

Locals honored for volunteer efforts in community

By Ruth Longoria Kingsland
of the Daily Courier

Most volunteers serve because they care about their community, and aren't looking for recognition.

Sometimes, though, a little recognition is nice.

Josephine Community Libraries and the Josephine County Foundation are among eight honorees statewide of the Governor's Volunteer Award. Also, a volunteer at the local youth prison was named a regional award recipient. Winners were announced this week, and the awards will be presented at an April 24 banquet in Salem.

In addition to the prestige of the award, statewide honorees receive a \$600 prize from Wells Fargo Bank. Regional honorees receive a \$425 grant.

The Josephine County Foundation was created in 2011 at Hidden Valley High School. Since then, it has grown to include members from each of the four public high schools in the county, as well as from New Hope Christian School. The participating public schools are Hidden Valley, Illinois Valley, Grants Pass and North Valley.

"I'm not surprised — my students do such great work," said Chris Pendleton, HVHS business teacher and a member of the JCF board. "I'm just happy the state is noticing what great work they do."

The foundation has a board of directors made up of adults,

but virtually all of the projects and fundraising is handled by students. JCF has hosted a vision clinic for low-income residents, an event in Wolf Creek that offered medical and dental checkups to schoolchildren, and other projects.

The foundation teaches students about philanthropy, community service project planning, nonprofit management, fundraising, grant writing, and leadership.

"One of the individuals who received glasses through the vision clinic responded, 'This is the first time I've ever seen my grandchild clearly.' You can imagine the impact that had on the students providing that service," Pendleton said.

Foundation members recently set their sights on raising money for local firefighters, after meeting with fire chiefs in the region.

Volunteers at Josephine County Libraries are what keep four local libraries up and running. If it weren't for more than 200 volunteers, Josephine County residents wouldn't have access to public libraries, said Kate Lasky, JCL executive director.

Josephine Community Libraries formed in 2007 after the county closed its libraries due to budget problems, shifting library resource to other county agencies.

JCL operates all of the county's libraries, and volunteers provide the vast majority of staffing — cataloging and shelving books,

answering questions and providing information for library patrons, hosting children's storytimes and other events, checking books in and out, marketing, communications, fundraising, outreach, facilities maintenance, and more.

"Our amazing, dedicated library volunteers are the heart of our library, and the hope of our community," said Norma Singer, Josephine Community Libraries volunteer coordinator.

A regional winner in this year's Governor's Volunteer Awards is Margo McAlpine. For the past eight years, she has volunteered weekly at the Rogue Valley Youth Correctional Facility, counseling young inmates, teaching them to play guitar and sharing her enthusiasm and musical talents with them. Prior to that, McAlpine was a volunteer for 30 years in various Josephine County youth organizations.

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