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Article published Jul 30, 2015

\$10,000 donation improves kitchen at Port Angeles day treatment center

Peninsula Daily News

PORT ANGELES — Peninsula Behavioral Health's Horizon Center recently received \$10,000 from Kitsap Bank to renovate the day treatment center kitchen for their clients.

The center at 205 E. Fifth St. on the corner of Lincoln Street has been the gathering place for clients since 1990, when Clallam County leased the building to the agency for \$1 per year.

Clients and staff prepare home-cooked meals there Mondays through Fridays, and the Kitsap Bank donation allowed the kitchen to be spruced up this spring with new cabinetry and countertops and a fresh coat of paint, said Rebekah Miller of the agency's development department.

But the kitchen is not all that was transformed.

'Fresh energy'

“According to staff, the renovation has had a palpable effect on the atmosphere of Horizon Center itself with a fresh energy and pride,” Miller said.

When the center opens at 10:30 a.m. each day, the kitchen — overseen by Rob Heagy, lead peer counselor — becomes a hub of activity where people collectively prepare the lunch meal, Miller said.

The center offers more than hot meals, she said.

Clients have access to a washer and dryer, shower facilities, the Internet and a host of activities.

“Not many people in the county are aware of Peninsula Behavioral Health's Community Support Services, which includes operation of its Horizon Center,” Miller said.

The team is led by Supervisor Kelly Cook, who oversees six case managers, two medical case managers and three peer counselors.

Their combined caseload hovers around 200 people, and most of the clients are on fixed incomes with a wide range of needs, Miller said.

Staff facilitate co-occurring disorder and social skills classes, plan recreational activities or transport clients to the local food bank.

They arrange for artists and performers to come to the center for education and

entertainment.

Clients garden, search for jobs and surf the Internet for fun.

The Clallam County branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness hosts a monthly bingo game.

“Many individuals with severe and persistent mental illness can be vulnerable and are often misunderstood, but when they receive the support they need and have a sense of belonging to the community, it can translate into fewer trips to the hospital, lower homeless rates and better overall wellness outcomes,” Miller said.

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