



Both Tim Rusk (above) of MountainStar Family Relief Nursery and Jan Eggleston (right) of the Deschutes Children's Foundation say their organizations have greatly benefited from the Nonprofit Network of Central Oregon. / Photos by Lyle Cox and Abby Lowell.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

Empowering nonprofits

Nonprofit Network of Central Oregon supports area nonprofits educationally

by Kathy Oxborough,
for *The Bulletin*

What most people know about the 678 nonprofits in Central Oregon is the good work they do. In the case of MountainStar Family Relief Nursery, it helped Sara, a 20-year-old single parent, to become the parent and role model she never had.

According to a 2005 public opinion poll conducted by Portland firm Davis, Hibbits and Midghall, 70 percent of Oregonians believe that nonprofits play a major role in making their communities a better place to live.

But what is less understood is how nonprofits obtain and manage the resources to provide those benefits. Like any other business, to operate effectively, they require specialized knowledge, leadership skills and ongoing education.

Five years ago, there were few

nonprofit management-training opportunities in Central Oregon. "Continuing education for nonprofits was real sporadic, and you had to go to the Valley to get it," said Jan Eggleston, executive director of Deschutes Children's Foundation.

The Nonprofit Network of Central Oregon, (NNCO) stepped up to fill that educational void. For the last four years, 50 to 60 individuals have been gathering for two hours at the Bend Community Center on the fourth Wednesday of each month to listen to experts on various topics and to network with one another.

The NNCO began about the time that Tim Rusk became the executive director of MountainStar, whose mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect. Rusk had worked in nonprofits managing programs, but he had never been an executive director.

Rusk brought his board president with him to his first NNCO presentation on board and executive director relations. "It gave us something in common about how we were going to work with each other; it jump-started the conversation," Rusk said.



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AMERICAN RED CROSS

The American Red Cross is known for responding with help in disasters, training people in lifesaving skills and providing emergency support to military families, but nothing is more important than the daily work employees and volunteers do to collect blood throughout the region.

In fact, Pacific Northwest Regional Blood Services (PNWRBS), which is part of the American Red Cross High Desert region and is co-located with them in East Bend, collected about 21,000 pints last year from 10,098 donors through mobile blood donation sites and its blood center. They are part of the Northwest consortium that supplies blood products to more than 80 hospitals in Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

"Central and Eastern Oregon hospitals alone used 14,116 pints between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006," said Mike Mawdsley, donor service manager for the PNWRBS. "Blood products are critical for trauma cases, cancer patients and surgery."



Photo courtesy of American Red Cross

For example, an accident victim can use between four and 40 units of red blood cells, and cancer patients use on average between two and four units of red blood cells over the course of their treatment and one unit of platelets a day over the course of just two to four weeks.

Locally, the Bend office serves Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook, Wheeler and Harney counties, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation. It has 55 employees and

approximately 190 volunteers dedicated to blood donation programs in the region. The Blood Center, at 2680 NE Twin Knolls in Bend, holds four blood drives each week, and the mobile unit goes to outlying communities between five and seven times every week.

It's so easy, yet so important, explained Mawdsley. The requirements for donating blood are simple: donors must weigh at least 110 pounds, be in good general health, be at least 16 years old (with a parent's consent), and answer important screening questions.

"One of the most common misperceptions is that someone can't give blood because they're on medications or have a medical condition," said Mawdsley. "That's not true. In fact, most people in the population can give blood, and it's critically needed—all the time."

Mawdsley used the example of a recent tragic car accident in Central Oregon that required blood to be brought in from all over the state to

treat the survivors, putting a strain on the rest of the region.

Once approved for donation, individuals can donate every 56 days. The type most in demand is O-negative as it's considered a universal donor that can be used for anyone regardless of type, especially in trauma situations where immediate transfusions are critical. While A-positive and B-positive blood types make up most of the population, any and every type is equally important in saving lives, according to Mawdsley.

"Blood is complicated," he said, as it's broken down into different components and used for different purposes. "So, when we put an appeal out for a blood donation, please come, regardless of your type. We can always use it—in Central Oregon and throughout the Northwest."

For donation hours and mobile locations, go to the Web site at www.mountainriver.redcross.org or call 541-382-2142.

—by Lori Gleichman, for *The Bulletin*

The NNCO was modeled after other "networks" created by Portland-based nonprofit Technical Assistance for Community Services (TACS).

About the time that TACS received funding from the Oregon Community Foundation and U.S. Bank to expand its nonprofit management services statewide, the Nonprofit Resource Council (NPRC), a committee of local nonprofit leaders, was looking for ways to bring educational opportunities to Central Oregon nonprofits.

"It was great synchronicity when all the various entities came together at the same time and with the same goal to form the NNCO," said Ken Wilhelm, executive director of United Way of Deschutes County and a member of the NPRC.

Although TACS manages and markets the NNCO, it is a joint

effort with the local NPRC. "They really made the network fly," said TACS' Carol Cheney of the NPRC members.

The educational sessions run during eight winter months, and in the spring the NPRC surveys nonprofits for advice on what topics they would like to see for the next year.

"It's an ongoing process to meet the individual and organizational needs because demographics change over time and new nonprofits come in," said Mark Hubbard, who oversees the NNCO for TACS.

The most popular topics are fundraising, marketing and board development—in that order—said Cheney, but one of the most important outcomes is the opportunity for networking, she added.

Eggleston agreed.

"It's an opportunity to look each other in the eye and ask, 'What would you do in a situation like this?'" she said.

Most nonprofit leaders agree that one of the biggest challenges of directing a nonprofit organization is finding the money to provide the services.

"You struggle with not having resources to do everything you know needs to be done," Rusk said.

In addition to the monthly meetings, the NNCO offers in-depth training. This February, the group brought fundraising consultant, Kim Klein, to Bend for an all-day workshop called "Building Board Fundraising Power." Klein, author of several fundraising books and founder of the "Grassroots Fundraising Journal," delighted her audience with humorous accounts of the challenges of raising money.

"Just act like children," she said.

"They don't have any trouble continuing to ask for money once you've told them no."

All kidding aside, the ability to hear one of the most respected fundraising gurus right here in Bend would not be possible without the NNCO and its sponsors.

The Bank of the Cascades and the Samuel S. Johnson Foundation are sponsors for the 2006-07 season. The Deschutes County Commission on Children and Families and the John and Linda Shelk Foundation sponsor their grantees to attend the NNCO.

"It's an honor to support local nonprofit organizations," said Cristina Lamoureux, a vice president with the Bank of the Cascades, "We want to keep finding ways to support vital resources like nonprofits that keep our communities healthy."

in good spirit | directory

A list of Central Oregon churches is published in The Bulletin every Saturday.

Aglow International - SE Oregon Area

541-388-3208

To help restore & mobilize women around the world, to promote gender reconciliation in the Body of Christ as God designed, and to amplify awareness of global concerns from a Biblical perspective.

Aglow International of Prineville

541-447-3415

To help restore & mobilize women around the world, to promote gender reconciliation in the Body of Christ as God designed, and to amplify awareness of global concerns from a Biblical perspective.

Central Oregon Mediation, Inc.

541-383-0187 | www.centraloregonmediation.org

A community Dispute Resolution Center to provide alternative dispute resolution services and education on conflict management skills to the citizens of Central Oregon.

Compassion Ministries

541-318-0414

Loving God and loving people.

Deschutes Children's Foundation

541-388-3101 |

www.deschuteschildrensfoundation.org

Promoting a community of services for children and families.

Four Winds Foundation

541-401-7505 | www.fwfoundation.com

Four Winds Foundation is dedicated to serving, living and teaching the natural way of the human being in connection to the Earth, Spirit and our World family through traditional indigenous values.

Human Dignity Coalition

541-385-3320 | www.humandignitycoalition.org

Working in Central Oregon to promote and safeguard human rights, honor diversity and achieve social justice for all.

Legal Aid Services of Oregon

541-385-6944 | www.oregonlawhelp.org

Achieve justice for the low-income communities of Central Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.

Madras Gospel Mission

541-460-2201

It is part of this ministry to embrace not only those directly in the school but also those in the surrounding communities.

Oregon Mountain River Chapter of the American Red Cross

541-382-2142 | www.mountainriver.redcross.org

To provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

PFLAG Central Oregon

541-317-2334 | www.pflagcentralor.org

To celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Sacred Art of Living - Center for Spiritual Formation

541-383-4179 | www.sacredartofliving.org

Nonprofit center for spiritual formation with programs that encourage people to trust and deepen their spiritual experience and to challenge and transform life's priorities.



Marjorie Smith, PFLAG

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