

Community News

Dowell named to Cottage Grove Carousel Board

The Board of Directors of CG Carousel has announced that Carmen Dowell has been selected to be the recording secretary. Dowell replaces Cindy Weeldreyer, who has left the board for other duties but remains an advisor and assists Nadine Kelley with grant writing.

Dowell is currently the graphic designer at Dirt Cheap copies in Cottage Grove and is associated with Opal Theater.

She has a background in marketing and advertising. "Carmen will be a valuable member of the carousel board in many different ways," said Board President Don Williams.

Dowell graduated from Cottage Grove High School in 1991. She has worked for major airlines and climbed her way to baggage manager, working in both San Francisco and Los Angeles airports — providing an opportunity to learn teamwork and strong organizational skills. After starting a family, Dowell went to work for a successful financial planning firm, starting as the receptionist and eventually becoming the firm's marketing manager.

In 2002, Dowell moved back to Cottage Grove with her three children, becoming active in parent clubs, Cub Scouts and soccer. She helped raise funds to get the playground built at Latham School. In 2008, she graduated from Pioneer Pacific College as Valedictorian, receiving her Associates of Applied Science in the criminal

justice field. Her passions have always included working with people with special needs and the arts. Three years ago, Dowell started her own acting group called "Creative Chaos." Everyone involved has a



Carmen Dowell

disability and they write and perform shows at the Opal Center. She has been involved in theater for more than 20 years, volunteering countless hours at both Cottage Theatre and The Opal Center. Along the way, Dowell has won grants due to her volunteering success for multiple organizations.

In 2016, she received the Les Schwab Pride and Prestige Award for her dedication to the Special Olympics. She is currently the Local Program Coordinator and has been involved for over 10 years.

"Carmen brings to the Carousel Group her energetic spirit, positive attitude and strong organizational and marketing skills," said Williams. "She has a strong 'thrive to succeed' attitude in any project she takes on."

Mayor's golf tourney donation



Cottage Grove City Councilor Mike Fleck (left) and Mayor Jeff Gowing hold up a check for \$1,765.26 raised during the recent annual Mayor's Golf Tournament. The check was donated to Community Sharing's H2O Program.

COURTESY PHOTO

SELCO accepting applications for SPARK! grants

SELCO Community Credit Union began taking applications Aug. 15 for its annual SPARK! Creative Learning Grants, and the process will remain open through Monday, Sept. 30.

The grants are a valuable tool for educators, awarding as much as \$1,000 each to K-12 educators across the 27 Oregon counties that SELCO serves.

Now in its 26th year, the SPARK! program was created with the belief that funding should not be an obstacle for educational projects that excite curiosity, deepen understanding and encourage new ways of learning.

Whether leading stu-

dents through a solar robotics project in Burns or teaching students how to use fingerprint kits to solve crimes as part of a forensic science class in Culver, educators have used SPARK! grants in unique and exciting ways.

In the 2018-19 school year alone, SELCO awarded \$45,587 to 54 teachers across Oregon, a record for the program.

"Creative classes or projects are often the ones that spark a lifelong love of learning," said Laura Illig, SELCO's vice president of marketing. "Funding these learning experiences can be difficult, which is why

SELCO continues to invest in this program more than a quarter century after we awarded our first grant.

"Strengthening the educational efforts of our communities has been at the heart of our mission since our beginnings more than 80 years ago, when the credit union was founded by a group of educators as passionate as those we support today."

SPARK! grants are awarded to educators with innovative classroom ideas and a need for materials or other resources to get those ideas off the ground.

"Without the SPARK! Grant, we wouldn't have

had a forensics class. We could have studied the materials and observed what other people do, but we didn't have the means to perform the experiments and practice what we were learning," said Culver Middle School teacher Mark Habliston. "This grant created an elective where kids were learning new skills and having fun, which would have never happened otherwise."

For more information about SELCO Community Credit Union's SPARK! Creative Learning Grants or to apply, visit www.selco.org/spark, or call 541-686-5382.

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