

U.S. Bank awards performance grant to CROW

On Dec. 23, David Spray, Sales and Service Manager of the Florence Branch of US Bank, awarded a grant check in the amount of \$2,500 to local youth non-profit organization, CROW (Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops)

Accepting the grant was Melanie Heard, artistic director and founder of the program. Funds were provided as part of the US Bank Foundation's 2016 "Play" grant cycle, which provides support for local arts organizations that enhance the economic vitality of the com-

munity.

US Bank Foundations website states that "Research shows that there are many important benefits of arts education for children. Our arts in education grants provide funding for arts-focused nonprofit organizations that bring visual and performing arts programming to low-and moderate-income K-12 schools and youth centers."

According to Heard, this is exactly the important kind of work that CROW has provided since 2011 - allowing local

children and families the opportunity to access high-caliber arts education right here in a rural coastal community. Heard believes that youth in rural areas are entitled to the same opportunities as other students.

She also believes in the strong need for arts education and the impact it has on the creation of well-rounded children.

"Kids that are exposed to the arts frequently score higher in academics, have reduced social problems, and emerge from our program more confident,

poised, creative, and dedicated to problem solving," Heard said.

This educational philosophy is where CROW's motto stems from: "The Arts Really DO Matter."

"We were honored to have received grant funds in 2016," said Heard, "and thank the US Bank Foundation for its incredible generosity and support."

For more information about CROW or to contact Heard, call 541-999-8611.

Financial Peace University program to be offered

More than 4.5 million people have positively changed their financial future through Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University (FPU). The nine-week course provides families and individuals with practical tools to gain control of their finances and set themselves up for long-term financial success.

The course meets once a week where a different lesson is taught by Ramsey on DVD, followed by a small-group discussion. Lessons include budgeting, relationships and money, getting out of debt, saving for emergencies and investing.

FPU will be held in Florence at the Florence Christian Church, 990 Second St. in Florence.

Classes begin Sunday, Jan. 8, at 7 p.m.

Through common-sense principles and small-group accountability, FPU gives people the tools they need to change their behavior and succeed financially. On average, families who complete FPU pay off \$5,300 and save \$2,700 in the first 90 days. Following the class nearly 94 percent of those families budget regularly.

"FPU will not only trans-

form the way you handle money, but also your marriage and other areas of your life," says Ramsey. "This isn't a boring financial class. We make learning about money fun and easy to understand so people in every situation can benefit from the information."

Ramsey knows first-hand the pain that financial stress can cause. After creating a net worth of more than a million dollars by age 26, he quickly lost it all. Since then Ramsey has helped families and individuals across the country learn how to get control of their

finances and avoid debt so they don't have to experience the same pain he did.

FPU lessons also include guest speakers Rachel Cruze, speaker and daughter of Dave Ramsey and Chris Hogan, counselor and speaker for the Dave Ramsey organization.

After purchasing a membership each participant receives a workbook, Dave Ramsey's Complete Guide to Money, an envelope system and an audio CD library.

For more information, visit www.daveramsey.com.

Revenue Department to hold tax refunds until February

SALEM — Oregon Department of Revenue officials have announced that no personal income tax refunds for the 2016 tax year will be issued until after Feb. 15, 2017.

The refund hold will allow data-matching of amounts claimed on returns to what employers report on Forms W-2 and 1099.

"Data-matching reduces potential refund fraud, and fraud is a problem we want to tackle from every direction we can," said Ken Ross, manager of Revenue's anti-fraud efforts. "The IRS, Oregon, and other states are taking similar measures to prevent potential fraud, capitalizing on the requirement that employers submit W-2 and 1099 information by Jan. 31."

Ross referred to the IRS' announcement earlier this year that taxpayers claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Additional Child Tax Credit won't see their federal refunds until after Feb. 15.

Revenue stops millions of dollars in fraudulent refunds

each year: In 2015, anti-fraud efforts stopped \$6.9 million in fraudulent refunds claimed on almost 4,000 different returns.

Fraudsters are known to submit fraudulent returns early, trying to go unnoticed among the many early filers requesting legitimate refunds.

Among returns filed before Feb. 15, approximately 90 percent request a refund.

"No one wants to hold up a taxpayer's legitimate refund, and taxpayers have been pretty understanding of the need to combat fraud," Ross said. "We take very seriously our responsibility to make sure tax dollars go to the legitimate owners and not to fraudsters."

Visit www.oregon.gov/dor to get forms, check the status of your refund or make payments, call 503-378-4988 (or 800-356-4222 toll-free) or email questions.dor@oregon.gov for more information.

For TTY for hearing or speech impaired, call 800-886-7204.

During peak calling times, you may experience an extended wait.

Sherrif's Office warns public about new phone scam

The Lane County Sheriff's Office has received multiple reports of a new wave of phone scams.

Scammers are claiming to be from the "Lane County Sheriff's Department" or the "US Marshal's Office Civil Division."

Community members are told by the scammers that they have outstanding warrants, unpaid citations, or have failed to appear at jury duty and can remedy the issue by purchasing gift cards. After the cards are purchased, the callers will ask for the numbers on the cards which allow access to the gift card funds.

Scammers are calling from the numbers 541-357-3302 and 541-327-9121, though additional calls may be made from other numbers.

The numbers are equipped with voicemail messages claiming to be one of the above listed governmental agencies. A male with a slight southern accent has also answered the line.

The Lane County Sheriff's Office would like to remind community members to be cautious of phone calls demanding payment in the form of gift cards.

When returning a phone call that you think might be a scam, use the publicly listed number for that agency.

If you are the victim of a phone scam and have lost money as a result of the scam, please report it to your local law enforcement agency.

If you did not send any money, you do not need to call and report it.

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Wed. Prayer - 6:00 p.m. — Wed. Ministries 1-8 Grade 7 p.m.

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Corner of 10th & Maple — 997-3533
Bible Study at 9:00 A.M.
Services: Worship, 10:30 A.M.
florencecrossroad.org • office@florencecrossroad.org

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1935 25th St. — 997-7660 • Pastor, Dr. Marvin Owen
Series "People of the Bible." on Wednesdays 6 p.m.
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Sun.; 11am & 6pm, Sunday school 9:45am.

FLORENCE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

2nd & Ivy — 997-2961 — Non-Denominational
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Middle School and High School youth groups meet on Wednesday.

FLORENCE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Pre-Denominational (Romans 16:16)
1833 Tamarack Street (2 blocks east of Hwy. 101 on 18th St.)
Bible Study: Sunday 10 a.m.; Worship: Sunday 11 a.m.
www.churchofchristflorence.org

FLORENCE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

12th and Nopal — 997-9020
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
10 am Wed., Women's Bible Study
Saturdays, Mens' Breakfast @ 8 a.m.
Online Worship Service@ www.florencenaz.com

FLORENCE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

1318 Rhododendron Dr. — 997-2523 — Worship at 11:00 AM — Sunday
School at 9:30 AM — Variety of Sunday evening activities - 5 PM
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Call for details.

FLORENCE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

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Website: florence4square.com

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florencevineyardchurch.com

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NEW LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH, E.L.C.A.

21st & Spruce Street — 997-8113
Adult Forum 9 a.m. — Sunday School 10:30 a.m.
Worship services: Sun. 10:30am & Wed. 6pm.
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www.lutheranchurchflorence.com

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