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# NEOAHEC Scrapbook

LA GRANDE - Eastern Oregon University...  
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the fifth annual Girls in Science workshop Oct. 28.  
Girls in Science is a collaborative effort between EOU and North...

## LAUNCHES CAMP

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### COMMUNITY COMMENT AMY DUNKAK

...to La Grande in 2004 and quickly became a Northeast Oregon AHEC board member.

"I wanted to return the favor and contribute any way I could," Dr. Koza said. "For many kids in rural communities, the only way they are going to learn about health careers is to participate in an AHEC program like MedQuest. I like being able to mentor to students and have a positive influence on their futures."

MedQuest is a weeklong residential camp held on Eastern Oregon University's campus each summer. Steve and many other Union County community members offer their time and expertise to the students interested in health career opportunities.

"I strongly believe that job shadow experiences and direct contact with local health care providers are invaluable to students who participate in the program," Dr. Koza said.

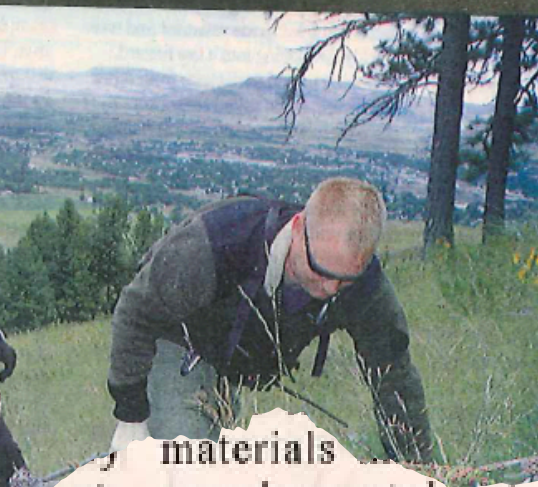
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Amy Dunkak, executive director of Northeast Oregon Health Education Center, addressed the Heppner Board of Commerce last week at the organization's annual meeting to strengthen Morro Valley's health care industry.

David Sykes

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Hermiston middle school students Jacoe Ternes, 11, and Sofia Gispert Tello, 13, heat a can of water with a burning Brazil nut at Saturday Science at Blue Mountain Community College. By transferring the nut's energy to the water, Tello and Ternes were able to estimate the nut's calories.

of common cereals, sodas and desserts. They calculated the sugar in a typical fast food meal and scrutinized the nutritional information found on ready-to-eat foods. A box of 10 Ho Hos, for example, holds about 30 teaspoons of pure sugar.

In another exercise, they used Crisco to represent the fat in a meal, alongside the representative white table sugar.

"You get an idea of what

sponsored Saturday Science with Eastern Oregon University, Blue Mountain Community College and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The goal is to interest kids in science, math and careers in medicine.

Eastern Oregon University chemistry professor Anna Cavatone, who was facilitating the nut experiment, said the students were fascinated by the process and engaged.

...quest camp is one of AHEC's founding programs, and it is just one way that Northeast Oregon tries to keep their home-grown professionals here to serve and give back to their community.

By Trish Yerges

...rural fire Department and then ventured up to Mt. Emily.

"Oddly enough, there's a right way to pull on a rope and there's a wrong way to pull on a rope," J.B. Brock,

sleep incline.

"It's really fun so far," said Jennifer McDougall, a 16-year-old from Pendleton. McDougall, like many of the students, is interested in pursuing a career in nursing but wanted to





# A sneak peak into health care careers

MedQuest provides opportunity for high schoolers to shadow medical professionals

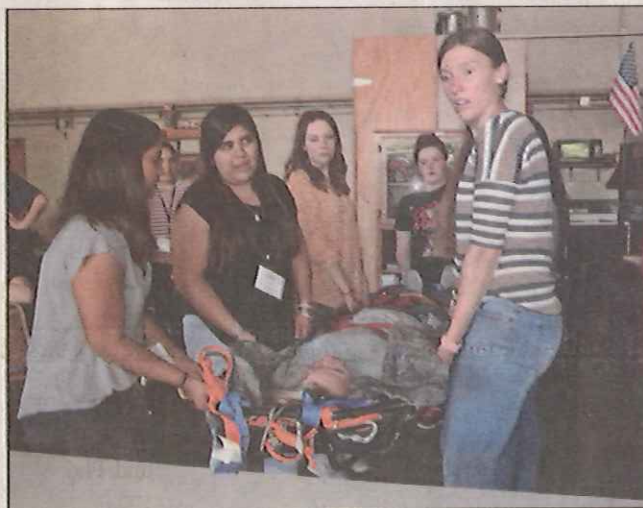
BY ISABELLA CROWLEY  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — High school students this summer can get a sneak peak at what it's like to work in the medical field.

The Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center's week-long residential health career exploration camp, MedQuest, is open to students from all over Oregon who have a proven interest in pursuing a medical career, according to a press release.

"They will enhance their knowledge of rural medicine, all while having an amazing time and making new friends," Camp Director Michelle Mudder said.

MedQuest, held on the Eastern Oregon University campus in La Grande, offers job shadowing, mentorship from camp



Dick Mason/The Observer, File

**MedQuest participants prepare to carry a rescue litter July 15, 2019. The 2024 MedQuest — a weeklong health career exploration camp for high school students held at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande — is scheduled for June 17-22.**

owing, mentorship from camp directors and medical professionals and hands-on experiences to learn clinical skills and intubation with Search and Res-

cue. The camp is open to high schoolers who are finishing their freshman through senior year in June 2024.

MedQuest is set for June 17-

22 and costs \$400. Only 40 spots are available and applications are due by March 31. There is a \$25 deposit fee upon application, which can be paid via PayPal or by check.

Families should expect acceptance decisions via email by the middle of April.

NOAHEC partners with Grande Ronde Hospital and other local facilities to help campers improve their understanding of careers in health care. Campers will hear from health care professionals and current students in the medical field about their experiences.

The cost includes room and board in EOU's residential halls, activities, supplies and CPR certification and training. Campers will receive a health professional stethoscope. Scholarships are available.

For more information email Mudder at [mmudder@neoahec.org](mailto:mmudder@neoahec.org).

# Nonprofit earns national recognition

Mission-driven Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center is based at Eastern Oregon University

BY TRISH YERGES

For The Observer

LA GRANDE — A local nonprofit was recognized for its work in recruiting — and retaining — students pursuing a career in health care.

The Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center was awarded the 2023 Center of Excellence Award. The honors were announced at the National Area Health Education Centers Program

See Nonprofit / A7



Lair



NEOAHEC/Contributed Photo

Members of the Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center's board of directors in June 2023 pose for a photo with the Center of Excellence Award the nonprofit received from the National Area Health Education Centers Organization.



# Nonprofit

**Continued from A1**  
Organization Biennial Conference in June in Salt Lake City, Utah, and on the NEOAHEC website.

"The primary reason this is so important to our team is that it is so affirming to all we've done as an organization over the past three decades," NEOAHEC Executive Director Meredith Lair said. "NEOAHEC is so special because it's built by such strong employees and volunteers. It's a privilege to keep it growing and evolving through the pandemic and the ups and downs of health care in order to meet our communities' needs."

NEOAHEC is an independent nonprofit corporation founded in 1991, and Lair has been with the organization for the past 11 years. It's governed by the board of directors and staff members, and they meet every other month. The staff team works on the Eastern Oregon University campus and they are co-located with the Oregon Health and Science University School of Nursing. This is the first time NEOAHEC has received an award from the Na-

tional AHEC organization.

"It's really such a privilege to have been recognized out of so many centers nationwide," Lair said. "It's just incredible."

NEOAHEC co-sponsors a program with EOJ called "Investigators of Science," and that program has won some national awards from the American Chemical Society, but that's just one specific program, Lair said.

The recent national honor is an organizational one.

"The award was specifically for our student recruitment and retention," Lair said.

NEOAHEC kept its programs alive and growing during the uncertain time of the pandemic, and over the past 30 years has engaged students in their health career pathways, which starts in middle school and extends through to graduate-level health professions training.

The nonprofit's recruitment into programs and ability to stay in touch with those students and mentor them along the way is at the core of this re-

cent national honor.

"There is a shortage of health care workers across the nation and that's everyone from primary care doctors to certified nursing assistants," Lair said.

That shortage has translated to nursing home closures. In Oregon, Lair said, the reason for closures has

*"The doctors are part of the puzzle, but it's taking so many more well-educated people to make the system work, and there's a shortage of just about everyone."*

—NEOAHEC Executive Director Meredith Lair

been due to the lack of certified nursing assistants. Health care and how it has been delivered has transformed so much, and that's one way NEOAHEC has been evolving.

"The doctors are part of the puzzle, but it's taking so many more well-educated people to make the system work, and there's a shortage of just about everyone," she said. "Young people don't recognize the breadth of health care. You don't have to be a doctor to contribute to the health care system."

Consequently, NEOAHEC's vision is to address the health care workforce shortage in rural and frontier Oregon by developing its own health professionals that reflect the composition and needs of the communities they serve.

The center's mission is to educate and inspire students and professionals to build a sustainable

health care community for Eastern Oregon. It provides programs and services in 11 counties: Baker, Gilliam, Hood River, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco and Wheeler.

For a rural AHEC to be recognized on a national scale like this was an absolute thrill for the NEOAHEC team, Lair said.

The award nomination emphasized the comprehensiveness of NEOAHEC's programs, including the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program, the support for enrolled learners on their rural rotations, and MedQuest, an annual health career exploration camp supported by community partners.

In 2023, the MedQuest program was expanded by hosting the La Grande camp and a virtual camp, and also starting additional camps, in The Dalles and Burns.

Between two overnight camps, a day camp, and a virtual MedQuest, NEOAHEC served 79 students.

The Healthy Oregon Workforce Training Opportunity grant that NEOAHEC was awarded shortly before the pandemic was crucial in the expansion of the OHSU School of Nursing PMHNP program to a distance learning model.

The grant-funded initiative persisted through the pandemic, and it had its first cohort finish the program and enter the nursing workforce in a career of very high need throughout the nation.

"I really feel like our whole organization, from our board to our staff and our collaborators, are so mission-driven and our mission has remained intact and supported over our history," Lair said. "That 'grow-our-own' principle that drives us is still driving us today. It's just evolving to meet the health care needs."



# Area high school students explore medical careers

By Susan Parish, For The Observer

*Isabelle Sauers held a Doppler pulse check instrument in her right hand and a tube of ultrasound contact gel in her left.*

After squirting a glob of gel onto her patient's wrist, she set the instrument's wand on the gel. Immediately, the patient's pulse was amplified on the Doppler. Then a digital pulse reading displayed on the screen.

"It's about 80. That's in the normal range," Sauers told the young woman.

Sauers, 17, a senior at Elgin High School, is among 36 high school students who tried hands-on medical activities at the OHSU School of Nursing on the Eastern Oregon

University campus Tuesday afternoon.

This week, these students are participating in the 25th annual MedQuest Health Career Exploration Camp organized by Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center, located on EOU's campus.

MedQuest is a comprehensive week-long look at many careers in health care. The camp is held on the campus of EOU and the surrounding community, and the students stay in dorms. The camp is open to



Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

Elgin's Isabelle Sauers takes the heart rate of Hannah Hair, of Milton-Freewater, during the 25th annual MedQuest Health Career Exploration Camp.

high school students completing grades 9 through 12 who are considering medical careers. Students paid \$400 to attend, which included all lodging, food,

activities and supplies. A limited number of scholarships were available.

This year's camp enrollment of 36 students is

See **Careers** / Page 5A



# CAREERS

*Continued from Page 1A*  
the largest group in the program's 25-year history. Last year there were 28 students. Although most students are from Eastern Oregon, others come from as far away as Ashland and Coos Bay.

The seven Union County students participating in the camp are Kimberly Wagner and Nova Barton, of La Grande; Bonny Daggett, Hannah Kilpatrick and Cade Gorham, of Imbler; and Hailey Hanson and Sauers, of Elgin.

"I'm pretty set on going into the medical field," Sauers said. "This camp is broadening my spectrum of what I want to be."

In the same clinical skills lab, other MedQuest students practiced procedures on two nursing simulation mannequins lying in hospital beds.

Dorothy Hancock, OHSU clinical instructor for the skills lab, explained the myriad procedures students could perform on the mannequins.

"We can take blood pressure, start IVs on them, put catheters on their bladder; drain the catheters, use a stethoscope to listen to their heart," Hancock said.

The students listened carefully, then took up the instruments and went to work.

MedQuest students were chosen from a pool of more than 60 candidates from across Oregon. They were selected based on factors like their GPA, extracurricular involvement, essay and passion for the health care field. All students have shown an interest in health careers, and most arrive at camp with at least some health career experience,

whether it's job shadowing or a CPR class.

"They all have some basic knowledge we can expand upon," said Meredith Lair, director of Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center.

## Week of medical experiences

Throughout the week, students are exposed to medical experiences and participate in hands-on learning. On Monday afternoon, Union County Emergency Services Manager J.B. Brock, a volunteer with Union County Search and Rescue, led a wilderness response emergency rescue at Mount Emily Recreation Area. He taught students how to tie knots essential in wilderness rescue and then demonstrated how to use a ropes rescue to pull a person up a hill on a stretcher.

Tuesday morning, students boarded a bus to Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton and toured the cadaver lab to learn basic anatomy and physiology.

"I was really excited about the cadaver lab," said Gorham, 17, a senior at Imbler High School. "I didn't think I'd get to see that in high school."

Today, students will tour the Life Flight base as well as Grande Ronde Hospital and its operating room. The hospital has been a partner in the camp since its inception.

Each student also is customizing a job shadow based on personal interests and will spend time at work with a health care provider.

Daggett, 17, also from Imbler High School, plans to become a pediatric nurse. She said she was looking forward to doing a job shadow at the women's

clinic Thursday.

"It's hard to job shadow in the medical fields around here unless you're in college," Daggett said.

MedQuest students also will become certified in American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR and automated external defibrillator training at the camp. Intermixed throughout the week, providers representing a variety of medical specialties will talk with students about pathways required for that medical career.

Lair said several former MedQuest students pursued medical and health care careers. They include Stephen Koza, a dentist at Koza Family Dental Care in La Grande, and John Combe, a licensed massage therapist who owns Combe's Wellness Center in La Grande. Combe also

travels to athletic competitions to provide sports therapy to world-class track and field athletes. This week, he is at the USA Track and Field Outdoor Championships in Sacramento, California.

In addition, several former MedQuest students now are nurses either at Grande Ronde Hospital or teaching at the OHSU School of Nursing. A couple of former MedQuest students are first-year medical students at OHSU in Portland.

Stephanie George, 22, was a MedQuest student six years ago when she was a sophomore at Enterprise High School. Now, she's entering her senior year of nursing school and is a lead counselor for the MedQuest camp. She said the camp helped her fine-tune what she wanted to pursue.





Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

Madeleine Seifert, of Bend, does chest compressions on a mannequin as Kathryn Warren, also of Bend, looks on Tuesday. Seifert and Warren are among the 36 students who tried hands-on medical activities at the OHSU School of Nursing on the Eastern Oregon University campus during the 25th annual MedQuest Health Career Exploration Camp. The camp is organized by Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center.



LOCAL

# Crime scene at EOU is a teaching opportunity

By Alyssa Sutton, The Observer

*Girls in sixth through eighth grades descended upon the Eastern Oregon University campus Saturday for a day of science and mystery solving.*

*This was the university's 16th year of organizing Girls in Science, an event created by an all-woman faculty, where girls from regional middle schools spend the day immersed in subjects such as chemistry, computer science, math and biology, while solving a mystery.*



Alyssa Sutton/The Observer

Celeste Karnowski, of Hermiston, takes notes at the fictional crime scene Saturday that was part of the Eastern Oregon University Girls in Science event. The event brings girls from regional middle schools to campus where they spend the day immersed in subjects such as chemistry, computer science, math and biology, while solving a mystery.



"We coincide our mystery with the (American Chemical Society) National Chemistry Week," said Brittany Hargrove, Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center's administrative and outreach coordinator, who assisted with the organization and administration of the event.

NOAHEC, a non-profit program that educates students and professionals to build a sustainable health care community for Eastern Oregon, partners with the university for the Girls in Science event.

This year the girls had to solve a mineralogical mystery, inspired by the National Chemistry Week's geology theme. Various EOU clubs had organized classrooms in Badgley Hall to appear as if a party had ended abruptly due to the death and/or disappearance of the party's host.

Clues were left throughout the crime scene, many of them relating to different minerals and rocks. Others included written notes and what appeared to be blood. The young women who attended Girls in Science were also able to interview witnesses, who were played by members of the EOU theater department.

"We try to get different (EOU) clubs involved," said Deanna Timmerman, an EOU associate professor of psychology who has volunteered at the event for 14 years.

In addition to the theater students, assisting this year were the math, pre-vet, chemistry and psychology clubs.

"There are about 50 volunteers this year," Hargrove said, including EOU fac-



Alyssa Sutton/The Observer

EOU student volunteer Charelette Burghard, right, shows students how to use chemicals to determine if blood samples are real or fake.



Alyssa Sutton/The Observer

Eastern Oregon University student volunteers from various clubs on campus help middle school students test evidence they gathered.

ulty and a board of trustees member.

After the girls gleaned as much as they could from the clues left at the crime scene, they migrated into labs on the third floor of Badgley Hall to start testing the evidence they'd gathered. During this time, they learned a bit about chemistry and biology before moving down to the computer halls to decode

additional clues. After finishing the day of experimenting and solving clues, the girls were divided into groups and asked to present their hypotheses.

"While there are clues pointing more strongly toward an answer, there is no right or wrong here," said Anna Cavinato, EOU professor of chemistry and one of the founding members. "We

honor creativity."

With the halls buzzing with girls from all over Eastern Oregon, including Baker, Union, Wallowa and Umatilla counties, Cavinato said that the Girls in Science planning committee has had to put a cap on how many can attend the event.

"We had a waiting list of 130, but we can only accept 100," Cavinato said. "We're at capacity (with 100) for resources and space."

She said she would like to offer the event twice a year to give everyone a chance to participate.

Timmerman explained that Girls in Science rotates through three scenarios, so that a girl who attends in sixth, seventh and eighth grades will solve three different crimes.

"This is the first crime scene we've had, though," Timmerman said, adding that the entire event is a wonderful learning opportunity.



# Course explores health careers

■ Imbler, Elgin high schools to offer new health careers course

By Susan Parrish  
For The Observer

Ten area high school health teachers attended a workshop Aug. 7, 8 and 9 at Eastern Oregon University to prepare them to teach Future Health Professionals of Oregon, a collegiate-level health careers course.

The course is part of an initiative to encourage high school students to consider health care careers. Students who enroll in the course will learn about a variety of health care careers and will have opportunities to job shadow a health care professional. Students will earn two college credits toward Science 116. The course is offered through Eastern Promise, a collaboration between Eastern Oregon colleges and school districts.

Imbler and Elgin high schools are among a handful of schools in the region that will offer Future Health Professionals of Oregon in the coming school year. Darci Sweet will teach the course to juniors and seniors at Imbler High School. Emily Sorensen will teach it to grades 9 through 12 at Elgin High School. Additionally, eight teachers will teach the class in Baker, Grant, Harney, Morrow and Umatilla counties.

"It helps students realize how many health care career paths are available, not just becoming a nurse or a doctor," Sorensen said. "The program also helps them understand the value of higher education and the doors it opens."

Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center developed the Future Health Professionals of Oregon course about seven years ago, but it has evolved over the years, explained Meredith Lair, executive director. The center is working to address a health



Susan Parrish/For The Observer

Elgin High School's Emily Sorensen, left, and Imbler High School's Darci Sweet will teach a Future Health Professionals of Oregon course at their respective high schools. The course is part of an initiative to encourage high school students to consider health care careers.



Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

Kyle Pfaffenbach spoke to local health teachers earlier this month, including two from Union County. Pfaffenbach, who teaches performance nutrition and exercise science at EOU, revamped Future Health Professionals of Oregon and led the August workshop.

care workforce shortage in 11 rural Oregon counties by providing educational programs to inspire students to consider health care careers. With that goal in the forefront, the organization is launching the expanded course, Future Health Professionals of Oregon, in partnership with EOU and Greater Oregon Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, a local nonprofit that provides education with a goal of building a regional workforce.

In the past, students did all the coursework online and independently. In the new model, students

will continue to take the class online but their schools' health teachers will provide guidance and input student grades. The model was piloted by teachers in Heppner and Milton-Freewater last spring.

Kyle Pfaffenbach, who teaches performance nutrition and exercise science at EOU, revamped Future Health Professionals of Oregon and led the August workshop. In the university's exercise science lab, he spoke to the teachers about what students gain from participating in research projects. At the high school level, research is mostly observation, said Pfaffenbach, who then invited teachers to bring their students to the lab to observe college students doing research.

"Sometimes research helps students realize they don't want to go into a field," Pfaffenbach said. "But sometimes, it fuels their career."

## Bringing health care careers into the classroom

Lair said the course is a toolkit for teachers to help students find the information they need to pursue a health care career. It's up to the teachers as to how they want to grow the course in their schools.

Sweet explained why she is enthusiastic about teaching the new course: "It goes over every health career in a broad spectrum. We're giving kids exposure to health careers at an early age. As instructors, we have the opportunity to bring in health professionals to speak to our classes."

Both Sorensen and Sweet said they



plan to invite local health care professionals to come to their classrooms to talk about their work and the education required. The teachers also talked about setting up job shadowing opportunities for their students, which they explained was an effective way to engage students.

Sorensen addressed how job shadows can make what students are learning in the classroom relevant to their future: "I have former students pursuing specific degrees because of their job shadows."

As part of the commitment to teaching Future Health Professionals of Oregon, the high school health teachers also joined GO-Healthcare Professionals, a new health occupations professional learning community. Teachers will meet periodically to discuss the curriculum and ways they are making the coursework relevant. They will work closely with Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center, EOU and GO-STEM.

Lair said high school students need to be given the necessary tools to make informed decisions about planning for career and college, and often planning for college begins too late in the high school career. Students who take the course and decide to pursue a health care profession will be able to see a clear career path starting with the specific courses required to attain their career goals. They also will connect with a college advisor. Lair said when high school students work with college advisors early in the game, it helps ensure students complete college coursework "in the shortest time possible so they don't walk away with as much debt."

"I would love to see these teachers help guide us in terms of how this course works in their schools, to stay in close communication with EOU's exercise science program, and then expand this to other school districts," Lair said. "The sky's the limit in how far we can take this."



# Doctors needed in rural areas

By Kathey Aney  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — When anesthesiologist Richard Wick opted to practice in rural Walla Walla, Washington, after his residency last summer, the decision put him at odds with most of his classmates. Young physicians tend to flock to jobs in big cities.

Wick, who grew up in Pendleton, dreamed of being a doctor since boyhood and practicing in a rural area was always on the radar. His father, Ernest Wick, ran the radiology department at St. Anthony Hospital. The boy hung around the hospital, even shadowing Pendleton general surgeon John McBee. Wick always figured he would become a surgeon but changed course during an anesthesiology rotation at the Creighton University School of Medicine in Nebraska. He loved

the variety and the awesome responsibility.

"In one day, I may care for a 9-month-old and a 90-year-old in different types of surgery," Wick said. "I get to take care of people at their most critical moments. I watch their heart rate. I literally breathe for them."

After finishing residency at Oregon Health & Science University, he and his wife Sarah considered where to practice. Richard felt comfortable with rural life, but Sarah had grown up in Portland and wasn't as eager to leave the metropolis. In recruiting physicians to rural areas, it's a common issue — a partner's employment opportunities or simply the affinity for perks of urban life often come into play.

The couple, expecting a child and tired of Portland traffic, eventually embraced an anesthesiologist position at Walla Walla's Providence St. Mary Medical Center.

"I love it," Wick said.

It's a happy outcome in a time of doctor shortages in rural America. The shortage, especially of primary care physicians, continues to worsen. That is partially due to an imbalance in pay between primary care doctors and specialists. According to Medscape's 2017 Physician Compensation Report, orthopedists, cardiologists, plastic surgeons and urologists all earn \$400,000 or more on average. But pediatricians, internists and family

See **Doctors** / Page 5A



## DOCTORS

*Continued from Page 1A*  
medicine doctors make \$225,000 or less.

Maggie Elehwany, the National Rural Health Association's vice president of government affairs, said rural America needs more doctors.

"Twenty percent of the population is scattered over 90 percent of the land mass," she said. "This 20 percent of the population has 9 percent of the physicians." In addition, "there's a higher percentage of chronic disease in rural America. They're poorer and sicker."

Oregon isn't quite that low. Based on Oregon Medical Board licensures and the OHSU Office of Rural Health, 10,247 of Oregon's doctors practice in urban/nonrural areas and 2,362 work in rural areas (defined as 10 miles or more away from a population center of at least 40,000).

The national shortage could grow to 45,000 by the year 2020, according to the NRHA. Since 2010, more than 80 rural hospitals have closed, including Walla Walla General Hospital.

Internist Norman Sitz is a popular Pendleton physician who is pondering retirement in the next couple of years. He worries about his patients when that time comes. He doesn't have hard numbers, but he knows his town is short on docs.

"People are always calling to get in," Sitz said. "I don't know what my patients are going to do."

Sitz grew up in Ontario, so as a young internist he felt no qualms about practicing in a rural area. Though Pendleton wasn't his first choice,

he soon grew attached to this little place where "people get along with each other" and he has stayed for 40 years and counting. The locale was close to good hunting and fishing and proved a great place to raise his and wife Michelle's three children. He doesn't mind seeing his patients around town and his home phone number is in the book.

"People don't abuse that," he said.

Sitz and his partner Daniel Marier sold their practice to the Praxis Medical Group three years ago as a way to rein in costs and get better bargaining power with insurance companies. The increasing regulation, complexity and requirements for such things as electronic health records have altered the landscape.

"You can't open a small clinic now," Sitz said. "There's no way to do it on your own. Fifteen years ago, someone could come to Pendleton and open a small practice."

Still, there are plenty of midlevel opportunities and not enough physicians to fill them.

Money isn't necessarily the reason for reluctance to leave urban centers. Wick said doctors who go to rural areas often get paid more by employers as an incentive. Doctors, dentists, optometrists, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and certain others also receive up to \$5,000 in annual tax credits to entice them to practice in rural Oregon. The Oregon Legislature recently renewed the credit, originally enacted in 1989.

A 2012 survey found that 45 percent of respondents felt the tax credit influenced their decision to practice in rural Oregon. More than 2,100 providers, including 60 in Pendleton and 76 in Hermiston, claimed the credit in 2015, the most recent data year available.

Barriers to a rural practice include resistance from partners, pressure to pay off debt and worry about being too far away from academia, specialists and the amenities of city life.





# Eastern Oregon students wrap noggins around brains



Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

La Grande Middle School student Daniel Corsini, right, holds a human brain at the NW Noggin event on Saturday at La Grande High School. Area students from Umatilla and Malheur counties visited LHS to learn more about science and neurology.

**By Susan Parish**  
For The Observer

Daniel Corsini, 11, held a human brain Saturday.

"It was gooey," said the La Grande Middle School student, "and also awesome!"

But Kimmy Wagner, 15, was more subdued. It was not her first time holding a human brain. The sophomore at La Grande High School

participates in her school's medical pathways program and is planning to become a doctor. A few days earlier, she had held a brain during a school visit to do experiments on cadavers at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton.

Corsini and Wagner were among 70 students in grades 6 through 12 from schools

throughout Northeast Oregon who attended a hands-on brain science and art event at La Grande High School Saturday. Students came from La Grande, Baker City, Boardman, Cove, Haines, Halfway, Milton-Freewater, North Powder, Nyssa, Pendleton, Union and Vale. Some students rode a bus for two

See **Brains** / Page 5A

## BRAINS

*Continued from Page 1A*  
hours to reach the event.

"Most people think of the brain as being squishy, but dead brains get a little harder. It's spongy, but like a harder sponge," Wagner said. "It's a lot easier to learn with hands-on programs like this one."

NW Noggin, a Portland-based nonprofit, brought 14 college volunteers, most who study neuroscience at Oregon universities, to LHS to give Northeast Oregon students an opportunity to do hands-on science and art activities — and to hold a human brain. The free event was coordinated by Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center and a host of community partners.

NW Noggin was created by Bill Griesar, who teaches neuroscience at Portland State University and Oregon Health Sciences University, and artist and PSU educator Jeff Leake. The nonprofit brings arts-integrated science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) education outreach programs into schools and communities. It was NW Noggin's first trip to Northeast Oregon.

Some students submitted brain questions in advance, which Griesar and his team answered at the event: How can you recharge brain cells? Why is the outside of the brain a different consistency than the inside? At what age does the brain stop growing and developing? Is it a different age for girls versus boys?

In addition, the college students talked about what type of brain science they are studying and how they hope to apply their work to better the world.

The health education center's Brittany Hargrove worked closely with NW Noggin to bring the program to town, including arranging housing and meals.

"We appreciate NW Noggin coming here," Hargrove said. "I'm excited the kids are able to have a unique opportunity with brain science and art."

Leake, NW Noggin's art coordinator, stood before a table strewn with natural plant material, tiles and paints and explained to students: "We're making neuron-like forms out of these plants."

Students made prints using plant material that looks similar to neurons in brain cells. Kristol Jensen, 15, a freshman at La Grande High School, arranged pieces of shrubs and white bleeding hearts onto a tile. She participates in the school's medical pathways program and plans to pursue a medical career, perhaps as a physician's assistant.

"I like science-y stuff," Jensen said. "I like any opportunity to learn how our body works."



# Wallowa County CHIEFTAIN



## Health leaders to host town hall, barn dance

Wallowa County Chieftain •

Published on July 15, 2016 12:08PM

Last changed on July 19, 2016 4:20PM

This month marks the 25th anniversary of both the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) program and of Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) Family Medicine's rural rotation in Enterprise.

The programs together have touched Wallowa County in countless ways. The AHEC has brought programs like MedQuest and Girls in Science that have trained and mentored Wallowa County Youth to pursue health-focused careers. The AHEC Rural Community Health Clerkship and Oregon Rural Scholars rotations in Enterprise, and the OHSU rural residency program in Klamath Falls have brought to Wallowa County four primary care doctors — Dr. Caine, Dr. DeYoung, Dr. Powers and Dr. Sheahan.

To celebrate the anniversary these two successful programs, local health leaders are hosting a town hall meeting from 3-5 p.m. Saturday, July 23 at Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise. Members of the Office of Rural Health board and staff, local and state lawmakers, and the Wallowa County community in general are invited to discuss ways to promote programs that support doctors coming to and living in rural Oregon communities, and the building of the health care teams that support these doctors.

In 1990 Wallowa County was in trouble. Dr. Siebe and Dr. Euhus were among the few doctors in town. Dr. Siebe conducted a formal survey of doctors across the state and found a similar story in all of rural Oregon — doctors leaving or retiring, and communities in need. Dr. Euhus took these findings to the state legislature with a strong call to action. The legislature listened, and from that session came the creation of the AHEC program and a mandate to OHSU to train and retain primary care doctors across the state.

Yet today we find ourselves in much the same place as we were 25 years ago. Wallowa County and other rural communities across the state are struggling to provide the solid primary care base that is needed to help keep communities healthy and thriving.

Immediately following the town hall, there will be a community barbecue and square dance from 5-10 p.m. at the Blue Barn Farm, 63327 Tenderfoot Valley Road in Joseph.

The event is spearheaded by Winding Waters Medical Clinic, with support from a variety of organizations including: Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU), Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center (NEOAHEC), Wallowa Memorial Hospital, and the Wallowa Valley Health Care Foundation.

For more information contact Keli Christman of Winding Waters at 541-426-4502 or [keli@windingwatersclinic.org](mailto:keli@windingwatersclinic.org).

MARKETPLACE

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Friday, May 20, 2016

erver & Baker City Herald

# Getting a feel for the rural life

■ Local hospitals,  
agencies team up to  
immerse medical  
students in rural  
health care

WesCom News Service staff

According to the National Rural Health Association, only about 10 percent of physicians practice in rural America despite the fact that nearly one-fourth of the population lives in these areas.

"When I tell people who are not from a rural community that I wish to practice rural medicine, they generally give me the same response. They react with a look of sympathy and congratulate me on my altruistic sacrifice to society," said Nicholas West, a first-year medical student at Oregon Health & Science University School of Medicine, from Imbler.

This illustrates the undeniable need for the redistribution of primary care providers, but how?

"I believe physicians from small towns are more likely to return to small towns. By taking on a leadership role as a medical student from a small town, I hope to create more opportunities for medical students to experience what small-town life is like," said Emily Thompson, a first-year medical student at OHSU, from Heppner.

First-year medical students like West, Thompson and Abigail Huddleston are part of a rural student advisory group to Dr. Paul Gorman, assistant dean of rural medical education in the OHSU School of Medicine. During their spring enrichment week, starting Monday, these students, along with the Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center, have planned activities in three communities in Northeast Oregon, including Heppner, La Grande and Pendleton. The opportunity was offered to all OHSU first-year medical students.

"We are pleased to work with NEOAHEC on this rural enrichment experience for medical students. We're finding exposure to rural communities and rural medical practices opens students' eyes to possibilities they hadn't considered before, which will hopefully mean more rural physicians down the line," Gorman said.

There is a need in Eastern Oregon for competent, caring and dedicated health care providers who truly want to invest in the region, according to school officials. Rural

See Rural / Page 5C



people need each day. The amount is affected by what people eat, their weight and activity level and even the environment in which they live.

The Institute of Medicine, which issues recommendations on the amounts of nutrients we need, states that an "adequate intake" of water ranges from 700 milliliters (about three cups) a day for

## RURAL

*Continued from Page 6C*

communities want doctors who are just as excited to create a life and work in their rural town as the teachers, loggers and firefighters for whom they provide care.

Medical students will be immersed in rural health care delivery by job shadowing and having dinner with hospital leaders and providers. They will interact with local high school students and get a feel for rural Oregon by enjoying extramural activities unique to the region. On their last day, students will come back together to discuss the experiences they had in the

communities.

"Each medical community has been so gracious to invite students to shadow in their hospitals or clinics and provide dinner with an opportunity to meet with hospital administration and providers," said Meredith Lair, executive director of NEOAHEC.

Grande Ronde Hospital, St. Anthony Hospital and Morrow County Health District will be hosting these medical students at their facilities.

"Giving my classmates the opportunity to learn more about and hopefully fall in love with rural Oregon, like I have, is what this trip is all about," Huddleston, who is from Seaside, said.

**Imbler Christian Church  
will be presenting,  
in concert, country  
Christian recording artist**

**Charlie Walker**

**May 29<sup>th</sup>**

at the 10 A.M. Worship service.

**Everyone is welcome.**



# Education Center works to strengthen county's \$7.6 million health industry

Health care responsible for 144 Morrow County jobs

By David Sykes

An organization based in La Grande has been working hard to keep Morrow County's health care industry healthy itself, the executive director told the Heppner Chamber of

Commerce last week.

Amy Dunkak of Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center (NEOAHEC) said the county has six physicians and 144 employees in the health care industry for a total of \$7.6 million annual contribution to the economy. That works out to 23 jobs and \$1.3 million, per physician.

Dunkak said there is a shortage of physicians looming in the future for rural areas and her organization is working to try and alleviate that shortage. "We try and attract health professionals to your community," she told the Chamber of Commerce. And it is not just physicians they deal with. "We work with physical therapists, physician's assistants and dental professionals too," she added.

According to the 2008 census, Morrow County has a total population of 11,140. She said 24.8 percent are over 55 years of age and 61 percent of those people need clinical health care. She said "a lot of physicians are going to retire," and her group is working to get young people interested in the medical field. Dunkak said there were 945 students in her region, which covers 10 counties in Oregon, who have gotten "intense health care training," including Med Quest and other programs.

Dunkak said educational efforts by her group will help keep Morrow County's health industry viable.

Two of the most popular programs are Med Quest, a residential health career explorations camp for high school students, and Girls in Science, a one-day event for middle school girls held on the Eastern Oregon University campus.

offered are health career day funds that give \$1,000 grants to communities that wish to coordinate a health career day for elementary students. Another grant program also gives \$1,000 grants to high school students that wish to coordinate a breast health awareness or fundraising event. Dunkak said another popular program is In-A-Box materials that offer supplemental science materials available to check-out for fourth through eight grade teachers focusing on the body and environmental sciences.

Patti Allstott, administrative coordinator at the Morrow County Health District, who is on the board of directors for NEOAHEC, said it is important to encourage our youth to enter

the health care field. "Small towns are vying for health care professionals with other communities. It is hard to get radiology techs and lab techs," she said, "not just physicians and physician's assistants." "Anything we can do to get young people involved (in the health care field) will help us locally," she said.



**Amy Dunkak, executive director of Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center, addressed the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week about the organization's efforts to strengthen Morrow County's health care industry. —Photo by David Sykes**



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## Popularity of science program remains strong

By Dick Mason, The Observer October 26, 2015 10:54 am



Madison Welker, right, of Hermiston and Lizbeth Miramontes, left, of Adrian receive assistance on a chemistry project Saturday from Caitlynn Barton during a Girls in Science session at Eastern Oregon University on Saturday. Barton is a member of EOU's chemistry club. (Dick Mason)

The annual Girls in Science weekend program at Eastern Oregon University continues to be a big draw more than a decade after it started. The secret to the program's longevity is not a mystery, but mystery remains one of its key components.

Each year the one-day program introduces girls in grades 6-8 from throughout the region to new elements of the world of science. About 90 girls attended Girls in Science on Saturday at EOU. The middle school students came to do what they always do — solve a mystery.

The girls were asked to determine why thousands of fish were dying at a fictitious site named Gray Bay. After doing tests in biology and chemistry labs and attending instructional sessions on math and computers, the students interpreted the information they were presented and generally concluded that pollutants from a fictitious lake, whose water flows into Gray Bay, caused the fish kill.

The journey toward solving the case, named "Save Our Fish: An Environmental Mystery," was an enjoyable one for Leela Andrew, a student at Grande Ronde Academy in La Grande.

"It is fun to do stuff that college people do and be on campus," Andrew said. She also attended the Girls in Science program in 2014 when students were assigned a health mystery to solve.

Emma Cain, a La Grande Middle School student, also was attending Girls in

Science for the second consecutive year and plans to attend again in 2016.

"What I have learned is so valuable," she said. "It is awesome."

She is considering later serving as a volunteer for the program.

"I am very interested. I want to look into it," Cain said.

The purpose of Girls in Science is to provide middle school age girls an opportunity to learn about science in a pressure-free environment.

"It gets girls out of the classroom and into an environment that is freer in which they can have more fun," said EOU Professor of Biology Karen Antell, one of Eastern's faculty members who helped conduct the Girls in Science program.

Antell taught students how to analyze fish by providing them with actual perch that they dissected while working in teams.

*For the complete story, please see Monday's edition of The Observer.*

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# GO-STEM Hub raising science awareness

**By Dick Mason**  
The Observer

Robots are rolling in two La Grande public schools and not coincidentally so is a promising new program based at Eastern Oregon University promoting math and science.

A Greater Oregon-Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Hub is reaching out to the region in an increasing number of ways after being established at EOU about 10 months ago.

The GO-STEM Hub, created with funding from a state grant, is designed to promote science, technology, engineering and math instruction in schools; help businesses learn how to use all four in the workplace to boost production and efficiency; promote the public's understanding of science and much more.

GO-STEM has already played a key role in establishing robotics programs at La Grande High School and La Grande Middle School, helped put on 16 programs promoting the sciences throughout Northeast Oregon and has taken a number of other steps to promote the use and understanding of science and technology.



Dick Mason/The Observer

Brad Nelson of Skip-Line Inc., a La Grande electronic engineering and manufacturing firm, works on a robotics project with La Grande High School students Zayne Kirkham and Eleanor Des Jardin.



## Hubs growing quickly

"It has been a great opportunity. It feels like we have accomplished a lot in a short amount of time," said Donna Rainboth, the GO-STEM Hub director and an assistant professor of education at EOU.

The STEM Hub at EOU is one of six in Oregon. The others, all created about a year ago, are located in Portland, Salem, Bend and Douglas and Lincoln counties. The STEM hubs are all funded by a state grant.

The Greater Oregon-STEM Hub serves Union, Wallowa, Baker, Grant, Harney, Morrow, Umatilla and Malheur counties. The hub has helped hundreds of people in Northeast Oregon since it was founded, but program officials hope to increase this number by getting more people to come forward and share their STEM-related needs. These include businesses.

"We want to link businesses with STEM professionals," said Katie Butterfield, the GO-STEM facilitator.

Agricultural firms are among those that could benefit from STEM connections. Butterfield noted that people in agriculture requesting advice on how to apply science, technology engineering and math to boost crop production will be put in touch with STEM professionals.

Butterfield noted that people working in agriculture apply STEM

principles in many ways. One example is that cellphone technology is now used to move irrigation wheels.

On the education front, employers are being encouraged to contact GO-STEM to explain the skills they need of high school and college graduates entering the workforce. Butterfield said that a number of area employers cannot find enough applicants locally with the skills they need. Helping schools better prepare students for careers can involve more than altering curriculum. It can also be done by establishing things like after school programs and clubs, Butterfield said.

## Benefits for students, teachers

After school programs STEM has helped start include robotics sessions at LHS and LMS. Students meet after school to build and program robots under the direction of volunteer STEM professionals. Robotics is a great match for GO-STEM because it incorporates many STEM elements, Rainboth said.

"It involves computer science, math and technology," Rainboth said.

GO-STEM has also helped establish robotics programs at schools in Baker City and Milton-Freewater, and soon will have one operating at a La Grande elementary school.

Work GO-STEM officials are doing for schools also involves curriculum. GO-STEM put on a workshop

*"It has been a great opportunity. It feels like we have accomplished a lot in a short amount of time."*

— Donna Rainboth, GO-STEM Hub director and assistant professor of education at Eastern Oregon University

## Learn more

Those who would like assistance from GO-STEM or information about the program should call Hub Director Donna Rainboth at 541-962-3720 or GO-STEM Facilitator Katie Butterfield at 541-962-3012.

neering and math are often inter-related in health career fields. This is the case with an increasing number of jobs in the 21st century, a point people connected to the GO-STEM program want to emphasize.

"You need to be literate in STEM to help make informed decisions," Rainboth said.

Rainboth believes the potential of GO-STEM is vast and that much more can be accomplished by it, especially if people continue to come forward and discuss how the hub can help them.

"This is the tip of the iceberg," Rainboth said.

Contact Dick Mason at 541-786-5386 or [dmason@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:dmason@lagrandeobserver.com). Follow Dick on Twitter @IgoMason.

Workshops put on for educators earlier with the help of GO-STEM include one in Wallowa County for sensors, which can be used for classroom experiments. Instruction was provided about sensors produced by a company that makes sensors for soil moisture, acidity, humidity and much more.

## Beyond the classroom

GO-STEM is also involved in helping to arrange for young people to have internships with professionals in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. This is why it will help put on the MedQuest Camp for high school students in June at EOU. The week-long camp will help students explore health care careers. Youths at the camp will see how science, technology, engi-



## The Quest to Produce Home-Grown Healthcare Professionals

*MedQuest camp is one of AHEC's founding programs, and it is just one way that Northeast Oregon tries to keep their home-grown professionals here to serve and give back to their community.*

By Trish Yerges

Each year high school students with an interest in entering a healthcare field apply for enrollment in MedQuest, a week-long exploratory camp organized by Northeast Oregon AHEC and hosted at Eastern Oregon University's campus.

The camp's goal is to produce home-grown healthcare professionals who will stay and set up their practices in rural and underserved areas where they are needed the most. This year's enrollment was an encouraging sign to AHEC organizers.

"We had 44 registered students, and we accepted 42," said NEOAHEC Outreach Coordinator Meredith Lair. "Then through a natural kind of attrition, we ended up with 32 students."

Attending the state-wide camp were sophomores, juniors and graduated seniors from high schools throughout our region and 9 from Lane County. Their selection was based upon their recommendations, GPA and the quality of their application.

Lair and NEOAHEC's Education Director Geoff Robinson collaborated on the MedQuest program agenda together, capturing student interest and registration during the 2013-14 school year.

Participating students are immersed in a rotation through 3 different job shadow locations as well as hands-on practice and audience inclusion in healthcare panel discussions with local providers.

Over 75 community healthcare providers and career volunteers stepped forward to instruct and mentor the MedQuest students.

"We had an incredible volunteer force behind MedQuest this year," said Lair. "So many clinic managers, providers, the hospital and local businesses came together to help us provide a robust and meaningful camp experience for the high school students. Without all of their cooperation, this camp would not be the unique and educational experience that it is."

Each day of the camp was a long one. They began at 7 a.m. and ended at 10 p.m.

Monday's agenda took the students to the Island City Fire Department where they did the ropes rescue. They also talked to college admissions and received a tour of EOU.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, students



rotated through 3 individually designed job shadowing locations within the camp. They received a tour of the Life Flight base and enjoyed a therapy careers night at Mountain Valley Therapy.

"They told us about the different avenues people can pursue within therapy," said Lair. "They also got their HIPPA and blood-borne pathogens certification after completing training and passing a test for that."

Also featured on the camp's agenda was a medical specialties panel discussion during which different physicians and practitioners from the community spoke about the road they took to become a physician, pharmacist, nurse practitioner and other healthcare provider.

"The students also spent 4 hours at Grande Ronde Hospital learning about different careers within the hospital world from telemedicine to nursing to lab careers," said Lair. "Chief Financial Officer Wade Weis spoke to them for a while."

Following this students spent an exciting afternoon with the La Grande Fire Department, learning about the different career opportunities there. Students were given a hands-on opportunity to dress in rescue gear and learn how to cut a vehicle open and rescue a trapped driver.

"Another thing the students participated in was a discussion about alternative medicine," said Lair.

Speaking on the alternative medicine panel were Dr. John Winters (naturopathic), Dr. Jason Kehr (chiropractic), David Ebel (physical therapy), Gary Oswald (acupuncture, massage, energy work and BheSaja), and John Combe (massage therapy).

"If the students enjoyed their MedQuest

experience with us enough, we like to keep in touch with them and help guide them through this process of becoming a healthcare professional," said Lair.

This is done through other follow-up programs, including an online course which is offered through EOU called, "Future Healthcare Professionals of Oregon." It's another guide that high school students have to determine what they might be interested in pursuing as a healthcare provider.

"We also have another program," said Lair, called, "A Day in the Life" which is a college program for undergraduates who are interested in applying to a graduate or professional program. We go to OHSU where interested students can spend about a day and a half talking to admissions counselors and touring the campus and learning what it is like to be a graduate student pursuing a career as a doctor, dentist or physician's assistant."

As additional support, throughout the State AHEC provides fully furnished housing for medical and dental students and physician's assistant students who are currently in the program and doing rural rotations.

"We're out there to grow our own medical professionals and bring these students back to a rural area to practice at whatever field they decide upon," said Lair.

MedQuest camp is one of AHEC's founding programs, and it is just one way that Northeast Oregon tries to keep their home-grown professionals here to serve and give back to their community.

For information on the 2015 MedQuest camp, contact Meredith Lair or Geoff Robinson at [www.eou.edu/neahec](http://www.eou.edu/neahec)



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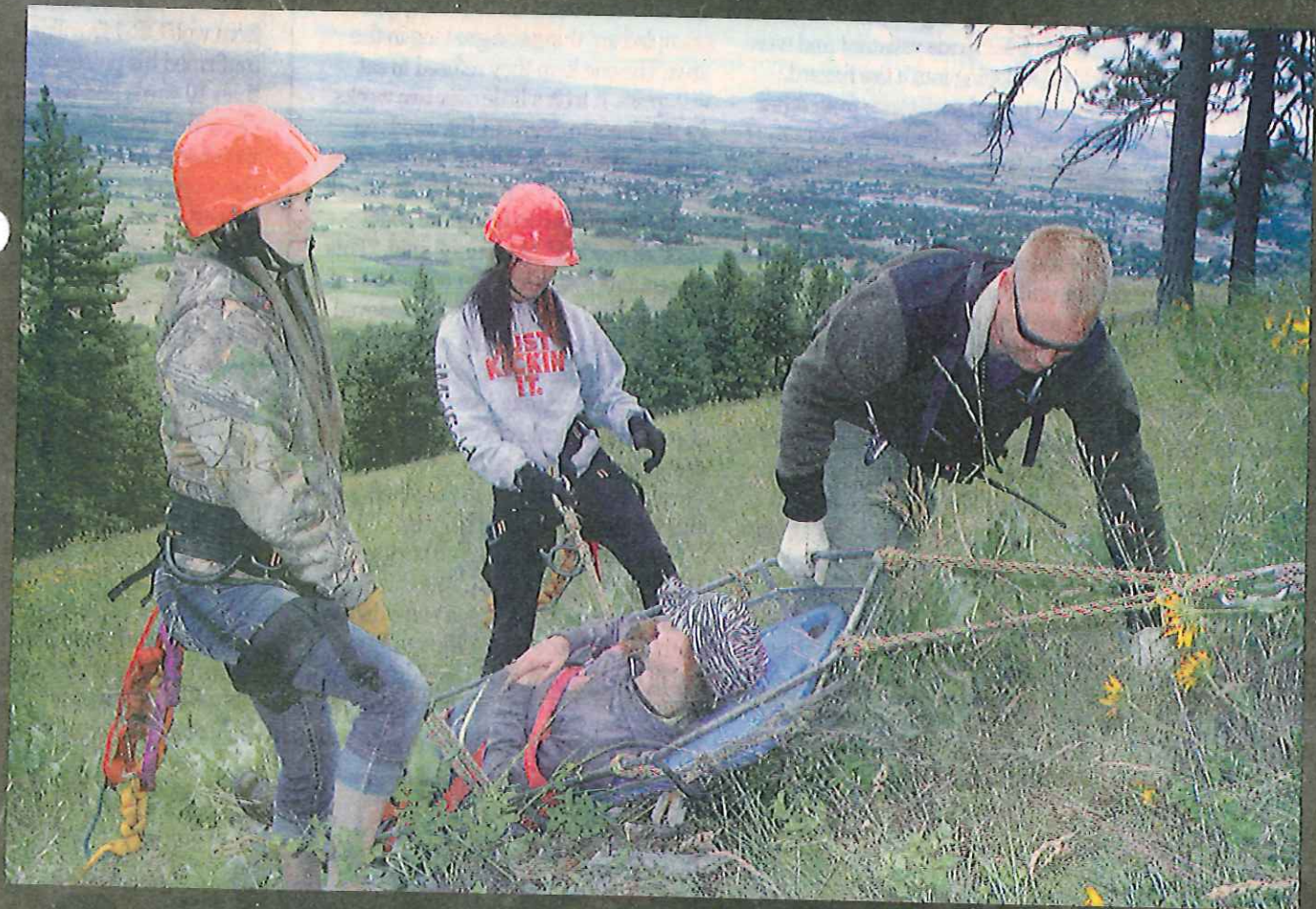
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Fax: 541-437-1712  
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# ROPES RESCUE LAUNCHES CAMP

■ High school students in La Grande for week during health care career exploration camp



Under the guidance of paramedic Chauncey Ferguson, Jennifer McDougall, left, of Pendleton and Aubrey DeLaRosa of Creswell learn the technique of rope rescuing as they raise 'victim', Jaine Homan, from a ravine to safety on Fox Hill Monday.

Chris Baxter/The Observer



**By Kelly Ducote**

The Observer

Aubrey DeLaRosa isn't sure what she wants to do when she grows up.

Maybe a neonatal nurse, maybe a lawyer.

On Monday, though, she was a ropes rescuer.

The 16-year-old from Creswell joined 30 other high school students from around the state for MedQuest Camp, an annual week-long camp hosted by the Northeast Oregon Health Education Center at Eastern Oregon University.

The camp launched Monday with ropes rescue training.

"It's really tiring. You use a lot of your leg muscles," said DeLaRosa, who was a rescuer who retrieved the "patient," who had fallen down a hill. "It's fun, but it's also hard to trust the ropes."

Donning hard hats and gloves, the students got firsthand training from the local ropes rescue team. They started the training at the La Grande Rural Fire Department and then ventured up to Mt. Emily.

"Oddly enough, there's a right way to pull on a rope and there's a wrong way to pull on a rope," J.B. Brock, Union County's emergency manager, told the students before going out to the mountain. "There are always two

ropes. Two is one, one is none."

The students were instructed how to tie a reloaded figure eight knot and how to package patients. Up on the mountain, they put their skills to the test in a mock rescue, helping members of the local ropes rescue team set up a system to bring the "patient" up a steep incline.

"It's really fun so far," said Jennifer McDougall, a 16-year-old from Pendleton. McDougall, like many of the students, is interested in pursuing a career in nursing but wanted to see what other opportunities the medical field offers.

*See Camp / Page 5A*



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2014

LOCAL

*"With a significant increase in numbers this year, it was important for the entire community to come together to offer students an experience that would fuel their passion to become a health care provider."*

— Meredith Lair, NEOAHEC outreach coordinator



Chris Baxter/The Observer

Before heading out and up into the hills for real-world instruction, firefighter and EMT Anthony Swales helps students make their way through one of the useful knots that could be needed during an actual rope rescue event.



## CAMP

*Continued from Page 1A*

Counselor Ellie McConnell can testify for MedQuest. She attended the camp as a 16-year-old. Now 22, she is preparing to apply for physical therapy school. This is her fourth year as a counselor.

"This is one of the biggest groups we've had," she said.

Camp organizers said the number of students this year doubled over last year.

"The response from the student interested in MedQuest camp was incredible this year," said Geoff Robinson, Northeast Oregon AHEC education director. "It really drives home the importance of what we are trying to accomplish by immersing students in health careers."

This week, the students will receive HIPAA and blood-borne pathogens certifications, rotate with practitioners in job shadows and hear from members of medical specialties and alternative medicine panels. The week-long camp has brought together more than 75 volunteers from Grande Ronde Hospital and its clin-



Chris Baxter/The Observer

Chief of the La Grande Rural Fire District Larry Wooldridge, left, guides students through the process of raising a third student "victim" up a hill during the ropes rescue instruction on Fox Hill north of La Grande Monday.

ics, local fire departments, doctors, dentists, optometrists and therapists.

"With a significant increase in numbers this year, it was important for the entire community to come together to offer students an experience that would fuel their passion to become a health

care provider," said Meredith Lair, NEOAHEC outreach coordinator. "Without the whole-hearted support of the community, MedQuest would not be the strong offering it is year after year."

For volunteers like La Grande Rural Fire Chief Larry Wooldridge, it's inspir-

ing to see interested kids.

"It's nice to ask for a volunteer and see hands go up," he said.

Contact Kelly Ducote at 541-786-4230 or [kducote@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:kducote@lagrandeobserver.com). Follow Kelly on Twitter @IgoDucote.



# Future medical professionals, hospital plans discussed with Founding Sisters

KRISTI ALBERTSON  
THE ARGUS OBSERVER

## ONTARIO

Hospital supporters met Thursday to celebrate success stories at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Ontario.

The Founding Sisters Society met at Pam Helfrich's home to hear from students they'd helped send to camp, get an update on planned upgrades at the hospital and just chat with one another.

The society was formed to honor the memory of the six Dominican sisters who founded Holy Rosary Hospital, Saint Alphonsus' forerunner, more than a century ago, and to help fund and direct quality health-care projects and education opportunities in the community,

according to information provided by Amber Campbell, president and chairwoman of the hospital foundation's board of directors.

The society heard Thursday from Tyra and Julie Hernandez, sisters and students at Ontario High School, who shared their experience at MedQuest, Eastern Oregon University's summer camp that explores various health-related careers.

The girls spent a week in La Grande, living in the EOU dorms and spending time with health professionals in a variety of capacities. They went through a ropes rescue workshop, in which they learned to tie knots and use ropes to pull injured people out of haz-

*Just because you happen to be on Medicaid*

*doesn't mean you shouldn't have a great facility like you would in a larger city.*

—Ken Hart, foundation executive director

ardous situations. They learned about blood typing, and they toured Life Flight, Grande Ronde Hospital and the La Grande Fire Department.

SEE SISTERS | PAGE A2

## SISTERS: Obstetrics to be upgraded in our youth.

FROM PAGE A1

"It opened my eyes to the different things I could do in the medical field," Julie said.

Each girl also got to job shadow three health-care workers. Julie shadowed an optometrist, a pediatrician and a physical therapist.

Tyra spent the day with a dentist, surgeons and an optometrist. Her job shadow experience likely will have a lifelong impact.

"I've decided to become a dentist," she said.

The girls thanked the Founding Sisters for providing the funds to make their camp experience possible. The cost was \$550 for an entire week of room, board and workshops.

"We just want to say thank you for making this possible for us," Tyra said. "It was a really great opportunity."

Ken Hart, executive director of Saint Alphonsus' Ontario Foundation, said helping students like the Hernandez sisters explore health career options is "a great example of one thing we're able to do with the money we raise: reinvest

in our youth."

Hart then shared the hospital's plans for upgrading its facility. Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Ontario recently received an \$8 million investment from its parent company, CHE Trinity. The hospital plans to put the money toward remodeling the Park Center across from its main campus on Southwest Fourth Avenue and updating its patient rooms, particularly in the obstetrics area.

The obstetrics department saw nearly 900 patients in 2013, Hart said. Just under 600 babies were born at the Ontario hospital last year.

The patients are overwhelmingly on Medicaid, which Hart called a reflection of the community. Malheur County is Oregon's poorest. But, Hart added, that doesn't mean local mothers don't deserve a top-notch facility.

"Just because you happen to be on Medicaid doesn't mean you shouldn't have a great facility like you would in a larger city," he said.

Upgrading the maternity

rooms to improve the patients' experience might encourage local mothers, who would otherwise drive Nampa or Boise before they go into labor, to stay Ontario, Hart added.

"We want to entice people who leave our communities to have babies to stay here," he said. "We want our facility to match the level of staff and volunteers."

Exactly what the obstetrics department upgrades will look like — and how the hospital will accomplish it without interrupting its service to mothers — is still under discussion. The hospital foundation also hopes community members will want to invest, Hart said.

"We assume [the obstetrics department] alone will be \$1 million plus," he said.

**KRISTI ALBERTSON**  
The editor at The Argus Observer. She can be reached at (541) 823-4818 or by emailing kristia@argusobserver.com. comment on this story, go to [www.argusobserver.com](http://www.argusobserver.com).





Friday, December 16, 2011

LOCAL

# Video conference to focus on diet, brain health

Oregon Health and Sciences University will present a video conference featuring Gary Wenk, Ph.D., a professor of psychology and neuroscience and molecular virology, immunology and medical

genetics at Ohio State University. His presentation, "Food for Thought: How Diet Influences Brain Health," will be held on Jan. 21.

Registration is due by Jan. 13.

Brain Awareness is designed for teachers, health care professionals and community members. Professional development units are available to participants. Northeast Oregon Area Health

Education Center is hosting the teleconference in the following locations: Eastern Oregon University in La Grande, Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario and Intermountain

ESD in Pendleton.

Two professional development units are available for those attending the sessions at EOU and TVCC.

Three units are available to those attending at

Intermountain ESD.

There is a registration fee of \$15. Register online by visiting <http://www.eou.edu/neoahec/BrainAwareness.html>. For more information, see the website or call 541-962-3423.





Healthy Communities Coalition

*A Service of Good Shepherd Healthcare System*

Dear **Family Health & Fitness Day** Vendor:

The Good Shepherd Medical Center and the Healthy Communities Wellness Coalition wish to thank you for participating in the third annual **Family Health & Fitness Day** held on Saturday, September 24, 2011 at Hermiston High School. Our commitment to improving the quality of life for our communities can only be accomplished through the continued support of organizations and agencies that strive to support healthy choices for individuals and the community. Your participation helped to disseminate valuable information to our community concerning health, wellness, fitness and safety.

We received numerous positive comments from the attendees regarding the usefulness of the information distributed at the event. Those attending expressed their appreciation for the time that vendors and exhibitors spent answering questions and addressing their personal concerns. Through your participation we were able to serve forty five hundred plus (4,500+) community members—an admirable success made possible by your contribution of time and resources.

We hope that you found the experience to be both useful and informative for your organization and look forward to working with you in the future. Our plan is to have another **Family Health & Fitness Day** event on Saturday, September 22, 2012. Thank you again for your time, assistance and support.

Sincerely,

*Juli Gregory, RN*

Juli Gregory, RN  
Education Director  
Good Shepherd Medical Center  
610 Northwest Eleventh Street  
Hermiston, OR 97838  
(541) 667-3506

[jgregory@gshealth.org](mailto:jgregory@gshealth.org)





# Thank You!

From Northeast Oregon AHEC Staff and

## MedQuest

Would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for their contributions to our 17th annual camp. This year we helped 27 students from 10 different counties explore their options in health careers.

### GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL

Grande Ronde Hospital Board Members  
GRH Department Managers  
Kolleen Carrel, Ed. Coordinator  
Rita Allen, Central Processing  
Peg Brown, Family Birthing Center  
Vicki Hill Brown, Infection Prevention  
Nancy Campbell, Patient Care Services  
Donna Clements, Family Birthing Center  
Shirley Cook, Family Birthing Center  
Rita Allen, Central Processing  
April Brock, RN  
Vickie Hill Brown, RN, FNP  
Amy Dodson, Lab  
Teri Garton, Lab  
Health Information Management  
Susan Lewis, RD, Nutrition  
Sue McCarthy, Surgicenter  
Susan Rice, MD  
Bunita Stockhoff, Home Care and Hospice  
John Walmsley, Respiratory Therapy  
Bob Weber, Lab  
June Wilson, OT  
Debbie Wright, Surgicenter

### EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

Academic Affairs  
Aramark  
Campus Security and Safety  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Facilities Scheduling  
Hunt Hall Maintenance Staff  
OHSU School of Nursing  
Residence Life

### LA GRANDE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Emmitt Cornford, EMT-I, Captain  
Chancy Ferguson, EMT-P  
Korky Gillies, EMT-P, Captain  
Stan Grove, EMT-I, Captain  
All of the other many staff who participated in MedQuest activities

### INDIVIDUALS

Le Alexander, EOU  
Bern Anderes, Scenario Victim  
Callahan Anderes, Scenario Victim  
Daniel Beckner, OD  
John Combe, LMT  
Sgt. Rick Bloom, Ropes Course  
Bob and Sue Coulter and Staff  
Dave Ebel, RPT  
Nicki Ebel, OT  
Dakota Gordon, Hunt Hall Director, EOU  
Lory Graham, OHSU School of Nursing  
Casey Heitz, Scenario Victim  
Jeff Henry, DVM and Staff  
Suzanne Hopper, ODS  
Susan Hughes, LCSW  
Alexis Johnson, Scenario Victim  
Brook Jorgensen, ATC  
Jason Kehr, DC  
Dawn Knight, OB-GYN  
Steve Koza, DMD and Staff  
Dan Leone, NP  
Joseph Martinez, DMD  
Terrence McCoy, DVM  
James McMahan, DMD and Staff  
Joseph Petrusek, MD  
William Pettit, OD  
Jennifer Moore, LA  
Mark Omann, DVM and Staff  
Debbie Rogers, EOU  
Danielle Simpson, MT, Interpath Lab  
Cindy Simmonis, RN  
Ellen Schoenfelder, MD  
Danielle Tams, ODS  
Kayla Webb, Scenario Victim  
Amanda Winkle, PTA  
John Winters, ND

### OTHER BUSINESS PARTICIPANTS

Animal Health Center  
Apple Eye Care  
B & K Auto Salvage  
Bills Quick Mart  
Blue Mountain Ropes Course  
Country Animal Clinic

Evergreen Health and Rehab  
Koinonia House  
Koza Family Dental Care  
La Fiesta  
Loveland Funeral Chapel  
Mountain Valley Therapy  
Obsidian Urgent Care  
ODS School of Dental Hygiene Staff and Students  
Oregon National Guard Armory, La Grande  
Primos  
Red Cross United Drug  
Yia Yia Nikki's

### MEDQUEST STAFF

Kelly Anderes, Staff  
Haley Hines, Staff  
Kim Lee, Staff  
Katie O'Riley, Staff  
Leonor Lopez, Camp Counselor  
Meagan McCabe, Camp Counselor  
Shaun Peiris, Camp Counselor  
Megan Wagner, Camp Counselor

### WITH A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS MEDQUEST SPONSORS

Leo Adler Foundation  
Wildhorse Foundation  
John Winters, ND  
B & K Auto Salvage

THANK YOU!



**NEOAHEC**

Northeast Oregon Area  
Health Education Center  
541.962.3801  
bhines@eou.edu

www.facebook.com/  
northeastoregon.ahec





## THE OBSERVER

Tuesday, July 5, 2011

LISA MCMAHAN  
The Observer

It's an invitation not typically extended to high schoolers.

"If somebody wants to play, let's go!" engineer Jeff Frantum of the La Grande Fire Department said, pointing to the Jaws of Life.

Standing on pavement littered with glass shards, the students took turns donning fire-fighting turnout gear, sawing through the windshield and using the jaws of life to pry apart an old car, learning how firefighters gain access into a vehicle while protecting passengers inside.

The extreme hands-on experience was part of MedQuest Health Career Choices Camp, a week-long experience designed for students interested in health care careers.

This year, 32 Oregon high-school-aged students from 26 communities met to explore health professions in the camp, which was facilitated by the Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center, or NEOAHEC.

"This is a pretty intense

**'I got to spend a couple of hours in the ER. It was really exciting for me. (The camp) just kind of confirmed what I want to do.'**

— Rebekah Esselstrom

opportunity for them to explore a lot of careers," Executive Director Amy Dunkak said. "They spend a whole week learning about health care."

The organization was established in 1990 and the camp is marking its 18th year in a big way.

"This is a record year for us," NEOAHEC Education Coordinator and Camp Director Brenna Dunlap said. "We're at capacity."

Students who wish to attend the camp must go through an extensive application process, Dunlap said, including letters of recommendation, meeting GPA requirements and writing an essay.

Dunlap worked to collect donations to enable everyone to attend.

"We were able to solicit over \$10,000 in scholarship funds," Dunlap said. "Every kid here that needed scholarship money to go to camp got it."

The camp also works with more than 50 local health care

providers that host tours and lead job shadows with the students.

The week was packed with time spent at Mountain Valley Therapy, Grande Ronde Hospital, Loveland Funeral Chapel, Kehr Chiropractic, ODS and the La Grande Fire Department, among other locations. Students learned about blood typing and medical labs at EOU's Badgley Hall.

"We have a lot of group activities, but it's also really tailored to the individual," Dunlap said. "Every student has three rotations."

The rotations differed depending on students' intended future professions.

Ian McLean, a senior from Imbler, toured the hospital's intensive care unit Friday. He is interested in physical therapy or biological engineering and had the opportunity to speak with a biology professor at Eastern.

Junior Rebekah Esselstrom

See **MEDQUEST**, 3B

High school-aged students learn about careers in health care field

# Choices, choices





LISA MCMAHAN | The Observer

**"FREE CONVERTIBLES MADE TODAY"** was a promise made by the La Grande Fire Department at this year's MedQuest Health Career Choices Camp. Engineer Jeff Frantum and firefighter paramedic Robert Feik directed students in crash extraction methods using the jaws of life June 23. The week-long camp, which included 32 Oregon high school students from 26 communities, is in its 18th year under the Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center.



## MedQuest just one of three camps offered by area health ed center

**MEDQUEST** from 1B

goes to Mountain View High School in Bend and used the week to learn more about becoming a surgeon or nurse in the ER.

"I got to spend a couple of hours in the ER. It was really exciting for me," she said. "(The camp) just kind of confirmed what I want to do."

The camp helps focus goals and, in some cases, shows students options they might not have considered.

They are also exposed to real-life working conditions and the flexibility certain careers demand.

Thursday's demonstrations, organized by fire Capt. Corky Gillies, gave students a taste of on-call life.

Thursday's Life Flight demonstration was pushed back when the helicopter was called out, and the jaws of life demonstration at the La Grande Fire Department was also interrupted before the car was transformed into a convertible.

Staff and students quickly switched gears, filing inside for a CPR demonstration.

The lessons are planned with students in mind, as are the rest of the week's activities.

Students stay on campus at Eastern and looked forward to evening recreation activities, including swimming and miniature golf.

The staff members are especially suited for the tasks at hand, Dunkak said.

"Many have been in camps or are medical students," she said. "That's what's great about our camp staff."

The camp is part of NEOAHEC's goal of improving rural health care, helping students earn degrees and encouraging them to keep their skills in Oregon.

"That's our objective at the end of the day," Dunkak said.

NEOAHEC was founded after the federal government realized the need for rural community health care.

"If there wasn't some action taken, we were going to be in a world of hurt," Dunkak said.

The organization offers two other experiential camps through OHSU, its "mothership," Dunkak said, and students are encouraged to attend those.

NEOAHEC covers 12 counties, and there are four other Area Health Education Centers in Oregon. The non-profit organization has eight houses — including one in Enterprise — where medical students complete their clinicals with local health care providers.

"We provide education from elementary school to med school," Dunkak said. "It's pretty phenom"



LISA MCMAHAN | The Observer

**TURNOUT GEAR GETS A THUMBS UP** from junior Rebekah Esselstrom of Mountain View High School in Bend as part of this year's MedQuest camp, which gives Oregon high school students the opportunity to explore different health careers through group sessions and individual rotations. Esselstrom said the camp confirmed her goal of becoming a surgeon or a nurse in the ER.



# Annual mammograms after age 40 save lives

## CURE from 1A

"One in eight — let's beat that rate," Brugger had students shout rhythmically.

Women who do develop breast cancer significantly improve their odds of surviving by catching it early, Brugger reminded students many times Thursday.

"The best protection is early detection," she said.

Women diagnosed in the early stages of breast cancer

have a 98 percent survival rate, Brugger said. Women diagnosed in the latest stage of breast cancer have a 26 percent five-year survival rate.

Women who receive annual mammograms after age 40 increase their chances of early detection in part because they provide doctors with a baseline of X-rays they can refer back to. The baseline makes it easier for doctors to spot abnormalities since they have a better idea of what a woman's healthy

tissue should look like, Brugger said.

Brugger said all women need to realize they face a real risk of developing breast cancer. Women from families with a history of breast cancer face a greater risk, but 85 percent of those who develop the disease do not have relatives who had it.

Only 10 percent to 15 percent of breast cancers occur because of inherited risks, according to

information distributed at Thursday's program.

Brugger is a graduate student at Portland State University where she is earning a master's degree in public health. She believes in making her presentations upbeat because students are more likely to talk with others about what they learned, sharing information which could save the lives of others.

Brugger's presentation was sponsored by the Oregon and

Southwest Washington affiliate of Susan G. Komen Race For The Cure Foundation. She spoke as part of a breast cancer awareness program being conducted at EHS by its Future Business Leaders of America chapter.

Emily Hardy and Rachael Carrothers, members of Elgin FBLA chapter, are leading the program. They received a \$1,000 grant from the Susan G. Komen For The Cure Foundation to conduct the

Friday, January 14, 2011†



Sara Brugger

public awareness program.



## BONES AND SO MUCH MORE



CHRIS BAXTER | The Observer

**BRENNA DUNLOP LENDS AN APPROPRIATE HAND** to Island City Elementary fourth-graders Camren Chrusoskie, left, and Oscar Galindo as they try to reassemble an X-ray puzzle. Learning about the bones in the human body was just one of the many stations some 1,300 fourth through eighth-grade area students visited at the "Let's Get Healthy!" interactive educational exhibit held at the Riveria Activity Center in La Grande Wednesday. Developed by Oregon Health and Science University in partnership with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, the exhibit was brought to La Grande by the Union County Commission on Children and Families and the Union County Fit Kids Coalition.



PENDLETON

# Not-so-weird science

By ERIN MILLS  
*East Oregonian*

For at least one Saturday Science middle schooler, the news that her sports drink consisted largely of sugar was, well, too much information.

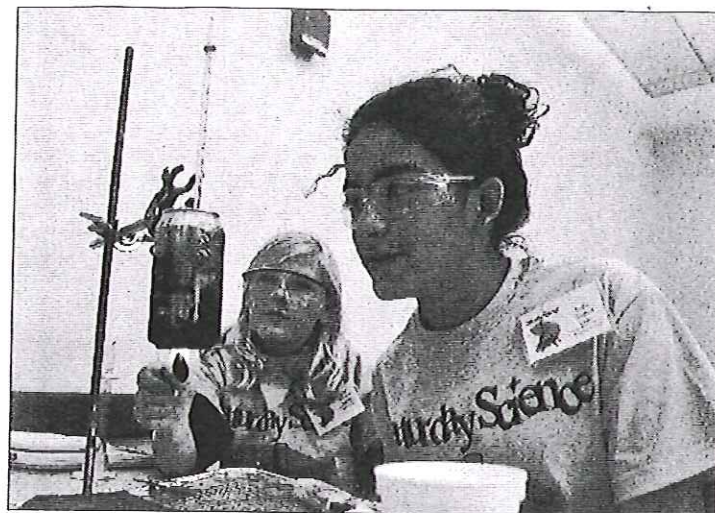
"She picked up her bottle and said, 'I don't want to drink this anymore,'" laughed Brenna Dunlap, a teacher with the Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center.

Students from across north-east Oregon, some from as far away as Tygh Valley, enjoyed a full day of body-centered science at the first Saturday Science event at Blue Mountain Community College. They drew and decorated models of the human body, conducted experiments to determine caloric, protein or starch contents in foods and poured solutions through tubes to model the human digestive system.

Two Hermiston students, Sofia Gispert Tello, 13, and Jacee Ternes, 11, favored the experiment that found the caloric content of nuts. They filled an aluminum can with 50 ml of water, then heated it to boiling with a flaming Brazil nut. By recording how high the water's temperature climbed, they could calculate calories per gram of nut.

"There are few activities like this around here," said Tello. "It's interactive."

In another room, students determined the sugar content



Staff photo by Erin Mills

**Hermiston middle school students Jacee Ternes, 11, and Sofia Gispert Tello, 13, heat a can of water with a burning Brazil nut at Saturday Science at Blue Mountain Community College. By transferring the nut's energy to the water, Tello and Ternes were able to estimate the nut's calories.**

of common cereals, sodas and desserts. They calculated the sugar in a typical fast food meal and scrutinized the nutritional information found on ready-to-eat foods. A box of 10 Ho Hos, for example, holds about 30 teaspoons of pure sugar.

In another exercise, they used Crisco to represent the fat in a meal, alongside the representative white table sugar.

"You get an idea of what you're really eating," Dunlap said.

The Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center

sponsored Saturday Science with Eastern Oregon University, Blue Mountain Community College and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The goal is to interest kids in science, math and careers in medicine.

Eastern Oregon University chemistry professor Anna Cavinato, who was facilitating the nut experiment, said it worked: kids were fascinated by the process and engaged.

"The only way to really get kids excited about science is to do it with your hands, to experiment," she said.



## EXPLORING EMERGENCY MEDICINE



CHRIS BAXTER / The Observer

**A TRIO OF MEDQUEST STUDENTS**, from left, Marisa Friesner of Bend, Natalie Zeigler of Joseph and Katherine Brafford of Ashland carefully remove an "injured" fellow student Bern Anderes of La Grande from a staged car accident scene Thursday at the La Grande Fire Department. Twenty-seven high school students from throughout Oregon participated in this year's week-long MedQuest Camp based at Eastern Oregon University giving them both classroom and hands-on exposure to a variety of facets involved in emergency medicine.

June 18, 2010



# Getting to the root of it

## Dr. Stephen Koza makes an impact on his community

As of Sept. 29, Dr. Stephen Koza's career will come full circle with Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center.

In 1994, the then-junior at La Grande High School received a scholarship from Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center to participate in a dental career institute. As he learned about dentistry skills, the young man felt a sense of confirmation that dentistry was the field he wanted to pursue.

As a teen, he was a student leader as president of the student body at La Grande High School, a Boy Scout with Eagle Scout rank and a district swim champion. He was also an accomplished scholar throughout his academic career.

True to form, he followed his career path from student to professional. He attended Oregon State University and later received his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from Oregon Health Sciences University in 2003.

Dr. Koza's mother, Mary, recalls, "I will never forget the morning in December when he got the call from his student mentor saying he had been accepted into the dental program at OHSU. It was a proud day for all of us!"

Fondly recalling his roots, he returned



### COMMUNITY COMMENT

AMY DUNKAK

to La Grande in 2004 and quickly became a Northeast Oregon AHEC board member.

"I wanted to return the favor and contribute any way I could," Dr. Koza said. "For many kids in rural communities, the only way they are going to learn about health careers is to participate in an AHEC program like MedQuest. I like being able to mentor to students and have a positive influence on their futures."

MedQuest is a weeklong residential camp held on Eastern Oregon University's campus each summer. Steve and many other Union County community members offer their time and expertise to the students interested in health career opportunities.

"I strongly believe that job shadow experiences and direct contact with local health care providers are invaluable to students who participate in the program," Dr. Koza said.

Board Chair Kathleen Negus said she is grateful for Dr. Koza's investment in

Northeast Oregon AHEC.

"Steve has always been an active contributor to our board. He was recently featured in an Oregon AHEC production and has always answered yes to volunteer in our programs," she said. "Steve has also been a strong advocate when we developed new rural clinical rotations in Baker City for dental students."

"We are thrilled that he stayed with us for six years. We are happy he will continue to support us, even though his board term has ended."

Dr. Koza has given freely of his time and expertise to the Northeast Oregon AHEC board. He has served as board secretary, treasurer and chair. He is also a member of the La Grande Rotary Club, The Academy of General Dentistry, The American Dental Association and the Christian Medical and Dental Association.

When he is not serving his community or spending quality time with his family, he can be found at Koza Family Dental Care on Cove Avenue in La Grande.

*Amy Dunkak is executive director of Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center, based at EOU.*





**SARA BRUGGER**, center, led a program at Elgin High School on breast cancer awareness Thursday. Brugger is with the Oregon and Southwest Washington Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen For The Cure Foundation. She is with EHS students Rachael Carrothers, left, and Emily Hardy. Carrothers and Hardy are leading a breast cancer awareness program at their school.

DICK MASON | The Observer



# FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER

*Speaker brings message of hope as she talks to Elgin students about how they can reduce their chances of developing the disease*

**DICK MASON**  
The Observer

ELGIN — Rhythm, rhyme, optimism and education.

All are valuable tools in the battle against breast cancer. They are tools that should not be overlooked.

This was the message Sara Brugger, a representative of the Oregon and Southwest Washington affiliate of the Susan G. Komen For The Cure Foundation had for Elgin High School students Thursday.

Brugger discussed the basics of breast cancer at a school assembly, addressing a sobering topic in a way designed to inspire.

"There is a ton of hope," said Brugger, who is from Vancouver, Wash.

Providing information in a straightforward but inspiring way, Brugger told students to be open about the subject, that the days of it being a taboo subject are gone.

"I wanted to keep it fun and easy to understand. I did not want to scare them," Brugger said after her talk.

Brugger, who gives presentations at schools throughout the state, seeks to empower students, emphasizing that they have the opportunity to make an impact in the fight against breast cancer.

She presented literature to students Thursday stating "I am the cure," the rallying cry of the Susan G. Komen Race For The Cure campaign. The slogan means everyone has the opportunity to take matters into their own hands. They can reduce the likelihood of developing breast cancer and boost their odds of surviving it, Brugger said.

Women can reduce their odds of developing breast cancer by maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, limiting alcohol intake and breast feeding. Brugger urged students to take this advice to heart.

"Raise your voices for healthy choices," Brugger said, a phrase she had groups of students at mid-court shout in unison.

Brugger said about one in eight women will develop breast cancer if they live into their mid-80s.

See **CURE**, 2A



# Portable kits designed to enhance science, health curriculum

In-A-Box is an educational "traveling resource" designed to enhance science and health curriculum, distributed by Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center. Boxes are now available to teachers, preservers and group leaders who work with children in grades four to eight.

The boxes are meant to encourage students to explore aspects of scientific careers;

and to learn about their bodies and the environment they live in. The self-contained "Exploration in Science and Health" kits were designed according to Oregon Academic Content Standards.

Heather Chandler of Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center said, "It's an awesome program and I'm very excited to take it over. I am hoping to get teachers to

see the value of having an entire curriculum complete with lesson plans, activities, worksheets and all the items needed delivered to their door."

Each box contains lesson plans and activities including films and books; health topics and careers; small group and hands-on activities; topic-specific artifacts; lesson extensions; and colorful anatomy

models. All of the materials are included at no cost. Educational modules include Brain; Bones & Muscles; Guts; Ear; Eye; Mouth; and Expedition Northwest. Each box is available to check-out for a period of up to three weeks.

Those interested in checking out a box should contact Heather Chandler with Northeast Oregon Area

Health Education Center at 541-962-3423 or hchandler@eou.edu, or visit [www.inaboxcurriculum.net](http://www.inaboxcurriculum.net).

In-A-Box was created by the Oregon Area Health Education Center and professionals at Oregon Health and Science University; it is funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.



## 7 join in 'Girls in Science' workshop

**LA GRANDE** - Eastern Oregon University hosted more than 100 students from Eastern Oregon, including seven from the Umatilla Indian Reservation, for the fifth annual Girls in Science workshop Oct. 28.

Girls in Science is a collaborative effort between EOU and Northeastern Oregon Area Health Education Center (NEOAHEC).

A major goal of the Girls in Science workshop is to get girls interested and to think about science as a career.

This year the theme was centered around the theme, "Save the fish! An environmental mystery."

Girls found information at four stations - chemistry, biology, archaeology and math. The girls analyzed facts and came to conclusions about why fish are dying and how they can be saved.

Girls attending this event were Cecelia Bonifer, Phyllis Medellin, Kaitlin Treloar, Trina Enright, Gabrielle



*Girls participating in the 'Girls in Science' event at Eastern Oregon University Oct. 28 included, front row from left, Cecelia Bonifer, Phyllis Medellin, Kaitlin Treloar and Trina Enright, and back row from left, Gabrielle Daniels, LeVella Thompson and Nicole Broncheau.*

Daniels, LeVella Thompson and Nicole Broncheau.

Helping with this event from CTUIR were Cheryl Shippentower from Environmental Planning/Rights Protection and Pamela Shippentower, Summer

Employment Coordinator/NAAMP Coordinator.

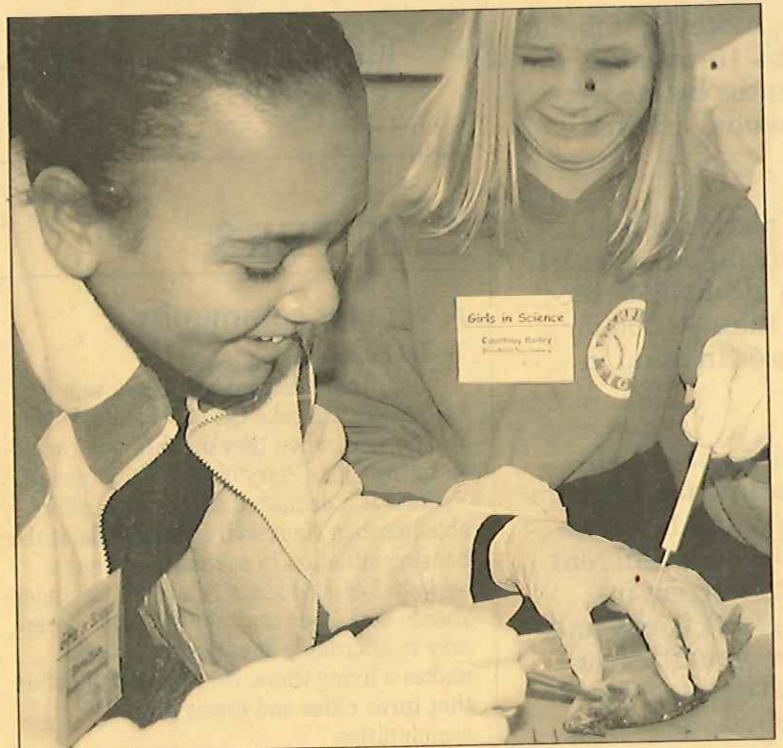
Keynote speaker was Kat Brigham, secretary for the Board of Trustees for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.



## LOCAL



Observer photos/CHRIS BAXTER





## GIRLS' DAY IN THE SCIENCES

*An all-girls science day at the Eastern Oregon University Science Center Saturday attracted about 100 girls from 26 schools throughout the region. The girls gathered for a smorgasbord of science-related activities and classwork. From chemistry to biology to graphing experiment results and much more, EOU science faculty and students guided the girls through a variety of research activities and labwork techniques all relating to the theme of the event, "Save The Fish! An Environmental Mystery." Girls in Science is sponsored and organized by EOU, the Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center, Impact 100, Soroptimist International of La Grande and the American Chemical Society, Richland Chapter.*

### **COMPUTER (ABOVE RIGHT):**

*From left, Emma Stockhoff and Celena Hefner, both of Union, Marissa Mavis of Stanfield and Kayla Swarat of Hermiston work on their analytical skills as they input results from their experiment in measuring oxygen levels in water as it heats up.*

**MICROSCOPE (RIGHT):** *Laura Patterson of La Grande, left, and Danielle Guyon-Fuentes of Hermiston take part in some microscopic work.*

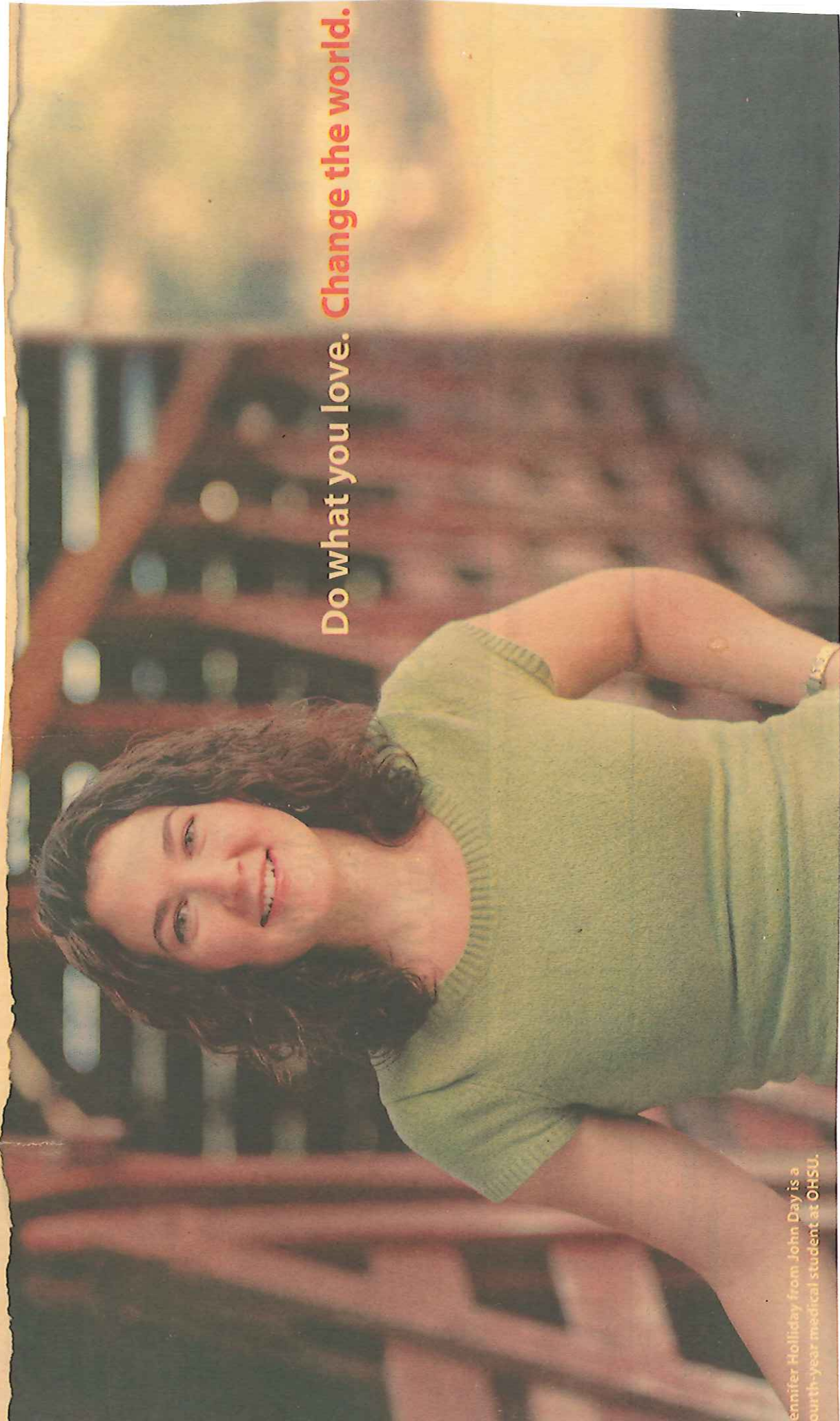
### **DISSECTION (FAR RIGHT):**

*Sierra Ducre and Courtney Bailey, both of Stanfield, dissect a fish to explore its inner workings.*



Do what you love. **Change the world.**

Jennifer Holliday from John Day is a fourth-year medical student at OHSU.





"I grew up on a cattle ranch in eastern Oregon. Out here, you're connected to the land. You're also more connected to each other. When I decided to become a doctor, I wanted to keep that connection.

"I was attracted to OHSU because it has a strong focus on rural care. Every student spends some time working with doctors in a rural setting, so we can see what it's like, firsthand.

"I love the idea of becoming a small town doctor. You're close to your patients. And you're not just

taking care of one person. You're taking care of a community."

**Training the doctors, nurses and dentists**

that Oregon needs – and encouraging them to practice where they're needed most – is a top priority for Oregon Health & Science University.

To help head off a shortage of healthcare professionals, we're expanding our programs and creating regional campuses. We're increasing our already strong focus on rural healthcare. And we're working with community leaders, hospitals and elected officials across the state. At OHSU, we encourage future doctors like Jennifer Holliday to do what they love. Because that's what it takes to change the world.

