

PeaceHealth adds CG foot clinic

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove residents are often understandably appreciative of the convenience of accessing goods and services in this community rather than making the drive northward. Such thinking was behind the recent establishment of a foot care clinic at PeaceHealth Community Medical Center in Cottage Grove, according to Patient Care Executive Marsha Crosswhite.

"Many of our patients would have previously accessed these services at the Barger Medical Building in Eugene," Crosswhite said. "We're thrilled to offer them here one day a week."

The hospital held an open house to introduce the public to the new foot clinic on Tuesday, March 31, with last Thursday as the clinic's first day of operations. Visitors toured a room that had previously been used to develop X-ray film but will now be used to provide basic foot care, with a dremel tool and vacuum on hand to help reduce the thickness of nails and calluses.

"These are things that you and I might be able to do ourselves," Crosswhite said. "But for people with diabetes, atherosclerosis or fungal nails it can be very difficult, especially if there's pain involved. There are a lot of people who need foot care that are not quite as mobile and find it difficult."

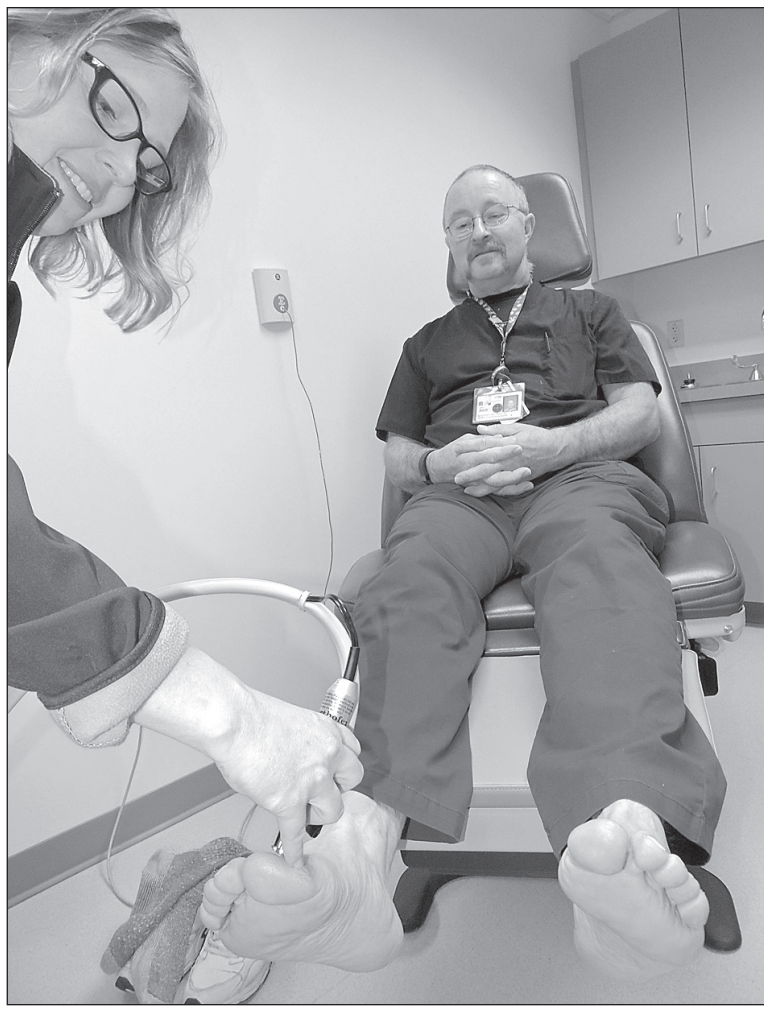


photo by Jon Stinnett
Heather Lyda and Rick Settlemeyer demonstrate the use of the foot clinic's new dremel tool.

Looking Glass battles youth homelessness

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

For the past 45 years, Looking Glass Youth and Family Services has sought to provide sanctuary for distressed youth in Lane County. Presently, organization officials are very concerned about the increasing prevalence of methamphetamines, heroin and sex trafficking in rural communities, and they are seeking more volunteers for its rural host program to shelter more youth from these ills.

"It is difficult to collect data on these issues, but we know that they are trending upward," said Services Director Kirstin London. "They represent the hidden facet of a community, and an alarming number of these situations that involve youth start in the home or on the Internet."

The Looking Glass Rural Program assists youth, ages 11-18, who are homeless, have run away or are at risk for homelessness and are interested in long-term situations to improve the quality of their lives. Its services include 24-hour crisis intervention, case management, temporary shelter, education and counseling.

The program was brought to Cottage Grove in 2008. Last year, the organization served 80 youth in South Lane County, including 47 who required intensive case management.

London said that most cases begin with conflict in the home over substance abuse, mental health or finances. She said that there are no laws in Oregon that restrict a parent or guardian from kicking their children out of a home, so long as they provide them with some sort of shelter; a car, shed or even a tent could meet this provision.

"We want to be the place where

youth can turn to in an emergency," said London, who has worked with the organization for over 10 years.

There are currently just two beds in Cottage Grove's rural host network, which are homes that provide shelter and basic needs to youth in crisis for 1-21 nights. London said she would like to have five beds available every night, and that some of the obstacles to growing the program lay in misconceptions.

"Many people believe that to be a host you need to be available 365 days a year, and that's not the case. If a host is going on vacation or just isn't available, we'll take them out of the rotation. Many people also believe that hosts are case managers, and that's not the case either. Hosts provide the basic needs, and they work with the staff in Cottage Grove to coordinate the other services," London explained.

London said that the South Lane Rural subcommittee, which she chairs, has picked up on significant anecdotal evidence that suggests increasing methamphetamines, heroin and sex trafficking are finding footholds in rural communities.

In September, Looking Glass held an informational session at the Cottage Grove Community Center on sex trafficking. London said 40 people — including community members and services providers — attended this event, and that she received positive feedback from those guests.

"It can be challenging to start that conversation because these are issues that carry a stigma and are often labeled as urban problems," she said. "But there is a great need for education in rural communities, not only about the available programs, but on why youth run away from home, and what to do when you suspect a young person is in trouble."

Habitat ReStore taking off, expanding hours

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove Area Habitat for Humanity has branched out into a line of business that's common among the organization's larger affiliates, and to hear Habitat's executive director tell it, business has been booming.

"A lot of larger Habitat affiliates have a retail storefront," Director Linda Oxley said. "They feature donations of gently used items with a focus on building supplies and household items."

The Habitat ReStore has been open for about a year and a half and has been growing ever since. It currently occupies space in the Cottage Grove Industrial Park, space that also doubles as Habitat's local office.



photo by Jon Stinnett
Habitat Executive Director Linda Oxley shows off the merchandise available at Habitat's ReStore.

"We were told that, once you start a ReStore, you quickly outgrow it, and that's exactly what happened," Oxley said. "At first, we were open once a month, but it was

crazy. We had to essentially take everything out to sort and price it and put it right back in."

Business hours two days a week followed, though now

the ReStore has made another leap and is open five days a week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Volunteers staff the store, and the proceeds benefit Habitat's mission of providing stable housing for those who might not afford it otherwise.

"The ReStores help sustain the business of the affiliate so that more money can go directly into programming," Oxley said. "Our prices are comparable with other ReStores; we price things at about 40 cents on the dollar."

Oxley said the biggest challenge with the ReStore so far has been getting the word out to the community that the store is tucked away in the back of the Industrial Park. Habitat will have a presence at this weekend's Home Show and will host a sale from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday with that goal in mind.

Tree planting scheduled

Cottage Grove's Urban Forestry Committee has announced that it will host a tree-planting starting at Bohemia Park this Saturday, April 11 beginning at 10 a.m. After trees are planted at Bohemia Park, the Committee plans to move to nearby Trailhead Park to continue planting there. The Committee's Wayne

Kleckner said six trees and about 50 smaller ones are due to be planted, with many set to replace trees lost to recent vandalism.

Volunteers who wish to help plant trees are asked to bring shovels and gloves if possible. Those seeking more information can reach Kleckner at 541-942-7337.



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