

PATROLS ...

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CJ Patrols also networks with other neighborhood watch groups throughout the Valley. Some of the groups have volunteers with former police and military experience - and Evans said they can use more people with that kind of background. Contact him at 541-592-2407 to get involved.

“We’re also meeting with Sheriff Dave Daniel and Deputy Lehman. We’re coordinating more to share information,” he said. “We know who a lot of the suspects are.”

Evans said some of the big fish in the local crime pond have recently been “taken out.” He said this has a profound ripple effect, as the older more entrenched criminals tend to further criminalize Valley youth who exist on the edge.

“Dave Daniel and Deputy Lehman have been really active here,” Evans said. “But even while trying so hard, they still take a lot of criticism. And that gets irritating. They’ve been very helpful. They’re also concerned about the citizens out there patrolling. While we look forward to the day when law enforcement is fully funded and we could become a regular neighborhood watch, right now, that’s not possible.”

Evans stressed that if CJ Patrols just keeps dealing with the same criminals without breaking the cycle, that the issues won’t go away. “We need to get to the root cause of the problem, which is combination of unemployment, drug abuse and homelessness. Some people like to say, ‘they chose this life,’ but many of these kids causing trouble have suffered unspeakable things, right here in the Valley. And if they don’t have a place to shower, sleep or have a meal, how does anyone except them to turn their lives around? Or get to a job interview?”

The Illinois Valley High School has some programs where they’re helping kids in trouble. Evans says more of that is needed and that local government must interface with the school, churches, social welfare agencies and the patrols, to help reach at-risk youth.

“So we’re excited about trying to help some of these folks,” Evans said. “While we want them to know we’re out there to stop property crimes, we also want them to know that if they want to let their life of crime and drugs go, that we’ll try to help them. Some of these guys are responding to us. One guy came up to us and gave up his weapon. We transported him to a relative who doesn’t do drugs, and he’s been clean for several days. We hope he makes it.”

One huge need is to “take back” Jubilee Park. Evans says drug activity is rampant there and with summer around the corner, unless the community does some significant organizing, the criminal element will continue to drive away families and children. One solution being kicked around - for both the park and the town - is hiring private security firms, but Evans wonders who would pay for that.

“You can tell when the potent drugs come into town, you can feel the bad energy rise - and then you have a lot of whacked-out people walking the streets,” Evans said.

Last weekend a man was so “crazed on meth” he took a machete to his dog. “Before we were called for assistance, a bouncer at the Junction Inn pepper sprayed the guy,” Evans said. “One of our guys rolled him over there was a machete beneath him. He secured the machete until Oregon State Police (OSP) arrived, took the guy and placed him on a 72 hour mental hold. The dog was taken home by a community member and has received veterinary care and now has a new home.”

“We know there is crime everywhere, but for a small town like this, it’s outrageously bad here,” Evans’ wife, Dea Evans said. “We feel like no one should be able to kick us out of our own town, but it’s going to take a lot more people getting involved to make a lasting difference.”

SILVER ...

Continued from A-1

Many of the donations to help pay to repair the damage and replace what was lost arrived with letters of support, with comments including: “I read about the break in on Facebook and wanted to help with the repairs. Hope you’re back to full speed again soon. A neighbor from the coast, Lincoln City, Oregon.”

“I was so sorry to hear about the recent vandalism at the Illinois Valley Branch. I would love if this donation could go to helping them with the repairs. I know what a huge difference a library like this

can make in the community. Thank you so much for your work, and I wish you all the best of luck going forward. With love from a library student in Baltimore.”

From another librarian in Stanwood, Washington: “My heart goes out to you! I started in a small pilot project library in Washington, and your loss feels almost personal. My thoughts and prayers are with you.”

A Seattle resident wrote, “Please accept this small offering to help reopen the branch that was broken into last week.”

Kerbyville Museum Executive Director Dennis Strayer was the owner of the stolen rock collection, which he valued at \$3,000. However, he reported last week that the most valuable piece, an \$800 semi-precious

stone was anonymously returned to the library and passed back to him.

Securing Our Safety, (SOS) a local nonprofit, is offering a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the burglary and vandalism. For more information on SOS, visit www.SecuringOurSafety.org.

The Powderhorn Café, located at 321 NE 6th Street in Grants Pass held a fundraiser for the library on “Pi Day,” March 14. Monies raised helped fund the rewards and will also go toward the restoration.

Anyone with information about the break-in is asked to contact Deputy Ken Lehman at the Josephine County Sheriff’s Office at 541-474-5123.

UCAN companion services helps seniors

Cilicia Philemon
IVN Contributing Writer

There is a volunteer companion program to help seniors in the Illinois Valley. It assists low-income people aged 55 and over to remain physically and mentally active and makes it easier for them to stay in their homes. Respite care is also provided to assist individual caregivers with their ongoing responsibilities.

Program manager Carlos Gomez said, “Volunteers engage clients in activities they truly enjoy or maybe activities they have always wanted to engage in. Going for walks, talking, watching movies, doing art or puzzles are just a few of the service activities that take place. Volunteers can prepare small meals, have lunch with clients,

do light house chores and of course the most important task of advocating for vulnerable populations.”

This program offers people 55 years and over with the opportunity to be of service. These volunteers help in many ways, such as making friendly visits, giving rides to medical appointments, offering support with medication schedules, and support with nutrition, and exercise. These companions do not undertake the responsibilities of professional caregivers, but instead provide companionship and friendly support.

“We recently learned of a resident who needed transportation to obtain life sustaining medication. He recently lost his wife and he could no longer drive. We were able to connect senior companion services so that he has transportation. The mere presence of his volunteer has allowed him to remain in his home and he has shown a tremendous improvement in mood,” Gomez said.

Some of the benefits of volunteering are building new friendships and skills through monthly in-service learning, community workshops and recognition

events.

These volunteers give caregivers a break so that they have time to take care of their needs while having piece of mind leaving their loved ones at home. There is a safety net in place even if the caregiver just needs to take a nap. Volunteers provide oversight and companionship while caregivers are away from the home.

These volunteers receive a stipend of \$2.65 per hour and mileage reimbursement. The stipend is not considered income or wages. They also receive an annual physical, additional insurance during service hours, 20 hours of pre-service training, and 40 hours of in-service training annually, a name badge and supervision.

One of the volunteers, Celenia Konich said, “Volunteering is good therapy for me. I like to help people. I know that there are a lot of seniors living alone and they need someone to listen to their stories. To talk, laugh and maybe cry with.”

One of Konich’s clients said, “Without her weekly visit, I would not be able to go grocery shopping as I can’t leave my 89-year-old husband alone. Celenia

shows up every week, with the most wonderful, cheerful attitude. I want to thank everyone involved. I appreciate you more than words can say.”

Another client said, “I get a well needed rest from constant interruptions and requests. I can then focus on a project or household job; thus I realize more accomplishments in my day which feels really good and lifts up my spirits. The role of a caregiver is very tiring and constant. This service helps to keep our independence and sanity. We need more of this kindness, and wish it were more plentiful. I suspect there are those out there who could use this service, but don’t know about it. I am grateful and feel very blessed to be part of this fine service.”

Volunteers are needed in the Illinois Valley. Those interested in volunteering or seeking services should contact 541-492-3520 or come to United Community Action Network (UCAN) at 125 N.E. Manzanita Avenue in Grants Pass to pick up an application. UCAN is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Easter Sunrise Service
Sunday, March 27 at 7 a.m.
Refreshments to Follow

Easter Worship Service
11:00 a.m.
(No Sunday School or Evening Service Today)

Visitors Welcome!

Valley Evangelical Free Church
498 Laurel Road • Cave Junction

0890



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