



Gary Kissel/Journal

Deah Dieckman and her daughter Kaylee, 6, sit on the bank of the Cedar River in front of their home in Maple Valley. A Section 8 voucher helps Dieckman afford the home while she works and plans to go to college.

## Voucher program can mean a second chance

Journal Staff

Deah Dieckman, 21, is in her third year of relying on a federal housing voucher. She lives in a house in Maple Valley with her 6-year-old daughter.

She used to live in a \$775 Kent apartment with her boyfriend of seven years, who was also the father of her child. He left her and her daughter in the lurch.

**"He wasn't ready to grow up and be a dad. I've never received a penny of child support. I was working full time, but couldn't afford that much. I had to break my lease."**

With advice from Catholic Community Services, she applied for a federal housing voucher. She now pays \$370 in rent plus about \$170 for utilities and other bills.

**"I work at the pharmacy at**

Costco and want to be a pharmacy technician," she said. "I haven't made it to college yet, but I'm going to. If it wasn't for Section 8, I wouldn't be able to.

"I want the program to stay around. I need it to. It gives people who made a little mistake in life a second chance, and kept me off the streets."

Two former residents of the homeless camp Tent City 4 in Bothell are moving into a two-bedroom duplex in Edmonds with the help of a federal housing voucher.

"They've taken me off the street," said Geneva Smith, 53, who said she has been homeless on and off for 14 years. She and Brooke Telin, 34, moved here from Florida this summer. Smith has a foot and leg disability that put her in a different category for a housing subsidy, and outside the years-long waiting list.