

Beds for Freezing Nights gears up for winter

By Caitlyn May
cmay@cgsentinel.com

Local organization hopes to help more homeless stay warm this winter

In 2009, Beds for Freezing Nights opened in Cottage Grove under a simple premise: providing a warm place for people who had nowhere else to go when the nights grew cold.

The organization was following the example of the Egan Centers, started by St. Vincent DePaul in Eugene to house the homeless between Nov. 15 and March 31, when temperatures routinely dip below 30 degrees at night.

The center was named for Major Thomas Egan, a homeless veteran who froze to death without shelter in the cold of winter.

Beds for Freezing Nights

didn't house any guests its first year but now, nine years later, it's gearing up for the winter and asking for volunteers to help with a guest load that has only grown.

"Last year we averaged 17.6 guests a night," said board member Christine Moats. "We had 176 stays and had between 12 and 24 people rotating in and out per night and 48 unduplicated guests."

Guests include anyone who cannot find shelter when the overnight average is 29 degrees or below — a stat that's monitored by several members of the board and a policy that has led to confusion in the past.

"People will say the center should have been open but they're looking at the temperature in the hills where it's colder," Moats said. "Or they'll say the Egan Center was opened so we should be. But that's the temperature in Eugene. It has to be an average of 29 degrees."

The number of people seeking a warm place to sleep has

climbed steadily, according to Moats. The increase has led to the need for more funding and volunteers. The organization — which used to be run out of the local Catholic Church — operates in the First Presbyterian Church on Third Street and is completely funded by donations.

"Most of that goes to insurance," Moats said. "That's our largest expense. We do offer coffee and some snacks too."

Ideally, the Beds for Freezing Nights board would staff each night with three volunteers but for the last few years, it's been two people manning one of the three shifts.

"At least one person is CPR certified and we like to have one male and one female but more women have stepped up to volunteer," Moats said.

The number of homeless individuals in Lane County has increased with the latest point in time count — a statistic released once a year based on volunteer head counts of

homeless individuals — Lane County has the second highest rate of homelessness in the state behind Multnomah County which houses Portland.

While the center was activated for just 10 nights last year, it still garnered its share of complaints.

During a recent forum for city council candidates, the issue of homelessness led to a discussion of Beds for Freezing Nights and the reported behavior of some of the guests with one candidate relaying a story about residents finding needles in the area and children not being able to play outside.

"We have heard some complaints from the neighbors of the church," Moats said. "Guests are allowed to go outside and smoke but they're reminded to be quiet. We address those things as they come up."

To become a volunteer, donate or for more information on Beds for Freezing Nights, visit www.freezingnights.com.

Pet tips 'N' tales

By Mary Ellen
"Angel Scribe"



'Diesel' runs the family

"Our family's six-year-old Labrador, Diesel, appears to have consumed a magic pill as a puppy to expand into his over-sized height and 110-pound weight," jokes Terri. "We joke that his puppy chow must have been named, 'Miracle Grow.' His massive body and tail are weapons of household destruction. He is table-height and can clear any table with one wiggle or swish of a tail. Our daughters, Abby and Ava, love playing with their furry brother who is a combination of joy and rambunctious that makes us smile every day."

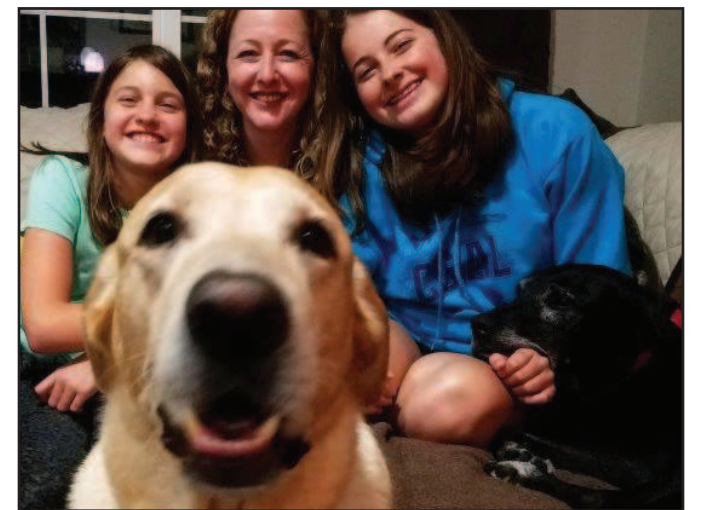
Labs love water, but Diesel steps it up a notch; he is passionate about fishing with his daddy, Jerome. As soon as the dog sees a fishing pole he can't contain his joy. It is a win/win for Diesel because car rides and hiking are his other favorite things. When asked, "What do you want to do?" his bark response sounds like, "Go!"

When he cat-ches his family snacking, he lets them know that he wants to "share" by sitting directly in front of them, all the while his front paws do a little jig dance. Diesel is not the family's only pet but the craziest, causing them to laugh hysterically as he does "zoomies" around the house for no reason.

"He's a big lovable, wiggly, goofball who thinks he belongs wherever we are," said Terri. "He squeezes himself on our bed along with our two cats. As mellow as he is, he is also protective. When my husband is out of town, Diesel sleeps with his head on dad's pillow positioning himself so he can see into our daughters' room."

As much as Diesel loves car rides, he is forbidden to go with his older dog brother, Reilly, to the vet clinic.

"Diesel is too protective. He won't let the veterinarian examine his elderly brother. He winds himself around Reilly so the vet can't get close," said Terri. "Our two dogs



Terri and her daughters Abby, Ava and elderly Labrador, Reilly, are used to Diesel running the show.

and two cats have taught our children compassion and about the unconditional love that only comes from pets.

"Three years ago, we lost our 11-year-old dog, Maggie. Her passing taught the girls about death and the important place that dogs hold in a family. We all mourned, even Diesel.

"When we lived in Georgia, both Diesel and Reilly were bitten by copperhead snakes. Reilly was bitten in the back leg, Diesel in the face, which tells you a lot about their personalities. Right after it happened, I thought Diesel had a tennis ball in his mouth. Then I saw that he was swollen. He is such a big-love bug, that I bet his feelings were hurt that something would bite him. We rushed him to the vet and he did great."

In the spirit of optimism, Terri had to rename her dog and cats' massive shedding to "magical fibers of joy and love."

"Our four fur babies have taught us unconditional love, acceptance, to hold our heads high, be confident, and ask for what we need," said Terri. "Their 'presents' gift our family with comfort, laughter and pure joy. We wouldn't trade them for anything in the world. Also, our UPS driver finally admitted, 'Your dog smiles at me!'"

TIPS:

The Furminator brush is a helpful tool to pet households because it cat-ches 80 percent of the fur before it hits the floor and breeds into dust bunnies.

The Humane Society of Cottage Grove says, "Stop putting dogs in truck beds. 100,000 dogs die each year from jumping or bouncing out of moving vehicles. They are a danger for vehicles driving behind them as they land on them from this unsafe method of transporting."

"I love my cats because I love my home, and little by little they become its visible soul."

—Jean Couteau

PeaceHealth offering influenza shot clinics

As flu season approaches, PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center echoes the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation that everyone age six months and older get a yearly vaccine against the influenza virus — and the sooner the better.

"We are experiencing an early flu season this year so we're recommending getting the flu shot as soon as possible," said Thea Petersen, MD, a family physician with PeaceHealth Medical Group at Cottage Grove Community Medical Center.

"Remember, getting the flu shot not only helps protect you, but everyone in our communi-

ty, especially children, older adults and pregnant women," Dr. Petersen said.

PeaceHealth is offering two upcoming walk-in flu clinics at Cottage Grove Community Medical Center at 1515 Village Drive.

No appointment is necessary.

- Adult flu clinic for patients age 19 and older: Wednesday, Oct. 24, from 1 to 4 p.m. in the Community Room.

Or call 541-767-5200 to make an appointment for other times.

The flu vaccine contains inactivated virus particles that cannot cause an actual influenza infection. However, it is relatively common for some peo-

ple to feel achy or run a fever after receiving the vaccine — a result of the immune system responding as it builds protection in the body. These minor symptoms last only a few days, and are much milder than full-blown influenza, which may include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and diarrhea and vomiting.

"Getting a flu shot is not 100 percent effective at preventing the flu, but if you were to get sick, your symptoms would be less severe and you're less likely to pass it on to others," Dr. Petersen said.

According to a recent report from the CDC, 80,000 people

died from flu complications in the 2017-18 flu season, making it one of the deadliest seasons in at least 40 years.

In addition to flu shots, there are steps all of us can take to keep ourselves and our family, friends, coworkers and neighbors healthy, said Bob Pelz, MD, medical director of infection prevention for PeaceHealth Oregon.

"Community members should be vigilant about thoroughly washing their hands throughout the day and covering their mouths when they cough or sneeze," he advised. "Sick individuals — both adults and children — should stay home from work or school in order to prevent spreading."

Community members invited to help track criminal activity

The Cottage Grove Prowler Tracker Network's (CGPTN) goal is to give Cottage Grove residents a place to report and keep track of criminal activity.

Using this forum, neighbors can look out for each other and raise awareness of suspicious behavior in the area.

The key to this group's success is numbers: See it,

post it and get instant feedback in order to make Cottage Grove a connected, informed and safer community.

To find out more information, find the private Cottage Grove Prowler Tracker Network group on Facebook by searching [facebook.com/groups/CGPTN/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CGPTN/).

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| SATURDAY 73° 49° Partly Cloudy | SUNDAY 67° 48° Showers |
| MONDAY 62° 45° Showers | TUESDAY 62° 42° Showers |

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