

First Springfest to be held this Saturday at the armory



Band Windy Ridge will perform for Springfest. Photo courtesy Facebook.

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Chandra LaHusen imagined a ukulele class for fourth and fifth grade students at London School. Fifteen students, ukuleles and an instructor. The dream was an easy one, the funding for it was a bit harder.

"I just thought we could come together as a community and then it grew into something bigger," she said.

After talking to a group in Eugene about the possibility of bringing ukuleles to Cottage Grove, LaHusen started asking fellow community members and before she knew it, the first annual Springfest was born.

The event is scheduled for April 29 at the armory. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Bands Windy Ridge and Flies with Honey are scheduled to donate their time for the evening.

The ukulele program will benefit from Springfest but according to LaHusen, the parent teacher organization who is helping put the benefit on, is hoping to have a wider reach.

"The proceeds will go to supporting music, art and staffing at London School," she said. "It will support staffing. We would love to get a full-time instructor but that's not possible from one fundraiser," she said noting the cost of a salary for the school.

The London School currently benefits from Fantastic Fridays; a reward-based day that allow students to choose different activities such as yoga or art, led by community leaders who donate their time. Gloria Campuzano teaches students yoga while other activities include making crafts and reading.

"It's exciting to see so much enthusiasm behind a school event," LaHusen said. "But it really is a way for the community to

come together for some music and to help children because music and the arts feed a child's soul."

The Woodard Family Foundation donated funds to the cause with LaHusen noting that the community has made the Springfest possible.

"This is for the children so for the community to come together, it's exciting."

Silent auction items include a quilt made by the local grange, a \$40 certificate for Mecca Arts, a massage certificate and self-care baskets. Sponsors with varying donations of services and goods include Cascade, the Book Mine, Old Mill Farm Store, the Bread Peddlers, Health Revolution Chiropractic, High Wire Farm, In-Light Collective, Crescent Moon Yoga, Resilience Permaculture Design and Bochetta Day Spa.

Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door and can be purchased at Coast Fork Feed Store and Crafty Mercantile.

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charge and featured local artisans, music and popcorn for sale. Despite the wind and constant threat of rain, several dozen residents turned out to take part in the event.

Barrows is an organizer for DIVA, or Downtown Initiative for Visual Arts. The group has been active in Drain for several years and according to Barrows, managed to move the Eugene operation and its nonprofit status to Drain.

The trade-off is detailed on the group's website, noting, "DIVA's operations in Eugene are winding down now. We accomplished our mission in Eugene which now has a happening downtown. With our recent expansion into rural communities (Drain first), we re-ignited our passion for making real change through art. We are handing over the DIVA torch to a very dedicated group of people in Drain who will carry on our mission there. They are already expanding some of their programs to neighboring communities of Yoncalla and Elkton. Some DIVA activities and programs may continue in the Eugene area but, for the most part, all programs and activities will be coordinated through the Drain Gallery and Art Center from now on, giving some of us who have been

intricately involved in DIVA more time to return to making art."

Saturday's event focused on the mission of bringing art to the community with several booths set up for residents to create their own artwork. Children were invited to use chalk to design flowers on the streets of downtown while a mirror was set up for passersby to create a self portrait.

While the focus of the event was art, the purpose was to raise money to purchase a facility to replace the community's now closed library.

The Douglas County library system was closed after commissioners voted to halt funding for the facilities as part of a continuously dwindling budget. The change went into effect on April 1 for Drain and will continue through June 1.

The courtyard beside DIVA's headquarters in downtown would serve as a new location for a type of reading room.

"We have crafting and gardening books we would donate and just give people a place to read," Barrows said.

A total for the event was not available as of press time but residents who wish to donate to DIVA can contact Barrows at divaindrain@gmail.com.



Stephanie Barrows stands in the garden space DIVA intends to use as a reading space after the Douglas County Library System shut down due to a budgetary shortfall.

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offer and spent months collecting trash and materials to create their masterpieces.

Carmen Erbele Dowell was one of the first designers to have her pieces walk the runway and made a note to credit her inspiration "Oscar the Grouch."

"I look back on my childhood and remember the hours of watching 'Sesame Street.' I always loved Oscar the Grouch," she said. "He was so messy and loved his trash and everyone accepted him for how he was and loved him as their neighbor."

Modeling Erbele Dowell's Oscar inspired piece was Monica Venice who has modeled in the show once before and will return to the venue in September.

"Monica's piece is inspired by the trash bag itself," Erbele Dowell said. "I went to my mom's house and she had bags stuffed with bags all shoved in a closet. She agreed that throwing them away was bad for our environment, but what to do with them? I brought them home and starting weaving and stringing them and voila something beautiful was created."

Intermission saw Mattoon invite the audience up onto the catwalk for an amateur walk. After a bit of coaxing, two members joined him on stage before making way for the models for the second half of the show.

Trashion's two smallest designers, Chevella Munk and Baleigh Creech stole the show with their designs.

Creech, an aspiring designer and avid Relay for Life supporter, incorporated cancer awareness ribbons into all three of her designs while Munk's two designs made the most of her fairy theme and available trash she collected over the months.

Terrisa West, Shiloh Glaspell, Hannah Bevan, Beth Bethsome-more, Stephanie Basham, Hazel Snyder-McCullen and Heather Lahaie also showed designs during Saturday's show.

The Trashion Show helped raise funds for Opal but according to Murray, ticket sales cover only 40 percent of the theater's operating costs and she asks that the community consider supporting Opal by purchasing a membership or volunteering at events in the future.



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