



LI'L TOADS GROW IN LEAPS

SPORTS — B

Pounding returns for 18th year

INSIDE — A3



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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

Boys and Girls Club rebrands for teens

New Teen Director Crystell Wise looks to bring high school age kids to the program

BY JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

The Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County is going through a rebranding for teens, thanks to its new Teen Center Director Crystell Wise.



JARED ANDERSON/SIUSLAW NEWS
Boys and Girls Club Teen Director Crystell Wise

Girls Club Director Jack Davis said, "Let's just say, with regards to the high schoolers, we don't have a brand."

"We're not on their radar," Wise said. This isn't just an issue facing the Florence-based program, Wise and Davis explained. Across the country, Boys and Girls Clubs' biggest challenge is getting older teens, especially high school students, into the program.

High school students are generally mobile, with after school responsibilities like jobs and extracurricular programs.

Above all, teenagers, unlike elementary students, have a say in how they spend their free time.

Getting teenagers into the program is vital, Wise believes, because they will be shaping the direction of the world sooner than most adults think.

Before she was hired at the club, Wise, who holds a degree in political science from the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma, was a social worker in Eugene.

"I was dealing with the no-chance/last-chance type of clientele," she said. "The homeless and the mentally ill."

See **TEENS 9A**

VETERANS DAY 2017 HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



ROB GRIFFES FOR THE SIUSLAW NEWS



PHOTOS BY JARED ANDERSON AND MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS



On Nov. 11, Florence recognized those who served in the U.S. military with multiple events in celebration of Veterans Day. Members of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3232 and the "Band of Brothers" group started the day by holding a sunrise ceremony at the Pacific Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery. Later in the morning, Florence Elks Lodge 1858 and the Ladies of the Elks held an early morning craft and bazaar fundraiser to support the programs they organize and contribute towards throughout the year. The high point of the day was the annual Florence Veterans Day Parade, which started at the Florence Events Center and made its way down Quince Street and through Historic Old Town. Multi-generational crowds lined Bay Street and stayed despite the rain. Patriotic organizations are welcome to join the parade each year, such as the Siuslaw High School Band, VFW, Daughters of the American Revolution, American Legion Post 59, Boy and Girl Scouts and others who marched, drove, rode and played — all to thank area veterans and those who served.

For more photos, see **10A**



IS COASTAL LIVING IN JEOPARDY? PART I: SOS

Siuslaw Outreach Services shows how the housing, employment crisis in the Siuslaw Region has reached a tipping point

BY JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

Each night, people living in the Siuslaw region who work 60 hours a week are forced to live in their cars. While Social Security is supposed to help sustain shelter and basic necessities for the elderly, people in several age demographics are finding themselves driven to sell donated items of clothing or panhandle just to pay the utility bills.

These are just two examples of the symptoms that many, including city officials, private business owners and nonprofit organizations in the Siuslaw region, are calling a housing and employment crisis; it crosses all ages and socioeconomic barriers and impacts residents of the region in different ways.

"The whole area, in relation to housing and employment, is devastating to me," said Dianne Huenergardt,

director of Housing Assistance for Siuslaw Outreach Services (SOS) in Florence.

SOS has provided a wide variety of services to the community, including emergency vouchers, housing assistance and self-sufficiency classes, since 1986.

It served 2,959 clients in 2016 — equivalent to more than 30 percent of the City of Florence's population.

The physical health of Siuslaw residents is also being adversely affected, with families choosing to live in mold-infested homes because a shortage of available housing options simply leaves them no choice. In many cases, these living conditions can lead to respiratory problems for children or the elderly.

Running parallel to the issues of low wages and a lack of housing is a

steady rise in mental health problems and domestic abuse as individuals and families deal with the stress — with some victims feeling forced to remain in dangerous situations

"A lot of times you'll see these cars that are parked at [grocery stores] late at night. The people have jobs, but they just don't have a home to go to."

— SOS Executive Director Bob Teter

because they are unable to find a place to live.

The crisis SOS and other local organizations are seeing stems from a combination of extremely low wages from part-time work, coupled with a dearth of affordable housing.

On the employment side, the dramatic decline of the logging and fishing industries have created a reliance on tourism jobs.

"They are low wage, seasonal

jobs," SOS Executive Director Bob Teter said. "People come here not realizing that things start to shut down at the end of October and people start getting laid off. In the summer, they think, 'Oh, I have a full-time job right now, I'm set.' And then November comes and the work scales back. It picks up for the holidays and then goes back down."

Even when workers do have steady employment, the wages are miniscule.

According to Teter, the average wage for the people SOS serves is \$10 an hour. Often, when people do work, they aren't given full-time hours.

"One of the things that I noticed that created a barrier for people was the whole issue of employers being required to provide benefits," Teter said. "So, we see a lot of employers now trying to work around that by

keeping people's hours below 30. So as soon as they start getting close to 30, they scale them back — and people can't live on that."

Teter stated that under these conditions, it is normal for individuals to work two or three jobs at any given time.

"We had a single mom a while back who was working 15 hours a week at Fred Meyer and 25 hours a week at Safeway, and she also worked late at night at the casino about 20 hours a week," Teter said. "And she relied on family members to take care of two little ones that she had."

Despite all of the hours and family assistance, she was not able to make ends meet on her own and ended up at SOS asking for help, relying on the program's emergency vouchers for help with utilities, clothing, food and paying for prescriptions.

See **LIVING 7A**

INSIDE Classifieds B6 Opinion A4
Community A3 Records A2
Kid Scoop B4 Sports B
Library Tidings A5 Weather Data A2

THIS WEEK'S WEATHER
Full Forecast, A3

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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