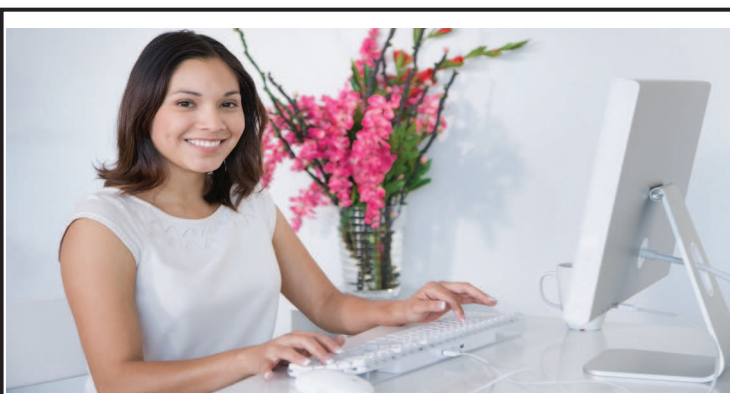


# Harrison family comes together to say goodbye

The Harrison Elementary School Reunion on April 20 saw generations of teachers and students honor the school before its move in September

PHOTOS BY GREG LEE



## A better work environment serves employees, company

Many people spend more time in the office than they do at their own homes. As a result, the environment at the workplace is especially important, and businesses big and small should attempt to make that environment as enjoyable and supportive as possible. A positive workplace environment not only benefits the company's employees, but it also benefits the company. Numerous studies have shown a link between workplace environment and error rate, willingness to collaborate with other employees and even absenteeism. For example, a study by the United Kingdom's Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment and the British Council for Offices found that something as simple as good lighting and adequate daylight throughout the office can reduce absenteeism by as much as 15 percent. In addition to minor changes around the office, there are several other things companies can do to improve the workplace environment.

### Increase and improve communication.

Particularly in the current economy, where uncertainty seems to be reigning over many businesses, open and honest communication with employees is especially important. As a result, communicate more frequently and effectively with staff. Let staff know the company is always open to suggestions, and respond to all suggestions to let employees know their opinions matter.

### Emphasize respect for others throughout the company.

No one wants to come to work and feel disrespected. Foster a culture of mutual respect wherein everyone knows bad behavior between employees simply won't be tolerated. Workplace bullying is not that uncommon, and employees who feel bullied or disrespected at the office are bound to be unhappy and less productive. Make sure everyone from the company CEO to the summer interns are aware that they must respect others and that they deserve respect regardless of their position within the company.

### Involve employees when instituting changes.

When attempting to improve a workplace environment, go straight to the source for ideas on improvement. Employees are on the ground floor every day, and they are an invaluable resource as to what's working and what's not working with regards to the environment at the office. Use them to help institute positive changes, and the result will likely be an improved environment as well as employees who feel more valued.

### Show appreciation.

A 2011 study from Massachusetts-based employee recognition



solutions provider Globoforce found that 41 percent of workers studied are not satisfied with the level of recognition they receive at their jobs. Companies hoping to foster a more positive work environment should always show appreciation to their employees when a job is well done. Appreciation can come in many forms, but companies should never avoid expressing gratitude or appreciation simply because they expect their employees to perform their jobs well. While it's important to set high expectations for employees, always give recognition and appreciation when employees meet those expectations. Fostering a better workplace environment can be done in a variety of ways and lead to happier, more productive employees.

Thank You to  
**Joy Ward & Jill Kallinger**  
For all you do every day.  
We couldn't do it without you!  
Erik & Wendy Sue Benson



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**THANK YOU LEESA & Linda**  
For all you do EVERYDAY!

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**Mandi**  
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## Bikes to Blooms set

The Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council (CFWWC), US Army Corps of Engineers, US Forest Service Cottage Grove Ranger District, Native Plant Society of Oregon, Walama Restoration Project and Kennedy Alternative High School, welcomes the community to discover spring wildflowers in bloom. With a local expert as your guide, we invite you to explore a rare, remnant prairie and oak habitat along Dorena Lake. Bikes to Blooms is a free, educational event that features activities for families and nature enthusiasts, including a morning bird walk, stewardship opportunities, educational booths hosted by local organizations and guided wildflower walks. Travel southeast of Cottage Grove and experience this ecologically valuable and scenic landscape and to see

the southern Willamette Valley in bloom.

Bikes to Blooms will take place on Saturday, May 12 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Bake Stewart Park along Dorena Lake. The event is free and open to the public. Bikes to Blooms event schedule: 8 a.m. Bird Walk, 10:30 a.m. Wildflower Walk, 1 p.m. Pollinator Walk. Naturalists are available to lead additional walks. Booths will be open from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. All walks are accessible by car or bike, carpooling is encouraged as parking is limited. Participants should bring a picnic lunch, water, weather-appropriate clothing, weed-free shoes, and a helmet if cycling. Please leave dogs at home. For questions contact the CFWWC at 541-767-9717, visit [www.coastfork.org](http://www.coastfork.org) or find us on Facebook.



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