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Siuslaw News

Giving a hand to man's best friend

Camp Florence youth train, work with strays from OCHS

By Christian Luna Hernandez
Siuslaw News Intern

& Mark Brennan
Siuslaw News

At Camp Florence, Frankie works with dogs from Oregon Coast Humane Society in an effort to connect dogs with at-risk youth.

CHRISTIAN LUNA HERNANDEZ FOR THE SIUSLAW NEWS

Humans love dogs. The bond between the two species is the story of a millennium-long partnership that has greatly benefited both. Archeologists have found remains from both species, interred together, that are more than 14,000 years old.

This relationship is also the cornerstone of a local program that matches youthful, at-risk offenders, with dogs that need a home and a caring owner.

"Project POOCH" began in Woodburn, Ore., in the 1990s. POOCH is an acronym for Positive Opportunities for Obvious Changes with Hounds, which is also the goal of the program.

Elements of the project have now been incorporated successfully into the curriculum at Camp Florence Youth Transitional Facility, a facility for youth located on South Jetty Road. It is run by the State of Oregon and the staff works with young men who are in the process of transitioning from a negative life situation to a more positive and productive one.

Camp Florence is the final step in that journey.

The mission of Project POOCH is to provide opportunities for youth in corrections to learn responsibility, patience and compassion for all life by working with shelter dogs. The program was founded in 1993 by Joan Dalton, who at the time was a vice principal at MacLaren's Lord High School.

– A generous community –

Florence residents, businesses come together to donate 14,572 pounds of food to Florence Food Share

By Chantelle Meyer
Siuslaw News

PHOTOS BY CHANTELLE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

Cindy Wobbe and her team of volunteers surpassed projections for the amount of food raised at this year's Pounding for Florence Food Share, beating last year's total by more than 1,400 pounds. The annual community effort to help feed area families has continued thanks to generous donations of food and money.

On Saturday, Cindy Wobbe held her 18th annual Pounding for Florence Food Share, with the help of the community, local volunteers and Wayne Sharpe of KCST Coast Radio.

In just a little over four hours at the Florence Grocery Outlet, community members donated 14,572 pounds of food. This record-breaking amount beats last year's 13,088 pounds, the previous record.

"I really want to emphasize that this is a grassroots, community effort — neighbors helping neighbors," Wobbe said. "We got to that total one can, one box at a time."

Included in the donations was items ready for Thanksgiving meals, such as frozen turkeys, canned vegetables and soup mixes. In addition, people also donated cash and other items needed by Florence Food Share, such as peanut butter, jam, rice, beans, sugar, flour, oatmeal and nonperishable food.

Much of the food was purchased at Grocery Outlet, which is now run by Brian Barnard and Lisa Fassler after Woody Woodbury retired earlier this year. People also brought items from home or elsewhere in town.

Every pound raised equaled a dollar match by donors, including Klaus and Maria Witte of Top Hydraulics. All this helps fill the pantry at Florence Food Share, which is heading into one of its busiest seasons as community members seek to provide meals to their families.

Look for other ways to donate, such as at Empty Bowls at the Florence Events Center from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2. For more information, visit www.florencefoodshare.org.

Holiday events begin this week

By Chantelle Meyer
Siuslaw News

Tomorrow marks the beginning of Florence's holiday season, with Thanksgiving opening a weekend filled with holiday cheer and community spirit.

People are welcome to attend Kiwanis Club of Florence's free Community Thanksgiving Dinner at Florence Elks Lodge 1858, 1686 12th St., from noon to 2 p.m. This annual feast allows everyone to eat a restaurant-style meal prepared by Kiwanis and community volunteers. Donations of canned food and money will be accepted, but are not required.

Then, on Friday, people are encouraged to start their holiday shopping with Black Friday deals. Those hoping to support local businesses can "shop small" on Saturday for Small Business Saturday. Created to emphasize keeping money local, the "shop small" movement gives back to consumers with promotions and refreshments.

"By shopping small and local, you help support your family, friends and neighbors," said local business owner Jo Beaudreau, who is helping promote Small Business Saturday in the Siuslaw region. "Keeping things local allows communities to thrive. Your dollar does make an impact."

A Facebook event page has been set up to encourage people to explore area shopping.

Saturday is also the official beginning of winter holiday events in Florence, with the Florence Festival of Trees, Light Up Your Boat Float, Florence Holiday Festival and Tree Lighting and Seacoast Entertainment Association's "Christmas Roadshow" with Ken Lavigne.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Florence Festival of Trees Family Fun Day at the Florence Events Center is open to the public to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus, take pictures with the holiday Bassett Hounds and preview Christmas trees hand-decorated by local businesses that will be auctioned the next day at the Festival of Trees Gala of Giving. Wreaths and small trees will also be available to purchase Saturday.

THIS WEEK'S **WEATHER**
Full Forecast, A3

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