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# 'She gave out second chances'

## City plans memorial fund for peer court director

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

Keizer's Peer Court lost its most fierce advocate to brain cancer in February, but the city and her friends are making sure her work is never forgotten.

Cari Emery Coleman, the program coordinator for youth court since its inception in 2004, likely affected the lives of thousands of local teens and family members who supported them as they passed through the diversion program. On Monday, March 1, the Keizer City Council approved the establishment of a memorial fund that will continue to benefit the city's peer court.

"Keizer has lost a great asset," said Tim Wood, Keizer finance director and Coleman's supervisor as an employee of the city. "She gave out second chances in a world that doesn't give out a lot of second chances."



Cari Emery Coleman

The court, made up of volunteer youth jurists, help determine sanctions for low-level offenses or otherwise eligible for diversion programs.

Saluting the people that make us proud of our community

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"Sentences" can run the gamut from enrolling in training courses to determining the appropriate venue for community service. The Keizer court serves youth ages 12-17. Approximately 80% of minors who have passed through the Keizer court successfully complete the program and have their records expunged.

After a transition period, the court will continue in Keizer. Those with current cases are being contacted individually.

City Manager Chris Epley, borrowing a statement from Keizer Police Department Chief John Teague, said "He said peer court is not just important, it's a moral imperative. It's imperative to give the kids a chance to travel down a new path and away from the criminal justice system."

The request to establish a memorial fund in Coleman's name came in the form of a letter to the city council from a group of Coleman's friends and supporters.

"Cari has directly impacted thousands of Keizer youth, their families and the community through her leadership and vision by providing restorative justice and community building," the group wrote.

In a statement posted on the Keizer peer court's Facebook page, Coleman is remembered as a tireless supporter of the court's mission.

"She truly poured herself into peer court and believed in our program. She will be greatly missed by all," the statement read.

Scott Peterson, CEO of Global Youth Justice, Inc., said he had no idea Coleman was battling cancer.

"Cari was one of the best and I know thousands of adults who run these programs, and she was among my most favorite," Peterson said in a comment to the post announcing her passing.

Upon creation of the fund, which is not yet final, friends and family will be able to collect donations. Donations will be held indefinitely with the investment income used to support the ongoing operation of the city's peer court.

Signatories to the letter requesting the memorial fund were: Dean and Mickey Lansing Luehrs, Tim Davis, Dick Withnell, Jeff and Aimee Carter, Darci Dance, Ron and Linda Menser, and Jeff and Pam Vale.

## VOLUNTEER of the Week



presented by



### JANE LOWERY

#### Where and how do you volunteer?

Keizer Chamber, KeizerFEST, Keizer First Citizens Banquet, Percy Presents which raises funds for the Giving Basket program. As a Keizer Rotarian, I help with many of the club's community projects. I volunteer at the summer concerts at Keizer Rapids Park, help Liberty House with their events and the Boys and Girls Club for their Cinco de Mayo event. One of most rewarding volunteering experiences was helping at the state fairgrounds with the animals after the Canyon fires.

#### How would you get others to volunteer in their community?

I get my whole team at Willamette Valley Bank involved. Together we participate in most of all the Chamber events, we take pictures, we share with our customers. I would encourage people to volunteer as a team, be it your work, or as a family, volunteering is wonderful way to bond with who you know along with meeting new liked minded people.

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