

UCAN News Articles – March 2018



Friday, March 2, 2018

AARP Tax Aide service is here for all your tax preparation needs (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.

TAX AIDE SERVICE NOW UNDERWAY. For over 40 years, February through April 15, the partnership of AARP Tax Aide and UCAN/RSVP has been providing free tax preparation to the community.

The AARP Tax Aide program serves low-income filers, seniors, disabled and most families throughout Josephine County, utilizing senior volunteers who have been trained in IRS requirements, providing excellence in customer service.

Services include: state and federal tax filing, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and Child Tax Credits (ETC). All services include free electronic filing.

Grants Pass residents should call the RSVP message line at 541-956-4450. Tax site: UCAN-RSVP office, 125 N.E. Manzanita Ave. (corner of Seventh and Manzanita).

Walk-in scheduling started Jan. 18. Visit joco-freetaxes.com for more information.

Illinois Valley residents should call 541-592-6139. Tax site: IV Family Coalition, 535 E. River St., Cave Junction.

Questions? Contact RSVP Manager Rebecca de Greyt at 541-956-4474.

BE A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER. Volunteers are the backbone of the American Red Cross, and without their help the Red Cross would not be able to provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

Josephine County has a mobile unit that goes to different locations and has a variety of positions that they need volunteers to assist with, such as check-in desk, scheduler, etc. Contact the RSVP reception desk at 541-956-4472 if you have any questions, or come into our office and apply.

SHIBA MEDICARE VOLUNTEERS. The success of SHIBA (Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance) is built on a statewide network of trained volunteer counselors.

Counselors help people in their community understand their Medicare insurance choices and their rights through individual counseling, education, and referrals. Volunteers report to a volunteer coordinator at UCAN.

If you are dependable, understanding, patient, and compassionate, communicate well, have computer skills or are willing to learn, we would love to have you on our team.

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Monday, March 5, 2018

IV Senior Expo this Saturday

CAVE JUNCTION — An event this Saturday aims to educate seniors living in the Illinois Valley who are interested in services close to home.

Called the Illinois Valley Senior Expo, the event will be held at the Illinois Valley Senior Center in Cave Junction, 520 E. River St., and is from 10 a.m to 2 p.m.

At the event there will be educational booths, demonstrations, workshops and classes, health information and screenings from Siskiyou Community Health Center, Clear Creek Family Practice and the Eye Care Group.

Representatives of organizations such as American Medical Response, the Illinois Valley Fire District, Mercy Flights, Silver Pages, and Community Emergency Response Team will also be attending, offering information to those who seek it.

An interactive survey, conducted by IV Wellness, will offer seniors the opportunity to inform the community of their transportation needs.

There will also be volunteer opportunities and clubs for seniors who want to get more involved with the community and include, the IV Lions, SMART, American Legion, IV Library, Rotary Club and the Embroiderers Guild of America.

The expo is being organized by IV Wellness Resources, Healthy U IVCandO, IV Family coalition, United Community Action Network and the IV Senior Center.

Those who attend may also try out the IV Senior Center's homemade soups, breads and desserts. All proceeds go towards a fund raiser.

The expo is sponsored by IV Wellness Resources, Mary Reynolds Insurance, Siskiyou Community Health Center, Shop Smart, AllCare and Options for Southern Oregon.



Friday, March 9, 2018

Supermarket Saturday to benefit UCAN Food Bank



Chris Arnott, warehouse coordinator for the United Community Action Network Food Bank, moves a pallet of food into place inside the food bank warehouse.

About one in three Douglas County residents rely on food from the United Community Action Network Food Bank every year. The public can help UCAN stock the food bank this weekend during the 5th annual Supermarket Saturday.

Between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday, customers can drop off non-perishable food items at seven grocery stores: Albertsons, Fred Meyer, Grocery Outlet, Safeway, Sherm's Thunderbird Market and Walmart in Roseburg and Ray's Food Place in Green. Mercy Medical Center Employee's March Against Hunger is teaming up with these stores to sponsor the food drive and support the UCAN Food Bank.

Susie Johnston-Forte with the UCAN Food Bank said Supermarket Saturday has helped UCAN collect an average of 5,500 pounds of food per year, and this year the organization hopes to collect 6,000 pounds, or about three tons. The volunteers will also be taking cash donations, and every \$10 donated equates to 40 pounds of food, or two bags of groceries.

"Everything that's donated on Supermarket Saturday stays in Douglas County to support all the people who access UCAN's 16 emergency food pantries and eight community kitchens," Johnston-Forte said.

She said there are many people living with food instability in the community.

"In winter when the electric bill goes up, the easiest thing to flex is often the food budget," she said. She said many families have to face the choice between keeping the heat on and buying food.

Sarah McGregor, UCAN Food Bank manager, said about 20,000 people in Douglas County receive food from the emergency food system every month, and about 40,000 people do every year.

“Every year about 2 million pounds of food comes through our warehouse,” McGregor said. She said the pantries also get food from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Supplemental Food Program, local farmers and other donations.

She said every donation helps. McGregor said people tend to be the most generous around the holiday season when UCAN stocks most of its food, but donations taper off during the rest of the year.

“But people are hungry year round, and the more food we’re able to acquire the longer we’re able to stretch those donated foods,” McGregor said.

UCAN had put on the event for the last few years, but decided to coordinate with Mercy Medical Center this year. Mercy employees will be volunteering to collect and package the food and cash donations.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Susie Johnston-Forte at 541-492-3522 or susie.forte@ucanap.org.



Friday, March 9, 2018

UCAN could use a hand from knitters and cricketer's (RSVP)

By Rebecca de Greyt for the Daily Courier

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Many Josephine County families come through our doors and they are in crisis, many of them do not have the proper winter clothes to survive the cold nights. Sometimes all it takes is a hat and a scarf to make their day and to see a smile on their face.

Come join the club and be a part of making warm hands and smiling faces. Contact RSVP Reception desk at 541-956-4472 if you have any questions.

TRAINING AVAILABLE. There is an Ombudsman training scheduled in Medford coming up in April. There is a need for three to four advocates in Josephine County. Advocate for resident rights, dignity and care.

Ombudsmen provide education, investigate resident concerns and seek to find solutions for the residents. Volunteers enjoy a flexible schedule with a four-hour per week commitment, working closely with staff, helping ensure quality care for residents, keeping active and building relationships.

To volunteer you must be over 21 years of age, be able to pass a background check, and be free of a conflict of interest. An incredible opportunity to enhance life for the aging, gain education and knowledge, and expand your network.

Training days are April 11-13 and 26-27 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please plan to attend all five days to become certified. Learning more is easy — contact Lené Garrett at 503-378-6303 or lene.garrett@oregon.gov.

SUPPORT CAMPUS CLOSET. Campus Closet is located at UCAN-RSVP, 125 N.E. Manzanita Ave. (corner of Seventh and Manzanita).

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Saturday, March 10, 2018

Volunteer opportunities for March

ADA DUNCAN

Volunteers are the backbone of a community. They are the ones who unite a community and make it a good place to live. There are many places where those of us who have the time and the heart can actively be in the picture. Here are just a few:

- Mercy Medical Center needs courtesy escorts to assist the admitting staff to register new patients, escort them to their destination within the hospital and wheel them and their belongings to their car when they are discharged.
- Family birthplace is looking for volunteers to help the staff monitor visitors, safeguarding the infants in their care and providing clerical support as needed.

- Golf cart drivers are needed to transport patients and family members from the parking lot to the hospital entrance, as well as ferrying lab materials from the outpatient hospital lab to the Community Cancer Center. Volunteers must be able to use a cell phone, must be dependable and are required to work on a schedule.

Douglas County Meal Program needs volunteers as follows:

Winston, Glide, Sutherlin and Yoncalla dining sites need two meals-on-wheels drivers Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Meal and mileage reimbursement is provided. All of the dining sites need kitchen helpers on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Yoncalla needs a greeter and two desk register volunteers on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Call 541-440-3677 for details.

Senior Companion Volunteer Program is looking for individuals to share their compassion, friendship and a helping hand to home-bound seniors or handicapped people. Volunteers receive a tax-free stipend, mileage and meal reimbursement. If you are 55 or older and want to help and serve others, call Colleen, Senior Companion Program manager, at 541-492-3520.

Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) Program is seeking individuals to assist area seniors with their Medicare benefits. All training is free and done in a group collaborative setting with mentoring by experienced volunteers. Volunteers age 18 and over are welcome. Call Karen at 541-492-3917 for details.

Head Start and Early Head Start are in need of volunteers to help in the kitchen, front office and classroom. They also need a special project coordinator. All volunteer positions are open to anyone 14 years of age and older. For more information or to apply, contact Sarah, Health Service Program manager, at 541-673-6306, ext. 120 or the Volunteer Hotline at 541-492-3526.

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is seeking a volunteer to help with administrative duties 4-6 hours per week, one day a week. Duties include data entry, critical for grant writing and volunteer recognition. Call the hotline at 541-492-3526 to get more information and to sign up.

UCAN/RSVP Vet Team is looking for veterans, male and female to help the case management team find housing for homeless veterans in Douglas County and assist homeless veterans in the house program to fill out paper work, take them to look at property possibilities, help them prepare for interviews or with computer research and mentor them as needed. For more information or to apply, call the Volunteer Hotline at 541-492-3526.

RSVP offers a variety of opportunities to be of service to the community. Volunteering not only provides service to others, but it also enhances the health and well-being of the volunteer. Call the Hotline, 541-492-3526 for details.

Ada Duncan of Roseburg is a volunteer coordinator.



Monday, March 12, 2018

One month after disastrous fire, family still looking for a home



*TIMOTHY BULLARD/Daily Courier and Rural/Metro Fire
The Corralas family (clockwise from left) Nickolas, 12, Kaylee, 15, father Nick, mother Leslie Wood and April, 24, have been living with friend Kristi Mishell since the family's recreational vehicle they were living in burned down in mid-February. They want to stay in Grants Pass and are looking for a place to live so they can get another start.*

By Jason McMillen of the Daily Courier

Disaster struck the Corrales family four weeks ago when a series of unfortunate events led to their multi-generational residence, which consisted of a food truck with structural attachments, burning to the ground.

The family lost everything in the flames, including their pit bull, Mason.

In all, seven people were made homeless by the fire on Highland Avenue, just north of the Interstate 5 overpass between Grants Pass and Merlin.

Those displaced include two school-aged children, one living with autism, a disabled senior relative and a 2-year-old grandchild. The senior relative has since been accepted into a retirement home.

"The landowner took away our water and our power," said the father of the family, Nick Corrales, with teary eyes. "If I had water, I could've saved my home. I could've saved my dog."

According to Corrales, the property owner suddenly cut off their power and water, likely after mailing an eviction notice. Corrales said the property doesn't receive mail delivery and he also claimed he was never told about the eviction in person.

Corrales owns a local landscaping and handyman company called Maintenance Made Simple and said he was trading work for rent.

The Daily Courier attempted to contact the legal owner of the property to seek comment but was unsuccessful.

While their utilities were shut off, the Corrales' dog accidentally knocked over a heating unit. Unbeknownst to the family, its automatic safety shutoff wasn't working properly. Because the family had no water, the resulting fire quickly engulfed the makeshift structure.

When her father collapsed at the scene of the fire, the family's eldest daughter, April Corrales, attempted to rescue the family dog from the structure.

While attempting to remove an object that was blocking an exit route for Mason, molten plastic poured down onto one of her hands, resulting in third-degree burns. In the middle of trying a different approach, Nick Corrales, having recovered, pulled her from the building. Seconds later, the family said, a propane tank detonated inside.

April Corrales works at Bridge Retirement & Assisted Living as a care provider.

The Corrales family moved to Josephine County from California in 2016 after their 15-year-old daughter Kallee was officially diagnosed with autism. Leslie Wood, the mother of the family, also suffers from Grave's Disease, a debilitating condition that makes it difficult for her to work.

When Kristy Mishell, the owner of Southern Oregon Staffing and a relatively new friend of the family, heard the news, she invited them to stay with her.

"To have wonderful people like Kristy just open their home," Nick Corrales said, comparing his experience in California to Grants Pass, "it's just another check on the board that we landed in the right spot."

Because Mishell lives in a 55-and-over community, the Corrales family, or any guests for that matter, aren't allowed to stay for longer than two weeks. After bending the rules for four weeks, Mishell and the Corrales family have been given a hard deadline of Thursday.

"There's no other place for them," Mishell said, highlighting Josephine County's dearth of adult homeless shelters. "We don't have another choice."

Anyone interested in renting the family a residence, or land to put an RV on, can call Mishell at (541) 761-1810.

The Corrales family isn't alone as far as having unstable living conditions with school-aged children.

In fact, records for the 2016-2017 school year show that 513 students, or 8.54 percent of the Grants Pass School District's total population, were unstably housed. The Three Rivers School District reported 474 students, or 9.85 percent.

Of the 513 unstably housed students in Grants Pass, 34 were living in youth homeless shelters, 18 were living in hotels or motels, and 18 were living in either a tent or car.

The rest were "doubled up" with friends or extended family.

"It's a little bit shocking how many children are experiencing homelessness," Grants Pass School District Director of Special Services Dr. Todd Bloomquist said.

He said the district does everything it can to transport children to their school of origin and that all students are eligible for a free breakfast and lunch every day.

When the district is made aware of a family struggling with homelessness, it refers them to organizations that can help like the Maslow Organization, for which Nick Corrales is extremely grateful, UCAN and the Josephine County Food Bank.

"The community as a whole has just really come together. It's been nothing but welcoming and open arms," Nick Corrales said, thanking everyone who's helped his family through troubling times. "I've never seen anything like Grants Pass."



Friday, March 16, 2018

Come knit, crochet with us to help others (RSVP)

By Rebecca de Greyt for the Daily Courier

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Friday, March 23, 2018

Ombudsman advocate training scheduled for next month in Medford (RSVP)

By Rebecca de Greyt for the Daily Courier

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Friday, March 30, 2018

Help advocate for resident rights with ombudsman training in Medford (RSVP)

By Rebecca de Greyt for the Daily Courier

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