

Homeless and Runaway Youth in Lane County

An LWVLC Study, 2006

In 2001, the National Coalition for the Homeless stated that homeless youth are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. In 2005, the Oregon Runaway and Homeless Work Group estimated that 24,000 youth aged 11 to 21 were homeless in Oregon during FY 2002-03. Most were aged 15 and 16.^[1]

Appalled by these statistics and inspired by a study by the League of Women Voters of Umpqua Valley, the League of Women Voters of Oregon adopted the following 2-year study at its 2005 state convention:

Research the number and conditions of homeless youth in Oregon, with emphasis on contributing causes, medical, housing and educational needs. Identify the skills and support services homeless youth need to leave street life and to lead sustainable lives, avoiding a lifelong homelessness. Examine programs and proposals for meeting these needs, including state, county, private and faith-based programs and proposals. Identify “best practices” solutions in urban and rural settings wherever they are operating. Clarify the legal structures that affect the lives of homeless youth. Make recommendations for actions to be taken.

The League of Women Voters of Lane County is participating in this study. Between November 2005 and February 2006, its Homeless and Runaway Youth (HRY) study committee interviewed experts at more than 40 social service agencies and school districts in Lane County. The complete report is obtainable on request, but the following are some highlights.

Who Are Homeless and Runaway Youth?

Safe & Sound, a Lane County coalition of service providers, recognizes four categories of HRY:

- Those at risk of family separation
- Runaways, who leave home without parental consent
- Throwaways, whose parents encourage them to leave or abuse, neglect or abandon them
- Homeless youth, who cannot return to their homes

In FY 2004-05, between 2,500 and 3,000 HRY made contact with social service agencies in Eugene/Springfield, where most Lane County providers are located. Most were white, but about 5% were African American, 4% were Latino and 8% had another ethnicity. Some agencies served equal numbers of males and females, whereas others reported a somewhat higher proportion of males.

School districts must use a somewhat broader definition of homelessness to comply with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which protects the rights of children and youth who are experiencing homelessness. The law says that a child or youth without a fixed, regular and adequate residence is homeless, regardless of the duration of homelessness or whether the child is living with a parent or separated from parents (see Appendix 1). In 2004-05, Lane County’s 15 school districts identified 2,158 homeless students in grades K–12, including 474 in grades 6–8 and 748 in grades 9–12. Of the total, 349 youth (16%) were unaccompanied (not living with a parent) (See Appendix 2).

Our experts described HRY as still kids developmentally, victims of predators, often capable of being successful at school, needing respect, able to assume leadership roles given adequate

support, not different from other young people, at high risk of being exploited, needing to feel that they matter and their voices are being heard. “Life has given them stuff to deal with that children shouldn’t have to face,” said Linda Richardson of Blachly School District, where 23 percent of the students are homeless.

Here is Angelina’s story: *Angelina has drifted in and out of shelter care since she was 13. Her earliest years were spent with her mother, who had a history of child neglect and drug abuse. At age 8, Angelina was sexually abused by one of her mother’s boyfriends. After that, she was removed from her mother’s home and placed in foster care. Throughout the rest of her childhood, Angelina moved in and out of various foster homes. She began running away and using drugs. At age 13, during one of her many admissions to treatment centers, Angelina was diagnosed with bipolar, social anxiety and oppositional defiant disorders. Her runaway episodes continued. By age 16, Angelina was homeless and living on the streets with a succession of adult men whom she called her “boyfriends.” Eventually, caseworkers lost contact with her, finally dropping her from their caseloads. In her last shelter visit, she stayed 3 nights, then left, and has not been seen since.*¹

Some Possible Causes

LWVLC did not conduct a scientific study to determine the causes of homelessness, but it collected providers’ opinions on this topic. The most commonly mentioned causes were abuse and neglect at home, drug abuse by parents or youth, mental illness, poverty, parental intolerance of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered youth, broken homes and parental incarceration.

“It is predominately a family-oriented issue,” said Circuit Court Judge Kip Leonard. “Family homelessness, family dysfunction, drug abuse (both family and youth), criminal behavior (both family and youth) and peer association.”

One group of teens we interviewed said they left home because their parents were always fighting and beating them and their siblings, because their parents were alcoholic, because they were kicked out of their homes or because they had conflicts with parents over rules. Another group said that abuse, drugs, alcoholism, not feeling safe, the death of a parent, neglect, having a family that doesn’t listen or help, not being accepted and being abandoned are situations that make young people leave home.

How We View Homeless Youth

Our experts’ opinions ran the gamut on this topic. Some said the public views HRY as a very important community asset and is sympathetic to the problem, whereas others said that HRY are viewed as a huge nuisance, scary and responsible for much of the graffiti in downtown Eugene. Some experts pointed out that many people ignore HRY, either because they are unaware of the problem or because the issue seems overwhelming. “It’s too depressing and unacceptable to have it in the community, and not having answers for it makes it even more challenging,” said Richie Weinman of the Eugene Planning and Development Department. “So people just don’t like to confront the issue at all.”

Safe & Sound Youth Project

Lane County’s main provider of services to HRY is Safe & Sound. This coalition was created to coordinate HRY services because most providers also serve other populations.

Looking Glass Station 7

(Eugene) Located in a former fire station donated by the City of Eugene, Station 7 is a walk-in emergency shelter for boys and girls aged 11 to 17 years. It currently offers 11 beds. Serving 300 young clients per year, it is open only between 5 pm and 10 am but has a 24-hour crisis line. Residents can stay for 14 days, though a stay can be extended up to 2 months if necessary. Those who stay for more than 3 days must devise a plan to end their homelessness. They identify barriers, and staff members help them overcome such barriers. Although the staff offers guidance, residents are in charge of preparing the evening meal, cleaning up afterwards and deciding on evening activities. Residents must obey four rules: be kind, be calm, cooperate and be willing to help others. The staff uses the Positive Youth Development^[2] approach. The wrap-around services at Station 7 include mental-health and substance-abuse counseling, help finding housing, follow-up therapy and a 6-month follow-up. The agency also provides crisis intervention for 200 families per year. Approximately two-thirds of the sheltered youth return to their homes or find accommodation with a relative. Fifteen percent go to live with a community member for a short time. Funding for Station 7 comes from the City of Eugene, Lane County, United Way, FEMA, a federal runaway and homeless youth grant and private donations. The Presbyterian churches in Eugene have provided money and resources, such as a washer and dryer. However, the agency does not have sufficient funding to hire enough staff, and therefore can fill only 11 of its 16 beds.

Looking Glass New Roads

(Eugene) has street teams that provide advocacy and support to youth on the street, including service referrals, transportation and crisis intervention. It also runs a day facility that is open from 8 am to 5 pm, offering breakfast, lunch and snacks Monday through Friday and dinner on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In addition, New Roads provides telephones, showers, a laundry facility, storage lockers, clothing and basic needs. A health center staffed by nurse practitioners (who are employed by Lane County but funded by the Federally Qualified Health Center) operates on site 3 days per week, providing contraceptives and commonly prescribed medications such as antibiotics. Case management, individual counseling and substance-abuse counseling are also available on site. Clients do not pay for those services, which are charged to the Oregon Health Plan if a youth has a medical card. Federal, state and local grants fund New Roads. However, director Eric Van Houten anticipates loss of federal money.

New Roads School

is a private, alternative school funded entirely by Eugene School District 4J and open only to youth whose homes are in that district. It allows youth to earn missing credits or obtain a GED. The school's 30 slots are almost always full, and there is often a waiting list. Of the 109 students who attended last year, 13 earned a GED and 45 transitioned back to 4J.

Planned Parenthood Health Services of Southwestern Oregon

(Eugene, Bethel, Springfield, Florence, Cottage Grove, Junction City) This agency's reproductive health-care services include birth control and sexual protection, screening for sexually transmitted diseases, annual exams, pregnancy testing and referrals to adoption and abortion services. Planned Parenthood's educational services focus on the basics of anatomy and physiology, healthy sexuality, birth control, disease transmission, gender issues and healthy relationships. Over the past 3 months, the agency has served 20 homeless young women at Looking Glass New Roads with a weekly education class, which usually attracts between three

and 13 girls. It serves a much larger number through its services to local agencies and its clinical services. It also offers classes in every high school in Lane County and some middle schools. It is trying to reach more HRY on the streets through a new outreach program. Planned Parenthood's educational services are funded by clinic revenues (though many clinical services are free), endowments from private donors, money from United Way and federal, state and municipal grants to Safe & Sound.

HIV Alliance

(Eugene) The alliance provides HIV prevention counseling and testing. Because of an Oregon state law, its needle-exchange program is unavailable to teens younger than 18 years. It also provides services for HIV-positive clients, the youngest of whom is 20. The agency recently started a Youth Health Outreach program from a van parked at Blair and 7th Ave. Private grants, such as one from Spirit Mountain Foundation, provide most of the funding. Competition for such grants is increasing.

Directions Services Counseling Center

(Eugene) Direction Services is a one-stop source for assistance and information on programs for families of children with disabilities. As part of the Safe & Sound coalition, Direction Services provides mental-health services for at-risk youth in alternative schools as well as for HRY who have experienced sexual assault.

Community Health Centers of Lane County (

Eugene and Springfield) The health centers include RiverStone Clinic in Springfield, Springfield Schools Health Center, Safe & Sound Homeless Youth Clinic at Looking Glass New Roads and the 4J Opportunity Center in Eugene. Community Health Centers provide integrated primary and behavioral health services for low-income, uninsured, underinsured, Latino and homeless people in Lane County. The Safe & Sound clinic is a satellite clinic of Community Health Centers, and it provides medical, mental-health and substance-abuse services for HRY and at-risk youth.

Other Services for HRY

Centro Latino Americano

provides tutoring on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Ninety percent of the tutors are bilingual in English and Spanish. One of the programs, Los Niños, focuses on parenting very young children. Lane Workforce Partnership^[3] funds the agency's youth program.

Eugene Library, Recreation and Cultural Services Department

offers recreational services, after-school programs, outreach programs at the Eugene libraries and free or discounted shows at the Hult Center. It is also the largest temporary summer employer of youth in Eugene. HRY participate in all of these programs. Most of the funding comes from property taxes and local voter-approved levies and bonds.

Eugene Mission

provides shelter, three meals per day and religious services. Its dayroom is open all day. There is always space in this 400-bed facility, but the Mission does not admit boys aged 11 to 17 years. Younger boys can stay with their mothers. The mission has an annual budget of more than \$1 million and is funded by individuals, businesses, churches, foundation grants and income from its newspaper recycling program.

FOOD for Lane County

provides emergency food to agencies that distribute food boxes. Its summer lunch program for kids serves up to 3,000 lunches per weekday at 57 sites. It also operates three gardens (one tended by youth) where people learn to plant, harvest and sell. Grants and local donations provide most of the funding, while United Way provides 11% and the USDA provides 7%.

Hosea Youth Services

focuses on youth aged 20 and under. Located in First Evangelical Church in Eugene, it is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 5 pm to 7 pm for dinner in its spacious dining room. It also offers showers and a laundry facility, distributes clothing and personal hygiene items and provides some tarps and sleeping bags. This faith-based program provides “spiritual encouragement.” In October 2005, it also opened Hosea House for five young men, who receive help with schoolwork, work and substance abuse problems. Two staff members live in the house, and volunteers help out. Funding comes mostly from individuals, some business owners and fundraising events. The church does not charge rent.

Lane County Youth Services

sees only youth who are referred by law enforcement agencies. It provides detention, secure retention, residential treatment, education, probation, counseling, competence and skill development, hobby and life skills and nutrition education. Funding comes from Lane County general funds and federal and state funds.

Lane County Department of Youth Services provides bus passes, food stamps and Oregon Health Plan benefits to qualifying teens aged 16 to 18. Youth under age 16 are referred to Child Welfare for foster care.

Leadership Education Adventure Direction

provides leadership development and outdoor adventure for low-income teens aged 12 to 17. In 2006, it plans to serve five HRY. With other agencies, it hopes to establish a Teen Center in downtown Eugene. LEAD is funded by foundation grants, donations from REI and Weyerhaeuser and in-kind donations.

Looking Glass Riverfront School

is an accredited alternative high school serving about 300 students per year. Eighty percent are low income, 15% come from rural areas and a small percentage are homeless. The school offers academic and elective classes as well as job training. A mental-health counselor and a drug/alcohol specialist are available on site. Their services are billed to the Oregon Health Plan, private insurance and grant funds.

Oregon Family Support Network

offers one youth group for adolescent girls and another for adolescent boys. Siblings are also invited. The network assists youth with social skills and life skills to help them become functional adults. It also offers support groups for families, advocates for families, organizes family fun nights and assists with individualized education programs, counseling, training, referrals and crisis calls. The network receives federal, state and local funds.

St. John Bosco House,

operated by Catholic Workers^[4], is a home for young mothers whose children have been removed because of residential instability or parental methamphetamine use. Girls under age 18 are not admitted. The women stay for about 3 months while trying to regain custody of their children, but they can stay longer. Two Catholic Workers live in the house. In 2005, the house sheltered a total of 32 women. A governing board provides financial support, friendship and guidance. Funding also comes from local grants, the McKay Family Foundation and the Catholic Archdiocese.

St. Vincent de Paul Eugene Service Station

provides showers, laundry, food, mail service, Internet access, clothing, assistance with résumés, and referrals to local agencies. It serves homeless people aged 18 and older. Youth are often referred to Looking Glass. United Way provides 80% of the funding, and private donations fill the gap.

Teen Post offers food, hot showers, clothes, a washer and dryer, recreation (pool table, ping-pong table, pinball), a recording studio and incentives (cash, a night in a motel, gift certificates) to create poems, short stories, book reports and songs. Open since January 2006, it operates from Monday to Friday from 11 am to 6 pm and on Saturdays from noon to 4 pm. The underlying principle is that youth can thrive when they find their creative gift and that they can also express their anger through music and writing. Teen Post recently started a GED program and a job-skills/résumé program. Individual donations fund the agency.

White Bird

is a referral agency that links clients to the many other agencies in Lane County via Info Line Resource and Referral, a 24-hour hotline. It also operates Cahoots, a program that uses a van to transfer people in crisis from the street to safe places or detox centers. In addition, it runs White Bird Medical Clinic, White Bird Dental Clinic, Chrysalis Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center and a Homeless Health Care Project. Its legal services help homeless and disabled people apply for Social Security benefits. These low-cost or free services are available to people of any age. Programs are funded by federal, corporate and foundation grants, state, county and city funds, United Way and fundraising events. Also, some clients pay for services.

Willamette Family Treatment Center

provides substance-abuse treatment, mental-health treatment, parental training and health care (a doctor and a public-health nurse are on staff) to girls aged 12 to 18. Clients may receive residential treatment (for an average of 3 months) or outpatient treatment (for 2 to 6 months). Teen moms receive pre- and post-natal care and parental training, and they can obtain childcare on-site at the Child Development Center. While the girls are being treated, they receive in-house tutoring through Eugene School District 4J. Upon release, girls receive aftercare. The center relies on federal, state and private funding, and bills the Oregon Health Plan for outpatient services.

Womenspace

provides advocacy, support and shelter for survivors and youth involved in intimate partner violence, which includes physical, emotional, economic and spiritual oppression. In

collaboration with Looking Glass, the agency provides direct outreach to HRY, including safety planning, advocacy and information. It has also developed training materials for people who work with those youth. Womenspace also reaches out to youth in middle and high schools, offering teens support in building healthy relationships (in collaboration with Ophelia's Place).

School districts

in rural and urban Lane County also provide a variety of services for HRY. Students meeting the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness qualify for free breakfasts and lunches and must automatically be enrolled in school even if they lack paperwork. To remove barriers to education, many districts provide items such as school supplies, transportation to school, backpacks, clothing for physical education classes, computer access, eyeglasses through the Lions Club, after-school tutorials, alarm clocks and calculators. Some districts provide additional items, including new and used clothing, access to laundry facilities, Lane Transit bus tokens or passes, hygiene supplies, deposits for more permanent housing, and referrals to other agencies. Unaccompanied youth are helped to apply for food stamps and the Oregon Health Plan. Funding for staff and assistance comes from McKinney-Vento, other federal grants and donations from businesses, churches and community organizations.

Eugene School District 4J

provides medical care to homeless youth at health centers in its four high schools (North, South, Churchill and Sheldon). The district provides 80% of the funding for the four centers and raises the rest from outside sources. The centers distribute clothing and make referrals to other providers, including Safe & Sound.

What Works?

Many experts emphasized prevention. "It's expensive to take hardcore homeless youth and turn them around. You need to start when they are, like, 5 years old," said Russ Brink of Downtown Eugene, Inc. "Good parenting techniques work, and the development of relationships, trust and consistency," added Galen Phipps of Station 7.

Once youth become homeless, services need to be coordinated, said Cheryl Zwilling of Looking Glass Riverfront School. And such services must have demonstrated their effectiveness in scientific studies, stressed Lisa Smith of the Department of Youth Services. She said that job and life-skills programs, community service, the Workforce Partnership and Families and Schools Together work whereas DARE, boot camp, and Scared Straight don't. Alicia Hayes and Diane Avery of Lane County Commission on Children and Families favor comprehensive programs, not just shelters. "Kids need safety, medical care, counseling and alcohol and drug treatment," Avery said. Eric Van Houten of Looking Glass New Roads emphasized one-stop shopping for such services. Planned Parenthood has found that formal settings or expecting homeless youth to show up on set dates and times are counterproductive. "And you must create a personal relationship with a homeless and runaway youth," the agency's Shannon Kilduff said. Several providers said that goals must be realistic and that staff should help youth make decisions in a nonjudgmental manner. Staff should avoid being preachy, controlling or condescending, our experts stressed. "Youth respond to Positive Youth Development³, strength-based communications and harm reduction strategies that meet them at their level," Safe & Sound's Katy Bloch said. Outreach also works. "When kids actually need help, they need to know it's there," said Captain Chuck Tilby of the Eugene Police Department. Judge Leonard said

it is important to meet the immediate needs of HRY and also to provide alternative education programs, job skills and referrals, substance-abuse treatment and family-centered therapy if appropriate. “Punishment and withholding services doesn’t work,” he added. Richardson (Blachly School District) said it is important to support HRY in a respectful, not demeaning way. “The goal is to prepare kids for life, to teach them how to take care of themselves when their parents are not able to care for them. It’s important not to criticize the parents when helping the children. Poverty is not a disease.”

Barriers to Getting Services

Our experts mentioned the following barriers:

- Many youth are not aware of available services
- Lacking transportation, they cannot get to agencies
- Agencies do not have enough capacity and funding
- Services are not sufficiently coordinated
- Some facilities, such as the Mission, exclude male teens
- Youth are afraid that agencies might place them back in their homes or schools
- After experiencing freedom, youth don’t like being told what to do
- They lack a social security number, which is required by programs that receive federal or state funds
- Some agencies lack cultural competence^[5]
- Youth may enjoy risky behavior and being needy
- Some youth have cognitive difficulties that prevent them from filling out forms
- Youth may want services that are very different from those that agencies provide
- Some youth feel they must stay isolated to survive
- Some youth lack the motivation to change
- Street culture may prevent youth from seeking help

Lack of transportation is an especially severe problem in rural areas or small communities but also anywhere outside Eugene, where most service agencies are located.

Janet Beckman of Springfield School District said that it is difficult to keep track of homeless teens because their situations change daily as they switch from living at home, staying with friends, living on the street, using a shelter, etc.

Gaps in Services

Nearly every agency said that lack of funding has prevented it from offering adequate services. “Declines in funding began with Measure 5 in the 1980s and have steadily continued,” said Van Houten.

Lack of housing for HRY was the gap mentioned most often. “There is a shortage of emergency housing, transitional housing associated with services and permanent housing,” said Richie Weinman of Eugene Planning and Development Department. Katy Bloch of Safe & Sound noted the shortage of housing for pregnant girls and young mothers, while Bob Dritz of White Bird said, “We need an old-fashioned flophouse,” explaining that such a residence could provide basic rooms for substance users, nicer rooms for those in treatment and even nicer rooms for those in recovery.

Terry McDonald of St. Vincent de Paul offered a different perspective on housing. “The issue for affordable housing for youth under 18 is less availability of units than case management,” he said. “Unfortunately, our experience with leasing to minors has been less than hopeful. We have found that this population is very transient and has few skills that enable them to maintain a good rental record. They also tend not to follow typical rules for tenants, such as limiting partying or the number of guests allowed to stay in an apartment. As a result, St. Vincent has worked with community agencies dealing with youth for those agencies to provide case management to the minors. Thus far, no agency we have dealt with has had sufficient contact and oversight of these youth to assure that the units don't get trashed or worse. Hence, St. Vincent sees this issue of leasing housing to youth to be one of oversight and case management more than availability of units.”

Eric O'Meara of Teen Post envisions a live-in facility that could be choosy about its clients and test them regularly for drug use. “The biggest gap in services is getting youth from where they are to residential care or independent living,” he said. “I would like to provide a live-in program where clients would look for jobs or go back to school—not just a crash pad.”

The Eugene City Council is addressing the problem of housing for HRY. In 2004, it identified eight strategic initiatives. Number 8 focuses on homelessness of families, singles and youth. The initiative is still in the planning process, and action may extend over 3 to 5 years. City staff report quarterly to the council.

A shortage of substance-abuse and mental-health treatment was second on the list of service gaps. “Alcohol and narcotics use is high in this population,” said Tilby. “A detox facility is needed, as well as a low-income clinic.”

Five school districts identified the lack of mental-health services as a major gap. Seven districts cited lack of transportation to access services. Other inadequate services listed by school district homeless coordinators were vocational training, shelter beds, medical care, services during school vacations and drug treatment.

Beckman lamented that housing assistance through New Roads is available only for teens 16 and older who have held a job for at least 2 months. Therefore, younger kids often stay in unhealthy relationships to get shelter. She also finds it ironic that pregnant girls get a lot more help from agencies than those who avoid pregnancy.

Therefore, there are many inadequacies:

- Housing
- Substance-abuse treatment
- Mental-health treatment
- Case management
- Coordination among services
- Group homes
- Temporary host homes
- Transportation
- Street outreach
- Employment with hands-on training
- Life-skills training

- Parenting education
- Summer youth employment program
- Services for HRY younger than 16
- Cultural competence
- Services for transgendered youth
- Counseling for sexually exploited youth
- Services for rural HRY

What Do Homeless Youth Want?

The teens we interviewed wished for a clean place to stay, a house to live in, a stable home run by good people, friends, a place their friends could visit, money for clothing and food, toilet paper, a place to do laundry, parents who didn't scream and fight, more contact with siblings, help with anger management, physical and mental-health therapy, groups in which they could discuss their problems and someone to listen to them. Others wanted to go back in time to before the death of a parent or their abandonment by their family. They also wanted family and community members to intervene when parents take drugs or abuse their children.

To survive, they had to develop street smarts: knowing which places were safe and which to avoid and avoiding troublemakers, gangs and abusive people. Although they found it difficult to get food, clothing and blankets, they often avoided shelters, which they found too restrictive. Some expressed dissatisfaction with Station 7 because they had to arrive by a certain time and leave by a certain time. They also found the rooms too confining. A welcoming place, one teen said, would be “a place that feels like home, without locked doors, that has resources to help you. A place where you can come and leave as you want.” Others complained that Teen Post admits clients in their 20s and is not very clean. Instead of contacting agencies, these teens preferred to rely on networks of friends. Others emphasized that HRY need programs like New Roads and Station 7, however. One young mother said she had received more help from New Roads than from the state.

The teens who were in school complained about overcrowded classes and feeling different from their peers. They said that traditional schools aren't set up for homeless kids. They wanted more personal attention, fewer distractions, a higher teacher/student ratio, shorter classes and shorter days. They praised alternative schools that offer half-day programs so students can also work. However, one youth thought that New Roads is too lenient because it does not require students to attend school regularly.

Most of the teens felt they needed to work to survive. Having a history of homelessness or a bad work history were barriers to employment, as were labor regulations that restrict tasks and hours for youth under 16. Transportation did not seem to be an issue with this group.

People who had made a difference in their lives included an adult woman who was providing permanent shelter, advice and other resources to one of the girls, a teacher who had found lodging and clothing for one of the boys and people who were “always there” because they had given teens their home phone numbers.

One girl wanted us to know that “we're not different from other kids. We just have more problems—we lack housing and supportive families.” She finds it hard to discuss her problems

with her friends, because she's afraid of losing them and they can't really help except by expressing support.

Funding Problems

Every provider we interviewed mentioned a decline in funding for services for HRY. Weinman said that the City of Eugene's Community Development Block Grant was recently cut by about 5% and that its Home Investment Partnership funds were reduced by 10%. "So the problems are getting worse, but Congress is reducing the funding," he said. "The President wanted to cut the whole program."

Phipps said the Oregon Legislature has decreased the level of Youth Investment funds. Consequently, Station 7 lost \$60,000 per year and had to discontinue its day program and use only 11 of its 16 beds. St. Vincent de Paul's Service Station never has enough bus tokens and can't buy gas for people's cars or give them sleeping bags. Kilduff said, however, that many funds are not accessed because applicants don't write adequate proposals. "For example, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has money for preventing juvenile delinquency, and One.org has money that could be used for homeless and runaway youth," she said.

Facing the Consequences

"Pay now or pay later," cautioned Michael Sorondo of Centro Latino Americano when asked about the consequences of not serving HRY. "The consequence will be crime. Kids without work skills will find a way to survive."

Other experts foresaw adult homelessness, teen pregnancy, dependency on welfare and increasing rates of sexually transmitted diseases extending from generation to generation. "Food stamps and welfare for the rest of their lives," Richardson said.

Advocates for HRY

HRY desperately need advocates because they may not be the lovable poster children everyone wants to help. The following agencies mentioned that advocacy is part of their mission: Eugene Library, Recreation and Cultural Services, FOOD for Lane County, Hosea Youth Services Project, Lane County Commission on Children and Families, Safe & Sound and Oregon Homeless and Runaway Youth Coalition.

Raising Awareness

"The community needs to be educated about how to treat homeless and runaway youth and other young people," Kilduff said. "Adults often underestimate them."

Our experts made the following suggestions for raising awareness:

- Schedule talks by well-known experts on youth homelessness
- Arrange presentations by HRY
- Make public service announcements
- Place stories about HRY in local newspapers and on TV
- Lobby the Oregon Legislature

Questions

1. Which of the service gaps listed on page 8 would you address first?
2. How do homeless teens' perceptions of the services they need (page 9) differ from those of the agencies that serve them?
3. In your opinion, how does our community regard homeless and runaway youth?
4. Has reading this material changed your perception of homeless youth? If so, how?
5. How might the League educate the community about this problem?

Members of the HRY study committee were Pat Hocken (chair), Alice Dugan, Marilee Duncan, Karen Ecker, Patti Hansen, Elaine Hodges, Betty Hosokawa, Sharon Kimble, Barbara Newman, Linda Sage, Angie Sifuentez and Roz Slovic.

Appendix 1: McKinney-Vento Act^[6]

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law passed in 1987 to help people experiencing homelessness. Part of the law protects the rights of homeless children and youth to go to school. In December 2001, Congress changed the law to give more rights to homeless children, youth and families.

Students are considered homeless if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Living with a friend, relative or someone else because they have lost their home or can't afford a home
- Staying in a motel or hotel
- Living in an emergency or transitional shelter or a domestic violence shelter
- Staying in substandard housing
- Living in a car, park, public place, abandoned building or bus or train station
- Awaiting foster care
- Living in a campground or inadequate trailer home
- Abandoned in a hospital
- Living in a runaway or homeless youth shelter

Every school district must have a person (a "liaison" per the law) who ensures that homeless students can enroll and succeed in school. The liaison must

- Ensure that students are enrolled in school immediately even if they do not have the legal and medical records they would normally need
- Help families and youth get immunizations and immunization or other medical records
- Tell parents and youth about transportation services and help set up transportation
- Make sure students get all the school services they need
- Inform parents and guardians about all available school services
- Settle disagreements between schools and families or youth
- Make sure preschoolers can enroll in Head Start or other preschool programs
- Ensure that parents and guardians can take part in their children's education
- Refer students to any medical, dental, mental-health or other needed services
- Coordinate with social-service and housing agencies

Under the law, children and youth in homeless situations have the right to stay in their school of origin (the school they attended before they lost their housing or the school they last were enrolled in). Students can stay at their school of origin even if they move to a different school district or are not living with their parents. If students move into permanent housing during the school year, they can finish the year in the same school.

A student will have to change schools only if it is not feasible to remain at the school of origin, for example, if travel time to school is so long that it is likely to be detrimental to the student. If students do not wish to remain at their school of origin, they have the right to attend the local school near their residence. School districts must provide or arrange transportation for students in homeless situations to allow them to stay at their schools of origin, even if the students move to a different city, county or school district. If students move across district lines, both districts must work together to provide transportation.

Students in homeless situations automatically qualify for free breakfasts and lunches at schools that offer meals. Other services that must be available to homeless children and youth, if necessary, are special education and other programs for students with disabilities, Title I programs for disadvantaged students, English as a second language, programs for gifted and talented students, before- and after-school programs and vocational and technical education.

Youth living apart from their parents have all the rights described above. In addition, school district liaisons must help youth decide which school to attend and help them enroll in that school. They must also inform youth about transportation rights and rights to disagree with school decisions.

Appendix 2: McKinney-Vento Statistics

McKinney-Vento Act
Homeless Students
Enrolled between September 2004
and June 2005
Lane County
School Districts

Information provided by Oregon Department of Education

Districts	Total	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Bethel SD 52	130	15	10	10	11	16	11	16	9	5	2	8	12	5
Blachly SD 90	45	6	3	3	8	1	1	3	5	3	3	2	3	4
Creswell SD 40	21	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	7	7	1	0	1	0
Crow- Applegate SD 66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eugene SD 4J	825	46	66	48	56	45	45	40	30	39	46	95	123	146
Fern Ridge SD 28J	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Junction City SD 69	24	0	1	4	1	2	3	2	2	1	1	0	1	6
Lowell SD 71	26	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	0	0	4	3	1	2
Marcola SD 79J	56	4	3	4	2	2	3	4	6	5	8	2	5	8

McKenzie SD 68	15	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
Oakridge SD 76	51	2	3	5	2	4	5	6	8	6	3	1	2	4
Pleasant Hill SD1	16	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	4	1
Siuslaw SD 97J	75	2	14	12	8	7	3	4	2	8	1	7	3	4
South Lane SD 45J3	261	24	21	20	17	19	20	28	23	20	21	20	12	16
Springfield SD 19	609	49	48	46	54	47	43	63	47	68	29	39	44	32
Totals	2158	151	175	157	165	146	140	174	139	163	122	180	214	232

Reported by Category	Unaccompanied	Shelter	Sharing	Unsheltered	Motel
Bethel SD 52	16	36	48	3	5
Blachly SD 90	5	0	40	0	0
Creswell SD 40	18	2	11	0	5
Crow-Applegate SD 66	0	0	0	0	0
Eugene SD 4J	181	236	244	48	223
Fern Ridge SD 28J	2	0	2	0	1
Junction City SD 69	0	0	22	0	1
Lowell SD 71	1	0	25	0	0
Marcola SD 79J	5	0	35	0	0
McKenzie SD 68	4	0	8	0	2
Oakridge SD 76	0	0	12	0	0
Pleasant Hill SD1	4	0	14	0	0
Siuslaw SD 97J	8	0	52	3	5
South Lane SD 45J3	24	8	34	8	4

Springfield	81	85	391	55	0
SD 19					
Totals	349	367	938	117	246

Note: Numbers by category are less than total numbers. Some students could not be categorized.

Definitions of Categories

Unaccompanied = Unaccompanied minors such as runaways

Shelter = Primary residence is an emergency shelter or transitional housing.

Sharing = Sharing housing, doubled-up in housing due to economic hardship

Unsheltered = Living in cars, tents, camping, under bridges, substandard housing (e.g. no electricity or water)

Motels = Residing in motels or hotels due to lack of permanent or affordable housing.

Limitations of Data

Definition is broad and somewhat subjective. Case-by-case eligibility determinations

Liaison expertise varies by district. Not all districts reported counts

Data are collected throughout school year (not a one-time count).

Some students will attend more than one district in a year, duplicates possible

Students are counted whether they were homeless all year or just for a short period.

Vento Statistics

Appendix 2: McKinney Vento Statistics

McKinney-Vento Act
Homeless Students
Enrolled between September 2004
and June 2005
Lane County
School Districts

Information provided by Oregon Department of Education

Districts

Reported by Grade Level	Total	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Bethel SD 52	130	15	10	10	11		16	11	16	9	5	2	8	12	5
Blachly SD 90	45	6	3	3	8		1	1	3	5	3	3	2	3	4
Creswell SD 40	21	0	0	0	0		0	1	4	7	7	1	0	1	0
Crow- Applegate SD 66	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eugene SD 4J	825	46	66	48	56		45	45	40	30	39	46	95	123	146
Fern Ridge SD 28J	4	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Junction City SD 69	24	0	1	4	1		2	3	2	2	1	1	0	1	6
Lowell SD 71	26	2	3	2	2		1	3	3	0	0	4	3	1	2
Marcola SD 79J	56	4	3	4	2		2	3	4	6	5	8	2	5	8
McKenzie SD 68	15	1	2	2	2		1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
Oakridge SD 76	51	2	3	5	2		4	5	6	8	6	3	1	2	4
Pleasant Hill SD1	16	0	1	1	2		1	1	1	0	1	2	1	4	1
Siuslaw SD 97J	75	2	14	12	8		7	3	4	2	8	1	7	3	4
South Lane SD 45J3	261	24	21	20	17		19	20	28	23	20	21	20	12	16
Springfield SD 19	609	49	48	46	54		47	43	63	47	68	29	39	44	32
Totals	2158	151	175	157	165		146	140	174	139	163	122	180	214	232

Reported by Category	Unaccompanied	Shelter	Sharing	Unsheltered	Motel
Bethel SD 52	16	36	48	3	5
Blachly SD 90	5	0	40	0	0
Creswell SD 40	18	2	11	0	5

Crow-Applegate SD 66	0	0	0	0	0
Eugene SD 4J	181	236	244	48	223
Fern Ridge SD 28J	2	0	2	0	1
Junction City SD 69	0	0	22	0	1
Lowell SD 71	1	0	25	0	0
Marcola SD 79J	5	0	35	0	0
McKenzie SD 68	4	0	8	0	2
Oakridge SD 76	0	0	12	0	0
Pleasant Hill SD1	4	0	14	0	0
Siuslaw SD 97J	8	0	52	3	5
South Lane SD 45J3	24	8	34	8	4
Springfield SD 19	81	85	391	55	0
Totals	349	367	938	117	246

Note: Numbers by category are less than total numbers. Some students could not be categorized.

Definitions of Categories

Unaccompanied = Unaccompanied minors such
as runaways

Shelter = Primary residence is an emergency shelter or transitional
housing.

Sharing = Sharing housing, doubled-up in housing due to economic
hardship

Unsheltered = Living in cars, tents, camping, under bridges, substandard housing (e.g. no
electricity or water)

Motels = Residing in motels or hotels due to lack of permanent or affordable
housing.

Limitations of Data

Definition is broad and somewhat subjective. Case-by-case eligibility
determinations

Liaison expertise varies by district. Not all districts reported counts

Data are collected throughout school year (not a one-time count).

Some students will attend more than one district in a year, duplicates possible

Students are counted whether they were homeless all year or just for a short period.

^[1] *From Out of the Shadows*. Report to the Interim Committee on Health and Human Services. February 2005.

^[2] Promotes bonding and social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and moral competence; fosters resilience, self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy, clear and positive identity, prosocial norms and belief in the future; and provides recognition for positive behavior and opportunities for prosocial involvement.

^[3] Lane Workforce Partnership is a nonprofit workforce development organization dedicated to assisting businesses with their employment needs, such as recruiting, training and retaining employees, and helping individuals find employment and advance in their careers.

^[4] Founded in 1933, the Catholic Worker Movement is committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer and hospitality for the homeless, exiled, hungry and forsaken.

^[5] Cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes.