

Mercy Flights celebrates 70 years of soaring

Stephanie Berry
IVN Contributing Writer

A vital area resource is celebrating 70 years of service to Southern Oregon residents.

Mercy Flights, an air and ground ambulance company, was founded in 1949 in the midst of the polio epidemic by George Milligan, a local air traffic controller. Funded entirely by local communities, even school children pitched in to raise the last 25 percent needed to (literally) get Mercy Flights “off the ground.” They were the first private, nonprofit air ambulance in the entire nation and they’ve been going strong ever since, responding to 26,000 calls in 2018.

“We are excited to celebrate our 70th anniversary with our community members and partners and we’re looking forward to many more years of service,” said the company’s CEO, Doug Stewart.

Outside of the American Red Cross and the military, Mercy Flights is the only agency legally allowed to display the Red Cross logo – a huge honor for such a small

company.

The local organization serves Southern Oregon and limited areas of Northern California.

“We are extremely proud to continue Mercy Flights’ 70-year legacy of serving friends, families and neighbors,” said Stewart. “It’s very special to be part of Oregon’s only nonprofit air and ground ambulance transport service. We get to do this work for the cause instead of the profit, which allows us to focus on the highest quality, patient-centered care. That’s why we were founded and why we’re here to stay.”

Mercy Flights has 25 ambulances staged in various places around the service area. The company also maintains two types of air ambulances – three twin-engine King Air C-90s and one Bell 407GX helicopter. All ambulances are staffed by highly trained crew members and equipped with state of the art equipment designed to handle any sort of medical emergency.

With more than 140 local employees serving 18,000 households, Mercy Flights’ aim for the last 70 years has always been to



not only provide exemplary service and save lives, but also to cut down on the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by those who require emergency transportation.

According to the company, ground ambulance fees can exceed \$1,100, transportation in a fixed-wing air ambulance can easily exceed \$13,000, and the starting cost for helicopter transport is \$20,745

plus mileage.

A Mercy Flights membership, however, trims these costs significantly. The company accepts whatever a patient’s insurance pays as payment in full, leaving insured members with a zero balance. Should a patient not have insurance, or should the insurance fail to pay, members are only responsible for 50 percent of the total bill.

Annual membership fees are \$75 for individuals and \$85 for families. Discounts are available for seniors and groups. And if a membership goes unused during the year, it can be converted into a tax-deductible donation.

Mercy Flights is currently funded solely through membership, user fees and donations. For more information, call 541-858-2646.

Candidates sought for Election of Rogue Community College District Board Members

Five positions will be open on the Rogue Community College (RCC) Board of Education for a district-wide election on May 21.

Candidates must file a declaration of candidacy with the Elections Department of Josephine County, Oregon by 5 p.m. on March 21, 2019. Contact for the Elections Department is Rhiannon Henkels, County Clerk, 500 NW 6th St., Room 170, Grants Pass, Oregon, 97526. Eligible candidates must be a resident of the Zone in which they file for candidacy. For exact Zone boundaries and other requirements for eligibility, call the elections office at 541-474-5240.

Board members serve four-year terms with no restriction on term limits. Two-year terms represent positions that a board member was appointed to fill on an interim basis. The two-year terms are to fill the remaining time in those elected positions.

Zones with open seats are as follows:

- Zone #1: 4-year term
- Zone #2: 2-year term
- Zone #4: 4-year term
- Zone #5: 4-year term
- Zone #6: 2-year term

For more information about the RCC Board and its functions, visit www.roguecc.edu or call Cheryl Johnson at 541-956-7001.



Healthy U News: Mindful Eating

by Laura Mancuso

Have you ever found yourself standing in front of your refrigerator or pantry looking for something to eat when you are not really hungry? Or how about watching TV and eating chips out of a bag and before you know it half the bag is gone? Oftentimes people eat when they are stressed, angry, happy, sad, bored or depressed and not because they are hungry.

Mindful eating is the practice of having an open-minded awareness of how the food we choose to eat affects one’s body, feelings, mind, and all that is around us. It is about being aware and present to the smell, taste and texture of each bite of food.

In essence, mindful eating means being fully attentive to your food—as you buy, prepare, serve, and consume it. The goal is to feel empowered by choosing nutrient-rich foods for complete health and to connect with your true hunger and fullness cues. This form of thinking requires ongoing practice and the following are some ways you can get started:

1. Begin with your shopping list. Consider the health value of every item you add to your list and stick to it to avoid impulse buying when you’re shopping. Fill most of your cart in the produce section and avoid the center aisles—which are heavy with processed foods—and the chips and candy at the check-out counter. Try not to shop on an empty stomach because hunger pains may also contribute to impulse buying.

2. Come to the table with an appetite— but not when ravenously hungry. If you skip meals, you may be so eager to get anything in your stomach that your first priority is filling the void instead of enjoying your food.

3. Start with a small portion. It may be helpful to limit the size of your plate to nine inches or less.

4. Appreciate your food.

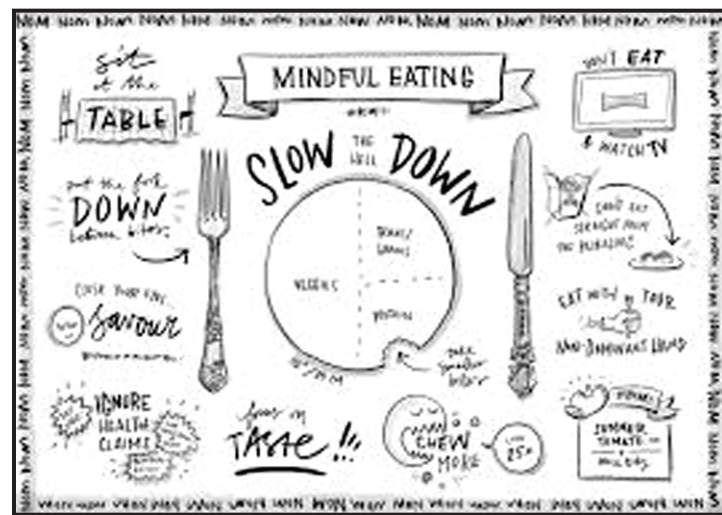
Pause for a minute or two before you begin eating to contemplate everything and everyone it took to bring the meal to your table. Silently express your gratitude for the opportunity to enjoy delicious food and the companions you’re enjoying it with.

5. Bring all your senses to the meal. When you’re cooking, serving, and eating your food, be attentive to color, texture, aroma, and even the sounds different foods make as you prepare them. As you chew your food, try identifying all the ingredients, especially seasonings.

6. Take small bites. It’s easier to taste food completely when your mouth isn’t full. Put down your utensil between bites.

7. Chew thoroughly. Chew well until you can taste the essence of the food (perhaps 20 to 40 times, depending on the food). You may be surprised at all the flavors that are released.

8. Eat slowly. If you follow the advice above, you won’t bolt your food down. Devote at least two minutes to mindful eating before you chat with your tablemates.



One drop of ink

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