

“We Will Because We Can” weekend proves to be an inspiration and success

By Scott Laird



A large group of energetic, compassionate and committed women took the city of Vernonia by storm on the first weekend of June. Under beautiful blue skies with sunny weather, they hit the streets; literally, riding bikes, and raising awareness for a cause they all feel very strongly about, cancer awareness.

The inaugural “We Will Because We Can” event was held in Vernonia May 31- June 2. The multi-faceted weekend, which centered on various bicycle rides, was created by Carol Lundin and friends, as a way to raise awareness about breast cancer, as a celebration

for all cancer survivors, and as support and healing for family and friends of cancer survivors. The event was based at Cedar Ridge Retreat Center, and included workshops, entertainment, meals, and the bike rides.

The weekend was a fundraiser for The Cancer Community Renewal Project, a national non-profit dedicated to inspiring cancer survivors and their support groups through physical activity and wellness programs within their communities. The idea is to provide programs and services like access to regular exercise, yoga, and massage, on

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Vernonia’s “First Friday” well-received

Vernonia’s very first “First Friday” artwalk was considered successful by all those in attendance on Friday June 1st. About six downtown merchants took part in the monthly celebration of the Arts that was being introduced in Vernonia for the first time. The inaugural event was held from 6 to 8 pm, and featured art displays, snacks, music, and extended shop hours by merchants.

The center of activity seemed to be the Community Learning Center, where about 20-25 people were congregated and could be found viewing paintings by local artists, Diane Caughlin, whose work was also on display across the street at Etcetera. Also on display at the Learning Center was work by Albert Gotz, who is the father of local resident Erika Paleck; and garden stepping stones, created by the Ford Institute Leadership class, which are being sold as a fund raiser for their class project (see related story on page). “This was great!”, said Jesse Jones, Director of the Learning Center. “There were so many people here out for the first event.”

Other merchants who participated in the evening event were: Out on a Limb and Buckleberry Cottage, who featured photography by Evangeline Doyle of On Madison Studios; Sunday’s Best, featuring oil painting by Melny; Grey Dawn Gallery, featuring work by Christopher Burkett; and Black Bear Coffee shop, with Sally Harrison signing copies of her postcard book for children.

The event was organized by city Recorder Kate Conley who was inspired by a similar event held in Grants Pass. The event was held to encourage residents and visitors to walk the downtown streets, socialize and share food, shop in the local stores, and enjoy a variety of artistic styles and events. The next “First Friday” event will be held on July 6th.

