

Gathering of the Grove garners huge crowd

Area nonprofits flock to Village Green Resort to talk networking, trends and cooperation

By Caitlyn May
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On Tuesday, Feb. 28, they city's nonprofit organizations filled a conference room at the Village Green to capacity to discuss how to further their efforts and engage with each other to continue lending their helping hands to Cottage Grove.

When the event began as a seedling of an idea three years ago, it was about community. Organizers didn't expect more than 50 individuals to show up for a day of networking and workshops but within minutes of opening the door, they were turning people away.

"How many people came, that would be the most surprising thing of the day," said Cindy Weeldreyer, an organizer for the event and a member on a list of organizations that span KNND Radio to T.E.A.M. Cottage Grove.

More than 20 nonprofit organizations attended the event including: Cottage Grove Community Foundation, Cottage Grove Gleaners, Cottage Grove Elk's Lodge, Community Sharing, Dorena Grange, Ford Family Trust, DIVA, Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, Aprovecho, Cottage Village Coalition, United Way and Cottage Theatre.

"Our planning team goal was to attract 40 to 50 participants and we were surprised by a capacity crowd of 100," Weeldreyer said. "We had a nice combination of well-established nonprofits and small,

brand new nonprofit organizations. Our all-day program addressed common needs of nonprofit organizations. We received a good deal of positive feedback in the evaluations with most encouraging us to make this an annual event."

The theme of the event was "collaboration" with several speakers addressing the crowd on how to attract and keep volunteers, manage their resources and spread their message.

Roque Barrows of the Ford Family Trust was both a speaker and attendee and was blown away by the turnout. However, he noted that as government spending ebbs and flows, nonprofits bear the brunt of some community needs. "In the smaller communities," he said, "nonprofits have to take on more of the work than in the larger communities."

In Cottage Grove, nonprofits are responsible for aiding in supplying low-income families with housing assistance, homeless individuals with resources, educational opportunities, outreach efforts, social gatherings, mental health services, business opportunities and networking, low-cost entertainment and a slew of other services.

"I think it's about coming together," Weeldreyer said, "and focusing nonprofit groups to make what's good, better."



Top: Diane Murray, Sharon Van Gorder and Judy Babbitt of the Bohemia Sunrisers Kiwanis Club proudly display their Lego creation during an activity demonstrating principles of collaboration. Top Right: Danny Solesbee, Shauna Neigh, Nadine Kelley & Travis Palmer participate in a Lego activity. Bottom Right: Keynote speaker Roque Barros of the Ford Family Foundation gives a presentation.

NEW HIGH SCHOOL PLAY OPENS TOMORROW

The Cottage Grove High School Drama Department will present Ravenscroft written by Don Nigro and directed by Janet Rust.

Ravenscroft, a psychological drama, is a thinking person's Gothic thriller, a dark comedy that is both funny and frightening. On a snowy night, Inspector Ruffing is called to a remote house to investigate the headlong plunge of Patrick Roarke down the main staircase. He becomes involved in

the lives of five alluring and dangerous women.

The cast of Ravenscroft includes Kyle Carrillo-Enders, Kristy Rodrigues, Keely Galbreath, Madison Owens, Baylie Hill and Destiny Duerst.

Ravenscroft runs March 9, 10 and 11 at 7:30 p.m. Cost is \$5 for students/seniors and \$10 for adults.

For more information, please call CGHS at (541) 942-3391.



Back row from left: Baylie Hill, Madison Owens, Kyle Carrillo-Enders. Front row from left: Kristy Rodrigues, Keely Galbreath, Destiny Duerst.

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