

On the farm: Food systems report details production, access

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The aging-out of a generation of farmers and the effects of an ongoing recession were among the many challenges to the production and access to food in Lane and Douglas counties highlighted in a presentation at Cottage Grove's Healing Matrix last week.

Jules Reynolds, an Americorps volunteer with the Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) program, offered details of a 10-month food systems assessment for southern Lane and northern Douglas counties on Tuesday, June 21, a report that Reynolds said aims to "tell the story" of food production and access in these areas.

She said her report, which will be presented again in upcoming public settings, was made possible with support

from the Oregon Food Bank. The report included information on the communities of Creswell, Cottage Grove, Elkton, Drain, Yoncalla and Dorena, communities that Reynolds grouped together as their own agricultural region that have some connection to the population centers of Eugene and Springfield.

Reynolds said she served as an "outside observer" for local events such as cgFeast and helped organize the South Valley Farmers Network during her time here, which also included her own personal experience of local food systems. She also spoke of progress in connecting local children to local food

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Into the wild

Library's 'Nature for Kids' program offers lessons beyond the books

BY GORDON OKUMU
For the Sentinel

On a warm Friday morning, area kids and their parents started steaming into the Cottage Grove Library for its Nature for Kids trip to Rujada campground. The excitement in their faces couldn't go unnoticed, and library staff and a few volunteers and parents prepared the kids for a big day out.

The bus left at 8:15 a.m. and soon arrived at the first destination, Row River Nature Park. Here, the kids started warming up for the day's events.

After the warm-up and yoga, all went back to the bus for a 40-minute drive into the deep forest.

Different plants were shown to the kids, who learned their names. The Douglas fir tree was of interest as the kids were taught of its dominance in the Rujada forest and the importance of its thick bark in situations of forest fires.

As the hiking went on, the kids came across the Oregon grape plant, an evergreen shrub growing to about three feet tall whose scientific name is *Mahonia aquifolium*. It features pinnate leaves consisting of spiny leaflets and is used for stomach ulcers, gastroesophageal reflux disease, stomach upset, as a bitter tonic, to treat infections and to cleanse the bowels. It was one of the most interesting plants for the kids. Nature learning was courtesy of Krista Lynn Farris, a botanist at US Forest Service-Umpqua National Forest.

The kids went on hiking the mountain and walking about 1.5 miles.

"What an exciting experience; I want to come back this way every time you guys organize this kind of an event" one of the kids said to the organizers.

Coming back under the mountain where the hiking had began from, the kids were served lunch and after lunch they formed groups where some kids were playing soccer, others learning how to play ukulele, others learning yoga while others participated in painting.

After a couple minutes in this, it was time for the kids to go make ice cream. Later, as adults watched over them, the kids played in the water, swam, jumped and had fun walking



photo by Gloria Campuzano

Dakota Roth gives a thumbs-up to the Nature for Kids program and its trip to Rujada campground.

in the creek.

The Library will offer trips through its Nature for Kids program through the end of August, though the trip to Spirit Falls on July 15 has reached capacity. It also offers trips for teens aged 13-17 through the Teen Adventures program. On Friday, July 1 at noon, sign-ups will begin for a trip to Dorena Lake for the kids on July 29 and to the Cascades Raptor Center on Aug. 26, in addition to teen trips to Dorena on Aug. 15 and the Wildlife Safari in Winston on Aug. 19.

Search for man missing since 2012 continues

The Cottage Grove Police Department says it is continuing its search for a man who disappeared from the area over four years ago.

On Feb. 14, 2012, Robert Richardson, then 60 years old, disappeared after family lost contact with him earlier that day. Richardson had reportedly told family that his vehicle would be on Gowdyville Road at Milepost 3 just west of Cottage Grove, and his red Ford Ranger pickup was located there. It is believed he may have disappeared from that area and may have had a bicycle with him.

Richardson is described as a white male about six foot, one inches tall and weighing 280-300 pounds. He wears glasses and has limited mobility.

Detective Doug Skaggs with CGPD said that the department is reviewing its case files, adding that Richardson's disappearance is the only unresolved missing person's report currently on file there. He said police are "fairly certain" that Richardson had

help leaving the area.

"Walking was quite an ordeal for him, and he left everything you'd normally take with you — a cell phone, wallet, etc. — at home," Skaggs said. "We think somebody else was involved. Somebody knows where he is."

Skaggs said Richardson may have enlisted help to end his life, though without more details, it's difficult to determine exactly what happened.

"Let's bring him home," Skaggs said. "Closure is needed."

Those with any information regarding Richardson's whereabouts are urged to contact Skaggs at dsaggs@cgpolice.org or by phone at 541-942-9145 x. 140.



Robert Richardson

Sigh of Relief luncheon details Nursery efforts

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Last Tuesday, June 21, the Family Relief Nursery hosted its annual Sigh of Relief luncheon at Cottage Grove High School to raise awareness of the Nursery and raise funds for its cause of helping troubled families. Over 200 individuals filled the high school's cafeteria, all with intention to help support and donate to the Nursery.

The event started on a happy note with the presentation of the Betty Wright Good Neighbor Award to Cynthia Sharp and John Hogan.

Although only an hour, the event was filled with heavy emotions, as the Nursery has made a huge impact on the lives of many Grovers and their children.

Executive Director Diane Hazen expressed her awe and gratitude of the attendance.

"As I look around the room I'm inspired by such an amazing combination of people," she said. "We have legislators, civic leaders, business leaders, staff, former clients, current

clients, we have volunteers and we have concerned citizens; it's an amazing combination of people."

The Nursery is the first of its kind in the state of Oregon, and many who attended had a chance to share what the nursery had done for them. Emcee Larry Tardie roamed the room to pass the microphone off to anyone who was willing to share. It was hard for a lot of those sharing to hold back their tears.

The most memorable story came from guest speaker Nicole Cary, who benefited immensely through the Relief Nursery. Cary struggled through a methamphetamine addiction while she became pregnant and gave birth to her first child. With an absent father and a mother facing jail time, Cary's son was given support through the Nursery.

"I'm so happy for the help they've given my son and even myself," she said. Cary started serving a short jail sentence today to take responsibility for a car crash she was involved in. She noted that she knows her child will be in loving and caring hands at the Nursery.

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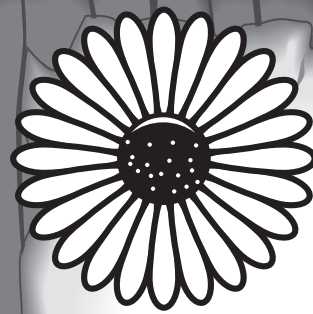
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