

THE OUTREACH

WINTER

A Newsletter from Siuslaw Outreach Services

2023

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Help is Here

Rachel is in her twenties and a mother of two children. She experienced Domestic Violence as a child, and later had the same experience in her relationships. Substance abuse, addiction issues, physical and mental health issues also played a part in her life. After coming to SOS for six years off and on, Rachel is now sober, stable and has custody of her children. SOS connected her with community partners including Catholic Community Services, Legal Aid, Planned Parenthood, Goodwill, and Lane Community College are among the support group who helped her get her GED, a job, a place to live and a life turned around. SOS also provided her with classes on budgeting, credit, tenant tips and financial goals. Rachel also took parenting classes to learn skills to care for her children. Without SOS and these community partners, she may not be here today. If you are struggling, give us a call.

Office Hours:

Closed December 25, 2023

And January 1, 2024

Monday - Thursday

10:00 am - 3:30 pm

Friday by appointment only

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

SOS Spearheads Florence Homelessness Resource

Many unhoused clients seeking services at SOS express challenges with navigating services in Florence and throughout Lane County. Community providers working with the unhoused have expressed challenges in coordinating services. Community leaders have expressed a need for a more coordinated effort by providers. In an effort to respond in a solution oriented manner, SOS Executive Director Bob Teter considered a model program he participated in Linn County to address troubled youth. Teter's vision was to use that model to address some of our unhoused community members. Earlier this year, he gathered a group of providers to form the Florence Homelessness Resource Team. The group's purpose is to collaborate to provide comprehensive wrap-around services to identified unhoused community members to help them overcome barriers to secure stable housing in a case-conferencing approach to help those particular clients overcome barriers to self-sufficiency. The group will also work with one another of services within their respective agencies to collect data for community awareness and assist city staff and elected officials in creating strategies to address homelessness.

Agencies who are participating include; West Lane Crisis Response, Safe Shelter For Siuslaw Students, Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter, City of Florence, PeaceHealth, Lane County Homelessness Outreach Team and others. More are expected to join in the coming months. The group began building the infrastructure this past summer and will begin their work in early 2024.

It is no secret that homelessness is a concern to many. Oregon has the highest rate of homelessness in the country. Local rent rates have increased an average of 70% over the past six years. Over 80% of the counties' population are rent burdened

spending over 35% of their total net income on rent alone. Nearly 50% are paying over half their income on rent or mortgage. It is estimated that 500 to 700 unhoused individuals pass through Florence seeking services and 180 to 200 unhoused individuals living in Florence year round. Many are working multiple jobs but cannot secure stable housing. Many unhoused individuals want to work but have difficulty finding employers willing to give them a chance. Most employers require a physical address on their applications. There are many who are trying to recover from addiction or are suffering from mental illness. Oregon is ranked as the least accessible state for mental health services.

This group will not make huge impacts initially but as Teter stated recently, "Through this collaborative effort, if we can just move the needle a bit and make life lasting impacts on some of our



unhoused individuals and families, I would consider it a success. Hopefully it will breed more success." In addition, to case management collaborative services, this group plans to work as one single loud voice in addressing policy makers in making decisions to work on solutions rather than focus so much on managing the problem.



**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@florencesos.org Website: www.florencesos.org

SOS Welcomes New Team Members

Recently, SOS added two new staff members.

Kenna Graunke is our newest Special Victims Advocate. Kenna will be delivering a wide range of services and resources to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, elder abuse and stalking. Kenna is a recently retired ER nurse. As an RN in an emergency room setting, she has seen many things so she is not easily shaken by stories we hear from survivors. Her medical background is also a huge asset in providing advocacy for survivor of physical abuse. Kenna applied with SOS after hearing a presentation made at a city council meeting. When she heard about an opening, she jumped at the chance for a new career.



Cerissa Shoun fills a new position at SOS, Crisis Assistance Advocate. Although the position title is not new, she increases the staff in the Crisis Assistance Program from three to four. Funds were raised to fill this positions due to clientele numbers and requests for services within that department. Client requests for services have increased by more than 50% in recent months. When asked why she applied to work at SOS, she said, "Well, it's pretty simple. I have always been a helper. I enjoy making people's day and life a little more bearable. SOS has a wide area that they can help with, I knew I wanted to be a part of making a difference in their lives and SOS gives me the opportunity."

Both Cerissa and Kenna have completed nearly 200 hours of training to obtain their Advocate status. We are thrilled to have them be a part of the team.

Kevin Furber, the Crisis Assistance Manager, presents Cerissa with her certificates upon completion of basic DV Advocacy certification and 180 hours of training for Crisis Assistance.



Holiday Heart Ache

Although the holidays are a joyous time for many, it is also the hardest time for some. The holidays can be a reminder of how much someone misses a lost loved one. There are pressures from tech marketers and from peers to buy the latest electronic device for a child. The pressure of increased cost of utilities this time of year. Rent costs continue to rise. All of this and more can bring individuals and families to the breaking point.

It is important for all of us to exercise patience and understanding as we are all facing some sort of life challenge. It also important that those of us who are not so destitute to support our neighbors in need. There are many groups and organizations out there working to improve the health and well-being of our community. Many of those groups and efforts are stretch to their own breaking point because the need is so great. Please remember to include organizations such as Food Share, Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter, Florence First Step, Safe Shelter for Siuslaw Students and of course **SOS** in your holiday gift giving.

SOS Partners Promotes Financial Management

For several years SOS has offered free classes on basic budgeting and understanding credit in partnership with Oregon Pacific Bank. Recently, SOS partnered with Financial Beginnings Oregon, a non-profit based out of Portland, Oregon with local representatives to offer more classes and resources to help low-income families and individuals work toward financial independence. SOS, Oregon Pacific Bank and Financial Beginnings now offer the following classes. "Tools for Budgeting and Reaching Financial Goals." In this class, students learn about different methods and tools for budgeting and tracking finances. "Budgeting Square Pegs Into Round Holes." Students learn how to maintain a budget and how to prioritize and adjust budgets to handle life's curveballs without going into major debt or financial ruin. "Understanding Credit." Students learn how credit is calculated and how to monitor credit reports. "Protecting Your Assets." Students learn about how monitor your credit reports, and how to identify potential scams. "Savings and Retirement." Students learn about savings and investments as well as creating plans to achieve financial long term goals.

SOS also offers classes in the areas of tenant rights and their responsibilities and classes in stress management. All classes are free to clients. Non-client community members may also attend classes. Anyone interested or want more information are encourage to contact SOS staff.

**To become a financial
Supporter of SOS,
Donations can be made by
Check, Direct Deposit or:**

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

SOS has a need for volunteers to help us with the front desk. This position is 3 hours a week and involves answering the phone, greeting clients

and is vital to our organization. If you're interested in our mission please join us! If you feel you can commit to that amount of time each week, **Call us at 541-204-1784.** (We also need help with the Crisis Line).



All-In Update

In January, Governor Kotek signed executive order, 23-02 designating nearly 200 million dollars to immediately address homelessness. She called it her “**All In Against Homelessness Initiative.**” The funds were distributed to eight Oregon counties that had the highest rates of homelessness. The focus of the funds were to upgrade some current emergency shelters, build more shelter sites, provide funds for families to move into rentals and provide financial aid to keep extreme low-income families housed. Funds were provided to Portland Metro areas, Bend/Redmond areas, Marion County, Polk County, Jackson County and Lane County. The governor directed those counties and service areas to spend all appropriated dollars by January 11, 2024, giving those entities nine months to plan, organize and distribute those funds to qualified households.

Lane County was awarded \$18 million. Florence was the only coastal community to receive All-In funds earmarking \$656,500 for the west Lane County. Agencies were only allowed to use 10% of the dollars distributed toward existing staff and increased staff required by the All-In program parameters. The rest of the funding was to be provided directly to qualified program applicants. SOS had to add one part-time position and reassign one full time staff position to accommodate the requirements of the funding.

Lane County’s goals were to provide emergency rent assistance to 741 qualified households to stave off eviction, increase the number of shelter beds by 230 and to re-house 247 households currently experiencing homelessness. As of October, the county reached its goal of 230 new shelter beds (all in Eugene and Springfield) and 500 households to stave off evictions and re-housed just over 100 households experiencing homelessness. Locally through this funding, SOS has staved off the eviction of 30 households and re-housed 16 families that were homelessness. SOS Crisis Assistance Program Manager, Kevin Furber said, “Although this funding has been a blessing to those who are most vulnerable; elders, children, disabled and veterans find and retain housing and shelter they need to obtain stability and peace of mind, it has been a challenge helping them find and secure affordable housing along with the limited time frame the funding is available.” Executive Director, Bob Teter and Lane County Human Services Commission leaders will be meeting this month to evaluate the efforts of the governor’s initiative and create strategies for next steps.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Chris Saltmarsh

As we near the end of the 2023 calendar year it is a great time to look at the accomplishments of Siuslaw Outreach Services and look forward to the future. We shared a heartwarming story in our annual letter to donors. It is a testament to why SOS exists and the beauty in helping those in our community when they truly need it. The story of Gina is an inspiration and shows the impact we can all have on someone’s life.

It was a difficult year for many in our community, but that is why we continue to ask for donations. These are critical for SOS to continue to serve our community and lift people up. Our amazing, dedicated, compassionate staff can only do so much without money. Government and private grants are getting more and more difficult to obtain or are severely reduced from previous years.

If you are able, please think about SOS this holiday season and donate what you can to SOS. You can feel good that your money will stay right here and help people in our community. If you are unable to donate financially, please consider volunteering time with SOS.

You may call us at 541-997-2816 or visit our website at: <https://florencesos.org> for more information or to donate. Thank you for supporting SOS.

-Chris Saltmarsh, SOS Board President

Saturday,
May 11, 2024
Florence Golf Links
Team Registration
Opens:
February 5, 2024

Save The Date!

14th Annual

Siuslaw Open



2022 STATISTICS

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED IN 20222,008

Males—842 Females—1,162 Other Genders—3 Seniors over 62—269 Disabled—321 Homeless—611 Veterans—90

Clients Receiving Domestic Violence Advocacy Services ...305	Sheltered Nights For DV/SA Survivors.....1,335
Clients Receiving Sexual Assault Advocacy Services.....40	DV/SA Survivors Participating In Support Group.....92
Clients Receiving Energy Assistance (LIHEAP).....504	Households Receiving Emergency Rent Assistance.....107
Response To After Hours Calls From Police/Hospital.....82	Participants in Parenting Education Classes.....10
Total Number Of Trained Volunteers.....24	Participants in Self-Sufficiency Classes & Workshops.....36
Total Number Of Volunteer Hours.....6,692	Total Visits.....12,056
Clients Served with Emergency Vouchers, Clothing and/or Rent Assistance (unduplicated).....1,372	

SIUSLAW OUTREACH SERVICES BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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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).

Classes Available to the Public*

- ◆ Budgeting Square Pegs Into Round Holes
- ◆ Financial Management/Banking Basics
- ◆ Managing Stress So It Doesn't Manage You
- ◆ Employment Tips & Tricks
- ◆ Tenant Tips & Information
- ◆ Introduction to Family Law

For more information about attending these classes, please visit us at 1576 W. 12th Street or call us at 541-997-2816

** Reservations are required*

~ 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 541-205-9011

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

**SOS is looking for committed volunteers to staff our Focus 4 Crisis Line.
Please contact us for more information by calling (541) 997-2816**



SIUSLAW OUTREACH SERVICES
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