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5038 Picture worsening for child abuse in county

Juliette's House director tells Newberg businesspeople cases in Yamhill County are up and funding is down

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Neither the topic nor the delivery at this week's Newberg Area Chamber of Commerce-sponsored luncheon was particularly cheery.

Kathleen Robbins, executive director of Juliette's House, took the podium to tell area businesspeople about child abuse in Yamhill County. She warned the audience several times that she might break down in tears, and once made good on that warning.

"There are still a lot of positive

things in (our work) ... but watching child abuse cases go up and funding go down has been very hard," she said, pointing to an annual growth of 5 to 16 percent in cases at Juliette's House.

Statistics compiled in a 2002 Children's First for Oregon statewide report showed Yamhill County's abuse and neglect rate of children grew 3 percent worse between 2000 and 2001, the last year reported.

The report showed 12 percent of the reported 251 county victims of child abuse were sexually abused. Robbins has led the assessment

center, which conducts medically-based evaluations of referred children, since its inception in the mid-1990s.

Juliette's House cases have grown from one child interviewed in the center's first six months, to 154 children coming through the building's doors in 2002.

"After seeing 750 kids, it's still hard," Robbins said as she choked back tears. It is these children's stories that have always given Robbins difficult-

ly. She talked about the 17-year-old student molested by her host parent, the 16-year-old cancer survivor who must now add "incest survivor" to her list, and the six children living in neglect in a school bus.

Lately, she told the audience, she has new reasons to be depressed, with funding being cut and donations down.

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Kathleen Robbins,
Juliette's House

Please see [CHILD ABUSE](#), Dr. A2