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Methodists to take stand against human trafficking Feb. 5

On Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 5, the women of the Florence United Methodist Church will take a stand against human trafficking along with other United Methodist Women (UMW) from around the United States.

These women will stack boxes to symbolize intercepting traffickers and to represent our commitment to stand with victims of human trafficking.

In football, the phrase “stack the box” is used when the defense puts its players “in the box,” in a rectangular formation, to stop the offensive team’s rush.

“Human traffickers run a game on the vulnerable,” said Cynthia Orr of the Methodist Church. “Our goal is to stack the box against them, to intercept their game and to box them up for



Members of United Methodist Women show their solidarity with others to intercept human traffickers and to open boxes of hope for survivors.

prosecution.”

The Super Bowl draws some of the largest numbers of traffickers who coerce the vulnerable to work in food service, cleaning services, escort services and as sex workers.

This act will serve to raise awareness of the increasing

number of people who, not of their own free will, are forced into labor.

The Florence United Methodist Women, along with others who will not be able to attend and participate in the event, have been photographed with their anti-trafficking boxes. These photos will be connected together around the stadium to become a part of the mission to intercept traffickers who trap the vulnerable within boxes of imprisonment.

Yola Hesser, co-president of the Florence United Methodist Women, said “The goal of the United Methodist Women is to improve the life of women, children and youth. Since this group is most affected by human trafficking, we want to work to free them all from slavery”

Lane Community College offers free safety, self defense course

Lane Community College Florence Center invites the community for a conversation about personal safety and awareness during a free seminar held Wednesday, Feb. 8, at the Florence Campus.

The free seminar includes workshops that cover the topics of sexual assault, dating and domestic violence and basic self defense from noon to 5 p.m.

The classes are held separately throughout the day and will be taught by LCC public safety officers. Participants are welcome to take one or more classes being offered that day depending upon their personal schedule.

These classes are free and open to all community members — not just LCC students, said Lt. Lisa Rupp of the LCC Public Safety Department.

“We provide this training for free because we feel it is necessary for the community to join in the conversation about sexual assault and dating and domestic violence,” Rupp said.

She added that those who attend will receive information on prevention techniques, statistics and information on public safety response to various situations.

The seminar is designed to be useful to anyone concerned about the growing threat of personal violence in our society, said Russ Pierson, interim director of LCC Florence.

“The three sessions are intended to offer real-world tools to help in three areas of personal safety: sexual assault and harassment; dating and domestic violence; and basic self defense. Anyone is welcome to attend any combination of these sessions,” Pierson said.

From noon to 1 p.m., officers will discuss how to prevent sexual assaults and harassment, including what to do to and not do if you’re sexually assaulted and how and where to report incidents.

From 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., the workshop will focus on dating and domestic violence awareness. In this class, participants will learn the warning signs of abuse, what abuse is, making a plan to get away safely and available college and resources.

The final three-hour class is from 2 to 5 p.m. and covers basic self-defense training. After simple warm-up exercises, participants will learn proper methods of performing a variety of strikes and escape techniques, as well as personal safety techniques to use in parking lots.

The public safety officers will also be available to give examples of scenarios and answer personal safety questions for participants.

“LCC’s Public Safety Office includes a team of highly trained professionals committed to serving the greater Lane Community College community — and that definitely includes Florence,” Pierson said.

“This is a series of three trainings they offer occasionally in the metro area, and we at the LCC Florence Center are really happy they have offered to bring these trainings to our community, too. Sexual assault, domestic violence and harassment of all types are an unfortunate shadow that hangs over many of us these days, and these classes offer hope, help and tools that can make a real difference in our personal and communal safety.”

The classes are free, though registration is required to help officers with their course planning. To register online visit: lanecc.edu/ce or call 541-997-8444 for assistance.

Grants available for historic cemetery projects

The Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries is offering grants for qualified historic cemeteries. The annual grants fund projects that preserve historic cemeteries.

Projects funded in the past include marker repair workshops, fencing, signs, interpretive panels and brochures, security lighting, access improvements, records management and more.

Awards typically range between \$1,000 and \$6,000, but have been higher. Anyone can apply for a grant. While the grant applications are online, they are simple and commission staff can provide support.

“Our goal is to preserve Oregon’s historic cemeteries,

so we try to make it easy for people to access funds to do that while ensuring the funds are appropriately used,” said historic cemeteries program coordinator Kuri Gill. A previous grant applicant, Patricia McCracken with Winchester Elementary School, said cemeteries program staff were supportive when she was submitting her grant report.

“We were new to filling out grants and staff was extremely helpful when we called,” she said.

There will be free grant workshops on project planning and grant writing and using the online grant application. A two-hour workshop will be in Salem on March 15.

A shorter webinar will be available on March 16. Two webinars, Jan. 18 and 19, will explain the online grant system.

State law established the seven-member historic cemeteries commission to maintain a listing of all historic cemeteries and gravesites in Oregon; promote public education on the significance of historic cemeteries; and help obtain financial and technical assistance for restoring, improving and maintaining their appearances.

To learn more about the grants or visit www.oregonheritage.org or contact Kuri Gill at Kuri.Gill@oregon.gov or call 503-986-0685.

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