

EDITORIALS

Homeless forum good first step

Inspired by the outpouring of interest on Facebook community pages, Polk County's first forum to address homelessness happened on Thursday. The event was well-attended, with about 80 people coming to see how they can get involved with helping the homeless population in Polk County.

Action is needed, but it's tricky, because homelessness has many facets and faces. County Commissioner Jennifer Wheeler had good intentions when she joined with officials in Marion County to form the Marion-Polk task force to address homelessness, and was wise to remove Polk from the group when its leaders began to lose focus.

That doesn't mean she — and others in Polk County — doesn't want to address the issues and see what can be done to help those in need.

When the Dallas community bulletin board on Facebook exploded with people asking that very thing — how can I help those out in the cold tonight? — the community forum was arranged.

People learned about what resources are available and what is needed, both immediately and down the road.

Some things are larger than community members can handle — mental health, low wages, high rents, housing shortage — while other things discussed are more manageable.

While the Mid-Valley Community Action Network works to get a handle on just how large a homeless population exists in Polk County, community members can work to collect donations of cash and clothing for those on the streets and in parks.

When one has nothing, everything counts.

Today at Valley Life Center, the annual Community Connect event will help hundreds connect to resources, get a fresh hair cut, eat a warm meal, gather much-needed supplies, and even get basic care for a beloved pet. It's a great chance to see services in action.

Even if you don't need help, swing over and take the opportunity to "shop" for a place to volunteer. Find out where you want to donate your time — your most precious resource — and sign up.

Spend time this weekend going through your closet and seeing what you have that you aren't using anymore — is it still in good shape? Would someone else find joy from something collecting dust in your home?

Donate it on the first Saturday of the month to the Polk Family and Community Outreach donation center — the warehouse space is donated by Salem Health West Valley to store items that will be given to people in need in the Polk County community.

Set out a box at school, work or church to collect food, socks, coats, gloves, hats or cash.

It truly takes a village to help everyone in the community. When the residents of Polk County set their minds to something, nothing stops them.

Homelessness is not something that can be prevented, but people who experience it or are close to experiencing it can be helped. It is wonderful to see the first steps taken.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump's first action affects homebuyers

Congratulations Trump voters.

Your boy in the White House in his first official act signed a presidential order suspending a plan by Housing and Urban Development to reduce the cost of homeowners' mortgage insurance for first-time home buyers using mortgages backed by the Federal Housing Administration.

Now it will be more expensive for these new buyers to buy that first home. This will negatively impact 750 to 800 thousand working, middle-class Americans each year.

The Obama Administration had planned to lower the cost of this insurance by almost one-third.

But immediately after being sworn, Trump suspended the original plan. If you plan to buy a house under the HUD program, the mortgage insurance on that loan will go up, making it more difficult to afford the home.

Now, Trump's buddies in the insurance business can rest easy that they will be making the maximum possible and increase their income by millions of dollars. Meanwhile, middle-class, working-class Americans qualifying for an FHA-backed mortgage will be less able to afford that first home or will pay millions more for the privilege. Your boy is really sticking up for middle America.

Thanks, Trumpies, even you will be shafted by this.

*Fred Brown
Dallas*

Stellar service, care at Salem Health

In early December, my husband took me to the emergency room of Salem

Health West Valley at the direction of my surgeon in Portland. Usually, I have to go to Saint Vincent's Hospital for the symptoms I was having, but the road conditions were not safe. My surgeon said he would be available to the physicians at Salem Health West Valley's ER. Those physicians were incredible. Together this skilled team successfully prevented me from requiring a dangerous surgery.

I was admitted to Salem Health West Valley where I remained for four days. I was impressed with the highly skilled and compassionate care I received. The nurses worked around the clock and were attentive to my needs.

I also want to thank the housekeeping department. There were two women who I called, "The Merry Maids," who I looked forward to seeing every day. They visited me and shared their experiences and their families. They did a great job of cleaning my room and acted as goodwill ambassadors.

Another person that added to the healing process for me was Bill, from the kitchen. He was an absolute delight. When I started the re-feeding process, he helped me plan the menu of foods I could eat.

I tried really hard to cheat and sneak food in the menu that I wanted to eat, but Bill would not let me. He made the re-feeding process fun, and he was very professional.

Those of us in Polk County are fortunate and blessed to have this professional institution right here in Dallas, and my husband and I were so blessed to know that we did not have to race up to Portland to relieve my suffering and prevent a complete intestinal obstruction.

I would highly recommend this hospital to anyone looking for skilled and compassionate care.

*Joy McGavock
Dallas*

Many thanks for early Christmas gift

The residents of Jefferson Lodge Memory Care Community, located at 664 SE Jefferson Street in Dallas, received an early Christmas gift from the members of New Life Ministries, located in Monmouth.

Jefferson Lodge sends a huge thank-you to the church members who went out of their way to make Christmas so special for their residents. Members donated supplies and their time to make a Christmas ornament for each resident in the memory care community. The handmade gifts were delivered individually and accepted with so much gratitude from the community.

Memory loss not only takes away a person's ability to remember, but it changes their cognitive abilities and sensory perception as well. The ornaments delivered by New Life Ministries not only encourage Jefferson Lodge residents to reminisce about Christmases past, but they provide a piece of beauty for them to enjoy as well.

From everyone at Jefferson Lodge, thank you, New Life Ministries, for dedicating your time and resources to lifting the spirits of our residents.

If you would like to know more about the exceptional care services provided at Jefferson Lodge Memory Care Community, call 503-623-8104 or visit www.Jefferson-LodgeMemoryCare.com.

*Joy McGavock
Dallas*

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PUBLIC AGENDA

Public Agenda is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the Itemizer-ObsERVER via email (ionews@polkio.com).

THURSDAY, JAN. 26

• **Monmouth-Independence Networks Board of Directors** — 7:30 a.m., Henry Hill Education Support Center, 750 S. Fifth St., Independence. 503-837-0700.

TUESDAY, FEB. 2

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 1

• **Monmouth Historic Commission** — 6 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.



WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words.

Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period.

Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed. Attacks by name on businesses or individuals will not be printed.

Letters to the editor that are obvious promotions for a business, products or services will not be printed.

Letters, like all editorial material submitted to the newspa-

per, are edited for length, grammar and content.

Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number. This includes letters submitted via the I-O's website. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only.

Letters must be submitted from individuals.

Letters of thanks to businesses, individuals and organi-

zations are limited to 10 names.

The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

Full letters policy available at www.polkio.com.

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Polk County
Itemizer-ObsERVER

Vol. 142, No. 4 (USPS) - 437-380

The official newspaper of Polk County • Serving Polk County families since 1875

Winner of 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2014 General Excellence Awards from the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association

Periodicals postage paid at Dallas, OR, Independence, OR and Monmouth, OR. Published weekly at 147 SE Court Street Dallas, Oregon 97338 Phone: 503-623-2373

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Polk County — One Year \$35
Other Oregon Counties — One Year \$40
Outside of Oregon — One Year \$45

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to: Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER, P.O. Box 108, Dallas, Oregon 97338

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