



School News

November 29, 2017

A monthly newsletter covering area schools

South Lane Mental Health lends a hand in local schools

Schools around the district benefit from mental health services provided by the non-



community's growing mental health issues. It currently serves approximately 1,500 people per year offering counseling for a host of mental health related circumstances. "We are putting in 99 hours per week in the school's," Clarke told the school board earlier this year. "I was surprised too when I did the math but we are there 99 hours a week on average."

Counselors staff the high school, middle school and elementary schools throughout South Lane School District and have seen the fruits of their labor.

"I'm going to tell a story," Clarke told the board at the time. "We got a call from the principal at the high school. Through staff and students, the high school administration had become aware of a student's plan to harm themselves. Through counseling from South Lane Mental Health staff on the premises and follow-up aid, they were able to find a solution. "He's changed his plan," Clarke said. "Having the resource on campus really is making a difference."

According to the American Psychological Association, one-third of college students in the U.S. have had trouble focusing over the last 12 months due to depression and anxiety. Of those who seek mental health help, 30 percent have seriously considered suicide. South Lane Mental Health reaches these students before they get to college but youth.gov--a cohort of more than 20 federal agencies--notes children ages 6 through 17 also have staggering percentages of mental health needs. According to the data, 21 percent of low-income students between 6 and 17 years of age may be dealing with a mental health issue. Seventeen percent have experienced a mental, emotional or behavioral disorder that requires outside help and counseling. Children in the foster care system and juvenile justice system were more likely to experience a mental health episode and require the help of a mental health professional.

Contact SLMH: If your question or concern needs immediate attention, please call SLMH at 541-942-3939. Otherwise, For questions about client services or mental health issues, contact help@slmh.org

For questions about billing, payroll, insurance, and job openings, contact businessadmin@slmh.org

For media or donor questions, or for general information about South Lane Mental Health, contact info@slmh.org

If you have a mental health emergency and live in Oregon's South Lane County, please call 911.

Above information provided by "What's right in South Lane."

South Lane Mental Health is beginning its fifth year of helping students in South Lane School District. The non-profit mental health organization has counselors in all of the school district schools, where they are providing direct support to students on an ongoing basis. According to the National Institute of Mental Health 1 in 5 children ages 13-18, have or will have a serious mental health illness. South Lane Mental Health is setup to help kids of all ages. "Young people spend a large part of their days in school, this is an obvious place to provide services to them," explains Valeria Clarke, Assistant Executive Director of South Lane Mental Health. South Lane Mental Health offers a variety of options to help kids. Clarke describes, "Services in the schools include one on one therapy, group therapy, behavior support/skills training, and even substance use treatment. We tailor our services to the needs of those who use them, providing individualized service is a hallmark of our work." Clarke also notes services are improved through collaboration within the schools because "therapists also consult with teachers and other staff to assist them in understanding why students respond the way they do in their school environment." The education setting has become more and more about helping kids in every facet of their lives, not just academics. Whether that is helping with student health needs, providing dental services, mental health support, or with living situations, a lot of work is happening to help students be successful in school and life. South Lane Mental Health was started in 1988 by a local group of concerned citizens hoping to respond to the com-

Football tries for the state championship



The Lions have had an undefeated season and on Saturday, Nov. 25, they tried to win it all and beat Mashfield for the state championship. Did they get there? See B1.



Kennedy profiled by The Sentinel

The series will follow the happenings at Kennedy through graduation



The first edition of "Bad Kids" hit stands this month. The seven-part series is the result of Sentinel staff partnering with students and faculty at Kennedy High School to tell the story of kids who are anything but "bad." Sentinel staff spends at least an hour a week observing classes and speaking with the tribe at Kennedy to understand the challenges it faces but also, the success it has and to untangle the preconceived notions a community may have about an alternative school. The name, "Bad Kids" came organically as a way to combat those stereotypes and reclaim the title. Because the students at Kennedy know what you call them--the bad kids--but their progress and passion at Kennedy is indicative of students whose circumstances landed them in situations beyond their control or those who cannot find a proper learning environment to suit their needs at Cottage Grove High School. Read a piece of the series below (available in its entirety at cgsentinel.com) and look for the next installment in the series on December 13.

Halie Ketcher has moved 11 times in her life but she's never had a move as difficult as the last one. Two days after being appointed principal of Al Kennedy High School, she oversaw the move of 94 students (and everything that came with them) four miles north of Cottage Grove to their new home in Saginaw; a space called Delight Valley that they would share with a pre-school and where they would contend with a shrinking move-in budget while new projects around the school district saw millions in bond money. It was a lot of baggage.

"There was some concern in the community," former Kennedy principal Mike Ingman said. He began the move as principal at the end of the 2016-2017 school year before a domino effect started by the resignation of Cottage Grove High School principal Iton Unosenata would see

Ingman take the top spot at the traditional high school and Ketcher, behind the big desk at Kennedy. The move to Delight Valley, Ingman said, meant a longer trek for students in rural Oregon where a car ride is not always guaranteed and the suggestion of moving the community's alternative high school was labeled a bad idea.

Bad. Because in Cottage Grove--where the median yearly income is \$37,058 and 22.5 percent of residents live in poverty--the perception is that the alternative school is for the students who can't be good, a common notion in a national education system that ranks students by tests scores and pays schools a dollar amount per head. In Cottage Grove, it's \$143 per student, per day.

The start There are 81 alternative high schools in the state of Oregon.

See Kennedy C2



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