

C4C: Community meetings are set for January 13-15

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A presentation is planned for the three local service clubs — Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions — at Aspen Lakes. Nonprofit organizations and churches will have the opportunity to hear about the program in a meeting at the Sisters Fire Hall. An all-community meeting will be held in the evening at the Fire Hall. Plans are still in the works for other presentations. The final meeting will be a “next steps” discussion with interested residents and organizations to provide feedback and to discuss ideas of how to proceed.

The hoped-for outcome of the January meetings is to gain feedback from the community that will inform future activities and direction. C4C also wants to invite more citizens to join the effort to improve dialog in Sisters Country.

SYP seeks to improve the level of civic discourse to strengthen communities and help them respond to challenges and opportunities. Since its adoption by all six major units of government in Duluth, MN and Superior, WI, SYP has spread to dozens of communities across the country and around the world that have used the program to strengthen their communities.

Sisters resident Robyn Holdman first learned about SYP from a fellow Rotarian who had brought the SYP Civility Project to Truckee/

Tahoe when she was the president of their community foundation. Holdman has spent the past 10 months talking with people in Sisters about the possibility of introducing the nine SYP guidelines for civility to Sisters Country. She sees them as a potential tool to help establish a safe platform for respectful communication, as the community focuses on its business, economic development, and societal issues and opportunities.

The members of the C4C steering committee are a dedicated, talented group of individuals who all bring strong skills and abilities to the table.

A former Special Assistant to the Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Holdman moved to Central Oregon in 1998 and transitioned to a career working with nonprofit organizations in development and community outreach efforts. She was a member of a team to establish the Nonprofit Resource Council and the Nonprofit Network for Central Oregon. She is now semi-retired and owns a real estate investment and management company with her husband. Her skill set includes communication, community outreach, development, team-building, process management, and special-project management.

Holdman’s passion for SYP is evident as she describes the program and the steering committee’s hopes for SYP.

“Our goal is to reach out to all members of our community. We want to encourage citizens of Sisters Country to join us and build on our past

success so we can all say with confidence and pride, ‘There is no better place to live than in Sisters Country.’

Bruce Rognlien, retired chairman emeritus of Associated Travel, the 13th largest corporate travel management company in the U.S., lives in Sisters with his wife, Marleen, most of the year, spending winters in the warmer climes of Los Angeles. He brings a willingness to speak up and speak with others about civility in the community and how we can treat each other in a positive manner.

“The SYP project seems like a good platform to restore and promote civility in our community.”
— Bruce Rognlien

“The SYP project seems like a good platform to restore and promote civility in our community. It just reinforces the Golden Rule. In my opinion, there is an unhealthy feeling in Sisters Country that promotes a lack of civility and mistrust. We need to try to eliminate these feelings,” he said.

Longtime resident Dr. Kent Neff is a physician who has focused on organizational consulting with hospitals, medical clinics, and other groups interested in respectful, thoughtful communication. In his work he frequently

sees the negative consequences of disrespectful dialog and its devastating effects on people who are exposed to this behavior.

“Respectful communication actually invites us to engage in more spirited debates on different issues,” Neff said.

Neff joined the C4C because of his 40-year love of Sisters Country and the positive attitudes and can-do spirit of its residents. In the last several years he has observed a number of situations in which Sisters folks treated each other disrespectfully, causing communication to break down and affected their ability to work together to get things accomplished.

“I want to work with other residents of Sisters Country to increase awareness of the importance of having respectful, civil communications that don’t become personal and disruptive to the goals at hand. I prefer a voluntary, grassroots process.”

New committee member Clark Brody is a career educator who started as a music teacher, and progressed to positions as an elementary, middle and high school

principal and then school district assistant superintendent. He retired from the Oregon Department of Education as Deputy Superintendent.

As a state-level administrator, Brody dealt with many diverse perspectives. His focus was to be sure everyone had an opportunity to be heard and understood. His skills include organization, communication, process development, and collaboration.

Brody and his wife have lived in Sisters Country for nearly six years and love living here. During that time they have observed a number of challenges reported by the media that deteriorated and became personal and unpleasant.

“I hope to contribute in a way that results in learning opportunities that allow us all to improve our personal communication skills. The hoped-for result would be improved collaboration and creative problem-solving, all the while remaining respectful of others who do not share the same point of view,” Brody stated.

For more information on Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project, visit www.dsaspeakyourpeace.org.

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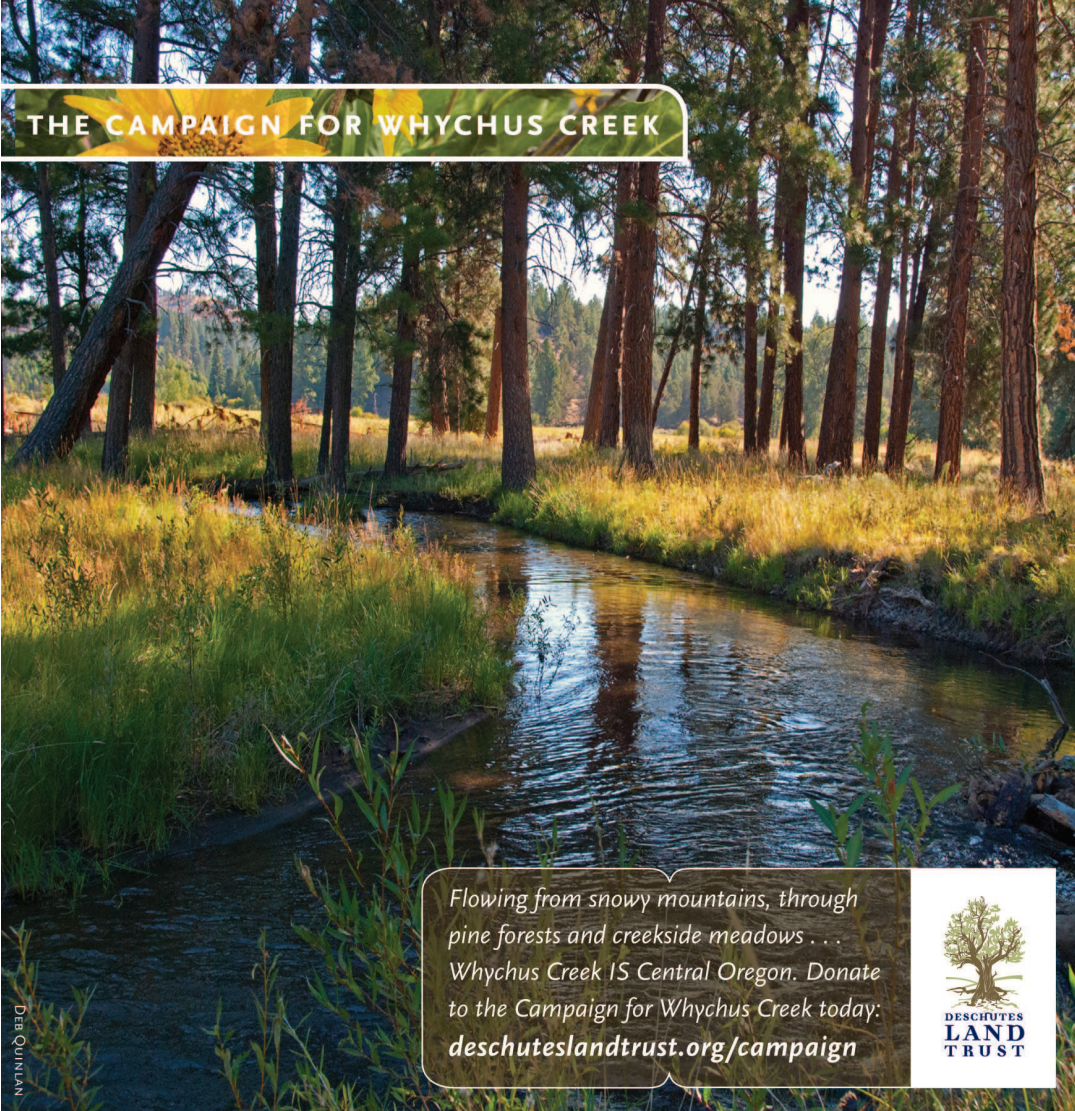
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