Children help community while having fun in the garden

"Ewwww" the kids scream when a big, slimy worm emerges from the soil. A boy immediately picks it up and thrusts it in the face of a girl sitting next to him at the lettuce bed. She shrieks as the rest of the group bursts into laughter.

Raptor Creek Farm was filled with smiling faces from the Grants Pass Boys & Girls Club and YMCA on Friday for the kickoff of the Summer Youth Gardening Program.

Addison Limauge, a fourth-grader at Riverside Elementary School, said, "It's nice to get fresh air and have more room because when there is a bad smell in the classroom it doesn't go away."
Children ages 5 to 12 were making birdhouses, preparing beds for planting lettuce, painting murals, playing with baby goats and, most importantly, learning. Learning about nutrition, how worms help the soil, what makes plants grow, and why being outside is so much fun.

"I like learning outside," third-grader Maleah Shaw said while proudly holding the colorful birdhouse she had just made. "I was excited to come today, because it was really fun last time."

The program officially starts June 21 when children from the Boys & Girls Club and YMCA will begin taking a bus once a week to the farm. Soon children from the Life Skills Program at Three Rivers School District and College Dreams will also participate.

The program was formed by AllCare after a community health assessment indicated the need for youth access to healthy food and physical activity opportunities in Josephine County. AllCare brought together the Josephine County Food Bank, the Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, and Oregon State University Extension to create a program where children can experience outside, hands-on activities while learning the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.

Said Sam Engel, the operations manager for the food bank, "We have kids out here that have never tried a fresh tomato, and here they get to try it when it's still warm from the sun."

Engel hopes the program creates a lifetime of interest in nutrition and physical well-being among the children by breaking nutritional barriers many of them face.

"We're hoping that by teaching kids how easy it is to use fruits and vegetables, and how beneficial they can be, that they will overcome the barriers associated with eating healthy," he said.

The farm itself was created by the food bank in 2010 to help feed the low-income families they support. But since 2014, when summer rolls around, the farm transforms into a classroom filled with little hands eager to get messy.

When the kids arrive they are all ears, ready to learn about botany, soil sciences, pollination and the community impact they are making when they harvest fruits and vegetables for the food bank.

Kevin Clark, executive director of the local YMCA, said the children themselves are helping benefit the community.

"It's an important lesson for them to learn that they are helping those in our community who need help," he said.

Raptor Creek Farm harvests 50,000 pounds of food annually, which helps to support the 11,000 people a month that the food bank serves. When harvest time calls, the kids are there helping pick and pack a variety of fruits and vegetables, while smiling, laughing, and bonding.

"The reactions we've had are tremendous," Clark said. "Mom and Dad pick up the kids and they can't stop talking about the fun they had in the garden."
Veterans volunteer, too (RSVP)

By Rebecca De Greyt for the Daily Courier

Sponsored by the United Community Action Network, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program matches the talents of people 55 and older with nonprofit agencies, and health care facilities throughout Josephine County.

• ARE YOU A VETERAN? Come join the UCAN-RSVF VET Team. The Veterans Team is composed of veterans who volunteer to assist UCAN clients who are seeking supportive services through our Veterans Families program.

Volunteers meet with clients to start developing a relationship and to get to know the family from the earliest opportunity possible. Areas of assistance include outreach, peer support, transportation, and some document assistance. If you are 55 or older, a veteran, and you want to be a mentor, please contact Rebecca de Greyt at 541-956-4474.

• ARE YOU A LOCAL HISTORY BUFF? The Kerbyville Museum needs volunteers! Please come and be part of the team. It's not only a great learning experience but a lot of fun and not much work. Welcome people to the museum and give tours and help out with our Living History programs. If you would like to find out more information please call the RSVP receptionist 541-956-4472 or you can come by the UCAN office, 125 N.E. Manzanita, and pick up an application.

• SUPPORT INDEPENDENT LIVING. Become a part of the Food & Friends Senior Meal Program, which provides balanced nutritional meals and a way for others to interact and socialize with one another. Dining Room help is needed and training is provided. Also needed are drivers willing to deliver meals to those in the community who are not able to make it to the dining site. To learn more about becoming a Food & Friends volunteer, please call the RSVP receptionist 541-956-4472 or drop by the UCAN office at 125 N.E. Manzanita and pick up an application.

Food Bank to hold drive on Saturday

One of the biggest food drives of the year for the Josephine County Food Bank takes place Saturday, with the assistance of employees from the U.S. Postal Service.

On Saturday, people in Josephine County can leave a bag of nonperishable food on or by their mailbox and have it picked up by members of the National Association of Letter Carriers. Known as the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, it is the largest one-day food drive
in the nation.

Also on Saturday, donations may be dropped in Grants Pass at food barrels located at Kelly's Automotive, 1661 N.E. Sixth St.; Mock's Ford, 913 S.E. Sixth St.; and KAJO/KLDR Radio, 888 Rogue River Highway. Also, donations may be brought directly to the Josephine County Food Bank, 3658 Upper River Road, which will be open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Sam Engel of the Josephine County Food Bank listed the following as most needed: beans, peanut butter, canned tuna and chicken, chili, stew, all canned vegetables, jams and jellies and staples such as rice, flour and pasta.

The Josephine County Food Bank serves around 12,000 people a month. For more information, contact Engel at 541-479-5556.

Friday, May 13, 2016

Senior Meal Program can use help (RSVP)

By Rebecce De Greyt for the Daily Courier

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• ARE YOU A VETERAN? Come join the UCAN-RSVP VET Team. The Veterans Team is composed of veterans who volunteer to assist UCAN clients who are seeking supportive services through our Veterans Families program.

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RSVP seeks volunteers to help with paperwork (RSVP)

By Rebecca De Greyt for the Daily Courier

Sponsored by the United Community Action Network, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program matches the talents of people 55 and older with nonprofit agencies, and health care facilities throughout Josephine County.

• DO YOU HAVE AN EYE FOR DETAIL? Are you good at filling out forms and filing papers? Do you like to be a resource for others in the community? Are you familiar with computers? Are you available over the summer? If you answered YES to all these questions then we would gladly welcome you to come to the UCAN office, 125 N.E. Manzanita Ave., to fill out an enrollment form. Please specify on the form that you would like to serve as a "RSVP Form and File Volunteer" and you will be contacted within five business days. Call Rebecca de Greyt if you have any questions, 541-956-4474.

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• BE A UCAN AMBASSADOR. Volunteers are the heart and soul of the UCAN Josephine County Warehouse. Your generous contributions of time and talent help get our job done efficiently and effectively. We are looking for people to be cross-trained to serve at the warehouse and be a driver for the Fresh Food Alliance. If you have the time and would like to learn more, please contact Rebecca de Greyt at 541-956-4474.

• KERBYVILLE MUSEUM NEEDS VOLUNTEERS. Please come and be part of the team. It’s not only a great learning experience but a lot of fun and not much work. Welcome people to the museum and give tours and help out with our Living History programs. If you would like to find out more information please call the RSVP receptionist 541-956-4472 or you can come by the UCAN office, 125 N.E. Manzanita Ave., and pick up an application.
Exclusion zone, "nuisance property" rules adopted by city

Two new ordinances aimed to prevent crime in Roseburg's downtown area have been officially adopted.

Monday night, the Roseburg City Council voted 6-1 in favor of the new ordinances. They will allow officers with the Roseburg Police Department to ban repeat criminals from downtown and hold owners of businesses and so-called “nuisance properties” accountable for allowing criminal activities.

The ordinances were a response to rising crime rates in the downtown area, leading to multiple instances of business owners pleading to city officials to intervene. They contended that disorder, drug abuse and violence in downtown not only caused them to fear for their own safety but that of their businesses. The problems could scare away potential customers, they said.

Councilor Steve Kaser was the sole dissenter, as he worried the ordinances were too open-ended and could be mishandled. Councilor Victoria Hawks was not present.

Some argue that the ordinances unfairly target homeless people downtown, though proponents of the ordinances say that the ordinances only aim to prevent crime regardless of the perpetrator. A third ordinance would have banned “unauthorized appropriation” of shopping carts.

According to councilor John McDonald, the ordinances aren’t meant to be the only answer to the problem, but rather work together with current help in place through groups like the United Community Action Network and the Homeless Transition Action Group.

Roseburg resident Ashley Katter argued that the ordinances were too punitive for a problem as complex as homelessness.
“The solution is not to try to eliminate homeless people from an area, but to find the root of the problem,” Hatter said. “... It’s not just a matter of eliminating them, but it’s also a matter of helping them.”

Police Chief Jim Burge said the ordinances will be used “conservatively” and that officers working in downtown will use good judgment in enforcing them.

“I know there was some concern about the pettiness of the types of violations. We are not that type of agency,” Burge said. “... I think the city manager and the city council will see that this ordinance is not abused or mishandled. I have faith in all my folks that they will be very judicious and fair in (their) application.”

An exclusion zone was similarly proposed by downtown businesses back in 2013, but city officials declined to adopt it at that point.

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Friday, May 27, 2016

Adopt a fairgrounds planter to maintain (RSVP)

By Rebecca De Greyt for the Daily Courier

Sponsored by the United Community Action Network, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program matches the talents of people 55 and older with nonprofit agencies, and health care facilities throughout Josephine County.

● CALLING ALL GARDENERS. Adopt a planter today! The Josephine County Fairgrounds has about 12 planters that need to be maintained and watered. This volunteer opportunity allows you to choose your own hours and you can choose your own planter as well. You would bring your own tools in order to weed, trim, water, and clean the area. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Germaine Cartmell 541-476-9437.

● ARE FINANCES YOUR THING? The Consumer Credit Counseling of Southern Oregon has come to Josephine County to manage the Easter Seals Oregon Money Management Program. This program offers support to people ages 60 and over with limited income and assets who need help with money management tasks. They are seeking volunteers who are interested in training to help members of our community succeed financially. Volunteers are needed who can commit to at least a year of service and are willing to serve at least 4-6 hours a month. They need about three volunteers locally. If you are interested please contact Rebecca de Greyt at 541-956-4474.
**DO YOU HAVE AN EYE FOR DETAIL?** Are you good at filling out forms and filing papers? Do you like to be a resource for others in the community? Are you familiar with computers? Are you available over the summer? If you answered YES to all these questions then we would gladly welcome you to come to the UCAN office, 125 N.E. Manzanita Ave., to fill out an enrollment form. Please specify on the form that you would like to serve as a "RSVP Form and File Volunteer" and you will be contacted within five business days. Call Rebecca de Greyt if you have any questions, 541-956-4474.

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**Saturday, May 28, 2016**

**GP Rotary Club gives recognition**

On May 25, the Grants Pass Rotary Club’s Community Service Committee recognized its annual grant recipients.

The club presented checks to eight local nonprofit organizations benefitting children, totaling $9,000.

This year’s awards were as follows:
- Hearts with a Mission, $880 to purchase furniture for homeless and at-risk youth;
- Josephine County Foundation, $1,285 to purchase Buddy Benches at the elementary schools;
- Josephine County Fairgrounds, $1,250 for playground equipment;
- Brighton Academy, $785 for a playground makeover;
- North Valley High School Robotics, $1,500 to create a secure fenced area and tools for science, technology, engineering and math programs;
- Rogue Community College Foundation, $950 for STEM kits for a hands-on workshop;
- Josephine Community Libraries, $1,000 to purchase Baby’s First Books.

**Josephine County Food Bank, $1,350 for the Planting Seeds for the Future program.**

For more information about Rotary or the grants, contact Pattie Baker, Community Service Chair, 541-955-8005.