

Hello,

My name is Marcela Ray and I am with Integral Youth Services in Klamath County. Due to the vast amount of rural area in Klamath County, we have a lot of youth and their families who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness. What we see a lot here is families trying to homestead without realizing that the weather can be extreme.

Those living in RVs or trailers, find themselves stuck in the winter month with no access to clean running water, or water that has frozen because of the low temperatures and unable to leave the property because of the snow that has accumulated. During the summer, the heat and dry landscape make it extremely dangerous for those using propane or open fires causing a large amount of fires that could have been prevented with proper preparation.

Those families within the city limits have more access to resources but still lack the accommodation to be able to send the children to school with a positive outlook towards their future. Multiple children living in a vehicle, lack of affordable housing, and facing many barriers that limit housing opportunities.

We have, however, had great success with the YEHA funding to help these families eliminate many of the barriers that they face.

We have been able to get a family of 6 into housing, pay for employment training and successfully get them on the road to self-sufficiency. We were also able to help with a motel for a family who was living in a shipping container in an area where resources are very scarce. The head of household is a 17 year old epileptic autistic boy who has been attending the same school for the past 4 years and moving him to a different location would be detrimental to his well-being. The YEHA funding allowed us to keep the child safe in his own environment while helping get the family out of the elements. We were able to pay the car insurance for dad to be able to drive his son to and from school while also looking for employment. After one month, this family found an available rental and we were able to pay for their move in costs without the disruption of school attendance.

There are many more successful stories to share and the impact that we have made to keep the children in our community thriving. Please at the very least maintain \$5m for the Youth Emergency Housing Assistance program in the OHCS budget bill (HB 5011) and please fight to increase that to \$15m to prevent child homelessness across our state. Though "youth" is in the program name, the program and our organization prevents homelessness of families with K-12 school-aged children, or rapidly rehouses families with children when they become homeless. You can find more information on the YEHA program here: <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/for-providers/pages/youth-emergency-housing-assistance.aspx>

Thank you!

Marcela Ray

Klamath Connections Case Manager