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COMMUNITY

Community Sharing out of food

By Caitlyn May
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It's been six months in the making but now, Community Sharing is nervous. This according to director Mike Fleck who reports the food pantry is out of food.

"It takes a lot to make me panic," Fleck said Monday night. "I've never seen the shelves so empty."

Community Sharing--a non profit that helps low income individuals find services like housing and provides food boxes for those experiencing food insecurity--is based in Cottage Grove and is now asking the community for help.

"Anything the community can give whether it's a can or box of something or bulk items that we can re-package," Fleck said.

The organization has partnerships around the county and state to stock its pantries. Community Sharing receives food from Food for Lane County, a county food pantry that distributes to local entities, Feeding America and a chain of grocery stores. According to Fleck, that giving has not stopped.

"It seems like we're getting the same amount of food," he said of the organizations that feed his shelves. "That's what they're telling us. So, what is causing the shortage?"

"I think it's a little of a lot of things," Fleck said, noting the changes to SNAPs--the food stamp program. "Food insecurity has increased and maybe that's responsible," he said.

The shortage is not new, but it is growing and with the holidays coming, it may only get worse.

Community Sharing offers holiday meal boxes for families that would normally do without.

"We have seen a shortage for probably six months," he said. "But Billy (San Miguel) came to me yesterday and said, 'There's no food left.'" Fleck said.

The organization gave out nearly 900 boxes of food last month. This month, if the shelves don't fill, that number may change.

"We are required to guarantee three to five days of food in the box. As an organization, we try to do five to seven days. But we may have to start curtailing the amount of food we put in the boxes," Fleck said.

The announcement comes just weeks after the release of the latest homeless stats. Lane County was home to the third largest population of home-

less individuals considered to be unsheltered and the second in regards to homeless veterans. Lane County was second only to Multnomah County, which houses Portland, when it comes to homeless veterans.

Community Sharing offers an option for those hungry in the community but Fleck is concerned over the immediate future.

"If anyone has anything, we will take it," he said. "They can drop it off at Community Sharing or if they have a lot, we will come get it," he said, noting the organization's gratitude for its food partners.

Community Sharing is located at 1440 Birch Ave. in Cottage Grove. To donate, please drop off items at the above location or contact Fleck at (541) 942-2176.

EDUCATION



PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

SLSLD teacher Sarah Parsons visits future kindergartener Lydia at her home in Cottage Grove prior to the start of school.

Knock, knock: teachers go door-to-door

By Zach Silva
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After a simple knock on the front door, there was a shriek of excitement and a joyful pitter patter of footsteps from inside the home. After a brief struggle opening the door, five year-old Lydia peered around the door with a wide smile and quickly ran away giggling in her brightly striped dress. Today was the day she had been waiting for: home visit day.

Waiting on the front step in front of the now open door stood Harrison Elementary kindergarten teacher Sarah Parsons, with a basket of "goodies" in hand, and education assistant Kathy Putman.

The pair were there as part of Harrison's home visit program. Before the school year starts the kindergarten teachers at Harrison visit the homes of each of their students to create a bond with the student and their family that starts before the first day of school. In this 20 minute visit, the goal is to form a relationship with the family and ease any anxious or nervous feelings going into the upcoming school year.

By accomplishing those goals, the hope is then to then use this relationship to have a relationship throughout the school year with this family and to fight against chronic absenteeism at the kindergarten level. According to recent school year data from the Oregon Department of Education, 22 percent of kindergarten students in South Lane School District were considered chronically absent meaning they missed over 10 percent of the school year.

While there is no magical solution to fixing all of these issues in one fell swoop, home visits are an attempt at creating a foundation for student success.

"A lot of parents will ask why you do [home visits]. What I have been telling families is that it really makes your child feel special. We are coming to see them. We are coming to their environment, that's how important they are to us," says kindergarten teacher Stephanie Black.

"It opens up communication, it builds those relationships right off the bat. And you are in a one on one setting where they can ask you questions that they may not get to

Please see **KINDER PG. A3**

Douglas library group to send tax levy to ballot

By Caitlyn May
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In November of 2016, Douglas County residents were told the county was running out of options to fund the library system. They were told that it was possible libraries in Drain, Yoncalla, Roseburg and throughout the county would shut their doors and cease their services. They were told there was a ballot measure--44 cents per \$1,000 assessed value-- aimed at creating a tax district to fund the library. On November 4, ballot measure proponents and the county were told, "No thank

you," by the voters and saw the libraries close their doors one after the other. The last one, Roseburg, slamming its door in June of this year.

A little over a year after the initial ballot measure was voted down, Friends of the Mildred Whipple Library are hoping to generate a different outcome with a slightly different tactic.

"We want to create the North Douglas Library District to fund the library in Drain," Valerie Johns said. Johns is a member of the Friends of the Mildred Whipple Library

Please see **DRAIN PG. A9**

CITY

Tiny houses get \$100k

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Village Coalition (CVC) is up against a monstrous task: raise \$800,000 to construct 13 tiny homes known as Cottage Village before the end of 2018 while staging a public relations campaign aimed at worried neighbors and a wary community. On Thursday, September 17, the load got a little lighter.

"We got \$100,000," CVC board member Bruce Kelsh reported.

Please see **TINY HOUSE PG. A10**

CGHS heads back to class

By Caitlyn May
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After weeks of empty classrooms and the dog days of summer, South Lane students are back.

September 6 marked the first day back for sixth and ninth graders while the "rest of humanity," as Cottage Grove High School (CGHS) Principal Mike Ingman called it, joined them on Thursday.

It was the first day for Ingman as well who was installed at CGHS as the interim principal last year after former

Please see **SCHOOL PG. A9**

COMMUNITY

Woman of the year

Yoncalla woman wins Governor's award. **PAGE A11**



GOVERNMENT

CG City Council

City Council address roads, budget. **PAGE A6**

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Coffee with the Editor
Last Thursday of the month
12 pm
@ Backstage Bakery
Come chat about the community!

