



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Countywide Event Extends Help to Area's Homeless Project Homeless Connect for Lane County Friday, March 6, 2009 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Eugene, Ore. – In a countywide effort to help the area's growing homeless population, Project Homeless Connect for Lane County will hold its third annual outreach event on Friday, March 6, at the Lane Events Center at the Fairgrounds. People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are invited to come and receive critical services and basic provisions.

With the help of hundreds of community volunteers and professional service providers, guests will be offered medical exams, dental checkups, vision care, hot meals, haircuts, bike repair, and much more. Over 80 local service agencies will be on-site to provide information on housing, employment, education, legal counsel, addiction treatment, and a variety of services available for youth, families, seniors and veterans. Giveaways of basic provisions will include items such as coats, sleeping bags, socks, scarves, hats, gloves, children's clothing and personal hygiene items.

Throughout the day, Lane Transit District will provide free round-trip transportation from all its service areas to guests attending the event. The City of Eugene will provide round-trip van shuttles from the following Eugene locations: First Place Family Center at 1995 Amazon Pkwy.; Looking Glass New Roads at 941 W. 7th Ave.; and the St. Vincent de Paul Eugene Service Station at 450 Highway 99. Transportation also will be available to serve people in Oakridge and Florence.

Meanwhile, donations for giveaways are still being accepted at St. Vincent de Paul store locations in Eugene. Items must be labeled "Project Homeless Connect." People interested in purchasing new items to donate can view the Project Homeless Connect gift registry at www.homelessconnect.org.

Last year the event served 1,158 guests. Organizers are anticipating an increase in attendance as Lane County's homeless population rises. On any given night, more than 2,600 people in Lane County are homeless, up 27 percent from 2008, according to preliminary results of the 2009 annual one-night homeless count conducted by the Lane County Human Services Commission. The Commission also reports that last year 1,965 school-age children were homeless sometime during the year and more than 11,000 people in Lane County were homeless at the time they sought services from a local nonprofit agency.

Project Homeless Connect is part of a nationwide movement working to help meet the needs of people who are homeless, while engaging the local community in finding solutions for ending homelessness. Major supporters include United Way of Lane County, the City of Eugene, the City of Springfield and the Lane County Board of Commissioners.

For more information about Project Homeless Connect, visit www.homelessconnect.org or contact Sophia McDonald, Project Homeless Connect Event Coordinator, at (541) 682-4614, (541) 505-6130 or Sophia.mcdonald@co.lane.or.us.

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