

# CAT grant for parenting skills training

Community Action Team (CAT) is the recipient of a \$23,701 grant through the John and Betty Gary Early Childhood Initiative of The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF). The funding will be used to provide education and support to improve parenting skills throughout Columbia County.

The mission of CAT is to "Build Bridges to Self-Sufficien-

cy." CAT seeks to reduce the extent and negative effects of poverty by increasing family self-reliance.

The grant is part of OCF's five-year \$2.5 million John and Betty Gray Early Childhood Initiative, aimed at improving the quality of early childhood education on behalf of Oregon's children, parents, and childcare providers. Eighteen grants

were awarded in February 2007, for a total of \$319,334.

The OCF, established in 1973, manages charitable funds donated by individuals, families, and businesses to enhance and support the quality of life in their communities. Today, the foundation's endowment consists of over 1,200 funds with combined assets of \$850 million.

# March 23, eat soup to help fight hunger

The Columbia County Commission on Children and Families is currently organizing a fund-raising event to benefit the Columbia Pacific Food Bank, which provides food county-wide for low-income people.

Fight hunger, promote the arts and get involved in your community. Join members of the Commission on Friday, March 23, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. for a simple meal of soup and bread. Keep the bowl as a reminder of hunger in our coun-

ty. The event will be held at 215 S. 1st Street, in the 3rd floor ballroom above Antique St. Helens. There will also be a silent auction, featuring ceramic work by featured artists. Tickets are \$10 each and will be limited to the number of bowls available. All proceeds will go to the Columbia Pacific Food Bank, and all donations are welcome.

Students taught in a pottery classes by Pat Brame at St. Helens High School and Mrs. Dutkiewicz at Scappoose High School have contributed bowls for this event, as have a number of professional artists. According to event coordinator Susan Easley, everything necessary for the event has been donated by local individuals and businesses.

Mary Walyer, long-time advocate of Empty Bowls projects throughout Oregon, commented that although Empty Bowls

has evolved over time and taken different forms, the simple meal offered in the Columbia County event is true to the original spirit of this fund raising event.

In 1990 a high school art teacher in Michigan helped his students solve a problem. They were searching for a way to raise funds to support a food drive. What evolved was a class project to make ceramic bowls for a fund raising meal. Guests were served a simple meal of soup and bread, and were invited to keep the bowl as a reminder of hunger in the world. Since then Empty Bowls events have been held throughout the world, and millions of dollars have been raised to combat hunger.

For more information about the Empty Bowls Fund raiser, please call the CCCCCF office at 503-397-7211.

# Swim for free

Free swim passes are available through June 30 for Columbia County Seniors, 60 and over, for the Forest Grove Aquatic Center.

For more information, call Community Action Team Senior Services Representative Karen Miller at 503-429-9112.

# Driving class to be held in March

An AARP Safe Driving Class will be held at the Vernonia Senior Center on March 29 and 30. The class is not limited to seniors.

Call Karen Miller at Vernonia Senior Center 503-429-9112 to sign up. The class is only \$10 and there are no tests.

## Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



about this week?" Answer, "Who knows, I don't yet."

It started raining about 1:30 a.m. – waking me from a sound sleep. I drifted off into half sleep, the word "Fleet" crossed my mind, who's "Fleet?" In '42, she was a just-weaned miniature Australian Shepherd ball of black fur. Always on the go – hence the name, Fleet. A throat cancer claimed her in about '49. Then came "Snicklefritz", a mutt. He and a stray cat were fighting over who owned the intersection and a truck claimed the victory. Along came "George" (remember the cartoon character, "Which way did they go, George?"). Big and clumsy, but a lover. He went the way of all chicken killer dogs. In '56, I got my first English Bull Dog, "Beauty," she went to a new home in '68. Then came "Little George" an abandoned pup in a snow-storm. Next a German Shep-

herd, "King," he was, he got shot and had to be put down. "Linus" was a Rat Terrier with a broken leg. In the '80s our second English Bulldog, "Bernice" a sick giveaway. She committed dog-side, walked in front of a big pickup. Then came "Brutus," our third English Bulldog from '82 - '94. Now Shadow. In that same length of time I've had five cats. There have also been a Box turtle, a snake, a white rat, raised Hampsters, Gerbils, two canaries, finches, goldfish, guppies and assorted other tropical fish and several talking Parakeets. I've housed quite a few field mice in my time also. The most fun though was raising a newborn kid (goat, that is). It grew up with Fleet. He finally became someone's dinner. No – not mine. He was my first child. Ho,ho.

What am I trying to say?

If you're blue, lonesome or in a rut because you're alone now, remember the good times through your past pets and fond memories they bring back. You might have considered them a pain in the neck at some point but they do have a place in the scheme of a healthy life.

See you at the St. Paddy's parade.

**Every Thursday,  
10am til the  
eggs are gone,  
inside**

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