

Group conducts eye screenings

By Patti Richter
of the Daily Courier

Not content to just do good things on campus, Hidden Valley High School students have formed a nonprofit foundation to benefit the community. As its first project, the Josephine County Foundation conducted an eye clinic at the county fairgrounds, offering free eye exams and glasses.

"Everything that would be done in an eye exam at a doctor's office, we did," said Cedar Wilkening, one of the JCF founders and a member of Hidden Valley High School's Future Business Leaders of America.

JCF was created by Wilkening and another FBLA student, Jacob Pendleton, as their project for the state competition (the project earned a third place award). The foundation's goal is to help other nonprofit groups in the area, while at the same time pursuing its own projects.

JCF is not to be confused with the Josephine County Educational Fund, which manages investments and scholarships for high school students in the Three Rivers and Grants Pass school districts.

"We modeled it after the Oregon Community Foundation," Wilkening added. "We became official in June."

The idea for the eye clinic came about over the dinner table one night. Wilkening was talking to her father, Kurt Wilkening, an optometrist who has a practice in Medford, and he suggested the clinic. Her father also runs a non-

health services and places such as Siskiyou Community Health Center to have them give information to people who could benefit from it. Tickets were printed out and given to those who needed help.

"We probably have handed out close to 250 tickets," she said.

JCF also collected used glasses from various sources. The Grants Pass Lions Club donated 700 pairs and Dutch Bros offered people \$1 drinks in exchange for used glasses. Overall, the foundation had 1,200 pairs that were each entered into a database and coded.

"We should be able to give people exact matches or at least come very close," Wilkening said last week. "They will get to choose a pair to take home."

Using AmigoVision's format, there were 10 stations at Saturday's clinic that covered everything from filling out minimal paperwork to an exam by an optometrist.

Patients were also given glasses if it was determined they needed it. If an exam showed that more serious treatment was needed, Cedar Wilkening said other optometrists in the area have volunteered to help.

"If a person needs help, we are going to get them it no matter what," she said. "We are hoping this will become an annual event."

For more information about FBLA or the foundation, call Hidden Valley High School at 541-862-2124.

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profit, AmigoVision, which is sponsored by the Bear Creek Rotary Club in Medford.

For more than a decade, AmigoVision has helped people in countries with little access to eye care by providing glasses and exams at mobile clinics.

Rather than opening the event to the general public, Wilkening and her two FBLA partners on the project, sisters Morgan and Rilynn Hansen, called