

Vernonia Senior Citizens SOS Program

"By the time I pay my monthly rent and utilities, I have less than \$50 for groceries," reported one local senior citizen during his registration for a meal certificate pack.

Vernonia Senior Citizens (VSC) organization created a voucher program to help meet the nutritional needs for our Vernonia seniors who find themselves in a similar situation. Their budget is stretched too tightly to eat properly. Although it is a temporary program until the new senior center

building is finished, the individual seniors have found a welcome solution. Through the utilization of three local restaurants, home delivered meals and dine-in meals are available (see related article on this page). Any senior can order a tasty meal for only \$6 from a senior menu at these establishments. For senior citizens who need financial assistance, like the one in the opening quote, VSC developed assistance through a meal certificate pack for ten meals per month.

It is a misconception that senior meals are fully paid through any government agencies. Currently, all sources of reimbursement show \$3.11 per meal. An average meal costs a little more than \$6 per meal, adding mileage reimbursement and minor office expenses. Financial records show the VSC organization is carrying a loss of \$3.24 per meal. VSC oversees an average of 269 meals per month. That translates to a net loss of \$872 per month or an annual loss over \$10,000. To further add to the problem, the new year is expected to contain a decreased amount of per meal reimbursement. The City of Vernonia has pledged some financial assis-

tance for the VSC meal program during the past and again this fiscal year, for which VSC is grateful. However, the City budget is also stretched and the VSC organization cannot depend on these funds always being available.

The VSC Board is asking for help to maintain this vital service for our low income Vernonia senior citizens. Donors are asked to become a part of a new fund raising program---SOS (Support Our Seniors). Any tax-deductible amount will be gladly received but here are some suggestions:

- \$60/month (sponsors one meal certificate packet of ten vouchers, for one senior citizen for one month) or \$120/month (sponsors two meal packs for two senior citizens), specifically for the meal fund.

- \$15/year senior membership (available to those 60 years old and above) supports the VSC organization which administers the program, adding General Fund support.

The VSC Board earnestly hopes many SOS Champions will come forth to help our senior citizens. A cut-out form has been provided to assist donors if you so desire or contributions may be mailed directly without the form. Donors will be honored monthly through the Bridge Street Bits column, listing names if permission has been granted, but not amounts. Board member and Chairman of the VSC Nutritional Committee, Sandy Welch, states, "I believe many people are unaware of this valuable program and this service. It's a true need in our community for our senior citizens. Ongoing monthly supporters would greatly assist our meal budget but any amount helps! Please become an SOS Champion!"

Vernonia Senior Meals

The Vernonia Senior Citizens (VSC) organization continues its services as they await construction of a permanent building of their own. Currently, VSC's office is located within the former Learning Center (939 Bridge Street) which also houses Bargains on Bridge Street Thrift Store. Firm plans are underway with the City of Vernonia which will start construction in 2017 for a senior center and food bank situated alongside the Vernonia Health Center.

Until such time as a local kitchen is available, senior citizens (sixty years old and above) are given options to assist in proper nutritional meals. One of the senior services currently being administered is the VSC senior meal program. The first option is for those registered home-bound seniors to receive one hot lunch each weekday. These meals, delivered by dedicated volunteer drivers, are catered through three local restaurants: Black Iron Grill, Mario-lino's and Subway. There are 184 meals delivered monthly to these seniors.

The second option is
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SOS DONATION (Support our Seniors)

Vernonia Senior Citizens
939 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064
Office Telephone 503-429-3912
501 (c) (3) TID: #23-7422295

Donor's Name _____
Mailing Address _____
City, State, ZIP _____

_____ Enclosed is my \$60 donation towards the Senior Meal Program (Sponsors one monthly meal pack containing 10 meal certificates)

_____ Enclosed is my donation towards two meal packs (\$120)

_____ Here is my donation for another amount \$ _____
_____ \$15/year annual senior citizen membership for those 60 years old and over

_____ You have my permission to list me as a Champion of the SOS program (amount will not be posted)

_____ My check will serve as my receipt OR

_____ I would like a tax deductible receipt mailed to me at the above address

THANKS FOR BECOMING AN **SOS CHAMPION!**

On The Shelves

By Shannon Romtvedt

The library recently hosted two wonderful programs: Vernonia Flood Stories on Wednesday, October 26, emceed by Vernonia resident, Tobie Finzel, and Life After War: Photography and Oral Histories of Coming Home on Saturday, November 5, facilitated by author and photographer, Jim Lommasson of Portland, OR. Life After War was a Conversation Project program, sponsored by Oregon Humanities and the Friends of the Library.

Vernonia Flood Stories was an opportunity for community members to share inspirational, humorous, and emotional stories from the floods of 1996 and 2007. Life After War presented stories of Veterans coming home from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. These stories were shared to interviewer and photographer, Jim Lommasson, author of *Exit Wounds: Soldiers' Stories - Life After Iraq and Afghanistan*, now available at the library. Two very different programs but both were powerful.

As a host for the program, I had a great experience working with both Tobie Finzel and Jim Lommasson and have a great respect for both individuals. I so appreciate the work they do and impact they have, one on a local scale and one on a national

scale. Thank you both for making a difference in our community through these events.

Coming up in December, the library will give all community members the opportunity to make a difference by participating in a survey. Please watch for a survey available at the beginning of December in the library, on the library website, and linked through our Facebook page. It will also be sent out in the December utility bill. The survey will be used to help plan for the upcoming budget year and for the consideration of future changes to services and programs. Whether or not you currently visit the library, we would like to know what you value (or would value) most.

Upcoming Events

Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia

Saturday, December 3, 11:00 am
Library is participating in Spirit of Christmas with a reading of *The Mitten* by Jan Brett followed by a scratch art ornament craft for children. Please watch for the Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia event schedule.

Movie Night

Tuesday, November 22, 6 pm (Family Movie): Showing the new sequel to *Finding Nemo*
Relax and enjoy a movie and popcorn

at the library. Call or visit the library for movie titles.

Ongoing Programs

K-5 Library Time

November 17, 4 - 5pm
Third Thursday of every month, 4 - 5 pm. Snack and craft for students K-5 and parents. Older kids/teens welcome as long as there are enough materials.

Book Discussion Group

Last Monday of every month, 5:30 pm
Selection for November 28: *Lean on Pete* by Willy Vlautin

Writer's Group

November 17, 6 - 7:30 pm
Third Thursday of the month. For all levels of writing experience. New members always welcome.

Baby and Toddler Time

Mondays, 10:30 - 11:15 am
Songs, short stories, toys, and bubbles for 0 - 3. Older siblings welcome.

Preschool Storytime

Fridays, 10:30 - 11:15 am
Stories and a craft/activity for up to age 5.

Membership Passes

The library has several new membership passes available for check-out. Passes include: OMSI, Oregon Historical Society Museum

and Library, Rice Rock & Mineral Museum, and the newest addition to the collection, Shute Park Aquatic and Recreation Center (Hillsboro, OR). Passes check out for 2 days to library members ages 18 and older. Contact the library for more information or to make a reservation. Passes were donated by the Friends of the Library and Vernonia Hands on Art.

New Library Volunteers

Welcoming new volunteers, Danika Kiss-Hofer and Kendra Stefan. Danika created the back drop for the Halloween photo shoot and is assisting with crafts and other projects at the library. Kendra will be helping staff at the desk with shelving and material circulation. Thank you Danika and Kendra for responding to the call for volunteers. Anyone else interested in volunteering, please contact Shannon Romtvedt at the library.

Library Closures

Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25 for the Thanksgiving Holiday

Hours & Contact Info

Mon, Wed, Fri 10 am - 5 pm
Tues & Thurs 1 pm - 7pm
Sat 10 am - 4 pm
Closed Sundays

Phone: (503) 429-1818

E-mail: library@vernonia-or.gov