



Behavioral health center moves to bigger digs downtown

By Susan Meeker/Colusa County Sun-Herald

The Colusa County drop-in center known as Safe Haven is getting a new downtown location.

Since 2008, the center where Colusa County Behavioral Health consumers have had a nonclinical and social atmosphere for a variety of activities has been housed in a one-room facility in the Behavioral Health building located on East Carson Street in Colusa.

"We now have about 20 regular participants," said Bill Cornelius, Colusa County Behavior Health interim director. "We need more space to operate."

The Colusa County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 on Sept. 27 to allow the center to move to the former offices of the Colusa County Sun-Herald at 131 Fifth Street, which most recently housed a quilt store.

The rent is \$950 a month and cleaning will be done by the center's participants, many of whom do the same kind of work in the community as volunteers, officials said.

The new multiroom facility will also allow the county to expand services, Cornelius said, and allow participants better access to the movie theater, bowling alley, shops, markets, parks and public transportation.

Colusa County Supervisor Denise Carter, who approved the move, said renting the new facility was a better option than previous considerations, which included constructing a separate building on the Behavioral Health campus.

"This location makes a lot more sense," Carter said.

Board Chairman Mark Marshall and Gary Evans voted against the move.

Safe Haven was designed with the goals of helping clients take responsibility for their mental health through the process of self help.

The center also gives participants the ability to provide support to each other in times of crisis and social isolation.

Cornelius said the new location would allow the center to be more ADA-compliant and provide the county the opportunity to expand independent living skills services that can be billed through Medi-Cal.

Most of Safe Haven programs are funded by Proposition 63, the 2004 Mental Health Services Act.

The property owners have agreed to make modifications to the building, which includes adding a kitchen and laundry room.

The two full-time Behavior Health staff at Safe Haven's Carson Street center will maintain their offices at the new location.

There would be no added expense of salaries or any new positions created, Cornelius said.

Activities offered by Safe Haven include walking group, potluck meals, meditation group, Creative Mondays, arts and crafts, movie matinee, Peers Helping Peers Group, Peer Advocacy Council, Helping Hands Community Outreach projects, adolescent anger management and depression bipolar substance abuse groups.

The center will be open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.