep our baby quiet," Mann-Heintz explained. "If the baby's not quiet, then we're not doing our job and something's wrong. This is when babies get shaken. You can really mess up a child's motor and cognitive functions if you shake a baby, but that's kind of an instinctual thing. You bounce them and then in your own frustration you bounce them harder to keep them quiet."

The material will help new parents learn that it's okay for babies to cry.

"There will be times when the baby is going to cry, and that's nothing wrong. Everything's OK. The baby's fed, the baby's dry, the

baby's clean and they're not hurting, they're just crying," Mann-Heintz said.

Parenting is stressful, no matter how much experience a parent has, she said.

"You've got multiple factions of fatigue, concern, frustration and maybe even depression overlaid on this, in terms of the caregiver," Mann-Heintz said. "When you're frustrated, the job that you have to do is to get a handle on your own emotions and figure out what you need to do to take care of the child. There's a reason why it's stressful and we all understand that. Babies are in jeopardy because of this frustration."

Alleviating that frustration takes community support, which leads to another program 90by30 is offering: home visitation.

In this case, trained professionals visit parents and help them through difficult times by connecting them to resources, giving moral support and providing help when needed.

"The main goal of home visitation is to connect families with someone who can talk about child development," Mann-Heintz said. "They can ask questions and let them know if there's things they need more support with. The parents can really feel connected to the community and feel like they have someone to turn to. Having a social connection is a huge deterrent to abuse and neglect."

90by30 is still working on when and how to implement

these programs, but Mann-Heintz is hoping that some can begin within the year. "There's a lot of details that still haven't been worked out," she said.

But to help with these and other programs, 90by30 says it needs community support.

"We're already enlisting some of the community people," Mann-Heintz said. "One of the slogans of this project is called 'A Part to Play.' The whole idea is that the entire community has a part to play in reducing child abuse and neglect. Our community has need for all kinds of folks with all kinds of skills and resources to take care of our kids and protect them."

From having informational booths at events like this Thursday's Good Life Boomer and Senior Expo to working closely with local organizations, the program is casting a wide net to enlist the help of everyone in the community to help build programs for families.

"People have resources," Mann-Heintz said. "They just need to know where to go to get help. Nobody wants to hurt their kids."

West Lane County 90by30 meets the fourth Tuesday of the month from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the Bromley Room at the Siuslaw Public Library in Florence, 1460 Ninth St. Its next meeting will be held Tuesday, Oct. 24.

For more information on the program, visit 90by30.com.

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