

JUNTOS: Grants fund family program in Sisters

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Participants can expect to be able to create goals for graduation and attendance; and be able to identify barriers and ways to overcome them for both graduating from high school and going on to college. Parents and students will gain skills and knowledge to have more effective communication with key school staff, as well as be introduced to the FAFSA and other financial aid resources.

Students will learn about the SAT/PSAT/ACT testing, tips for essay writing, importance of volunteering and community service, and how to be competitive in applications for college.

By the end of the six-week course families will have a completed education action plan to focus on next steps.

"This program gives families ownership of their child's education," says Jones.

Many of the families that participated in the first cohort in 2013 wanted to continue to meet. The group set up monthly meetings to continue to discuss how to support their children.

"Of the participants in

the first cohort, we had four seniors," says Jones. "I am proud to say all four of those students are attending college. We are changing the culture — families are energized."

Recently, Jones was approached by Oregon State University to continue and expand her work in the Juntos program.

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— Ruth Jones

"Other districts saw all the positive energy coming out of the Sisters program," says Jones. "Sisters is an example. When we started the Juntos program here we were the fifth program in the state; now there are 14 school districts participating. We started a program in Redmond ... soon Culver and then Prineville."

She started working

directly for the Open Campus program through Oregon State in November. It made sense for her to continue to be housed in Sisters, and the University agreed. Jones has a small office in the Sisters Middle School library and still keeps a watchful eye on the Sisters program while she expands the good work she has done to other rural communities in Central Oregon.

Through a grant from the Ford Family Foundation, Jones' position is paid for and Oregon State University has offered to pay up to 70 percent of her tuition costs so she can finish her bachelor's degree.

"I have an associate's degree," she says. "But to finish my degree, be able to stay in Sisters and continue to support these families — this position transition was a no-brainer for me."

Volunteers are needed to assist with the program. Knowing Spanish is a requirement, as well as desire to work with students and families.

"Juntos means together," says Jones. "We are here to support and assist Hispanic families and tell them that their kids can go to college just like anybody else."

For more information, contact Jones at Ruth.jones@oregonstate.edu.

City hears another appeal on project

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

The developers of McKenzie Meadow Village (MMV) have been hit with another appeal from Pinnacle Alliance Group regarding a November 19, 2015 Planning Commission decision to approve an extension on the MMV subdivision plan.

Mark Adolf of Pinnacle, who for several years was aligned with developers of MMV to construct an 82-bed assisted-living facility (ALF), was unable to ever secure the financing necessary to construct the project. MMV partners provided multiple contract extensions to Adolf until, in 2013, they terminated their agreement with him.

At the time of the original approval of the MMV Master Plan in 2010, restrictions were placed on the developers that none of the other nine phases of the development could be started until the phase one ALF was completed. Thus, the inability of Adolf to secure his financing effectively put the entire development on hold. Included in the Master Plan are cottages and low-cost

senior apartments, two housing options widely regarded as critical in Sisters.

The delays caused by Adolf's inability to secure funding required MMV developers to apply to the City for multiple extensions on the Master Plan, the site plan, and the subdivision plan.

Since the termination of the agreement between Adolf and MMV, Pinnacle has acquired another piece of property located next to the post office with plans, fully approved by the City, to build an ALF. Although the project is clear to proceed, Adolf has yet to apply for the building permit and pay the requisite fees to the City to begin construction.

He has filed three appeals with the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, claiming that decisions made by the Sisters Planning Commission and City Council regarding MMV were not valid. The appeals have stalled MMV's ability to begin building their planned ALF, for which they have plans and a builder ready to go.

At the request of Pinnacle and MMV, the public hearing was left open for 14 days.

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