

VOLUNTEER of the Week

presented by



TED PLUMB

Where and how do you volunteer?

Traffic volunteer: Speed surveys, seatbelt usage counting.

Volunteer Community Service Officer:

Responded to parking complaints, graffiti abatement, delivery and pickup documents to and from the DA's office, Sheriff's office and county clerk.

Training: Role playing for Officer training.

Property and Evidence: Evidence intake, Prescription Take Back program (involved taking accumulated prescription drugs to the burn plant, evidence inventory, delivered and picked up evidence from the state crime lab.

How would you get others to volunteer in their community?

In the early 1970s my goal was to be a police officer so I started college for this profession. While going to college I got a full time job with the city of Gresham at the Waste Water Treatment Plant that, at the time, paid about as much as a police officer so that's where I ended up.

In December 1997 the opportunity came to be able to volunteer in the law enforcement field. That's when I started. The tasks were simple at first but as I was able to take on more duties I was able to grow as a volunteer.

My goal each day when I go to work or the dentist office, doctor's office or where ever, I try to make everyone else's day a little brighter. If I can make someone smile then my goal at the time is accomplished. If you're happy, I'm happy, and I like to be happy and in a good mood.

As an added bonus, I get to work with the best folks possible.

What does volunteering do for you?

Volunteering gives me a sense of pride in helping others. It's nice to know you've made a difference and provides added value to the citizens. Additionally, you gain an understanding of how the city works and where their needs may be.

How would you get others to volunteer in their community?

I believe a person should look at themselves and determine what they can do, what kinds of things they would like to do and see what opportunities there are to learn. There are so many opportunities to volunteer whether it be with a business or with the city of Keizer.

Oregon lawmakers looking to make child care more affordable, available

BY JULIA SHUMWAY
Of Oregon Capital Chronicle

As Portland resident Jasmine Casanova-Dean spoke to legislators at a hearing about child care last week, her 67-year-old grandmother watched her 2-year-old daughter in another room.

Casanova-Dean can only afford professional child care two days a week, so every other day she's left to shift her work schedule, seek help from family or friends or tell her daughter to be patient while she finishes an important work meeting.

"My story is the same as countless other parents struggling to find affordable child care," Casanova-Dean said. "I and so many other parents shouldn't have to choose between caring for a child and working."

Lawmakers and Gov. Kate Brown are trying to help, though they acknowledged that the state can't do enough to make sure every family that needs child care can afford it.

For Rep. Karin Power, the Milwaukie Democrat who leads the House Early Childhood Committee, it's a personal issue. She has two young children in child care.

"It's really expensive, and it's really expensive for everybody," Power said. "I'm hearing right now too from families who can afford care and still can't get it because providers have closed."

Brown called for \$100 million in new spending. The Legislature's budget writers haven't yet decided how to spend the roughly \$1.5 billion in extra state money, but there's broad support among Democrats in the majority to spend at least some on child care.

Child care advocates back a plan that would cost just under \$90 million. About half of that sum would go to grants for new child care providers and existing facilities that plan to hire more staff or otherwise expand their programs.

Supporters pointed to the San Francisco-based Low Income Investment Fund, which reported spending \$168 million to create 273,000 new child care slots between 1984 and 2020. In total, that \$168 million resulted in \$29 billion in monetary benefits to families and communities, according to the organization.

Oregon would use another \$21 million for direct payments to child care workers as incentives to stay in the



Preschool students play in a Salem-Keizer classroom.

Submitted photo

workplace. Child care workers are paid an average hourly wage of \$14.95, according to the Oregon Employment Department – slightly more than the minimum wage but lower than the starting salaries many retailers and fast food establishments are offering because of staff shortages.

The last \$4.3 million would go to administrative costs associated with combining two state departments that dealt with child care. The Early Learning Division in the Education Department set learning standards, while the Human Services Department handled child care subsidies.

Legislators last year directed that the two functions be combined into a single new state department, and legislation under consideration this year will give extra time to form the new Early Learning and Care Department.

Pending legislation, introduced by the House Early Childhood Committee, also would increase subsidies to move closer to paying the actual cost of child care needed by low-income families. Legislative fiscal analysts haven't estimated that cost yet.

While her committee is working on policy changes, Power said the problems with child care come down to money and how society thinks about the need to care for young children.

Once children are 5, they have access to free K-12 education. In the current two-year budget cycle, the state spent \$9.3 billion on K-12 education.

State and local governments pay teachers and other school staff and build and maintain school facilities, but there isn't similar spending on child care facilities. As a result, child care remains unaffordable for many families while those providing the care are among the lowest-paid workers in Oregon.

"I often think, 'What if each family was expected to pay the full cost of

sending their kid to school?'" Power said. "I think most people would look at me like I'm nuts if I said something like that, because it just isn't something that we would expect. Public education is such a core tenet of our nation, but we don't extend it to littler kids."

Researchers at the University of Oregon have run two ongoing national surveys of families with young children and child care providers throughout the pandemic. In November, the team reported that nearly 60% of child care providers experienced "significant staff shortages," compared to just 36% before the pandemic.

More than 85% of child care center directors said they struggled to recruit and retain qualified workers, and nearly 40% said they were ready to leave their jobs or the child care field entirely within the next year.

"These numbers are likely an underestimate, as there have been many reports showing that a large number of providers have already left the child care workforce before we asked these questions," the report said.

Jessica Boyd, a child care worker and mother of two in Eugene, told the House committee she's been working in child care for 10 years. More than half her monthly income went to paying for her older son's child care when he was young, and she left work for two years when her younger child, now 8, was born because she couldn't afford child care.

Over the past two years, Boyd said, her child care center has struggled to hire workers and reduced the number of children it accepts because there aren't enough workers to care for them.

"If it wasn't for my husband, I wouldn't be able to get by on a child care provider's wage," she told committee members. "I could not be self-sufficient on my own income. It's really discouraging when the people at Taco Bell are making more than me."

death notice

Patricia A. Grew

April 04, 1934 – Feb. 02, 2022

Patricia Grew of Keizer, Or. passed on Feb. 02, 2022 at the age of 87.