

KeizerCommunity

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Looking for heat relief?

By CRAIG MURPHY
Of the Keizertimes

Looking to beat the heat during this ongoing heat wave?

Head over to Salem. Jeff Cowan, chief at Keizer Fire District, referred to a press release from the City of Salem when asked about what Keizerites can do to stay cooler in the hot weather. Forecasts call for highs to remain in the 90s through next week.

Salem has several locations open to the public as cooling shelters until 9 p.m. including the public library, most malls and the Center 50+ at 2615 Portland Road NE.

Other tips include keeping hydrated with a cup of water every 20 minutes, doing the hardest physical labor in the cooler parts of the day, wearing light-colored cotton fabric clothing, pulling blinds or shades to keep heat from coming in windows, staying indoors in an air-conditioned room if possible, making pets stay hydrated and checking on sick or elderly neighbors that may be susceptible to heat illness.

Keizer City Manager Chris Eppley noted the limited options in Keizer.

"People can come to the Splash Fountain," Eppley said. "Or there are misters in the fire truck at the Big Toy. We don't have cooling stations specifically designated."

The Splash Fountain is open Wednesdays through Sunday behind city hall from noon to 7 p.m. It will also be open on Mondays and Tuesdays through the summer

when the forecasted high is 95 degrees or above.

Given the heat and the dry, some concern have been expressed about fireworks for the 4th of July. Cowan referred to a statement from the office of the State Fire Marshal.

"Decisions to prohibit the sale of retail fireworks and the display of professional fireworks are determined by local fire authorities through local ordinances," the statement read in part. "The Office of State Fire Marshal does not have any legal authority regarding the use of legal fireworks in Oregon. Therefore our office cannot issue a ban on their use."

Eppley said on Tuesday there wasn't a ban in place for Keizer.

"We haven't discussed any sort of ban," Eppley said. "Not really sure whose call it would be, probably mine or the council's."

Keizer City Councilors did not discuss the topic at their most recent meeting on June 15 and don't meet again until July 6.

Nate Brown, director of Community Development for Keizer, said a ban could only be done through a certain code.

"If there were a ban on lighting fireworks that would have to come through the authority of the Uniform Fire Code," Brown said. "If the city wanted to prohibit the sale we could have not issued the temporary permits, but that didn't happen so the only course of action would have to be through the emergency clause of the UFC."

Learning to 'let it go' despite challenges

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Eileen O'Connor never has to wonder how she'll feel going home after one of her dance classes for special needs children at Keizer's Courthouse Athletic Club.

"I never leave without having enjoyed the class," said O'Connor, who has taught youth dance classes at Courthouse for the past four years. "I enjoy it in a different way than I do anything else. Some of them are the most creative kids around. They're not shy and they are uninhibited. By the third time they do something, they're out of their shell completely."

O'Connor began teaching dance while working as a dancer and company manager in Singapore. It wasn't long before parents with children that had developmental disabilities began asking if their kids could attend as well.

"They had very limited opportunities there. I just began integrating them into my regular classes," O'Connor said.

When she returned to the U.S., Salem specifically, she began working with Salem-Keizer school district and offering regular and special needs dance classes through the Kroc Center. Four years ago, she moved the whole shebang to Courthouse and now splits time between the Keizer and south Salem locations.

While O'Connorsometimes works at a slower pace with the special needs class, she tries to incorporate everything she would in a normal class.

"We talk about dance terminology, counting, etiquette and we try to do a little bit of everything from ballet to hip-



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald
Clockwise from top left: Madison Wright, Madison Howell and Katie Stinson take turns in the spotlight during special needs dance classes at Keizer's Courthouse Athletic Club.



hop," O'Connor said. For example, a game of duck-duck-geese becomes plié-plié-leap.

Later this month, O'Connor will offer a Cinderella Dance Camp for special needs students ages 4 to 12. The camp begins July 13 and runs through July 17. Times are 3 to 4 p.m. A Cinderella Dance Camp for non-special needs dancers will run from 9 to 10 a.m. Cost is \$70 per camper. Both are being hosted at the Keizer Courthouse location.

"I kind of take cues from Disney and this year we are going to be looking at Cinderella

because of her new movie. The whole week we will focus on courage and kindness as well as dancing," she said. "We'll also have a hired dancer come in dressed in character to tell the Cinderella story at the end of the week."

Parent Kristin Wright said O'Connor's special needs classes offer just the right mix of activity and life lessons for her daughter Madison.

"The social aspect of seeing other people follow directions gives her an example to follow. Presenting in front of her peers is another big thing as far as gaining self-confidence along with creativity," Wright said.

Student Katie Stinson's grandmother, Mary Blankenship, said the classes were some of the only she found in the area that offered the attention special needs kids require in extracurricular activities. Katie has been taking dance for three years.

"Katie is learning physical and emotional self-control and the atmosphere and the dancing experience movements help with her developmental progress," Blankenship said.

For more information, or to register for the Cinderella Camp and future classes, visit courthousefit.com/kids-dance.

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Library mgr. needed

The Keizer Community Library is seeking a volunteer manager to oversee daily library operations.

The manager works closely with the board of directors and the Library Committee. The board is seeking applicants with proven organizational skills who is able to set priorities within the operations of the all-volunteer library.

Applicants must be computer literate; knowledge of library systems is desirable but it is not essential.

The board asks interested persons to apply in person at the library in the Keizer Heritage Center at 980 Chemawa Road N.E. or email books.keizerlibrary@gmail.com to request an application.

The deadline to apply is July 15.

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