

New Gorge Response Team offers volunteer training

Group will provide trauma support in the Gorge

By Trisha Walker
Columbia Gorge News

Kristina Ensbury, now of Hood River and formerly of The Dalles, is helping bring Trauma Intervention Program NW (TIPNW) to the Gorge. Training will be offered in November at FISH Food Bank in Hood River, led by Portland-area TIPNW Executive Director June Vining (see sidebar).

The Columbia Gorge Response Team, now recruiting volunteers, will be "called by the emergency response system (police officers, firefighters, paramedics, hospital personnel and medical examiners) to assist family members and friends following a natural or unexpected death; victims of violent crime; victims of fire; disoriented or lonely elderly persons; people involved in motor vehicle accidents; people who are distraught and seeking immediate support; and survivors of suicide — just to name a few," according to TIPNW training materials (www.tipnw.org).

Ensbury knew about the TIPNW program from working in the funeral industry in Portland, and saw volunteers



Trauma Intervention Program NW will offer a training academy to Gorge residents who wish to volunteer for the newly formed Gorge Response Team. Volunteers are sought from around the Gorge.

Photo courtesy of TIPNW



Kristina Ensbury

call," she said.

Afterwards, she realized there was no such support program in the Gorge — although there is one in Skamania County — and she set out to establish the Columbia Gorge Response Team to assist local survivors of trauma.

Ensbury began working with local law enforcement,

primarily in The Dalles, sharing her story and talking about "how underserved the community is with mental health," she said. Former The Dalles Police Chief Patrick Ashmore, current Police Chief Tom Worthy and Wasco County Sheriff Lane Magill were supportive "from the get-go," but TIPNW trainings were suspended for the majority of 2020 due to COVID-19. She was finally able to receive training last November in the Portland area — she's been on 31 calls there since.

"From the get-go of my screening process, I told them this was my plan: I will go to Portland and do my time, but ultimately, I want

to bring it to the Gorge and help my community because we don't have anything," she said.

TIPNW has been in the Portland area for 29 years and is comprised of specially trained volunteers "who provide emotional aid and practical support and resources to victims of traumatic events and their families in the first few hours following a tragedy," according to the website. Hood River Prevention Department Director Belinda Ballah has secured grant funding to support the program for four years, Ensbury said.

Ensbury said the care offered is tiered — there are volunteers who meet with

clients at the time of the incident, and call back anywhere from one to seven days later to check in. Another team calls the client 30 days later, and there are still other teams who provide support to the volunteer on scene. There is also a free 24-hour support hotline, where volunteers serve as liaisons to connect clients with services.

All services are free.

"Often with trauma, you need to reprocess things as time goes by," she said. "It's not, 'We're going out on a crisis and you never hear from us again.'"

In Portland, volunteers are assigned three 12-hour shifts a month; in the Gorge, with the program just starting out, volunteers will receive a mass text and whoever is available in the shortest amount of time will respond.

Volunteers must have a clean driving record, pass a background check, fingerprinting through TIP, attend all training sessions, have a valid driver's license and vehicle, a cell phone with texting capabilities, internet access and a GPS navigational system.

She also said marginalized communities tend to feel more comfortable with a TIPNW volunteer who speaks their language and/or understand their culture.

"People from their own communities tend to serve them better," she said. "We

Training offered

TIPNW is hosting a training academy at the FISH Food Bank, 1130 Tucker Road, Hood River, in November (see schedule, below). In addition to the training academy, there is a three-month field training period and monthly meetings; all are required to become a volunteer. There is a \$50 registration fee to secure a spot in class.

Training schedule:

Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 9-10, 6-9 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 13, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 14, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 16-17, 6-9 p.m.
Friday, Nov. 19, 6-10 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 20, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
CE Meetings, Dec. 7, January TBA and Feb. 1

would love to get a Native American volunteer to help the native community best, a Spanish speaker, an LGBTQIA-plus volunteer — there is opportunity for everyone in this, and I love that about it."

DEATHS AND SERVICES

Helen Jean Dorzab died on Sept. 19, 2021, in Junction City, Ore. She was born on Dec. 26, 1946, in Hood River, Ore. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Gonzalo Lizama Hidalgo died Sept. 23, 2021, at home in California. Gonzalo was born on Jan. 10, 1965, and was 56 years of age at the time of his passing. A viewing will be held 4-7 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 17 at Anderson's Tribute Center, Hood River, with a rosary at 5 p.m. Funeral Mass

will be at 10 a.m., Monday, Oct. 18 at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Hood River. Gonzalo will be buried at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery immediately after. Visit www.AndersonsTributeCenter.com to leave a note of condolence for the family.

Gonzalo Lizama Hidalgo falleció en su casa el 23 de septiembre 2021 en California. Gonzalo nació el 10 de enero de 1965. Un tiempo de velación se llevará a cabo de 4-7 p.m. el domingo 17 de octubre en

Anderson's Tribute Center y rosario a las 5 p.m. Su misa fúnebre será a las 10 a.m. el lunes 18 de octubre 2021 en la iglesia católica St. Mary's. Gonzalo será enterrado en el panteón católico de St. Mary's. Visite www.AndersonsTributeCenter.com para dejar una nota de condolencia a la familia.

Dorothy Nelle Davidson, age 87, a resident of The Dalles, Ore., died Oct. 3, 2021. A funeral service will be held Thursday, Oct. 14 at

4 p.m. in the Spencer, Libby & Powell Gathering Hall, 1100 Kelly Ave., The Dalles. Spencer, Libby & Powell Funeral Home is in care of arrangements.

H. Carl Klindt, age 97, a resident of The Dalles, Ore., died Oct. 5, 2021, at the Oregon Veterans Home. Spencer, Libby & Powell Funeral Home is in care of arrangements.

Susan Elizabeth Lucas died Oct. 7, 2021, at

Mid-Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles, Ore. Susan was born Aug. 22, 1966, and was 55 years of age at the time of her passing. Arrangements are under the direction of Anderson's Tribute Center, The Dalles. Visit www.AndersonsTributeCenter.com to leave a note of condolence for the family.

Jarl E. Nelson, age 76, a resident of The Dalles, Ore., died Oct. 9, 2021. Spencer, Libby & Powell

Funeral Home is in care of arrangements.

Funeral Home is in care of arrangements.

Donald Leroy Judd died Oct. 10, 2021, in Hood River, Ore. Donald was born on Feb. 28, 1934, and was 87 years of age at the time of his passing. Arrangements are under the direction of Anderson's Tribute Center, Hood River. Visit www.AndersonsTributeCenter.com to leave a note of condolence for the family.

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