

Senior Advocate, Karen Miller - Available to Help

By Scott Laird

Whenever I get the chance to talk with Karen Miller, I am struck by her approachability. She always makes time to stop for a chat, at least briefly. She also always seems like a person with something to do, a person with somewhere to be, a person who's taking care of business.

That's because it's her job to take care of business in the name of helping our local senior citizens find and get needed services. "Seniors are the fastest growing segment of our population," says Karen.

Karen works for Community Action Team (CAT) as a Senior Service Case Manager based at the Senior Center in Vernonia. "I prefer the title Senior Advocate," said Karen at her office recently, "because basically what I do is advocate for our seniors. Any problem they have, I am here to try and help."

CAT, whose motto is "Building Bridges to Self-sufficiency," is a non-profit whose goal is to mobilize resources to reduce poverty and make families and individuals more self-reliant. They provide a Senior Advocate for community members sixty years old and over in Clatskanie, Rainier, St. Helens, Scappoose, and Vernonia. They follow an assessment process that allows them to identify needs that might qualify for assistance. Just some of the services they provide are Re-

spite Care which provides relief for at home care takers; Oregon Project Independence (OPI) which helps seniors living at home with housekeeping and personal care assistance; a nutritional program which includes Meals on Wheels delivery to homes; foot care services at the Senior Center; and Hearing Aid services. They also offer Veterans Services through a representative at the St. Helens main office; legal assistance including possible pro bono help; AARP safe driving classes; and a new Foster Grandparent/Senior companion program that matches seniors with kids to help them with reading and friendship, and matches volunteers with seniors, to bring joy and comfort to lonely and isolated seniors.



CAT doesn't just provide senior services either. Other services they offer are: emergency energy and housing services, transitional housing assistance, USDA child care food program, Kid Start, and Head Start.

Karen loves working with our local seniors and really appreciates the opportunity to be here. She has worked in the past to acquire funding through state and federal Preventative Health Grants to provide additional programs like swimming for exercise at the Forest Grove pool, Diabetes check-ups, and Medical screenings.

According to Karen, "many seniors don't know that these services are available. Worse yet, they don't know I'm here to help. I want people to feel free to stop in or call me to ask questions," said Karen, "I also encourage anybody in the community who knows of a senior who might need some assistance to contact me. I really depend on networking to make my connections."

Karen Miller will always have a lot of business to attend to, but she'll always make time to stop and talk, especially for our senior citizens.

To reach Karen Miller stop by the Senior Center - 446 Bridge Street, or call her office at 503-429-9112. Leave Karen a message if she's not there. To reach CAT call 503-397-3511

Vernonia Boys' Baseball Season a Success

By Scott Laird

Coach Jerry Butcher couldn't say enough about his team. Butcher's 12-14 year olds had just completed an amazing season, and Jerry surely was proud. "This was a great group of kids," he told me numerous times during a recent interview about their successful season.

Coach Butcher is the head coach for the Vernonia entry in Junior Baseball of Oregon's National League. The twelve boys under his direction finished the year with fourteen wins, one loss and one tie. After a tough draw at the county tournament, where the team finished third, they just missed qualifying for the state tournament. "We had a very demanding, very hard schedule, three games on Saturday, and three on Sunday, plus it was very hot," said Butcher about the county tourney. "The kids just ran out of gas."

Butcher, who has coached boys' baseball for seven years, was assisted by Aaron Miller, Mike Orth, and Dan Titus with this year's team. "We had great support from the whole community this year," said Butcher. "All the parents really got involved. We had times when we had more spectators at an away game than the home team."

When asked about keys to the team's success, Butcher talked about his players' dedication - to the team, to themselves and to each other. "These kids would do anything to win. Not one kid missed a single practice or game the whole season. We had four kids on this team who had never played at all

before, and the other players taught them and encouraged them. I told them 'I'm the coach, you're the leaders', and they really embraced that philosophy."

"It was a whole team effort all season. Different kids would step up and contribute in different games. That was the key to our whole season. This was a great group of kids."

Coach Butcher and the rest of Vernonia can look forward to more exciting and aggressive baseball next season. Eight of this year's twelve players are eligible for the team again next year.



Echoing Evergreen Booster Day Camp – Fun For Everyone

By Scott Laird

Another year of the Echoing Evergreen Boosters' summer day camp at Camp Wilkerson has come and gone. And what a year it was!

A total of 353 campers took part in the biggest day camp yet during the week following Jamboree weekend. "We were very excited about the turn out this year," said Camp Director Katie Po-

etter as she recovered at home the week following camp. "Everybody had so much fun!"

Poetter has assembled a great team to run the camp including co-director Robin Dennis, Financial Director Michelle Dennis and Secretary Jeanne Mohr. Poetter also recognized the great contribution of all the volunteers, sponsors and camp counselors who helped out. "Without them camp just wouldn't happen," said Poetter.

Camp Wilkerson consists of one week of day camp, Monday through Friday, and is open to all children from kindergarten to twelfth grade in the Vernonia and Mist areas. The seventh through twelfth graders act as counselors for the younger children. Adults who volunteer can also bring their infants. The camp is set up in stations which the campers rotate through, participating in activities like hiking, building bird houses, Jazzercise, obstacle courses, BB gun and archery shooting, and crafts.

Poetter, who began training to take over as director five years ago and took the reins three years



ago, credits her predecessors for the camp's success. "Camp Wilkerson was started thirty years ago as a Girl Scout Camp by Nona Skinner and was run with the help of Kathy Ward.

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