

THE OUTREACH

WINTER

A Newsletter from Siuslaw Outreach Services

2020

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Marcus's Story

Marcus was experiencing fear, hopelessness and depression after being beaten and sexually assaulted by a family member. The family member told Marcus he was being punished because he was in gender transition. Marcus confided in a friend about his experience. The friend encouraged him to seek help from SOS. The SOS advocate helped Marcus create a safety plan, provided him with relocation resources and connection with a support group and mental health therapist that specializes in sexual assault trauma. Marcus has relocated and is now safe with a supportive family friend and connected with services in that area. This was accomplished with continued support from friends of SOS.

The Good, The Bad, The Opportunities

What an eventful year!

Early in 2020, SOS was faced with the sudden demand to restructure the agency to remain in compliance with the Violence Against Women Act, Family Violence Prevention Services Act, and Lane County Human Services Commission requirements. In short, the new mandates required the agency to divide internally into two separate agencies that are allowed to share a few operational functions. At the time, we were unsure how services would be affected. There was growing concern that the requirements would create a financial burden that would be difficult to maintain. The good news was, the community responded with increased financial contributions to fund the adaptation to the requirements. The anxiety that came with the change quickly disappeared due to the generous outpouring of support from our financial partners and volunteers. Heartfelt thanks go out to all who stepped up to help!

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and anxiety levels quickly rose again over the necessity to adapt. The staff and board of directors worked quickly to ensure that accessibility for clients was not hindered.

SOS Executive Director Bob Teter quickly worked proactively with several foundations and government agencies to secure resources for clients financially affected by the pandemic and the governor's restrictions, and

to find resources for staff to work remotely if necessary to ensure services continue. His efforts were a success!

In all, \$255,000 was raised for direct aid for clients to help with rent and utilities. A portion of the funds were used to add video conferencing for staff and clients. The conference room was remodeled to allow clients to access computer resources and to video-conference with Lane County Courts, Oregon Law Center, and various self-sufficiency education programs. Staff were provided safe and secure equipment to work from home in certain situations. Security cameras were also installed. This additional technology has greatly improved the agency's ability to provide services. It also fully utilized those additional funds.

The downside to all this? None of the new funding addressed the burdensome new operational costs forced upon us. The staff and board are working to secure continued funding to ensure operational costs are met so we can continue the many critical services for people in need. The staff and board are so grateful to those who have sacrificed to support us financially. If you'd like to help underwrite these new costs and keep our valuable community programs funded to the necessary levels, please contact us.

Together we will get through this, because we must.

**CLOSED: NOV. 26 & 27
DEC. 25, JAN. 1, 2021**

Hours:

**Mon.-Thurs. 10 - 3:30 Fri.
9 - 4 by appointment**



**SIUSLAW
OUTREACH
SERVICES**

**OUR MISSION: "To provide compassionate, respectful
and confidential support to people in need."**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 19000 Florence, OR 97439
Physical Address: 1576 West 12th Street Florence, OR 97439
Phone: (541) 997- 2816 Fax: (541) 997- 7257 Crisis Line: (541) 997- 4444
E-mail: exec@florescesos.org Website: www.florescesos.org

Domestic Violence Awareness

Month Recap



October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Each year, SOS and other agencies in Oregon as well as nationwide, perform a variety

of awareness campaigns. Domestic Violence is an issue that touches every aspect of our community. In 2019, SOS provided services to 325 survivors of domestic violence. The stress of the coronavirus, along with other issues, has increased the need for services. By the end of September of this year, SOS had already responded to nearly 400 instances of domestic violence. This year, SOS held its annual March Against Domestic Violence. In years past, as many as 200 have shown up to silently march through Old Town Florence. The numbers of participants were down significantly due the pandemic. Although precautions were taken to address concerns, such as masks, distancing and hand sanitizers, many felt the risk was too great. Mayor Joe Henry proclaimed October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in a ceremony during the October 5th meeting of the city counselors. During the ceremony, he expressed his appreciation for the critical services SOS provides. The Siuslaw News provided a two-page insert once again. The insert included commentaries from community leaders, local statistics as well as ideas for ways community members could make a difference in the lives of those experiencing violence. New this year were yard signs in the shape of awareness ribbons. Several businesses and homeowners displayed the 18-inch by 30-inch signs throughout the month of October. The signs, created by Sign Stop in Florence, are reusable and will be available next year for anyone wishing to post them. If you would like to get involved in future awareness campaigns, please contact SOS Executive Director, Bob Teter.



SOS WORKS WITH MCR

Last year, Siuslaw Outreach Services entered into a partnership with the newly formed Mobile Crisis Response program. MCR is a group funded in part by Lane County Mental Health to assist local law enforcement and emergency medical service personnel in responding to calls regarding a mental health crisis. The goal of the program is to help law enforcement or EMS de-escalate situations involving someone exhibiting mental health issues, provide thoughtful support and services for the homeless and assist with wellness checks and death notifications.

The team of individuals is trained in grief counseling, de-escalation, crisis intervention as well as coordinating disaster relief efforts. The group operates out of the West Lane Fire and Emergency Medical Service Authority. SOS provides support services to MCR with shower, laundry, motel and transportation vouchers as well as cold weather gear. SOS also provides back-up support. If MCR workers are engaged and a call comes in, SOS can respond on scene. In the event domestic violence or sexual assault is reported as part of the crisis, MCR calls SOS to the scene to provide its specialized services. "We are very grateful for our partnership with SOS. Together, we are able to provide better services to our community.," said MCR Director, Lori Severance.

The group is supervised by a local board of advisors consisting of representatives from local law enforcement, fire & ambulance, Options Counseling, Lane County, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Peace Health, Cold Weather Emergency Shelter Program and Siuslaw Outreach Services. MCR responds to an average of 20 calls per month. SOS provides support to 15-20% of their calls. Until November of this year, MCR only responded to calls within the Florence city limits. Recently, Lane County commissioners voted unanimously to increase sheriff department presence in the Florence/Mapleton area allowing MCR to work in the surrounding areas.

Staff Learns About Mental Health

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 Americans suffer from some form of mental health issues. Approximately 30% of those experiencing chronic homelessness have been diagnosed with some form of mental illness. SOS has many clients who are in crisis and are experiencing trauma, addiction, depression, suicidal thoughts or suffer from some other form of mental illness. For the past year, SOS Advocate, Lori Oltman, has been a member of the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Lane County. As a member, Oltman is involved in on-going training as well as leading trainings for community groups on the subject of suicide prevention. The staff at SOS has been successful in helping prevent 11 suicides since the onset of the pandemic.

For the past 3 months, SOS staff members, Lori Oltman and Marie Hickman, participated in intense training on how best to communicate and serve those suffering from these mental health challenges. They learned how someone, suffering from various forms of mental illness, process information, how diet and dental care have an effect on mental health. The staff trained on techniques to support those who may be "self-medicating" (with non-prescribed) drugs. The extensive training program was administered by Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon and funded by Oregon Department of Justice. SOS Executive Director, Bob Teter said, "This will definitely make our program delivery more impactful and efficient. I am so grateful for the hard work of these dedicated staff members, as well as the opportunity provided to us by the state."

Transforming Lives Through Philanthropy



SOS Donor Development Committee past chairperson, Judith Schwartz, and then board president, Bart Mealer, wanted to provide a way for some of our larger donations to be recognized. Although, several hundred community members financially support SOS with donations between 5 and 999 dollars each year, which are critical to maintaining the operations of SOS, a smaller number of donors have made donations between 1,000 and 50,000 dollars to a specific program or operating expense in the past couple of years. A plan was set in motion to create a donor recognition wall to display the names of those donors.

The committee and staff worked with local engraver and artist Joe Mirvis to create the artwork. The concept of using butterflies was the brainchild of SOS Advocate, Pamela Long. Pamela's thought that SOS and its programs are designed to help someone change their situation or provide them services to greatly impact change in their lives for the better. It made sense to use the analogy of the wondrous process a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly. Demonstrating the metamorphosis many of SOS clients experience. At the bottom of the artwork is a scroll that reads, "Philanthropy and selfless acts transform lives and those lives transform the world." This is at the very heart of the Donor Development Committee's philosophy. If you would like more information about how to get your name on the wall, please contact the Siuslaw Outreach Services office.

SOS Adds Beers to the Board Of Directors

Oregon Pacific Bank Loan Officer and talented singer, Maree Beers, has joined the Siuslaw Outreach Services Board of Directors. Beers is also involved in Habitat For Humanity and C.R.O.W. Maree Beers' proven leadership, knowledge of the community and local tribal issues make her a wonderful addition to the team.



Maree Beers

Message from the President

I am sincerely grateful that I was chosen to lead the board of directors for the next year at SOS. The last 9 months have been a challenge for many, and we as an organization have worked hard to help individuals and families in need. The COVID-19 pandemic brought forth many obstacles that nobody could have anticipated. Due to great leadership from Bob Teter, he and the staff at SOS did an amazing job of helping clients who were in need. During the next year, my hope is that we will continue to provide services for those in need, while also providing kindness and support to those seeking help from us.



Justin Young

Justin Young
President
SOS Board of Directors

SOS Responds to COVID Housing Crisis

The effects of COVID-19 have rippled through the housing market even in the Florence area. The nationwide rental and housing crisis is hitting close to home for those impacted. Since March, Siuslaw Outreach has served over 60 households directly affected by the corona virus pandemic, with multiple months' worth of rent assistance and nearly 100 households with utility bill assistance. The vast majority of those households lost income due to state COVID restrictions, while some had a member of the household with a compromised health status that increased their expenses. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) had a strong start in November with more than 80 individuals and families signing up for assistance in the local area. There have also been energy programs for over 23 families influenced by COVID that have allowed people a reprieve from higher energy bills caused by staying home to socially distance.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE AS YOU SHOP

Go shopping and give! Fred Meyer Community Rewards and Amazon Smile match a portion of your spending and send a check to SOS. Just go to www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards and link SOS to your Rewards Card

using number **86049**. When you shop online with Amazon, make sure you click on the Amazon Smile logo and select Siuslaw Outreach Services as the organization to receive benefits.



~ LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY ~

If you are 70 or older please consider a legacy bequest to Siuslaw Outreach Services. Your gift will help you with financial planning and ensure Siuslaw Outreach Services will continue to be here for people in need, for many years to come. Those who contribute to our Legacy Campaign will receive special tax benefits, have their gift forever recognized and remembered and gain the satisfaction that they have made a long-lasting impact on the health and livability of our community.

Please contact SOS Executive Director:

Bob Teter at 541-997-2816

or a member of our Board of Directors for more information.

SIUSLAW OUTREACH SERVICES



Justin Young



Chris Saltmarsh



Jennifer French



Montee Kennedy



Bob Teter



Maree Beers



Lori Gates



Bart Mealer



Judy Schwartz



Denise Tarvin



Jane Vecny

NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION RIGHTS and PROTECTIONS to BENEFICIARIES

Siuslaw Outreach Services, Inc. operates its program, services and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws. No person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), disability, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any of our programs.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write Office of Civil Rights, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (OCR), 810 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20531 or call 202-307-0690 (Voice) or 202-307-2027 (TDD/TTY). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may also contact OCR through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339 (TTY), 877-877-8982 (Speech) or 800-845-6136 (Spanish).

2019 Statistics

Clients Served with Emergency Vouchers, Clothing and/or Rent Assistance (unduplicated).....	2,720
Males.....	1,397
Females.....	1,594
Other Genders.....	11
Children under 17.....	753
Seniors (62 and older).....	380
Disabled.....	728
Homeless Individuals.....	763
Veterans.....	164
Households Receiving Housing Assistance.....	64
Clients Receiving Domestic Violence Advocacy Services	325
Clients Receiving Sexual Assault Advocacy Services.....	19
Victims Receiving Stalking Advocacy Services.....	15
Clients Receiving Energy Assistance (LIHEAP).....	564
Response To After Hours Calls From Police/Hospital.....	55
Total Number Of Trained Volunteers.....	36
Total Number Of Volunteer Hours.....	10,924
Sheltered Nights For DV/SA Survivors.....	730
DV/SA Survivors Participating In Support Group	71
DV/SA Survivors Receiving Legal Aid	78
After Hours Calls to Crisis Line.....	165
Participants in Self-Sufficiency Classes & Workshops....	145
Participants in Parenting Education Classes.....	49
Total Walk-In Visits.....	7,751

SOS is looking for committed volunteers to staff our Focus 4 Crisis Line. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator for more information by calling (541) 997-2816 ext. 206 or stop by to see Lori at SOS.



SIUSLAW OUTREACH SERVICES
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