

• There will be a peaceful “**Rally for Black Lives**” 5 pm Thursday, July 21, in front of Lane County Correctional Facilities at 101 W. 5th Avenue in Eugene, Community Alliance of Lane County tells EW. The rally is followed by a march to Kesey Square. Springfield-Eugene Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) and CALC are responding to a national call to action by the Movement for Black Lives, and they ask “the community to join them to end white silence and call for an end to police violence directed at black people in our country.” Wear black and bring signs. For more info email calcb2b@gmail.com.



• We hear from the folks at **Community Alliance for Lane County (CALC)** that their office has been **vandalized**. With its involvement in everything from supporting Black Lives Matter to aiding the local Asian businesses that were recently vandalized, CALC writes, “We shouldn’t be surprised that CALC’s involvement has drawn the attention of the haters.” Not surprised, but we are disappointed at the hate that bubbles up in our community. CALC says the group was targeted with “three disturbing incidents of hate graffiti” containing “some extremely racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic words and images.” To support CALC and help fight hate, you can donate online at calcline.org or mail to 458 Blair Boulevard.

• Let Us Eat Cake! **A People’s Rally and Celebration in Solidarity with Bernie Sanders** will celebrate “all the good things Bernie stands for and that we have accomplished this year with music, speakers, entertainment and cake,” organizer Ellen Furstner tells EW. She says, “The day before the start of the Democratic Convention we will join over 100 cities in the U.S. and around the world to demonstrate our unwavering support and appreciation for Bernie Sanders and to get ready for the next stage in the political revolution.” The Eugene rally will have a donation drive for Occupy Medical and a talk by OM director Sue Sierralupe. The rally is 11 am to 1 pm Sunday, July 24, at the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza, 8th and Oak. Please bring donations for Occupy such as socks and underwear, bathroom items, vitamins and ibuprofen, or money. Contact Furstner at 541-933-2246 for more info.

• **Womenspace’s Safehouse** will be closed from July 25 to Aug. 8 for annual maintenance and cleaning. Womenspace could use donations from the community including: carpet cleaning, vent cleaning, painting, janitorial and general maintenance and repair. Womenspace’s mission is preventing “domestic violence in intimate partner relationships in Lane County and support survivors in claiming personal power.” The Crisis Line is available 24/7 at 541-485-6513 or 800-281-2800. For more information, contact Teresa Aslin, acting executive director, 541-485-8232.

• NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Lane County is hosting a panel on **what you need to know for crisis intervention** 6:30 to 8:30 pm Wednesday, July 27, at Lane County Behavioral Health Services, Rm. 198, 2411 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. To learn about what to do if your loved one is in crisis, come hear from the Eugene police, White Bird Clinic, PeaceHealth and Hourglass Community Crisis Center. Call NAMI at 541-343-7688.

NEWS

BY AMY SCHNEIDER

LANE COUNTY CHILDCARE CENTERS NOT REQUIRED TO TEST DRINKING WATER FOR LEAD

Toxins are everywhere. In Portland, the discovery and subsequent cover-up of high levels of lead in the drinking water of public schools led to Portland Superintendent Carole Smith’s resignation July 18.

Here in Lane County, school districts are in the midst of testing drinking fountains and faucets for elevated levels of lead.

But for daycare centers and buildings where young children gather to learn, testing water for lead isn’t a sure thing.

School districts in Oregon aren’t mandated to test for lead in drinking water, but many have chosen to pay for testing out of their general funds, including Eugene 4J, Springfield, Bethel, Creswell and North Douglas school districts. The districts have committed to find and repair any locations where lead is leaching into the water.

In April, the state of Massachusetts set aside \$2 million to test public school drinking water across the state, according to *The Boston Globe*. No such money has been set aside in Oregon as of yet.

Daycare centers aren’t mandated to test, and any testing would come out of their own pockets. On June 8, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Oregon Department of Education released recommendations “to help school districts and childcare centers reduce lead in drinking wa-

ter.” The recommendations say that all childcare programs should test their drinking water for lead this summer and fix all detected problems.

Young children and babies are more vulnerable to the health effects of lead than older children or adults, and even small amounts of exposure can cause learning disabilities, impaired hearing and other symptoms, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

“Most childcare centers are private, and we have a lot of registered home facilities as well, so we can’t mandate them to test their water for lead,” says Karol Collymore, a spokesperson for the Oregon Early Learning Division. “We are arming our childcare licensers with information on how they can do that. We know that our caregivers want their kids to be safe, and we know just because we’re not allowed to mandate it doesn’t mean they don’t want to do it.”

Judy Newman, co-director of Early Childhood CARES, says as Preschool Promise — a new publicly funded preschool program — is implemented in Lane County, new classrooms will be tested for lead before opening in the fall.

Charleen Strauch, operations director for Head Start of Lane County, says that because Head Start is a federal program, they follow strict mandates that require testing each facility to ensure children are safe. Head Start drinking water was tested five months ago, Strauch says.

In some Head Start locations, fountains and sinks are disabled, and children drink from water coolers. Strauch says she hopes to install new, hands-free water bottle stations at Head Start locations by September.

For privately owned daycare centers, lead testing is up to the discretion of the owners. Last month, the Early Learning Division sent a flier to local childcare centers with tips on how to deal with lead in drinking water, recommending that all early learning environments should test for lead and use an OHA-accredited drinking water laboratory. Any taps with water showing lead levels of more than 15 parts per billion should be shut off, the flier says.

Collymore with the Early Learning Division says parents should talk to their childcare providers to find out if they are testing for lead. “They can express their concern and support them as they try to navigate this lead testing situation,” she says, adding that the Early Learning Division is a resource for guidance.

Visit the Oregon Health Authority website for more information. ■

