

Senior Center News

With Christmas and New Year's day reminding us of our blessings during this past year, the Vernonia Senior Center wishes to thank all those who have helped with programs for our senior citizens, and those who have brought vitality and joy to our lives.

We wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Vernonia Senior Citizens Center: 446 Bridge Street
Hours: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Thrift Shop Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Phone: 503-429-3912

Lion's Club delivers raffled wood



Recipients of Lions Club firewood raffle, Matt and Katie Poetter, with Lions' members Allen Marshall, Brenda Gooch, Terry Schaumberg, Ken Pitts (and Needlenose), at delivery of the wood. Photo by Randal Harvey

The winner of a cord of wood, raffled by the Vernonia Lions at the Christmas Bazaar, was Randy Parrow, who then gave the wood to his daughter and son-in-law, Katie and Matt Poetter. Lions Club members Allen Marshall, Terry Schaumberg, Brenda Good, Ken Pitts,

Thomas Sherman, Randal Harvey and Vince Aszman, with helper Jack Harvey, delivered, chopped and stacked the wood. Schaumberg donated the wood for the raffle, which was delivered on Saturday, December 10.

CASA for Kids, Inc. announces grant

CASA for Kids, Inc. has received an \$11,000 Community Grant from The Oregon Community Foundation to build organizational capacity to advocate for abused and neglected children in Columbia County.

The mission of CASA for Kids is to ensure that all children in foster care can grow up in a safe, permanent home. The organization recruits, screens, trains and supervises volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) who work in the best interests of the children.

"Foster children need more

help than the system can provide," said CASA for Kids executive director Kathryn Bourn. "A child with a CASA has the best chance of success."

The grant funds will enable CASA for Kids to expand its staff to supervise more CASAs, Bourn said. Eight new CASAs just completed training and have been sworn in to take cases. The new CASAs are: Scott Kelly, Janelle Jaha Adams, Kristen Hinze, Becky Hamshar, Melissa Campos, and Shelly Thompson, all of St. Helens, Jean Hoffman of Deer Island, and Tami Kemp of War-

ren. The new CASAs are enabling the Columbia County program to serve 21 more foster children, Bourn said.

"We still have a tremendous need for more CASAs," Bourn said. "In November alone, 15 children in Columbia County went into foster care." The organization currently is recruiting volunteers for its February 2012 class. The OCF grant funds will enable CASA for Kids to continue to train and support new CASAs.

For more information, see www.casaforkidsinc.org or call 503-366-4133.

Judge Shera-Taylor gives resignation

Diana Shera-Taylor, a Columbia County Municipal Court Judge has announced her resignation effective December 31. "The time has come for me to stretch my wings and pursue new challenges," said Taylor of her decision.

Taylor, a judge for 15 years,

has served in St. Helens for the past seven years and Scappoose for nine years.

She intends to continue with mediation and arbitration through her business, Taylor Dispute Resolution, at 203 S. First Street in St. Helens. Taylor said the business has been

growing, and eating into her time on the bench.

Taylor will also continue to work with Columbia County Consortium, which helps serve children who have been removed from their homes as a result of neglect or abuse.

CCCF director honored by NWRESD

Jan Spika-Kenna, director of the Columbia County Commission on Children & Families, was honored last month with the 2011-2012 Partner in Education award from the Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRESD).

"Jan has been a wonderful advocate for children and families in Columbia County. She is the hub of the wheel, the wheel being the many agencies in Columbia County that work with children and families," said Laney Coulter, of the NWRESD Columbia Service Center.

"She understands...how we operate and what our needs are, and works tirelessly to help us meet those needs. The school districts in Columbia County are very appreciative of the work she does for our children and want to recognize her

with this award," Coulter concluded.

The "work of the Commission is successful," Spika-Kenna said, "because of the Commission members' dedication to serving children's and families' needs, and the support of my staff and the County Board of Commissioners."

The 20 member Commission has maintained its commitment to supporting children and their families through advocacy projects and program funding. In addition to Healthy Start, CASA, the Teen and Family Transition and Skills Trainer programs, this year, the Commission funded short term services. Funds for these projects impact literacy, child safety, school success, violence prevention, nutrition and health.

These services include the Vernonia School District Summer Books and Swim programs, 4-H Spring Break Day Camp, St. Helens Police Department Bike Helmet Education, Clatskanie Elementary After School program, Columbia Community Mental Health Mentors, Healthy Start Child Injury Prevention, Rainier Hudson Park Elementary After

School and 2nd Step programs, 4-H Run Girl Run program at St. Helens Lewis and Clark Elementary, St. Helens McBride Elementary Parent-Child Book Club, Snoopeeland Reading for Healthy Families, St. Helens Library Our Community Reads, Big Rig event and books for Head Start, Child Care Resource and Referral literacy.

Each December, the Commission also gives 50 Holiday Book Bags filled with donated items that encourage children to read, to the state Department of Human Services, in St. Helens, for their clients. In addition to the items in the bags, parents are able to choose several new books for each of their children. This event is possible through generous book donations from the St. Helens Kiwanis Club and private individuals.

In addition to the December event, the Commission donates books throughout the year county-wide. If you would like to donate new or gently used books for children of all ages, please contact the Commission on Children and Families at 503-397-7211.

**The 6th annual
 Christmas Dinner
 Turkey, Ham, All the Trimmings,
 Plus Dessert and Beverage.
 December 25, 1-4 p.m.
 Vernonia Senior Center**

**Dinner is free to families
 and friends in Vernonia
 We will also have Dinners to go
 Gratuities or donations not accepted
 Happily Provided by The James Gang**

