



NEWS RELEASE

February 23, 2008

For Immediate Release

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Youth Chefs to Serve Up Meals for Homeless

Eugene, Ore. - Young chefs from the John Serbu Youth Campus in Eugene will use their culinary skills to prepare meals for hundreds of homeless citizens and volunteers. More than a dozen youth, participating in the Martin Luther King Culinary Program on the campus, will take part in this year's Project Homeless Connect event on Friday, March 6, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Lane Events Center and Fairgrounds.

With the help of donations from various local food vendors, youth chefs will prepare and serve meals at the event café throughout the day.

"These young people will not only have the opportunity to apply their culinary skills on a large-scale, but they'll have the chance to be a part of a positive community event that helps make a difference in people's lives," said Jose Alvarez, Lane County Youth Services.

Project Homeless Connect for Lane County is a one-day, one-stop event that provides critical services and basic provisions to people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. Guests are offered a variety of free onsite services ranging from medical exams and dental checkups to bike repair and haircuts.

"The café portion of the event not only provides meals, but is designed to offer a warm and hospitable atmosphere for guests," said Laurie Trieger, Project Homeless Connect food services coordinator. "From handmade table centerpieces created by local school children to the nearby entertainment stage to the opportunity to connect with community volunteers, we really want guests to feel welcome and know that the community cares."

Over 80 local service agencies will also be participating in the event, providing resources on housing, employment, education, legal counsel, addiction treatment, and a variety of services available for youth, families, seniors and veterans.

Last year the event served 1,158 homeless guests. Organizers are anticipating that more people may come and seek services this year as the overall homeless count in Lane County grows. This year's one-night homeless count, conducted by the Lane County Human Services Commission last month, rose to 2,673 people, a 27 percent increase over last year.

Project Homeless Connect is part of a nationwide movement to connect homeless people with services and basic needs, while engaging local communities in finding solutions for homelessness.

For more information about Project Homeless Connect for Lane County, visit www.homelessconnect.org or contact Sophia McDonald, Project Homeless Connect Coordinator at (541) 682-4614 or Sophia.mcdonald@co.lane.or.us. For more information about the culinary arts program on the John Serbu Youth Campus, contact Jose Alvarez, of Lane County Youth Services, at (541) 682-4711.

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