

GENERAL NEWS

Ballots arriving now for May elections

Lane County Elections has mailed ballots for the May 19 Special Election. Voters can expect to receive ballots as early today.

Voters who do not receive a ballot for the Special Election can check the status of their registration and ballot at www.lanecounty.org/elections.

Voters can also call Lane County Elections at 541-682-4234 to determine if they need to update their voter registration to receive a ballot.

Lane County Elections office hours are 9 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

On Election Day, May 19, Lane County Elections will have extended hours and will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Voters can drop off their ballots at one of many official drop box locations listed on page 20-27 of the Lane County Voters' Pamphlet.

Drop boxes are now open and will remain open until 8 p.m. election day.

Florence PTA nominees win top honors



COURTESY PHOTOS



Left: PTA award recipients Lynn Anderson and Kaylee Graham with PTA members following the convention in Wilsonville; PTA Reflections Arts program award winner Layla Blakely of Siuslaw Middle School.

On April 17 and 18, five local PTA delegates attended the Oregon State PTA convention held this year in Wilsonville. The overall convention theme was "Our Children — Our Future."

Convention activities included the annual business meeting, election of state officers, workshops on a variety of topics around education and the well-being of children, awards and leadership dinners, and the annual Reflections Art Awards luncheon.

A slate of fun activities throughout the weekend kept the atmosphere light.

This year's special keynote speaker was Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici, who spoke about her involvement on the Education and the Workforce Committee, as well as the Committee on Science, Space and Technology.

Two Florence nominees were chosen to receive state awards above all other nominees around the state, and a local middle school student received an award in the PTA art program.

Lynn Anderson was chosen to receive the Oregon State PTA Champion for Children Award, which is presented to an individual who has done exceptional work advocating for children.

Anderson has been a part of the Florence Native Indian Education Program for 24 years, and director of it for the past 14 years. The local program is a model for Lane County, and serves not only children, but their families as well. Alongside this program, Anderson is the site coordinator for the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant and the Twilight program. She also coordinates the popular local Pow-Wow held each year in March.

She works with students in and outside of the school setting. She is an important member of the Child Study Team and the District Data Team in the Siuslaw School District.

Anderson is also co-chairman of the 90by30 Initiative in Western Lane County, whose goal is to reduce child abuse and neglect by 90 percent in our community by the year 2030. Anderson sits on three State Boards: the Indian Education Board, the OEIB (Oregon Education Investment Board), and the Equity Committee of the OEIB.

Kaylee Graham received the Oregon State PTA High School Student Service Award for her dedication to volunteering and

giving back to the Florence community.

When Graham was 10 years old (in 2010), she attended a meeting of the Florence Community PTA with her mom, where a foster care coordinator was the guest speaker. Graham was inspired by the talk to help foster kids in some way, so she started a project that she called "Buddy Backpacks."

She scheduled a garage sale, advertised it, collected donations of items and raised \$2,000. With those funds, Graham purchased 150 backpacks and items to go in them: blankets, stuffed animals, small photo albums, snacks, toothbrushes and other small comforts.

Through a local agency, Graham's backpacks were distributed to children as they went into foster care.

In 2011, Graham came up with a plan for a community-wide volunteer project, called The Power of Florence, which has now become a regular Florence event. In 2012, the City Council proclaimed the third Saturday in July each year to be the "Power of Florence Day." The day is set aside for people to come out and work on community improvement projects, raise money for non-profits, donate food, and many other volunteer activities.

During the Power of Florence day, Graham travels around town and puts time in at many of the projects going on. The day ends with a party in the park, with food and entertainment — all planned by Graham.

By the end of the 2014 Power of Florence Day, it was

determined that approximately 3,000 people participated, there were 48 service projects, more than \$32,000 was raised for community causes, and more than 10,000 pounds of food was collected for the local Food Share and the Humane Society.

The third Florence award winner was through the PTA Reflections Arts Program. Layla Blakely, a seventh grader at Siuslaw Middle School took an honorable mention for her drawing, "Choose Cloth."

The 2014-15 Reflections Arts theme was "The world would be a better place if...", and Blakely "was trying to show the world would be a better place if we used cloth bags instead of plastic ones."

She was unable to attend the Oregon PTA reflections luncheon.

The Florence Community PTA will be hosting a congratulations reception for the three award recipients in the near future. The date and time is yet to be determined.

The May meeting of the Florence Community PTA will be May 12, at 5:30 p.m., in the Siuslaw Elementary School library. A very short business meeting will take place, and members will be electing officers for the 2015-16 school year.

The public is invited to attend. Childcare and refreshments will be provided.

Visit the Florence PTA website at www.florencepta.org.

Florence Community PTA is parents, teachers and community working together to improve the education, health, safety and well-being of local children and youth.

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MAY 2	MAY 3	MAY 4	MAY 5	MAY 6	MAY 7	MAY 8
Sunshine, Breezy pm	Sunshine, Breezy pm	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy, Showers	Mostly Cloudy, Showers	Morning Showers, Cloudy	Clouds and Sun
59°F 44°F	59°F 46°F	58°F 48°F	56°F 44°F	59°F 46°F	60°F 48°F	63°F 50°F

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