

Lions Club Spam & Eggs

The Lions Club of Vernonia held its annual "Spam & Eggs" fundraiser on May 6 at the R&S Market. The fundraiser is held to raise funds and canned protein items for the Vernonia Cares Food Bank. The Club made several dishes to sample made from SPAM. The Lions were able to raise over \$250 dollars and 11 pounds of canned food items. The Lions wish to thank R&S Market and the incredible staff for all their help. And the wonderful and giving community of Vernonia. Thank You!



George Tice, Tommy Sherman and Muffy Marshall of Lions Club of Vernonia, present the donations collected during "Spam & Eggs" to Randal Harvey, board member of Vernonia Cares Food Bank.

Where Do You Read The Voice?



It was such a fine sight to see Sharon and Randy Parrow standin' on a corner in Winslow, Arizona, takin' it easy and reading a copy of Vernonia's Voice. Next stop...The Hotel California?

Governor Signs Foster Sibling Bill of Rights *continued from front page*

electronically and by phone. Other provisions of the law provide for training foster families and DHS caseworkers on the importance of sibling relationships, and creates a pathway for foster youth to remain connected when their siblings are placed in a permanent home.

"For us, the worst thing you can endure in the foster care system is to be separated from your siblings," said Baska. "Your siblings are like your best friends from birth and nobody is going to understand what you are going through better than they are."

In addition to testifying in front of both the Oregon House and Senate, members of OFYA visited Salem to lobby for foster care rights for children in the system.

"The voice of youth is essential when any changes to the foster care system are considered. The youth who participated in developing the Sibling Bill of Rights see that they can have an impact on the world they live in," said Lisa McMahon, OFYC Program Director. On the impact of the law, McMahon commented, "Foster youth see that the Sibling Bill of Rights is life changing, it's history – that this is law in Oregon now, and their advocacy is why it exists."

"I think this is a huge win for foster youth all across Oregon," said Baska, "so we can all grow up and know

who are siblings are and be part of their life."

Baska has been attending Portland Community College and hopes to enroll at Lane County Community College next fall where she plans to study Political Science. She remains active in OFYA and serves on a Youth Advisory Board for DHS, working to help implement additional policy recommendations from OFYA. In 2015 she was chosen for Foster Club All-Stars, a national paid internship position, and is currently working as a Youth Development Specialist there, mentoring new interns in the program.

Through its youth-led model of civic engagement and leadership development, OFYC have had legislative wins each of the past four longer sessions. Because of OFYC, foster youth in Oregon now have: Assistance Obtaining Driving Privileges (2009); A Tuition Waiver for former foster youth entering community college or state university (2011); A Foster Child Bill of Rights & Foster Child's Ombudsman (2013); access to savings accounts at the age of 12 (2015); and the ensured opportunity to participate in at least one extracurricular activity (2015).

"Foster Care is the talk of Salem right now," said Baska "There are a lot of legislators who are looking at how we can improve our state's foster

care system for our youth that are in it. I think having all these youth from all over the state talking about their experiences and what they went through with their siblings has been really impactful."

OFYC members plan continued work to improve foster care in Oregon including improving training for foster families and caseworkers on conflict-resolution and LGBTQ+ youth; increasing youth engagement around new placement and permanency

planning; and incorporating best practice models for youth transitioning out of care, suicide prevention, and foster home inspections.

Children First for Oregon is a statewide, nonprofit organization whose mission is to make long-term systemic change by advocating for the adoption of policies and programs that keep children healthy and safe, and strengthen families. Learn more at www.cffo.org.

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