



SAFESTREETS

July 12, 2016

Streets Stories: Addicted mom-to-be and baby get treatment

EVERETT – *From time to time, we share streets reports and successes from our police, social worker and other City staff. Today's story comes from Kaitlyn Dowd, an [embedded social worker](#) with Everett Police:*

On June 14, I was assisting Sergeant John Zeka, Sergeant Michael Braley, and other officers as they contacted people living in several encampments on private property in southeast Everett. At one of the encampments, we encountered a pregnant woman and her boyfriend.

The woman, Laurie*, believed she was around five months pregnant, had had no prenatal care, and was using methamphetamines. Her boyfriend was also using methamphetamines, as well as heroin.

We notified the couple that they needed to relocate within three days, as the private property was scheduled to be cleared, and let them know about the various services that might benefit them.

The next day Sgt. Zeka and I met with the couple again. This time we set up an appointment for them to meet with the case manager in her office so she could refer them to services and get them on the housing list.

Two days later I returned to the private property to check in on the couple with Sgt. Zeka, Sgt. Braley and Officer Shane Nelson. When we approached the encampment, it had been cleared out. As we continued to walk the property, we found the couple and a few of their friends not far away.

By this time I had established enough trust to make a phone call to a family member to see if they would be a support system to the couple. I also called various medical facilities in hopes of finding one that would agree to provide care to such a high-risk pregnancy.

Learn more:

For more information on the Community Streets Initiative, visit www.everettwa.gov/streetsinitiative.

For more information on the Safe Streets Plan, visit www.everettwa.gov/safestreets.

Sign up for email updates at www.everettwa.gov/notifyme.

Unfortunately, none of the facilities we contacted were willing to schedule an appointment with Laurie. Luckily, the family member agreed to come and pick them up, load up all of their belongings and let them stay with her for the night.

I was also able arrange for the couple to stay with yet another supportive family member for the weekend. To make this plan stick, Officer Nelson and I drove the family member to her partner's work so she could use his vehicle to transport the couple's belongings.

The family member picked up the couple and took Laurie directly to the hospital, where doctors estimated she was closer to 37 weeks pregnant. In the meantime, I located a program that provides specialized care for addicted mothers and their newborns, all on the same floor of a medical facility. They were willing to hold a spot for Laurie.

But the following week I found out that the couple had set up their tent in a new spot, rather than continue staying with the family member. When I arrived to the new location, Laurie was very ill. I told her about the new treatment program, but she was hesitant about going to treatment if her boyfriend couldn't visit her, and wasn't ready to go that day. The next day she finally committed to going to treatment on the following Monday.

A couple days later Officer Clyde Turner and I stopped at the camp to drop off a box of food donated by the Everett Gospel Mission. Laurie was very thankful for the food and was looking forward to going to treatment on Monday.

On Monday I received a call from a family member explaining that Laurie was very ill again. She was transported to the ER, but was unwilling to go to treatment, again pushing it out to the next day.

Officer Nelson and I went back to the camp the following morning and the couple was awake and ready to go. We got them breakfast and transported Laurie to the treatment facility. The following day her boyfriend was set up with a drug and alcohol assessment so he can enter treatment as well.

Laurie's story, including her hesitance to leave her encampment and boyfriend to seek treatment, is not uncommon. We often find that it can take weeks of contact to establish trust and a relationship with individuals on the streets, and they often have several "false starts" before they finally seek services and treatment.

My hope is that once Laurie and her boyfriend successfully complete treatment, they will have a stable housing option. It is far too common that people get clean, but don't have a home or a shelter to go back to and end up back on the streets where it can be difficult to avoid the triggers that can lead to relapse.

I am also happy to report that late last week, Laurie gave birth. Mom and baby are doing well. Learn more about the [Everett Safe Streets Plan](#).

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*Names have been changed.

Learn about Public Safety Innovations in our community

Join Snohomish County, the City of Everett, Snohomish County Sheriff, and Everett Police to learn more about how communities are responding to the growing challenges of mental illness, opioid addiction and homelessness on our streets next Tuesday, July 19, at the Snohomish PUD auditorium (2320 California Street), from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The forum will feature a panel of representatives from several “co-responder” public safety teams, from around the Puget Sound region, that combine traditional policing with outreach and social services. Forum attendees will have a chance to participate in a Q&A session with the panelists.

The event is part of the City of Everett’s series of Safe Streets community forums. This [public safety forum](#) is free, and open to the community.

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