

National Disability Employment Awareness Month reminds people of the power of inclusion

SALEM, Ore. – October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

This year, more than ever, as employers have shuttered doors or moved to remote work, people with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted. Their loss of employment was at a higher rate than their peers without

disabilities.

“We are all better off when everyone, including Oregonians with disabilities, can contribute to their community and economy,” said Dacia Johnson, Executive Director of Oregon Commission for the Blind.

The theme for NDEAM 2021, “America’s Recovery: Powered by Inclusion,” reflects the importance of

ensuring that people with disabilities have full access to employment and community involvement during the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Oregon Commission for the Blind (OCB) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) invite

the public to a series of free webinars around the theme of inclusion.

The series schedule and subjects are:

Tuesday, Oct. 5 – Employment Innovations in the time of COVID-19

Tuesday, Oct. 12 – Youth Employment Journey

Tuesday, Oct. 19 – Maximizing Hours: How to Navigate Services

Tuesday, Oct. 26 – Workforce Recovery: Powered by Inclusion (Discussion with business leaders)

More information on how to register can be found on the ODHS website at www.oregon.gov/dhs.

“Through the challenges of the past few years, the disability community has shown its strength,” said

Lilia Teninty, director of the ODHS’ Office of Developmental Disabilities Services. “We invite those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, advocates, partners, and the larger community to join these webinars so, together, we can build an economy that includes all members of our community.”

Oregon FFA and Les Schwab ‘Drive Away Hunger’

Oregon FFA and Les Schwab Tires Centers recognize the great need to help fight hunger.

Those affected by food insecurity are in need year-round, especially now as the holidays are fast approaching.

Since 2013, Les Schwab Tire Centers of Oregon has partnered with Oregon FFA in a Drive Away Hun-

ger Initiative to help raise as much food and awareness as possible. The initiative will take place the entire month of October.

The public is urged to join in the effort to drive away hunger by dropping non-perishable food donations at any Oregon Les Schwab Tire Center, Wilco, or Grange Co-op store through Oct. 31.

The timing of this initiative is important to help local food banks and pantries gear up for the upcoming holiday demands.

This special partnership allows FFA members to live out their motto of “learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live and living to serve.”

FFA members follow in the footsteps set by the em-

ployees at Les Schwab Tire Centers as they generously giving back to their local communities daily. Over the past eight years, this effort has raised nearly three million meals for those in need.

The Oregon FFA is part of the National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America. It is a national youth orga-

nization of 760,113 student members, all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture.

There are 8,817 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Oregon FFA is made up of more than 11,000 members in 109 chapters throughout the state. The FFA mission

is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

To learn more, visit online at the Oregon FFA Facebook page, #ORFFADriveAwayHunger, and www.lesschwab.com/drive-away-hunger.

Riverbend joins Babies with Books NICU read-a-thon

SPRINGFIELD, Ore. – The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart at RiverBend is teaming up with more than 100 other hospitals from around the world to participate in the 2021 Babies with Books NICU Read-a-thon.

The annual Babies with Books NICU read-a-thon is a friendly reading competi-

tion between both families and NICUs.

The read-a-thon is designed to encourage family reading, support infants and families and build NICU morale especially during the isolating time of COVID-19.

Families and NICUs track their total hours read with winners announced at the end of the competition,

which runs from Sept. 13 – 23.

Reading to children helps support infant brain development, promotes family bonding and reduces the stress parents face.

In particular, premature born babies miss time in the womb hearing their mother’s voice, making the concept of parents reading to their child even more

important. Since March of 2020, the NICU at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart at RiverBend has been giving parents free books to help get them started.

“The NICU can be very sterile and sometimes parents don’t feel like they have much control,” said Allison O’Brien, neonatal specialist at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart at RiverBend.

“Reading to their child feels normal and gives parents something to look forward to. We’ve received a lot of positive feedback from families.”

With support from the Children’s Miracle Network and book donations, more free books are now being made available to families in the NICU. The books handed out include rec-

ommendations from staff and classics like Goodnight Moon and The Very Hungry Caterpillar.

If you would like to make a book donation, new books can be sent to the NICU – 5th Floor at 3333 RiverBend Dr., Springfield, OR 97477. New books only.

For more information, visit www.babieswithbooks.org/readathon.



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