

# KeizerCommunity

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## City tackles employee health

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

The lower costs were simply an added perk.

When Machell DePina and Kristen Brokaw, the two-person Human Resources department for the City of Keizer, started a Health and Wellness Incentive Program for city employees last year, they found options galore.

Out of 95 employees at the city, 60 are taking part in the program.

"We're not giving up on the other 35," said DePina, the HR director.

DePina and Brokaw, the HR generalist for the city, also didn't want to fall into a trap.

"A lot of government entities are looking at ways to reduce health care costs," DePina said. "They look at things to build into their insurance programs. If you do that, you get lower rates. But it's not our culture. That's not the way we do things here. We didn't want to go down any of those roads, to participate only so you get lower insurance rates.

"We didn't want that culture," she added. "We wanted people to participate because they choose to. We didn't want folks angry because they had to be in or pay more for their insurance."

DePina said the criteria got rid of a large number of programs right away.

In July 2012, the Keizer Police Department implemented its Oregon Physical Abilities Test (ORPAT) Incentive Program, a physical agility and skill course designed to simulate police chase and capture activities. Those completing the course receive an incentive bonus of \$250.

That's nice, but not exactly ideal for regular public employees. After some research, DePina and Brokaw selected Portland-based Hub-



Above: Arturo Madrid takes a big bite of a lettuce wrap prepared by Kristen Brokaw, while fellow utility worker Juan Aleman looks on.

Right: Kristen Brokaw explains the ingredients for her lettuce wraps while serving them to fellow city employees last week in the break area at Keizer Civic Center.

All photos courtesy Machell DePina



bub Health to be the foundation for the city's program. It costs employees \$3 a month to participate, which includes personal health coaching, access for family members and a variety of activities to choose from.

"We sent out a survey (to employees) that if we designed a program for the city, what would you like to see, a whole laundry list," DePina said. "Of course, everyone wanted something different. We knew we needed something super flexible to get a majority of employees interested. We looked at every program under the sun. We looked at private and public sector plans, free and paid. We did not want a program to be established and then sit on the shelf. We were looking for

something simple with variety, something we could easily manage."

Brokaw said there can be up to 25 activities to choose from at a time. While fitness is certainly a key option, this isn't a gym membership substitute.

"You have activity minutes," Brokaw said. "What you do in those minutes is up to you. You can walk the dog or walk with the kids. You can log minutes in a gym. You can log minutes pounding fences. You can paddle up the Willamette River. There are a lot of different activities. We have a challenge to keep track of minutes. The idea is the challenges are endless."

That means challenges have included drinking enough water, taking vitamins, joining a book club and even making the bed in the morning.

No, really, that last one is for real.

"You can say, 'I did this' and it sets you on a positive path for the day," DePina said. "It is just simple things like that."

Employees are eligible for a one-time \$50 incentive for creating an online account and confidentially entering personal health information. There are also financial incentives based on minutes accounted for. For example, 150 minutes in a two-week period means a \$10 incentive, while 600 minutes in the same time period means a \$15 incentive.

Earlier this year, city employees won a national Hub-bub Health competition, a two-week "Break for Recess" challenge requiring employees to grab a co-worker and go for walks. A total of 20 participants logged 6,841 minutes of exercise to earn a \$500 prize from Hub-bub.

Much attention is paid to education, including education about healthy snacks. At least twice a month, Brokaw goes into the kitchen in the break area and tries out a new healthy recipe, then invites employees to stop by and try it.

"It is fun having everyone be guinea pigs," Brokaw said with a laugh. "I'll figure out what works and what doesn't."

DePina said the snacks have been popular, especially when combined with regular employee potlucks.

"We put out a spread with informational items," DePina said. "Folks can come, stand and try things. People talk about it, share information with others and tell what they love and do not love."

From the start, DePina and Brokaw wanted to partner with a company that would keep employees interested.

"It needed to be an entity that stays fresh and turns over quickly," DePina said. "If it feels stale, people lose interest. Hub-bub was the best at having something new going on all the time."



File  
Participants in last year's drama camp practice blocking an improv scene.

## Register for choir, drama camps

Keizer students interested in singing and acting can sign up now for the annual McNary Area choir and drama camps.

Camps are open to students entering fourth through ninth grades and run July 13 through 17.

"We are in our sixth season of running the camps and each year the attendance just keeps growing," said Andy Thomas, Whiteaker choir director and one of the camp instructors.

Last year, the camps reached 150 participants and had 13 instructors and assistants between the two camps, the most yet.

The choir portion runs from 9 a.m. to noon and the drama camp runs from 12:30 to 3 p.m.

Kids are welcome to participate in just one of the camps or both, but one feeds into the other.

Participants will get to work with Jim Taylor, choir director at McNary High school, Thomas, three McNary choir graduates and Andy Thomas, a middle school drama specialist.

Drama camp exposes participants to teamwork, imagination, voice, pantomime and many other aspects of theatre.

Registration forms are available from music teachers at each Keizer school, at McNary High School office, the Whiteaker main office and via e-mail at thomas\_andy@salkeiz.k12.or.us.

Registrations are due by June 5. Cost is \$65 per camp which includes a camp T-shirt and all materials.

## Audition for the Bard's Midsummer production

Keizer Homegrown Theatre is hosting auditions for its production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Saturday, May 30, at noon.

Auditions will be held at the Keizer Civic Center gazebo and hopefuls should bring a prepared monologue.

The play will be an updated take on the William Shakespeare's script featuring not-so-young lovers who fall comically in and out of love in a ridicu-

lously brief period of time. The lovers in KHT's version are senior residents of a retirement home who, chafing under the expectation that they "act their age," run away to a place where happiness is not dictated by who or how old you are.

Additional audition information, specific character descriptions and a downloadable audition form available at [www.keizerhomegrowntheatre.org](http://www.keizerhomegrowntheatre.org)

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## Community Band's final concert set

The Keizer Community Band will present its final concert of the season on Wednesday, June 3, at 7 p.m. in the McNary High School auditorium.

The 50-piece band, conducted by Michael Koenig is made up of members from Keizer, Salem and surrounding communities. It's members range in age from sixth grade through age 90.

The concert will include *March From the Great Escape*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *The Cowboys*, *Benny Goodman - King of Swing* and others. Admission and parking are free.

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**SAINT EDWARD Catholic Church**  
393-5323  
5303 River Rd. N., Keizer  
Father Gary L. Zerr, Pastor  
Saturday Vigil Liturgy: 5:30 p.m.  
Sundays: 8:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.  
La Misa en Español: 12:30 p.m.

**John Knox Presbyterian Church**  
452 Cummings Lane North • 393-0404  
Rev. Dr. John Neal, Pastor  
Worship - 10:30 a.m.  
Education Hour - 10:00 a.m.  
Nursery Care Available  
[www.keizerjkpres.org](http://www.keizerjkpres.org)

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Sunday Schedule:  
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9:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study  
9:30 a.m. Children's Activities  
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Pastor Virginia Eggert

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