

## Anonymous couple to buy new trailer for West Salem service ministry

By Saerom Yoo

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An anonymous couple has offered to purchase a new trailer to replace the one stolen from a West Salem service ministry last week.

Craig Oviatt, the director of Salem Dream Center, said the couple volunteered at the ministry for the first time Oct. 29, the day after its trailer was discovered missing.

Salem Dream Center mentors youths in the Edgewater district and provides donated furniture, clothing and food for needy families. Oviatt and volunteers used the trailer to make deliveries.

The volunteers read about the theft a few days later and contacted Oviatt via Facebook.

"They were impressed with our program," Oviatt said. "They said they felt like they needed to do something to help our ministry."

The new trailer, at 17 feet, will be larger than the old one. The Dream Center should have it in a week or two, just in time for it to make its annual Thanksgiving food box deliveries to needy families in the area.

Last year, 540 families received food boxes during Thanksgiving and Christmas. Each one was filled with enough food to feed five people for a week.

This year, Oviatt said, the new and larger trailer will allow the Dream Center to help more families.

The volunteers weren't the only ones who came running to the Dream Center's rescue.

As word spread about the trailer, strangers from as far as Vancouver, Wash., offered to help.

People brought in clothes and food to West Salem Foursquare Church, which houses the Dream Center.

One man walked in during a women's Bible study to donate \$200.

Another called and offered to make up the difference in costs that insurance wouldn't cover in



**Danielle Peterson / Statesman Journal**  
Outreach Pastor Craig Oviatt talks about some of the donations piled in his office at West Salem Foursquare Church. A cargo trailer that was used to deliver furniture, clothing and food to needy families in West Salem and beyond recently was stolen from the church parking lot.

the theft.

At least 11 people called offering to let the Dream Center borrow their trailers for as long as it needed.

The House, a church in Vancouver, is holding a drive to replace the furniture that was in the stolen trailer.

It had been packed full for delivery to a family, Oviatt said.

"I'm just amazed at the generosity of people," he said.

When the Dream Center receives its new trailer, Oviatt said, he'll do a better job of protecting it.

The old one didn't have a license plate or a logo, which made it difficult for police to track.

"We're going to put our name on it," he said. "We're going to buy a much better locking system. We're going to do everything right this time."

Oviatt isn't angry about the theft. He's just focusing on the joy the incident has brought.

"People are good," he said. "Even the person who stole it &#8230; hopefully it's saving somebody's life."

syoo@StatesmanJournal.com, (503) 399-6673 or follow at Twitter.com/syoo