

Agencies work to solve child care shortage

Clatsop County's two primary care hospitals have joined forces to alleviate the region's child care shortage.

Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria and Providence Seaside Hospital serve approximately 60,000 patients and have a combined workforce of more than 1,000 employees.

Without support for working parents, some families have been forced to choose between working or caring for their children full time, hospital officials said. Child care is essential to maintaining a strong workforce.

"The closures of child care centers in our community have caused great concern for CMH and for our caregivers," said Nicole Williams, chief operations officer for CMH. "Having access to child care is necessary to support a grow-



Williams



Coplin

ing workforce and community. CMH will continue to be engaged and involved in finding a resolution to this issue."

The county has experienced a loss of over 1,000 child care slots in the last several years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue escalated when several providers closed their doors. In 2021, the county established the Clatsop Childcare Advisory Group, with representatives from CMH and Providence Seaside on the committee.

"Having access to affordable child care is essential for our caregivers," said Rebecca Coplin, chief executive at Providence. "We have heard from our caregivers and the community how the lack of child care critically affects their daily lives. We are committed to working with this group of partners to do all we

can to continue to find solutions."

The group decided a program should be established to provide stable support for current providers and incentives for new providers.

It proposed the Retention & Expansion Child Care Grant program, which was approved at the June 22 committee meeting. The program will begin with \$500,000 in federal funding provided by Clatsop County through its COVID relief entitlement.

The hospitals, along with the county and the Columbia Pacific Economic Development District, are working together to find grants that can be awarded and monitored.

Licensed child care providers in the county can apply for grants, and the Clatsop Small Business Development Center will provide business and economic support to them.

Providence Seaside recently pledged \$100,000 toward the program through its Community Health Division and CMH committed more than \$50,000 to help support Astoria's Lil' Sprouts and the new Bumble Art Studio day care.

The U.S. Coast Guard in Astoria also plans to open a separate child development center for its members, which also could provide slots for children in the community.



Courtesy Warrenton Police Department

A fallen tree closes northbound lanes of Highway 101.

Driver injured in Highway 101 crash

A man was hospitalized early Tuesday after he suffered a medical condition and veered off the highway, striking a tree.

The man, whose name wasn't released, was headed north on Highway 101 near Ocean Crest Motors about 7:45 a.m. when he struck the tree, which fell across the northbound lane, Police Chief Matt Workman said.

"Luckily, other motorists were able to avoid the tree and no other crashes oc-

curred," Workman said.

Some people stopped to assist and help open the road to traffic, but others drove past in an unsafe manner.

The scene was complex, Workman said, but the combined effort of Warrenton Police Department, Warrenton Fire Department, Medix Ambulance, Oregon Department of Transportation, and Classic Towing helped extricate the driver, get him to the hospital, clear the tree and remove the vehicle.

Liberty Theatre wins grant

Liberty Theatre in Astoria will receive a grant for \$146,000 to hire marketing staff to support performing arts on the Oregon Coast.

The grant was announced last week by the M.J. Charitable Trust as part of its spring

2022 grants report.

The report details 76 grants valued at \$32.5 million to nonprofit groups in the Pacific Northwest. The theater grant is the only one to be distributed in Clatsop County.

Public safety calls

Continued from Page 2

2, 32400 block Turlay Lane.

•Medical response, 4:41 p.m. July 2, 200 block Southwest Alder Avenue.

•Medical response, 12:50 a.m. July 3, 1300 block Northwest Warrenton Drive.

•Medical response, 6:03 p.m. July 3, 600 block Fifth Avenue.

•Medical response, 7:18 a.m. July 4, 92200 block Whiskey Road.

•Medical response, 10:36 a.m. July 4, 33200 block Sunset Beach Lane.

•Medical response, 1:50 p.m. July 4, CMH clinic.

•Medical response, 7:05 p.m. July 4, Walmart.

•Injury from fireworks, 11:07

p.m. July 4, Sunset Beach Approach.

•Medical response, 1:25 a.m. July 5, 0-100 block Northwest 17th Place.

•Medical response, 2:10 a.m. July 5, 1600 block Honeysuckle Loop.

•Medical response, 2:54 a.m. July 5, 33200 block Sunset Beach Lane.

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