

Family Relief Nursery announces new executive director

After an extensive search, Family Relief Nursery recently announced it has chosen Peggy Whalen as its new executive director. The board of directors revitalized its executive director search in January, when current executive director Diane Hazen announced she would be retiring this year. Since the position's announcement in January, many qualified local and national candidates submitted applications.

"The competition was intense and the board interviewed many qualified and talented applicants," said Hazen. "Each interviewee partook in a thorough three-part interview process with teams comprised of representatives from the nursery's board of directors, leadership staff and community partners.

The planned executive director transition started in 2018, but was put on hold when Hazen offered to remain in place until a time when recruiting efforts would be the most effective.

"There is a seasonality to hiring and I am dedicated to Family Relief Nursery and maintaining its community relations and fiscal health," Hazen said. "The board and I wanted to wait

until the new year to start our renewed executive search. And we are so happy that we waited. We feel Peggy is the perfect person to spearhead Family Relief Nursery's success for the next 25 years."

Hazen said she is committed to overseeing a smooth transition as she aids in the hiring, on-boarding and training process. "Serving the Nursery has been enormously fulfilling and it will be difficult for me to leave my position, but now is the perfect time to transition to a permanent, full-time executive director," Hazen said. "Family Relief Nursery is in a place of strength with a supportive board, awesome leadership team and staff, financial stability and solid community partnerships."

Whalen grew up in the small, rural town of Red Bluff, Calif. and comes from an intervention, advocacy and support background with over 38 years of experience working with survivors of trauma and abuse. While in California, Whalen worked at both Rape Crisis Intervention in Chico and WEAVE, Inc., in Sacramento, which provided services to victims of sexual assault and do-



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New Family Relief Nursery Executive Director Peggy Whalen

She has received both Nonprofit Management Program and Advanced Nonprofit Management Program Certificates through Lane Community College. Her education and long history of non-profit leadership makes her the perfect candidate to lead Family Relief Nursery.

Since 2016, Whalen has helped guide Eugene Science Center's revitalization efforts and its recent planetarium campaign as development director.

"I am so excited to be joining the staff of Family Relief Nursery. I have long been impressed with the important work the nursery does to help stop the cycle of child abuse and neglect through prevention and early intervention," said Whalen. "Having worked most of my career helping women heal from the intergenerational impact of abuse, I am thrilled to be working with children and families at such a crucial stage in their development.

"Family Relief Nursery's prevention work has amazing outcomes and can help stop the cycle of abuse, which I saw so

many times in my career."

After Whalen is fully embedded in her new position and community, Hazen said she plans on moving back to the nursery's board of directors, where she can continue to serve Family Relief Nursery and its mission to keep children safe.

"When I joined the Founding Board in 1993, we had a vision of supporting parents, strengthening families and giving children the opportunity to be successful by achieving their full potential in life," said Hazen. "Over the last 25 years, we have grown and we foresee even more growth over the next few years. Peggy is the person to help facilitate that growth.

"She is an energetic and passionate leader committed to serving children and families. I am excited to be introducing her to the community and our partners."

Whalen began at Family Relief Nursery last Friday, March 1. Her first activity will be to attend a statewide meeting of the Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries. Her first months will be comprised of learning more about Family Relief Nursery's therapeutic processes, meeting community partners and using

her many years of direct service experience to build rapport with nursery families.

Family Relief Nursery began serving children in August of 1994, and will be commemorating its 25th anniversary this summer. Since then, more than 2,500 children and their families have received program services, including therapeutic early childhood classes, home visits, parent education classes and respite care.

Families voluntarily seek support for addressing many challenges. While a typical family faces 1 to 3 stressors, a family entering the Family Relief Nursery faces an average of 22 stressors.

Individualized plans are created for each family to promote stability by lowering risk factors, developing family strengths, and nurturing children.

As a result, the Nursery has proven success at keeping families out of an overburdened Foster Care system, improving school readiness and literacy, lowering parents' unemployment rates, and decreasing family emergency room use.

For more information, call 541-942-4835 or visit www.familyreliefnursery.org

Cottage Grove Business Challenge Kickoff Event rescheduled for March 13

The Cottage Grove Business Challenge's Kickoff Networking Event was one of the many cancelled events due to last week's major snow storm.

The challenge team, comprised of the Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce, Cottage Grove Community Development Corporation, Lane Small Business Development Center and Brunneis, Pacific Northwest Productions, determined that the area's need for successful businesses, not to mention the \$10,000 in prizes, is important enough to reschedule it's Kickoff Networking Event.

This business growth focused event is being held in an effort to generate more interest

in the Cottage Grove Business Challenge.

All interested parties including entrepreneurs, investors, sponsors and business leaders are encouraged to attend the kickoff networking event.

The event will be held Wednesday, March 13, at the Brewstation, located at 106 S. Sixth St. in Cottage Grove.

Challenge participants are invited to attend the four-part 'Your Business Plan Accelerator' course hosted by Lane Community College. Courses will begin Wednesday, March 20, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., at Lane Community College-Cottage Grove, located at 1275 River Rd.

This course is free of charge

to challenge participants, who are highly encouraged to attend this incredibly valuable educational opportunity.

For participants unable to attend the four-part course, there will be a two-hour Saturday seminar available, March 16, from 10 a.m. to noon at Lane Community College-Cottage Grove.

This will be a condensed

version of the 'Your Business Plan Accelerator' course.

More information about all these events, participant information and registration can be found at www.cgbizplan.com.

For more information, email contactme@cgbizplan.com or call Brunneis, Pacific Northwest Productions, at 541-357-1930.

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