

Citizens4Community launches survey

This week Citizens 4Community launched a local survey to help guide the growing nonprofit and shape the future of its community-building efforts in Sisters Country.

The survey is available through noon Tuesday, February 11 on the C4C website — Citizens4Community.com — and several local businesses have kicked in prizes to help boost participation. Community input also will be gathered during four focus groups this week.

“Through the survey and focus groups we’re hoping to reach a broad cross-section of community members and leaders,” said C4C President Robyn Holdman.

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C4C hired Jan McGowan, a professional nonprofit consultant who lives locally, to lead this strategic planning process. McGowan is coordinating the survey and will facilitate the focus groups. Organizational consultant Bill Birnbaum, also of Sisters, has lent professional assistance to C4C as well.

The survey is designed to help the four-year-old nonprofit prioritize its activities, better understand community

perceptions about the organization, and help C4C focus on ways to improve its processes and fundraising.

“We’ll learn more about what the community values and wants—where the energy is,” Holdman said. “We’re still a relatively young organization, and we want to stay on track.”

Community members came together to form C4C during the fall of 2015.

The nonprofit’s first initiative was the Sisters Country Civility Project (Speak Your Peace). That project included several free “Soup & Civility” workshops aimed at strengthening local relationships and building communication and leadership skills. Wallet-sized civility “tool” cards were designed to offer quick tips for better conversations. Some 4,500 cards — featuring art by Kathy Deggendorfer — have since been distributed.

C4C later organized the Sisters Community Quilt Project to help kick off outreach efforts for the Sisters Country Vision. The all-volunteer team then assisted on the Vision Action Plan, which it is now helping to implement. Last year C4C also started hosting “Community Builder” events that bring area nonprofits, agencies and other groups together to explore new ways to collaborate, leverage local resources and pool funding on cooperative efforts.

During the past four years C4C has hosted nearly 30 free community-engagement activities, including a City Council candidates night, the fiesta in Fir Street

Park, a forum on the First Amendment, last November’s all-community singing event at the Belfry and monthly Let’s Talk, Sisters! discussions.

“Our goal is to help foster a vital community—where residents are very comfortable engaging and working as collaboratively as possible and where there’s a strong sense of well-being and connection—even as Sisters Country grows,” said C4C co-founding board member Amy Burgstahler. “This survey will help us gauge our effectiveness so far and think about what we could do better.”

Holdman and Burgstahler noted C4C has some real opportunities to bring funding into Sisters. “It’s important we stay community-led; this survey is a way to help that happen,” Holdman said.

C4C hopes residents will take the survey and also share it with friends and neighbors. And several local businesses are stepping up to help C4C ensure a good response rate. “It just underscores the supportive nature of our community,” Burgstahler said.

R Spot Italian eatery, Fika Sisters Coffeehouse, Paulina Springs Books, Suttle Tea, Sisters Coffee Company and Blue Burro are among those offering gift certificates as drawing prizes.

Participants can choose to offer their contact information for the random prize drawings, but their survey responses will remain anonymous and will be kept confidential by McGowan.

See Citizens4Community.com to take the survey.

Young artist sells artwork during art walk

By Jodi Schneider
Correspondent

Keegan Williams, a talented nine-year-old artist from Bend, has taken the art scene by storm with his clever drawings, which feature witty creatures and designs that come mostly from his vivid imagination.

Williams’ dream of becoming a cartoonist has become more of a reality after art enthusiasts bought 12 prints of his drawings that were displayed on the wall at Good Day Café (adjacent to Bedouin) during the last Fourth Friday Artwalk.

Bedouin owner Harmony Thomas is a Sisters Art Association board member and donates the wall in the Good Day Café for local artists.

“The art wall in the café is a vessel for artists to show their work,” Thomas said. “It is a non-commission wall because the show is only up for a month. I love that we see a new collection of work every month.”

She noted, “Working and helping artists with exposure is something that I’m passionate about, because I see their potential and want to share it with the world.”

Thomas first spotted one of the nine-year-old artist’s drawings on the refrigerator at his home when she picked up her son Tarren, who is friends with William’s brother.

“I was immediately impressed with his detail, he



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER

Keegan Williams dreams of becoming a cartoonist.

then invited me to see more of his work,” said Thomas. “I asked if he would like to show his work on the art wall at Good Day Café.

“Keegan and my daughter Cora are in the same fourth-grade class at Elk Meadow Elementary in Bend. The K-5 school focuses on learning through the arts, and the curriculum is based around art,” she added.

The entire Williams family is artistic, an environment that encourages creativity.

Emily Williams spends every day of her life being creative and working with art. She poured her heart into painting murals during her college years and is now a graphic design artist, a sculptor and painter.

“My husband, Spencer, and I are both artists, so we have a lot of art supplies,” she said. “Since I work at home,

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