

Family Resource Center is ready to help Banks area residents

By Susan Cackler

Banks school district residents have a tremendous resource for seeking aid during rough times through the Family

Resource Center. The Center is designed to allow rural residents the same access to aid agencies and services that urban residents enjoy. It was es-

tablished by the Commission on Children and Families and is coordinated through the YMCA.

The Family Resource Center has an excellent means of con-

necting with area families through its coordinator Leslie Sipp. Sipp works at Banks Elementary School teaching English Language Learning, assisting the principal with discipline and filling in wherever she can help. She sees first hand that children need food to eat, warm clothes and school supplies in order to succeed at school.

Sipp provides families with the information they need to get help. Sometimes this may be getting them an appointment to apply for food stamps in Forest Grove. It could mean contacting the local food bank or consulting a list of lawyers who will work on a sliding scale. She also has information on the Oregon Health Plan, utility bill help and discounted transportation. Whatever a family lacks, Sipp knows how to find them help.

Sipp learns of people in need through referrals and people who call her directly. She sees the resource center as a "way to help strengthen the community and give kids what they need to be successful in school - at least a piece of it."

This is an especially busy time of year for the Family Resource Center as it gears up to help through the holidays. Approximately 30-35 families will receive holiday food boxes. The Family Resource Center also ensures that each member of the families receives two Christmas presents. Sipp helps to coordinate the necessary



Leslie Sipp

collection. All of the Banks Schools, the Boy Scouts and St. Francis School will host food drives. Mrs. McOmie's second grade classroom collects mittens and gloves. Curves collects toys and food. Different activity groups at the high school will adopt a family to provide gifts. All of the food and gifts collected through the center go to families within the Banks School District.

Sipp also coordinates a backpack and school supply drive in the spring and summer so that all school children start the year with the necessary supplies.

For most people, the resource center is there to give them a boost when they need it and show them the direction they can take to get help and get back on their feet.

If you or someone you know needs the kind of help that the Family Resource Center provides, call Leslee Sipp at 503-324-2004 or e-mail <leslees@banks.k12.or.us>.

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