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PeaceHealth to offer Palliative Care classes

Beginning in April, the PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center Palliative Care program will host a series of classes designed to train prospective volunteers to work directly with palliative care patients in the community.

The trainings will be held at Lane Community College and include an overview of palliative care, the role of the palliative care team and the volunteer, communication and spirituality.

Palliative care programs serve patients who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness and desire alleviation of symptoms - whether social, physical, emotional or spiritual. Patients can receive palliative care at any time and at any stage of illness, whether terminal or chronic.

Though both palliative care and hospice care programs focus on pain and symptom management, palliative care programs also include treatment options.

"Florence is a town that thrives on volunteerism," says Palliative Care Medical Social Worker Donna Becker. "The start of our new palliative care program presents another great opportunity for Florence residents to give back to their community."

Palliative care strives to improve a patient's quality of life by offering comfort and care in times of pain and volunteering for a program such as this can be incredibly rewarding, according to Becker.

Palliative care volunteers will be trained in a number of

roles: providing companionship and support to patients, providing respite care to caregivers, and additional acts of service such as running errands for families, providing transportation, preparing meals or doing light household work.

Volunteers also contribute organizational support by participating in program activities and helping with events and celebrations.

Patient support volunteer classes will be limited to 12 members. The dates and times of the classes will be determined by participant feedback.

If you are interested in becoming a palliative care volunteer, or if you have questions, please contact Donna Becker at dbecker@peacehealth.org or call 541-902-6734.

Don't be surprised but what youth fall for online

Our youth are constantly connected to technology and social media. Whether it is a smart-phone, tablet or laptop, they can communicate online in the blink of an eye.

Predators take advantage of social media by disguising themselves with a fake online profile. By acting a certain age

or gender, they can easily lure a child or teen into communicating with them. After just a few messages, they can often convince youth to share personal information, or even meet in person, making them vulnerable victims.

The best advice is for parents to befriend their children

on the apps they use so they can better monitor their use.

The best time to have these conversations is *before* your kids create a social media account (which is earlier and earlier now).

Work together to keep kids safe online.

Utz

from 1B

interest, not only because of my background in education but because of my background as a parent."

The Special Programs that Utz is responsible for cover a wide range of disciplines.

These include some areas that might surprise the public, subjects such as Professional Development, Indian Education, After School and Summer Programs, Civil Rights, Talented and Gifted Education and Homeless Education.

One of Utz's major challenges centers on the writing and submission of grant proposals that are required to receive the funding support that the Federal Government allocates for Special Programs nationwide.

Many of the programs of her department are contingent on acceptance and approval by the Federal Government.

These areas are referred to as "Title" programs and they have to be applied for at different times depending on the length and amount of the grants.

"I write the grants that are required to secure recurring funding for many of the programs that I oversee, not Special Education, but programs that affect many other students in the district. What we are able to do is based on maintaining a consistent level of funding," Utz said.

The other programs in the district that she is referring to impact a high percentage of the student body, showing that her work has significant

impact on the district as a whole.

"My true north compass is making sure all kids get what they need in the way that they need it. Case managers, teachers and educational assistants work with students on the ground level and they are the ones that are seeing things that might change in a kid. That is when we come together as a team to see what changes may need to be made for that individual student," Utz said. "What I always have to come back to is how what we are doing is going to best serve our students."

For more information on the Special Programs available to the students and parents of the Siuslaw School District, call 541-997-5457 or visit www.siuslaw.k12.or.us.

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