

Bridge Street Bits

By Karen Miller

WE HOPE BY NOW many of you are recovering from the flu, colds, coughs, and all that comes with it. Thank you for watching out for your senior neighbors during these times of need. You never know what an act of kindness might do to cheer someone up, at ANY time of the year.

WE HAD A PRODUCTIVE BOARD MEETING on Friday, January 12. It's always good to have collective ideas and thoughts to plan for our future and we have a superb board with whom I am proud to serve. Remember we meet on the second Friday of each month at 10:00 am at the American Legion Hall where the Food Bank is located in Vernonia. All are welcome to attend. Next Board Meeting is February 9th.

HOW HAVE YOU liked the new look at the Thrift Store. Some busy bees have been working behind the scenes in organizing the back room where things are stored, and out front where donations are sold. Thank you to all volunteers who participate in working together at Bargains on Bridge Street to make that a pleasant and thrifty place to shop. Thanks to all of you who try to keep your retail shopping local. Besides, there's nothing like small friendly hometown help when you need it.

THANK YOU to all our monetary donors to our Meals on Wheels Program, which helps keep this needed program operating. Again, Meals on Wheels drivers are always needed. Please call Jack Agee at (503) 429-2005 if you think you might want to serve in this community.

Send your Meals on Wheels donations to Senior Center, MOW Program, 939 Bridge Street, Vernonia OR 97064. Donations are tax deductible.

FOR QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SERVICES here in Columbia County you may direct your questions to Community Action Team. Call Mandy at (503) 366-6545. For Senior Veterans Services, call Russ Clark at (503) 366-6580.

SENIOR SIGN OFF Good luck on keeping up with your New Year's Resolutions. Many people look forward to the New Year for a new start on old habits.

See ya around town...

Vernonia Senior Center • 939 Bridge Street • (503) 429-3912

Natural Path to Health: New Year Tips

By Dr. Carol McIntyre

If you have set some goals for yourself this New Year please remember one basic piece. Setting small goals is best. Typically, if you can achieve a small goal then you begin to build the confidence to work on larger goals. Creating lifestyle changes in the New Year can be fun and exciting when you are achieving goals you have established.

Some of the most important things to focus on for better overall health are:

- **Sleep** - We are all guilty of not getting enough sleep (especially me)... but providing your body with enough sleep is one of the most important things you can do for yourself. Your body repairs itself during sleep. Your stress complex is highly regulated based on your sleep pattern. Lack of sleep can lead to a number of imbalances in your system

that can become pathological and cause a variety of issues. Proper sleep equals proper balance.

- **Water** - This is the sole ingredient that you need to consume to stay alive. Over 75% of your entire body is made of water. Without water you cannot survive more than three days and sometimes less than 24 hours. Water is much more important than solid foods. Therefore, if you are in a catastrophic situation, it is very important to have access to fresh clean drinking water.

- **Exercise** - Physical movement is imperative to our overall well being. The lack of physical activity in our culture has led to an increase in a number of diseases including diabetes, heart disease and childhood obesity. In the days of personal cultivation we were always physically active. Today's culture based around technology takes us away from movement which is an important part of

our health.

- **Food** - Grow your own or know where it comes from is my best advice. There are many prepared foods that have chemical preservatives in them and these chemicals poison our bodies. Be aware of what you're eating even if you think it's a healthy choice. One good example of this is specialty foods such as gluten free products. I encourage people to check the ingredients - just because it's a specialty food doesn't mean it's a healthy choice. Starches are used often as fillers and this is not always a healthy choice - especially for diabetics. Read your labels!

- **Fiber** - Speaking of reading labels, always note the fiber content in your foods. According to the American Heart Association the average woman should be getting 25 grams of fiber every day. The average man should get between 30-38 grams of fiber every day. EVERY

DAY! Typically the average American gets less than 10 grams of fiber daily. Increasing fiber can help with overall digestion, regulation of bowel movements, and can decrease cholesterol.

So, how does one set small goals in relation to overall general health? Again, make small goals such as drinking more water, trying a new vegetable, walking around the block once a day or 3 times a week, etc. Each goal can be geared to your current life and minor changes implemented for success. If you're a night owl, set a bedtime for yourself. Working at a desk all day? Stand up to stretch for 2-5 minutes every hour. Stressed? Stop and take three deep breathes at least once a day. All of these things seem simple but will be very effective.

Good luck on your path to wellness and as always, thanks for joining me. Be Well~

Columbia County is Keeping it Local *continued from page 16*

for business owners to do something different to promote themselves and use a different mode of advertising that they may not be using," says Parvey. "It also helps give them some confidence to take it the next step and try something new and encourages them to use technologies like live Facebook feeds, as ways to promote or advertise their businesses or programs."

Parvey says most businesses in Columbia County are small, with between one and four employees, and often need that extra push or some type of support to grow and expand their business. "Small business owners are good at what we do, we're often not good at being in business," she says. "The hard part is, we always have to be marketing, and a lot of our small business owners don't know how to do it. They may be good at the service they provide, but they have to get customers to walk in the door. I'm here to provide tools and help them get engaged in promoting themselves."

Parvey says she sees the value in grass-roots economic development, because she is a business owner herself. In addition to her contract work with Keep It Local, she owns a business called "Mental Happiness" which helps people or businesses with anything from social media marketing, to home and office organization, to website work, to ghost writing. "It's about relationships and helping move people forward, whatever

shape or form that might take," says Parvey. "I like doing projects, so that is good for my business as well as my work with Keep It Local."

In addition to the weekly radio show Keep It Local has done several live broadcasts from events like the Columbia County Fair and the Veterans Stand Down. They also organized the Small Business Expo this past November to support Shop Small Saturday and help kick off the holiday shopping season.

In 2018 Keep It Local will partner with St. Helens Credit Union to provide six sets of business classes. "One thing we like to do is partner with businesses and match efforts they are already interested in doing," says Parvey. "We're always looking for ways to work smarter, not harder."

One of Keep It Local's largest projects has been the annual "Catch the Holiday Spirit Across Columbia County" campaign which encourages shopping at local business through the use of stamp cards; consumers collect stamps for dollars spent and can win prizes after turning in completed cards. This year was the second for the campaign, with seven businesses participating from Vernonia, including Cornerstone Naturals, Creatures Pet Shop, Mariolino's Pizza & Grill, Martin Arms, Out On A Limb, Vernonia Hardware & Liquor Store, and Wauna Federal Credit Union. "We had 232 Spirit

Cards turned in this year across the County; last year we received 130," says Parvey. "Each card requires \$200 in spending, so that means we tracked \$46,000 in holiday spending! It's really great to see that growth and how it is impacting local businesses."

This coming spring the Keep It Local campaign will feature a Spring Savings Coupon campaign that will encourage business owners to hand out coupons for other local businesses to customers who spend at their business. "It uses coupons to cross promote and introduce customers to other businesses," explains Parvey.

Parvey says the next step in growing the Keep It Local program is strengthening the local Chambers of Commerce. "How can we get more businesses involved in their communities and their Chambers, and how can we support those Chambers?" asks Parvey. She says there are also some exciting things happening at the County level to promote tourism, and that Keep It Local Columbia County will be involved in promoting those campaigns.

"We need to get more people involved and engaged," says Parvey. "I see our Keep It Local program as that glue that helps support businesses and bring them all together to support each other."