

# Teen Giving Tree has largest distribution ever

The holidays are over, but goodwill lingers. That is the feelings you will find north of Florence in the Twin Lakes area. The Teen Holiday Party, which has become an annual event at Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue's Sutton Lake Fire Hall, had the largest turn out yet for gift distribution.

The fire station was decorated and food was available but that's not what draws the teens to this party each year. Yes, it's the presents — and lots of them.

For the teens that have participated in the event in the past, it is no surprise. But for 20 percent of the kids it was their first.

"The community is very generous," said Vicki Ambrosio, owner of Twin Lakes Store, which hosts the event. "The teens are modest in their requests and the community goes above and beyond."

"This year we had more donations than ever and we were able to provide a small food box to each teen."

Ambrosio said that adding the food boxes is something she's always wanted to do



COURTESY PHOTOS

**Gifts for the Twin Lakes' Teen Giving Tree were distributed at the Sutton Lake fire station, along with food boxes (above) for each teen.**

since the Giving Tree project began three years ago.

Ambrosio said that teen giving trees are around, but that the distribution party at the fire hall is what makes this one so different, with gifts given out to the teens themselves instead of parents.

In addition, each gift is hand picked for that specific teen

based on his or her wish list. Teens are encouraged to take the gifts home and put under the tree until Christmas.

"However, it appeared that will power went out the window again this year, once they get caught up in the moment of unwrapping," said Ambrosio.

The party started slowly as Ambrosio, aka Ms. Claus, was

waiting for Santa to show up. The stockings were hung from the firemen's hooks with care, the teens patiently waiting, while eyeing the heap of gifts under the tree.

"Each gift was labeled with a specific name," said Ambrosio, "and stockings were, too."

It wasn't long before the scanner said Santa was in sight. When he arrived the fun began.

"Starting with the overstuffed stockings, they tore into it all," said Ambrosio. "Santa's elves called out names on the presents right and left. The kids barely had time to open a present before they had to go get another."

"Getting piled up with presents is any kid's dream and these teens enjoyed every minute."

Now that it's all over, a slide show is on display at Twin Lakes Store for all to see. The store is located five miles north of Florence on Highway 101.

The photos will be on display through the month of January.

Submitted by Vicki Ambrosio

# 'Trans Perspectives' topic of next PFLAG meeting

California activist Zoyer Zyndel, chairperson of Trans-E-Motion, will be the featured presenter at the regular meeting of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) on Tuesday, Jan. 12, at Lane Community College, 3149 Oak St., in Florence.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Room 250.

PFLAG-Florence vice president Jane Hudson will join Zyndel in the presentation.

This is the first regular meeting of PFLAG-Florence to be held at Lane Community College, and the college will continue hosting PFLAG-Florence regular meetings throughout 2016.

Zyndel, whose well-received presentation to

PFLAG-Florence in 2014 sparked greater interest in the topic, is the author of an LGBT+ anthology still in use throughout California's Central Valley and has been active in the LGBT+ Student organization, United Student Pride and PFLAG-Fresno, where he has served on the board for three years.

Trans-E-Motion, the organization he chairs, seeks to improve transgender lives through education, outreach, advocacy and support in Fresno and surrounding communities and sponsors the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance in November.

Zyndel and Hudson will field questions following the presentation.

The public is invited and refreshments will be served.

# Three-day 'Presbyterian 101' workshop being offered

On Jan. 10, 17 and 24, at 11:15 a.m., Pastor Greg Wood will teach a class titled: "Presbyterian 101: Basics of Presbyterian Theology, Worship and Work."

This class may be a refresher course for members or as an introduction and new member's class.

Topics will be:

- Jan. 10: "What do we believe?"
- On Jan. 17: "Why we wor-

ship like we do."

- Jan. 23: "Nuts and bolts about the Presbyterian Church of the USA."

It may offer a point to ask deeper questions and foster other discussions. Bring your questions, answers and ideas to this three-day class.

The Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw is at 3996 Highway 101 North.

Worship service is Sundays at 10 a.m.

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