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Adam Amato Emerald

Cindi Patterson organizes the peanut butter for the 'get milk and peanut butter' Governor's Food Drive taking place until March 1.

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Hunger drives donations

■ The University hopes to outdo itself in this year's Governor's State Employees Food Drive

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

More than a dozen departments on campus will participate in a statewide effort to help raise awareness of hunger while helping to feed those in need.

Organizers are encouraging students and faculty to bring in non-perishable food or cash donations so the University can top last year's efforts in the annual Governor's State Employees Food Drive.

Last year, the University collected more than 77,000 pounds of food, and this year the organizers hope to collect more than 100,000 pounds. The drive began Feb. 5 and will run through March 1. Various departments on campus will place food bins in or around their buildings to help promote the drive.

Karen Scheeland, coordinator for the Office of Governmental Affairs, said they have increased their goal

because of past successes.

"We looked at the past accomplishments. We had 23,000 pounds in 1999 and went to 77,000 in 2000," she said. "It seemed like a natural progression."

The progression mirrors the rising number of people in need of food in the Eugene area. From 1999 to 2000, there was a 22 percent increase in the number of food boxes available, and a 29 percent increase in the number of people who needed boxes, said Kim Mangun, assistant director for University public affairs and development.

"The situation seems to be really bad," Mangun said. "There is really a desperate need in the area."

She said she was encouraged by the increased number of departments participating in the drive.

Mangun cites cuts in food stamps, a lack of affordable housing and a lack of safe, affordable child care in the area as the main reasons for the increase.

Deb McGeorge, food solicitor for Food for Lane County, also said the situation is serious.

"The state of Oregon is number one in the U.S. for hunger," she said.

"It's a very serious issue."

Mangun said the journalism school has been active in the food drive. On Valentine's Day, more than 300 heart-shaped cookies were sold. The money raised through the sale will go to Food for Lane County.

Lisa Plumb, the benefits coordinator for Human Resources, said that for the fourth year in a row, staff working on the fourth floor of Oregon Hall decided to enact a theme for the food drive to encourage staff members to make donations. This year's theme is "Get milk and peanut butter," she said.

"It is just a sort of a publicity stunt," Plumb said. "It's to have a good time and remind people of the drive."

She said past themes include "Mountain of Macaroni," "Tower of Tuna" and "Bridge of Beans."

Cash donations will also be accepted, Mangun said. For each dollar donated, she said volunteers at Food For Lane County can buy six pounds of food, and donations of \$5 will feed a family of four for an entire day. Donations are currently being accepted in the EMU and the bookstore, she said.

Middle school students visit UO

■ Students from area middle schools came to campus for a two-day conference

By Chris Ryan
for the Emerald

Hundreds of local students gave up most of their three-day holiday weekend to come to campus for the fourth annual "Just for Middle School Students" on Monday, the second day of a two-day conference sponsored by the college of education.

The Eugene and Springfield students each paid \$20 to participate in the day-long event, which was designed to prepare them for life after middle school.

"This is our way of helping them develop skills and giving them support," said Karen Logvin, one of the event coordinators.

The middle school students spent Monday morning watching theater performances and engaging in group activities in the EMU Ballroom. In the afternoon, they divided into groups and explored campus.

"The best part was the morning session," said Russell Kamp, an

eighth-grader at Monroe Middle School. "The plays were the most fun."

The event was the second day of "Success in the Middle: A Conference for and about Middle School Boys and Girls," sponsored by the University's Youth Enrichment and Talented and Gifted program, a branch of the college of education.

The conference began Sunday at Churchill High School's auditorium with a program called "The Next Great Generation." It featured a performance from Eugene's senior theater group Encore Theater, a speech by author William Strauss and a performance by the Eugene Opera.

Encore's fast-paced theater act was well-received by the crowd with big laughs and loud applause. Audience members joked about memories of childhood and told the students in the audience to savor being young.

Strauss then delivered "The Millennial Generation," a speech about the potential of those in the generation born in 1982 and after.

"Today's generation has more in

common with the people from Encore than they do with their parents," Strauss told the crowd.

He said generations want to rebel against the generation that preceded them, and, because Generation X has been largely apathetic, the Millennial Generation will be motivated and successful.


"You truly are America's greatest generation," Strauss told the middle school students in the crowd.

Strauss, who is the co-founder and director of the political cabaret the Capitol Steps, was also promoting his new musical, "MaKid-do," a parody of the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta "Mikado."

The Eugene Opera was on hand to perform songs from his musical. The songs had titles such as "Practically Perfect Kids" and "We are the New Millennium," and each one echoed Strauss' words about the power of this millennial generation.

As students dispersed around 3:30 p.m. Monday, the two-day conference came to a close.


"It was a great success," Logvin said. "We had a full house this morning. It was a lot of fun."



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