



**A FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD**

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Dear Senators and Representatives,

A Family For Every Child supports HB4039, which will provide much needed housing and support for Oregon’s unaccompanied houseless youth (UHY) through host home, shelter and support service programs.

**In the 2018-19 school year, the Eugene and Springfield School Districts identified 1,223 students experiencing homelessness**, including 392 UHY navigating homelessness without being in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

There are limited housing services available for youth in the Eugene and Springfield communities. Many unaccompanied adolescents are left to find shelter on their own and many unaccompanied students drop out of school to take jobs to earn money for shelter, food and other basic needs. Statewide, **Oregon’s houseless students graduate from high school at a rate of just 54%**.

Host home programs, like the one operated by A Family For Every Child, provide students with a safe, stable and healthy place to live while they finish high school. In 2018-19, A Family For Every Child was able to provide host home housing for 2 students from the Eugene and Springfield School Districts, equating to 545 nights of stable housing and 1,635 meals provided for students.

Additionally, organizations contracted with the Department of Human Service’s Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHT) Program, such as Looking Glass in Eugene, support students by offering short-term shelter housing, street outreach, drop-in spaces, culturally specific services, mental health and substance use services and other transitional housing options.

HB4039 would allow Host Home Programs like A Family For Every Child, and shelter/support services such as Looking Glass, to serve more of Oregon’s unaccompanied houseless youth by providing the critical financial resources needed to expand staffing and facilities.

The need for such programming is striking. Oregon has the highest rate of youth experiencing homelessness in the country. 50% of chronically houseless adults in the United States first experience homelessness as a youth. Former runaways are 50% more likely than non-runaways to not have a high school degree or GED as adults. Making an investment in Oregon’s youth now will help prepare the next generation of Oregon’s workforce and community leaders for a brighter future.

Thank you for your consideration and your concern about our Eugene and Springfield youth.

Respectfully,  
Jan Ferguson  
Permanency Department  
Host Home Director

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Christy Obie-Barrett  
Executive Director

Charlene Savant  
Associate Director

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Associate

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Executive Administrative  
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15<sup>th</sup> Night/Host Home

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Kelli Smith  
Child Recruitment &  
Volunteer Coordinator

Shawnell Tolliver  
Heart Gallery /  
Photo Coordinating /  
Matching Assistance Program

Andrew Hampton  
IT Director

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**PROGRAMS**

Heart Gallery  
Child Recruitment  
Adoption Agency  
Matching Assistance Program  
Mentor Program

Family Building Program  
Family Finding Program  
Family Preservation  
15<sup>th</sup> Night-Host Homes  
Life Bookers