

# Free child safety seat check up, Feb. 10

Columbia County Safe Kids, in partnership with Alliance for Community Traffic Safety (ACTS Oregon) and several community partners, will hold a child safety seat check up event on Thursday, February 10, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. The free clinic will be held in St. Helens at the St. Helens Fire Station, 105 S. 12th Street, St. Helens.

The clinic provides an opportunity to have a child safety

seat checked by a certified technician, who can correct misuse, help with installation and teach you how to correctly install the seat. Technicians can also check for seat recalls. There is no cost to have a technician check your child safety seats. Please plan to spend 30-60 minutes at the event.

Additionally, through a grant funded by the Oregon Department of Transportation, Columbia County Safe Kids is also

able to provide low-cost child safety seats to families in need. Families who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) should contact their worker about payment for a seat.

For more information about the clinic or the Columbia County child safety seat program, contact the Commission on Children and Families at 503-397-7211.

## FEMA gives home fire prevention tips

Each year an average of 18,300 Americans are injured, and more than 3,500 die in fires, with children age 14 and under making up 10-15 percent of all fire deaths. National Burn Awareness Week is traditionally observed the first full week in February, and according to FEMA Regional Administrator Ken Murphy, it's the perfect calendar observance to focus on preventing fires and protecting children.

"Children under the age of five account for fifty-two percent of all child fire deaths, and home fires tend to spike in winter months, placing younger children and toddlers at even greater risk," said Murphy, "Many children are unable to escape from fire on their own, and I encourage parents and caregivers to use National Burn Awareness Week as an opportunity to take actions that keep their loved ones, and particularly children, safe from fire and burn hazards."

Top tips to avoid fire and

keep kids safe around the house include:

- Keep children at least 3 feet from hot stoves and cooking appliances. When cooking, use back burners with pot handles turned towards the back of the stove.

- Have fireplace flues and chimneys inspected for leakage and blockage from creosote or debris.

- Open the fireplace damper before lighting a fire and keep it open until the ashes are cool. Store ashes in fire-resistant containers; cover the container with a lid, and dispose of ashes carefully.

- Place space heaters on a floor that is flat and level – Do NOT put space heaters on rugs or carpets. Keep space heaters at least three feet from bedding, drapes, furniture and other flammable materials and place them out of the flow of foot traffic. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.

- Always tuck cords from appliances where children cannot

reach them.

- Install smoke alarms on every level in your home, and inside and outside sleeping areas.

- Test smoke alarms each month and replace the batteries at least once a year.

Excellent online resources for fire prevention education materials and protecting children from fire and burns include: <http://go.usa.gov/rfF>; [www.usfa.dhs.gov/kids/](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/kids/); [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org); [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org); [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) and [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov). Learn about FEMA's Children's Working Group (CWG) at [www.fema.gov/about/cwg.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/about/cwg.shtm).

## Still time to sign up for Ball teams

If you missed the sign-ups for Baseball, t-ball and softball on February 2 it's not too late. Another sign-up will be held Wednesday, February 16, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Room 6 at Washington Grade School.

For more information, call Brooke Morrison (baseball) at 503-429-0560, Melissa Zavales (t-ball) at 503-429-2710 or Katie Poetter (softball) at 503-429-0700.

## Student schedules bake sales

Megan Ely will hold three bake sales at Vernonia Sentry Market to earn funds for her trip to England and France as a Student Ambassador with the People to People program in June of this year.

The dates of these sales are Friday, February 4; Friday, March 18; and Friday, April 8; all from 3-7:00 p.m. She is also hoping to collect any cans and bottles that people are willing to donate towards the trip.

If you have a donation, please call her mother, Susan, at 503-429-5709 and arrange for Megan to pick them up from your home.

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## Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a column of information about Vernonia schools. This column was provided by Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox.



### Town Hall Meeting – Educational Programs Thursday, February 10 6:30-8:00 p.m.

The first news I would like to share with you is the fact that we WILL be having school on Monday, February 14. This day will take the place of one of the days we stayed home during Thanksgiving week earlier in the year. So please remember to send your children to school on February 14, no matter what they tell you.

Secondly, please plan on attending our expanded Town Hall at 6:30 p.m. on February 10, right after our board meeting (5:30 - 6:30). There will be activities for all age groups of our children so you can bring them and you can attend the Town Hall. To give you an idea of what to expect, we will start with a short introductory overview, followed by a number of specific breakout sessions and a number of booths that will be able to share additional information about the many different programs that are being offered in our district. We will have a short Q & A session and share a brief update on our new schools project about 7:30 p.m. Please join us, whether you have children at school or not. We are doing a lot and I am sure you will be surprised at all that is going on to support our students getting the best education possible.

Finally, we continue to make progress toward finding all the funding necessary to complete our new schools. With the recent announcement of the FEMA buy-out, we currently stand at 82% of the funding necessary to complete the school. Work is going gang-busters at the site and we continue to pursue funding opportunities. We recently received two gifts. A check from \$17,500 from US Bank on the 26th, which completes their \$25,000 gift for this year, and more recently, a gift from Georgia Pacific of \$50,000 which was announced on Monday, January 31st, at the Wauna Mill in Clatskanie. Our thanks to US Bank and Georgia Pacific for their generous contributions to our project and to the many others who have made contributions and continue to do so. We are going to do this! It is happening – if you don't believe me take a drive up Texas Avenue and look out over the new site. You can now actually see the footprint of the building!

If you have questions or would like to learn more about what we are doing and what we are planning for the future, please join us February 10 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. in the Cafeteria!

## Pet of the Month

Columbia Humane Society in St. Helens has a variety of wonderful pets available for adoption. Find the pet that's right for you in the shelter at 2084 Oregon Street. Phone 503-397-4353  
Open Mon - Fri 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 11 am. to 5 pm.



Buddy is a lover! He's about 6 years old, but has plenty of purrs and head-butts to share with a new family. He has perfect manners and a quiet, friendly personality. It won't take long for this mellow boy to wiggle himself into your heart. Buddy gets along great with other cats and smaller dogs. He is up-to-date with routine shots and is house trained.

The Columbia Humane Society is a No-Kill non-profit shelter dedicated to helping friends find each other since 1985.

This Pet of the Month is Sponsored by:

**Senator Betsy Johnson**