

FUNDS from A1

organization is faced with.

Portmann, who passed away suddenly in 2012, left \$50,000 to the organization specifically earmarked for the Cottage Grove program. Local volunteer Carmen Dowell began asking where the money was earlier this summer.

"I noticed in June," she said. "Something wasn't right. They told us that they were going to do quotas so we kept waiting. They said they would tell us about the plans for the games on Friday and then they would tell us on Monday and then they said Summer Games are cancelled. Then, the CFO was fired."

The Special Olympics announced in June that it was suspending the summer games—expected to draw approximately 1,500 athletes—citing financial problems. In 2016, the organization took a \$325,000 loss on \$4.5 million in revenue.

"It's a different story every day," Dowell said of her conversations with Oase and other Special Olympics staff members. "On Jan. 31, 2017,

the last financial documents on the website, it says we had \$50,457.58. We didn't spend \$50,000 in a year."

Repeated attempts by *The Sentinel* to contact Oase were unsuccessful.

The Sentinel also requested an accounting of what the money was spent on between 2012 and 2017. Audited figures show that the group spent approximately \$36,000 but that nearly half of that was spent on lodging, an expense usually reimbursed by the organization.

"This means we can't go out and get some more medals or ribbons," said Loren Goodman, an athlete who has competed with the Special Olympics for more than 10 years in bocce, bowling and track and field. Goodman joined approximately two dozen other athletes, parents and supporters on Thursday, Aug. 9, at a demonstration on Main Street in Cottage Grove that drew both residential and press attention.

"We're looking for answers," Dowell said at the time. "We had a webinar and I kept asking where the money was and they would say they would

talk to me tomorrow one-on-one and then they said there was no money from Michele, they said prove it. Then they said they used it."

Teachers who worked with Portmann also came out to the demonstration, including Diane Hicks, who noted \$50,000 was "a lot" for a public school teacher to will to an organization and how upset Portmann would be with the situation.

Oase's full statement, which was sent to *The Sentinel* by Special Olympics Oregon's director of marketing and communications Chad Carter, read: "The 2012-2016 financial audits and itemized expenses provided by the independent auditor show expenses incurred by the Cottage Grove Local Program were properly used to support their program. The year-over-year balances have been publicly available through audits since 2012.

"In our recent conversations with Local Program Coordinators, in both group webinars and individual calls and meetings, we have found there to be an inconsistent understanding of the Special

Olympics Oregon business model that has been in place, how funds are allocated and how to interpret the internal reports they have received.

"This appears to be the case with the Local Program in Cottage Grove, which is not their fault. We are working in collaboration with all 30 programs to evolve the system to better reflect the financial challenges we are faced with and provide the clarity, transparency and open communication they need.

"We will continue our attempts to work with the Cottage Grove program, in the same manner we are working with all local programs, to understand their unique circumstances and provide immediate support operationally and, once we are able to do so, financially.

"Most importantly, and never to be lost in the conversation, is our commitment to the athletes and ensuring they are the focus of everything we do."

Oase has been on the job since June.



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EVACUEES from A1

Barrong said.

When her family was burned out of their home in the '90s, her mother found herself without anything but the clothes she was wearing.

"She works at the hospital and she didn't even have a uniform to go work back at the hospital," Barrong said. "So now she packs two or three uniforms so at least she has those."

Wildfires have become an increasing worry on the west coast with several wildfires causing evacuations in both California and Oregon last year. This year's wild fire season has already seen at least 20 fires between the two states, affecting thousands of residents.

Recently, the aviation museum hosted the Jim Wright Memorial Fly-in, but due

to the fires, six pilots had to cancel their trips to Cottage Grove due to smoke or their responsibilities to helping local fire departments battle the fires.

Barrong said she put her pilots' safety first and is glad

to be living in Cottage Grove when every fire season hits but remembers her hometown and the damage the fires cause.

"There's this lake," Barrong said. "Northern California perfection with little islands

and it's beautiful. Because of the firestorms that came through, it's gone. Everything is burned."



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HOPE U.M.C.
 131 W "A" St. Drain, OR
 541-315-1617
 Pastor: Lura Kidner-Miesen
 Fellowship & Song: 11:30am
 Potluck Lunch: 12:00pm
 Worship: 12:30pm

COTTAGE GROVE:
6th & Gibbs Church of Christ
 195 N. 6th St. • 541-942-3822
 Pastor: Aaron Earlywine
 Summer Service: 9:30 am
 Christian Education:
 Pre-K through 5th
 www.6thandgibbs.com

Calvary Baptist Church
 77873 S 6th St • 541-942-4290
 Pastor: Riley Hendricks
 Sunday School: 9:45am
 Worship: 11:00am
 The Journey: Sunday 5:00pm
 Praying Thru Life: Wednesday 6:00pm

Calvary Chapel Cottage Grove
 1447 Hwy 99 (Village Plaza)
 541-942-6842
 Pastor: Jeff Smith
 Two Services on Sun:
 9am & 10:45am
 Youth Group Bible Study
 Child Care 10:45am Service Only
 www.cgcalvary.org

Center for Spiritual Living
 700 Gibbs Ave. (Community Center)
 Rev. Bobby Lee
 Meets Sunday 3:00 p.m.
 cslcottagegrove@gmail.com

Church of Christ
 420 Monroe St • 541-942-8565
 Sunday Service: 10:30am

Cottage Grove Bible Church
 1200 East Quincy Avenue
 541-942-4771
 Pastor: Bob Singer
 Worship 11am
 Sunday School: 9:45am
 AWANA age 3-8th Grade,
 Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm
 www.cgbible.org

Cottage Grove Faith Center
 33761 Row River Rd.
 541-942-4851
 Lead Pastor: Kevin Pruet
 www.cg4.tv
 Full Children's Ministry available
 Service: 10:00am

Delight Valley
 Church of Christ
 33087 Saginaw Rd. East
 541-942-7711
 Pastor: Bob Friend
 Two Services:
 9am - Classic in the Chapel
 10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium

First Baptist Church
 301 S. 6th St • 541-942-8242
 Interim Pastor: Reed Webster
 Sunday School 9:30am
 Worship Service 11:00am
 Youth Wednesday 6:30pm
 cgfirstbaptist.com

First Presbyterian Church
 3rd and Adams St
 541-942-4479
 Pastor: Karen Hill
 Worship: 10:00am
 Sunday School: 10:00am
 www.cgpresbynews.com

Hope In The Grove
 700 E. Gibbs • 401-855-5668
 Pastor: Wayne Husk
 Sunday services:
 Worship: 9am
 Coffee Fellowship: 10:15am
 Bible Study: 10:30am

Hope Fellowship
 United Pentecostal Church
 100 S. Gateway Blvd.
 541-942-2061
 Pastor: Dave Bragg
 Worship: 11:00am Sunday
 Bible Study: 7:00pm Wednesday
 www.hopefellowshipupc.com
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 1041 Pennoyer Ave
 541-942-8928
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 Sunday Bible Study: 10:00am
 Sunday Worship: 10:50am & 5:30pm
 www.pennoyeravecc.com

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 Sun: 10:30am
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 Sat. 4-5pm or by appointment
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 552 Holbrook Lane
 541-895-8686, Sunday: 8:30am

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 820 South 10th Street
 541-942-5213
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 Bible Study: Saturday, 9:15 am
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Trinity Lutheran Church
 6th & Quincy • 541-942-2373
 Pastor: James L. Markus
 Sunday School & Adult Education
 9:15am
 Sunday Worship 10:30 am
 Comm. Kitchen Free Meal Tue & Thur
 5:00pm TLC Groups
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United Methodist Church
 334 Washington • 541-942-3033
 Pastor: Lura Kidner-Miesen
 Worship: 10:30am
 Comm. Dinner (Adults \$5,
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 1st & 3rd Monday 5-6:00pm
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