

Chalk Talk

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

The other day I was in Washington Grade School just before school started and, as I was leaving, a parent volunteer was coming into the building. She had been out in the freezing weather since 7:30 a.m. making sure that children could cross Bridge Street in safety before the student crossing guards arrived. This parent was Kimberley Brandt who has hardly missed a day volunteering for this important and (lately) cold task. Earlier this year Janet Rethwell was also helping out. To both of them I would like to say THANK YOU! for serving the kids of Vernonia.

I would also like to say thank you to Sheril McWhirter for her excellent service in this same capacity for many years. She has put together a meaningful, quality program that has a 100% safety rating. Our thanks to her, our other instructional assistants who help out in the cold, and our student crossing guards, who all work together to make our schools a safer place for our children.

We could use some additional volunteers to help with this task. It only takes half an hour and

helps so many parents rest easier knowing that their children are being watched out for on their way to school.

If you have some time and would like to volunteer for even one day a week, please contact Mr. Miller at WGS.

I would also like to make sure you know about Oregon's Healthy Kids Program. Healthy Kids is a no-cost or low-cost health coverage for all of Oregon's uninsured children and teens up to their 19th birthday. Healthy Kids is a comprehensive coverage offering medical, dental, vision, prescription, behavioral health coverage and more. No family makes too much money for Healthy Kids. Parents' income will determine whether a child is eligible for the no-cost or low-cost coverage option. For example, a family of four that earns as much as \$67,200 a year may qualify for low-cost coverage.

For more information about how to get your children signed up for this service simply contact DeAnna Pearl in Vernonia at 503-369-7370, or Healthy Kids Columbia County Outreach Coordinator Patricia Ortiz in St. Helens at 503-396-3834.



Exclusion Day is February 15 so be sure your child is immunized

The new year is here and the Oregon Immunization Program is reminding parents that now is the time to make sure kids' vaccination records are complete. State law requires that all children in public and private schools, preschools, Head Start and certified child care facilities have up-to-date immunizations, or have a religious or medical exemption.

Parents or guardians will receive a letter in late January or early February if their child's immunization record shows that he or she has not received the required vaccinations.

Children will not be able to attend school or child care starting February 15, if their records on file show missing immunizations.

"We want to make sure children can go to school in a safe, healthy environment free from vaccine-preventable diseases," said Stacy de Assis Matthews, immunization school law coordinator in the Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division.

This year, parents should take note of some important information:

- Tdap vaccine requirement:

Tdap vaccine is required for seventh- through 10th-graders. Tdap is a tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough) booster. Whooping cough is a serious health concern in Oregon with about 300 cases recorded in 2011.

- Hepatitis A vaccine requirement: The hepatitis A vaccine, which protects against a communicable viral infection, is a two-dose series now required for children 18 months through third grade.

Parents seeking immunizations for their children should contact their health care provider or local health department, or call Oregon SafeNet at 1-800-SAFENET or 1-800-723-3638. No one can be turned away from a local health department because of the inability to pay for required vaccines. Additional information on school immunizations can be found on the Oregon Public Health immunization website at <http://public.health.oregon.gov/PreventionWellness/VaccinesImmunization/GettingImmunized/Pages/school.aspx>.

See article on page 20 for ways to help the Class of 2012 raise money for their prom.

Spring ball sign-ups start Feb. 1

It's time to sign-up for Vernonia spring ball teams. Sign-ups will be held February 1 and February 23, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., in the Washington Grade

School library. T-ball, baseball and softball will all be accepting sign-ups at these meetings.

For more information, contact Maria Lemay at 503-429-1067 for t-ball, Brooke Morrison at 503-726-8427 for baseball, or Katie Poetter at 503-429-0700 for softball.

Free Dental Screening

No Insurance Required

Date: February 9
Time: 8:30-2:30 pm
Location: Washington Grade Sch.
Who: All youth *residing* in the VSD 47J Service Area



All youth will receive free dental screening and needs assessment on Feb. 9th provided by Pacific University School of Dental Health. The report can be used to follow-up with the child's dental provider. If the family does not have an established dentist, Vernonia Dental is accepting new patients at this time. They bill most major carriers including Oregon Healthy Kids insurance.

If no insurance, information for application to the Oregon Healthy Kids Program will be included with the report. Every child is eligible ages 0 to 19.

If students are in need of services and are not eligible for insurance, Heather Lewis, will be applying for a small grant to invite the P.U. School of Dental Health back to provide minor filings and sealants.

School Contact
 Aaron Miller, Principal
 Washington Grade School
 (503) 429-7941



Community Contact
 Heather Lewis, Resource Coord.
 Vernonia Prevention Coalition
 (503) 429-4677

What Next?
 Take results to dental provider

Need a dentist?
 Vernonia Dental
 (503) 429-0880

Taking OHP Patients

Need Insurance for Kids
 Healthy Kids Insurance
 Patricia Ortiz
 (503) 396-3834

Local Assistants are available

Families: "Be out there" with kids

by Chris Thomas, Oregon News Service

Now that all the Christmas electronics have been given a good workout, how about the kids using them? A pre-holiday Nielsen survey found 44 percent of kids between ages six and 12 had an iPad on their wish list. No report on how many saw that wish come true, but electronics certainly domi-

nate the lives of young people these days.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is trying to help families pare down the average eight hours a day that kids spend in front of screens. According to NWF Naturalist David Mizejewski, even in outdoorsy states like Oregon, kids still tend to prefer technology, "It's not that there's anything necessarily inherently bad about all those great technologies, but I think anyone would agree that eight hours a day for a kid to be indoors – sedentary, in front of electronic media – is too much."

He points out that there are plenty of ways to use technology to enhance outdoor experiences – like researching locations for new adventures, and downloading applications onto phones or tablets to help identify plants, trees and critters.

NWF's tips for parents are online at www.nwf.org/BeOutThere.

And why should parents care? There's a vast amount of research showing that outdoor time for kids is good for grades, behavior and health, says Mizejewski, "Parents can make it a resolution – 'In 2012, I'm going to make this a priority, to get outside with my kids, or build some outdoor time back into my kids' schedule' – because it's an important thing to do."

Sports are one way to get kids outdoors, although he says the best outdoor time for kids should be unstructured – just letting them poke around and explore, with friends or parents. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a total of 60 minutes of unstructured, outdoor play for kids every day.

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