

Students Prepare Dramatic Production

Thirty home-schooled girls and boys from the Vernonia area are working hard on two plays they will present on April 4 and 5. The grade school level actors will dramatize the beloved story of "Heidi," and the high school actors will tread the boards in a comedy entitled "The Ugly Duckling." The plays are directed by Rachel, Margaret, Alberta, and Caleb Hardy of the Greenleaf Acting Company in Scappoose. Both plays include lively action, colorful costumes and sets, and even some music and dancing.

"Heidi was one of my favorite stories as a child, and I'm thrilled to be bringing it to the stage in Vernonia," says Alberta Hardy. "The children are working hard, having a great time, and we are putting together a wonderful show. Heidi is a show the whole family will enjoy."

"I really love A. A. Milne's one-act play 'The Ugly Duckling,' and I think our high school group is doing a wonderful version of it," states Margaret Hardy. "It's a privilege for me to work with this group, and I think it's also great for them to learn all the skills that come with being in a play. I believe that all ages will really enjoy this amusing and sweet medieval tale!"



The performances will be at the Vernonia Grange on the corner of North and Washington, one block north of Vernonia High School, on Friday evening, April 4 at 7:30, with a Saturday matinee on April 5 at 2:30. All are welcome to attend. The performances are free, but donations are gladly accepted.

VHS Blood Drive A Success

The recent blood drive for the American Red Cross held at the Vernonia High School was a success. According to VHS teacher James Brookins who coordinated the drive for the school, the goal was to collect thirty-eight pints. Forty-two were collected, twenty-six of which were from first time donors.

Another Blood Drive will be held on June 14, 2008, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Spencer Park.



School Based Health Center Planning Takes Place

Columbia County has taken another step toward planning for health care for youth! The Columbia Health District (CHD) has received three grants from the Department of Human Services for planning School Based Health Centers (SBHC) in the communities of Vernonia, Rainier, and at St. Helens High School. The grant money is being used to convene local planning groups in each of these communities, in addition to supporting county-wide planning initiatives.

On March 6th, CHD-Public Health had the pleasure of convening a day long planning retreat which brought together over 30 community partners to discuss School-based Health Care as a way of addressing the unmet health care needs of the youth in Columbia County. In attendance were State public health employees, health department staff, school superintendent, school board members, teachers, counselors, school administrators, physicians, nurses, parents, one student, a county commissioner, representatives from Sacagawea Health Center and many other key community stakeholders. The objectives of the retreat were:

- To develop a framework by which to address county-wide health needs starting with initial planning grants in three communities.
- To discuss School-Based Health Center long-term sustainability
- To identify shared resources and discuss how to engage our community around health care for kids.

All objectives were met at this initial gathering and next steps were identified. The participants requested that another half-day work session be scheduled as a follow up to this day-long retreat. This event will take place on April 14th. The location and times are to be determined. Initial goals for this half-day include continuing the discussion of financial sustainability as well as community education and engagement.

CHD-Public Health is committed to listening to the needs of community members, partners, and stakeholders as we continue together with the SBHC planning process. If you would like to be involved in the planning process, or have any questions, please contact the Program Coordinator Aisha Krebs. She can be reached by phone at (503)397-4651x206 or by email at apoole@chdpublichealth.com.

School Board Report

The Vernonia School District meeting held on March 13, 2008, brought good news. Everyone was welcomed back into the district office for the first time since the flood. Guests from the Beaverton, Southridge and Aloha Booster Clubs presented a card signed by many of their members along with a check in the amount of \$2,700 for Vernonia schools. J.D. McMahon of Insight Corporation presented the board with a donation of ten new laptops and printers to the district.

Vernonia High School will be inviting the Scappoose High School to their Spring Fling Dance. Some students will also be traveling to Scappoose to prepare and serve dinner to the staff and teachers as a thank you for welcoming our students and staff into their school during our time of need.

Washington Grade School Principal Aaron Miller was nominated and has been named the Community School Educator of the Year by the Oregon Community Education Association. The award ceremonies will be held on Thursday, April 24, 2008, at the Ocean View Resort in Seaside OR.

In regular business, Curl's Transportation was awarded the contract for bus services to the district.

The board approved keeping the current school schedule and not adding three make up days at the end of this year. The last day of school will be June 10, 2008. The district will request a seat time waiver for the days missed due to the flooding from the Oregon Department of Education. Dr. Cox advised the board he has been told to expect the waiver to be approved. They also reviewed calendar options for the 2008-09 school year. The board approved a schedule that is similar to the 2007-08 calendar with 173 student contact days and 190 contract days. Total enrollment for the district is still down ten percent.

DOWA, an architectural firm, recently provided the board with concept drawings for a new school campus which gave the board a way to understand and determine how much acreage will be necessary to relocate the campus. DOWA determined that thirty to forty acres are needed and five sites were rated as possibilities for relocation. The district approved Dr. Cox to begin discussions with those landowners.

The board also approved an expenditure of up to \$50,000 to add another modular classroom (donated by Blazer Industries) that will be placed next to WGS in the parking lot and for paving repairs.

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for April 10, 2008, at 6:00 PM at the District Office.