

# LCC Winter Class Schedule

INSIDE

# Hanukkah begins Dec. 2



# Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

## Local Nativity collections on display this weekend

BY MARK BRENNAN  
SIUSLAW NEWS

Holiday celebrations surrounding this time of the year have begun, with a number of religious traditions centered around the celebrated birthday of Jesus Christ of Nazareth on Dec. 25. For the Christian community of Florence, one of the local seasonal highlights is a collection of Nativity scenes that depict different interpretations of the birth of Jesus.

There is a centuries-old tradition among Christian denominations to include Nativity scenes to symbolize the historical setting that was present at the time of the birth of Jesus.

The Florence Nativity Festival at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is an extensive collection that includes interpretations of the birth of Jesus created by followers from many different cultures. This year's display will have hundreds of Nativity sets comprised of numerous individual pieces and no two are alike. Many of the sets are family heirlooms.

The church, located at the corner of North Fork and Munsel Lake roads, began sharing Nativity sets with the public more than a decade ago. Carol Parrish has been involved since the inception of the event.

"I was in the very first one 14 years ago," she said. "I got a lot of mine at yard sales, Goodwill and estate sales. I pick them up here and there and I just keep at it."

In addition to what would be considered "traditional" scenes, which are centered on figurines in or around a barn or a manger, there are other, more modern treatments of the event that Christians look towards as the beginning of their religion.

See NATIVITY page 8A

## 23rd annual Empty Bowls

# Community seeks to fill Food Share's Empty Bowls



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS



One of the Florence community's most successful fundraising events, Empty Bowls, makes its annual appearance this weekend at the Florence Events Center. The popular fundraiser accepts hundreds of bowls designed, created and donated by community members and sells them to the general public — with all proceeds going to Florence Food Share. This year's event is the 23rd consecutive year Empty Bowls has been held. Purchased bowls will be accompanied by a coupon redeemable for one cup of soup at a participating restaurant during the month of December. Empty Bowls will be held on Saturday, Dec. 1, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday, Dec. 2, from noon to 3 p.m.

## Giving Tree brings 'the magical part of Christmas' to local teens

Twin Lakes Store's annual gift distribution seeks more participants

BY JARED ANDERSON  
SIUSLAW NEWS

The Christmas lists begin unexpectedly for teenagers: Socks, underwear, deodorant.

"There are more comforters on that tree than normal," Vicki Ambrosio said. "They're asking for bedding. What teenager puts this on their Christmas list? It's all the time. For the kids to put their toiletries and shampoo and conditioner, it's crazy. They're asking for things that should already be in their lives, but maybe they can't afford it."

"That's why I do it."

Ambrosio heads up the Twin Lakes Giving Tree program, which for the past six years has been giving gifts to teenagers, age 12 to 18, who live primarily in the rural area north of Florence. She runs the program out of her business, Twin Lakes Store, a convenience store located on Highway 101 near Munsel Lake.

For the program, teenagers fill out a list of needs and wants on a paper ornament, which Ambrosio then places on a small tree just next to the main doors of Twin Lakes. Her customers come in, take an ornament and purchase the items for the kids, sometimes all of them, sometimes just a few — whatever they can afford.

"There's a lot of teenagers that are on their own in this town," Ambrosio said. "There's homeless teenagers in this town, or teenagers who are being raised by their grandparents. Those are the people that we're looking for. We still have about 15 slots we're making for kids to come in and do their wish list."

See GIVING TREE page 10A

# PLANTING ROOTS OF EMPATHY

School districts work with programs to teach students emotional literacy

STORY & PHOTO  
BY DAMIEN SHERWOOD  
SIUSLAW NEWS

Wilson Hornung commands the unbroken attention of two dozen students at Siuslaw Elementary School — no small feat in a classroom full of first-graders. When he speaks, the children cheer. When he sits upright, the children ooh and aww. When he flops over on his belly, the children clap. He's also just six months old.

Wilson is one of four infants who, once a month, have a star

role in Siuslaw Elementary School classrooms under the newly-instated Roots of Empathy program, a series of curricula aimed at enhancing children's empathic and social intelligence.

"Talking to my other teacher friends about it, they're intrigued," said teacher Heather Costa, who hosts the Roots of Empathy class for Wilson's visits. "And I'm excited for the kids to see a positive parent-child relationship."

Roots of Empathy was born from the idea that em-



Wilson Hornung (center) visits Siuslaw Elementary School classes in his role as "teacher" in the Roots of Empathy Program.

pathy and understanding are curative ingredients for a more compassionate society and that delivering these lessons early in life can have profound individual and community-wide effects.

Its founder, Mary Gordon, first created the program in Ontario in 1996 and the organization has since spread worldwide and in multiple languages.

The program relies on local families to volunteer with their two- to four-month-old infants to play a teaching role in classrooms. At their

core, these lessons revolve around "emotional literacy" and the skills associated with seeing the world through others' perspectives.

The program came to the Siuslaw region through the 90by30 child abuse prevention project, a Eugene-based nonprofit dedicated to reducing child abuse 90 percent in Lane County by 2030. The nonprofit's West Lane district co-chair, Suzanne Mann-Heintz, is also an instructor in the Roots of Empathy program.

See ROOTS page 11A

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Community . . . . . A3 Sports . . . . . B  
Opinion . . . . . A4 Monthly Calendar . . . . . A6  
Records . . . . . A2 Weather Data . . . . . A2

THIS WEEK'S WEATHER Full Forecast, A3

TODAY 49 39	SUNDAY 49 34	MONDAY 51 35	TUESDAY 50 35
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2 SECTIONS | 20 PAGES  
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Saturday, December 1 11 am - 5 pm  
Sunday, December 2 11 am - 5 pm

An eclectic showcase and shopping experience for unique works of art and fine craftsmanship

Free Admission

(10% of Artists' Sales during the event will benefit the Florence Art Center)

Florence Event Center • 715 Quince Street

