

# Riverfolk: At least 35 volunteers stepped up to feed those in need

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"I was nowhere," she said. Tucker got in touch with Mary Docherty, who helped her navigate the process of getting a replacement birth certificate and a new ID, which Tucker has used to help her get a job and her own apartment. "There's nothing they can do without IDs," Docherty said, adding she has now helped about eight people. On Tuesday, she was fitting Tucker and her partner, Joshua Gianuario, with new rain gear, courtesy of a private donation to Riverfolk. Docherty said the people Riverfolk helps have taught her a huge amount about dignity and grace, and have become some of her best friends. Tucker said she was left

homeless months ago after fleeing an abusive partner. With help from groups like Riverfolk, she said, "I'm learning to come back up."

## Turkey Bucks

In August, Riverfolk started its free 10 a.m. Sunday brunch at the Armory, which averages 13 people each week. Docherty said she has a friend at the Astoria Safeway who heard about Riverfolk. The store chose the group as the recipient of the Turkey Bucks program. Checkers at the store gathered the donations throughout November. Robyn Koustik, director of the Armory and an unofficial board member with Riverfolk, said the donation really hit home last weekend, when someone from Safeway called and said they had \$15,000



The Riverfolk Homeless Coalition's board of directors includes, from left, Mary Docherty, de facto member and Astoria Armory Director Robyn Koustik, Hilary Levine, Mike Doran and Nicole Adamczyk.

worth of food that needed to be picked up. "I just started calling agen-

cies," she said. "Please take turkeys."

The group distributed nearly 200 turkeys to individual families and other social service groups. Volunteers

with the group cooked another 20 or so turkeys at the North Coast Food Web and Columbia Memorial Hospital's community center the day of the feast at the Armory. Adamczyk said when the group learned there wouldn't be any pies in the food donation, Riverfolk put a call out on Facebook, and by Thursday had a table full of donated deserts. The Thanksgiving event had at least 35 volunteers, Koustik said, often outnumbering the diners. Docherty said Riverfolk still has 18 turkeys left for future brunches. The group also has been chosen as the recipient of another of Safeway's fundraisers, the Santa Bucks program, which is now raising money for Christmas meals.

# Festival: 'Everyone is so giving, caring and compassionate'

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faces painted, work on craft projects and create and wrap handmade ornaments to give to loved ones. During a conference Russell attended — targeted for designers and organizers of various Festival of Trees events — she was inspired to bolster the experience for children and add a touch of Disney magic, as other organizations and communities had done. "My vision for Candy Cane Lane is that people will come, families will come, to see the trees and see Santa and catch a good case of holiday spirit at the open house," Russell said.

## A winter wonderland

The 19th annual Providence Festival of Trees, hosted by the hospital's foundation, also will retain many traditions the community expects and enjoys. Guests will experience the highly anticipated display of stun-

ning Christmas trees that are festively decorated by local businesses, designers, florists and other north coast residents, Russell said. Collectively, the trees create a holiday wonderland that serves as the inspiring setting for both the community open house and the following gala dinner and auction. Some of the approximately 20 trees will be designed by Festival of Trees veterans who look forward to participating every year. New groups also are partaking in the festivities. This year, local law enforcement agencies are using the festival as an opportunity to honor the memory of former Seaside Police Sgt. Jason Goodding, who died in the line of duty in February. The Seaside, Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart and Cannon Beach police departments, along with the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office, are "pooling their energy together to come up with a memorial tree," according to Russell.

The tree will have a police theme and be auctioned off with "experiential items," she said. Russell has not seen the list yet but it might include items such as a ride-along or a trip to the shooting range with an officer. "They're going to come up with these experiences that kind of get the police officers face-to-face with the community," Russell said. "So we'll have what I'm calling 'priceless experiences' that aren't something you can go out and buy — something very special." The proceeds from that tree alone will go into a special fund that will be used to memorialize Goodding in some way when the hospital's emergency department is remodeled. Nothing specific has been determined, Russell said. All other funds from this year's festival will go toward the purchase of new three-dimensional tomosynthesis imaging equipment, the latest state-of-the-art mam-

mography technology, which helps with early cancer detection and mitigates false positive results. There currently is not a similar machine on the north coast in Oregon, Russell said, and patients must drive to Portland or other larger cities. The equipment's estimated cost is \$400,000. Purchasing the machine is the foundation's yearlong goal, and they have accumulated more than \$250,000 from other fundraising efforts and personal donations this year. "Festival of Trees is going to be a good add-on to that," Russell said, adding she feels fortunate her job includes working with a "very generous, remarkable community." "I get paid to work with the most generous people," she added. "Everyone is so giving, caring and compassionate when it comes to healthcare and what we do."

tioned off, along with signature artwork by Paula Blackwell, during the elegant evening gala. The event — which gives North Coast residents the uncommon opportunity to don their holiday finery to celebrate the holidays with community, Russell said — also includes a silent auction for donated items, as well as wreaths and 3-foot trees decorated by hospital staff members. Attendees also can enter a drawing for a weeklong stay at an estate in Ireland. The Festival of Trees is Providence Seaside Hospital Foundation's largest fundraiser of the year. During the past 18 years, the event has raised more than \$1.3 million to benefit a variety of community health services and programs provided by the hospital. The open house runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 3. It is free to the public. Doors open for the gala dinner and auction — also at the convention center — at 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$100



Justin Grafton Studios/Submitted Photo

Each tree at Providence Seaside Foundation's annual Festival of Trees fundraiser is decorated with a theme that matches the item being auctioned off during the evening gala. All proceeds support the Providence Seaside Hospital and local programs and services. per guest and tickets should be reserved by Thursday. For more information about the event or to reserve a seat for the gala, contact Russell at 503-717-7604 or email veronica.russell@providence.org.

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