



CLOUDS IN THE FORECAST
FULL REPORT ON A2

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WASHINGTON COUNTY'S LEADING INFORMATION SOURCE

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Opinion

Help Homeless Youth

According to Community Action in Washington County there were 1,200 students dealing with homelessness attending schools in Beaverton. That was two weeks ago. Now the number has risen to 1,300.

In Hillsboro the number is not as high, at 282 students with no homes to go home to. These children of all ages go "home" to makeshift shelters under bridges or in the woods; to abandoned buildings; perhaps to a car; or, they are in homeless mobility, without a constant place to stay and moving from place to place in search of a place to rest.

Community Action offers a program to help homeless families. Its Hillsboro Family Shelter provides up to five weeks shelter while it helps families meet goals in making financial plans for long-term self-reliance and in finding housing. It also has programs to help families avoid the pitfalls of homelessness with its energy and emergency rent assistance program and its housing stability assistance program.

As for students dealing with homelessness, another organization, HomePlate at 494 E. Main St., Hillsboro, is a place where homeless youth can go for a healthy meal.

The idea of HomePlate came together when a youth group, social service agencies, the Hillsboro Police Department and other community members and organizations identified the problem of youth facing homelessness in Washington County, and the absence of services for them.

Since its opening in 2005, HomePlate has served literally thousands of homeless youth who otherwise might have gone hungry.

HomePlate exists through donations (make checks out to HomePlate c/o UCC, 494 E. Main St. Hillsboro, Ore. 97123). And here are some other things needed for the program: bus tickets, socks, gift certificates for food or clothes, supplies for sack lunches (juice boxes, individual packages of cookies and crackers & cheese, protein sources like tuna salad, individual canned fruits, granola bars etc.).

For more on Community Action, go to www.communityaction4u.org. (gs)