

## Check Out the Vernonia Library *continued from front page*

the community, especially programs at no charge, is good. The Library is far more than just a building with books anymore."

The Vernonia Library is participating in the Columbia County Reads program for the third year. The theme this year is "Survival, Self-Reliance and Sustainability." Moloney says that each library in the county develops their own special event around the theme. Shaanee Moreland is an AmeriCorp volunteer working with the Columbia County Emergency Management Department. Moreland has been coming to Vernonia to help with the regular After School Reading Program on Tuesdays, teaching children about preparing for different types of potential disasters. "If you're prepared, you're in control and it's not as scary," explains Moloney. "Things happen and there are things you can do to be prepared for it. And that's important for small children to know and understand." Moreland is also presenting a preschool program for parents and children. Moreland has also developed a major program for the Library, "Together We Prepare" which will be held on Saturday, February 22 at 4:00 PM. "This is for everyone in the community and will focus on learning about emergency preparedness and having emergency kits," says Moloney. Moloney says there will be some incentive prizes and drawings.

Moloney has some regular programs that have continued to be popular. The Preschool Story Time is held on Monday's at 10:30 AM. Every Tuesday at 3:45 is the After School Reading Program which includes a story, a snack and

a craft project.

Moloney is excited about some new programs the Library is offering on Thursdays. On the first Thursday at 4:30 PM volunteer Grant Williams runs a stamp club which Moloney says has been popular with both young and old patrons of the Library. "It's been popular with all ages," says Moloney. "We have little kids who love to come as well as adults."

On the second and fourth Thursday at 3:45 PM is Lego Club, which Moloney says is being attended by both young children and teens. The kids build



their sculptures and write something about what they made. The projects are put on display at the Library until the next time the club meets.

On the third Thursday at 3:45 a new Chess Club has been meeting, hosted by Robb Wilson. "This has generated a lot of interest," says Moloney. "They play until they are done with their games and they want to go home; often they are here until 5:30 or 6:00 PM."

One other new program that will start on March 12<sup>th</sup> is the Baby and Toddler Time for ages 0-3 on the second Wednesday of each month, hosted by Shannon Romdvedt.

Moloney places an emphasis on finding ways to get young children to read. She says the Lego Club has been a great tool to encourage young children to read about something they are interested in. "It reaches out to the kids, especially the boys, at an age when they think it's not cool to read or they have more important things to do than read", says Moloney. "If we find something interesting to them then they start reading and they don't even realize it. With the Legos, they want to read about how to put them together, how to make a specific project, or cool things other people have built and how they did it.

It's one more avenue to engage them."

The Vernonia Library will be hosting another Oregon Humanities Conversation Project in April. Moloney says the Vernonia Library has been very successful in attracting and receiving these special programs, mostly because attendance and participation at previous events has been so good. "We have never been denied a request because of our great participation," says Moloney. "These are free programs for us." The Conversation Project offers humanities-based public discussion programs about provocative issues and ideas. The Vernonia Library has hosted several of these well received programs each year during the preceding four years including topics such as censorship and being black in Oregon. "The professional leaders that Oregon Humanities send for these programs are really great and very engaging," says Moloney.

Another new program being offered throughout the State of Oregon is the Library Passport Program which allows members of a Library access to and the ability to check out materials at other Library systems including the Washington and Multnomah County systems. This is a great benefit for Vernonia members who work or travel through these areas, and allows access to a tremendous amount of additional resources.

The Vernonia Library also has passes to Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) and the Portland Children's Museum. Members of the Vernonia Library can check out these passes free of charge and receive entrance for two adults and four children.

Although she feels like the Vernonia Library offers a lot, Moloney says she is looking for more input about how to reach underserved populations within the community and finding ways to develop additional and creative programs. "I want to provide what people would like, says Moloney. "If they are not coming, I need to know why. I want to reach out to our different populations."

Moloney is extremely grateful for the help she receives from her many volunteers. She says she has about twenty-five people who volunteer throughout the year, some on a weekly basis, some only occasionally. She also receives a lot of assistance, especially financially, from the Friends of the Library who support numerous programs, buy equip-

ment, and fill other gaps with volunteer time as well as funding. The Friends of the Library will host their Spring Book Sale, one of their key fundraisers on



March 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Vernonia Community Learning Center. Donations can be dropped off at the Library to help support this program.

The Vernonia Public Library is funded through the General Fund of the City budget. Reductions in property tax revenue have had a significant impact on the City and therefore are impacting the Library budget. "There isn't funding for any of these programs we provide," says Moloney. "These are all volunteer driven."

Moloney says she recently approached the Vernonia Lions Club to request a small donation to help with the upcoming "Together We Prepare" program. Moloney says she was shocked when the Lions members handed her a check the next day for \$500 to "...use as you see fit to help the Library." "It was absolutely amazing," says Moloney. "It was an example of what I continuously see from this community. People want it to work. They want the Library here. They want the programs here."

"We offer much more than almost any other library of our size," says Moloney. "If you look at our statistics for participation and use it is pretty amazing. Our circulation has gone up every month during the past year. The attendance at our programs is great. It shows how invested the community is in the Library. It's impressive and I'm proud of it. We all should be proud of it."

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