PASSPORT TO HAPPINESS

CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES GREATER HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN 2013

The Wasco County Network on Aging announces the launch of the 2013 Passport to Happiness campaign designed to inform and engage the older adult population in The Dalles and surrounding area about activities and services from which they can benefit physically, emotionally and financially.

The Passport to Happiness campaign centers around monthly educational events where seniors can learn about ways to improve their health and happiness in every facet of their lives. The first event in January was facilitated by Lauren Kraemer, of OSU Extension, Kraemer said “I am thrilled with the response we have received about the calendars and our kick-off program was a big success. I think the folks that participate in these educational events over the next year will really enjoy themselves and have an opportunity to reflect on their happiness and improve their health.” Held at the Mid-Columbia Senior Center in The Dalles, each event focuses on a different topic such as transportation, cognitive function, housing, and personal protection. The next Passport to Happiness event will occur on Wednesday, February 20th, from 3:00-4:00pm at the Mid-Columbia Senior Center. All older adults are invited to attend.

To promote the Passport to Happiness events and encourage participation, the Wasco County Network on Aging worked with communications design firm Blue Marble Creative to create the Passport to Happiness Calendar. The calendar features healthy food recipes, tips to enhance personal well-being, a comprehensive listing of agency and service resources, and a full schedule of events around the Columbia River Gorge that are of specific interest to the senior community. “It was an amazing process to see this project develop from start to finish,” said Scott McKay of the Mid-Columbia Senior Center, “when I got this group together, I didn’t know where we would end up but we have a great resource and we have received wonderful feedback on the calendar already.” Included with the calendar is the actual Passport card that campaign participants can bring to events and get stamped. At the end of this year, the Network will host a Passport to Happiness celebration where participants with complete (or nearly complete) passports will be awarded various prizes such as massages, gift cards for haircuts, manicures, or pedicures, and gift certificates to various local businesses.

Passport to Happiness Calendars and may be picked up at the following locations in The Dalles: the office of the Area Agency on Aging, the office of Aging and People with Disabilities, the office of Mid-Columbia Community Action Programs, The Mid-Columbia Housing Authority and Resource Center,
the Mid-Columbia Senior Center, the OSU Extension Office, and Water’s Edge. *Passport to Happiness*

Calendars will also be available for pick-up at each educational event.

Underwritten by Oregon State University Extension Service, the campaign is sponsored by Casa El Mirador, Columbia State Bank, Flagstone Manor, Hearts of Gold Caregivers, Mid-Columbia Medical Center, Mid-Columbia Senior Center, PacificSource Medicare, and Rebecca Street Physical Therapy and with additional support from Area Agency on Aging, Canyon Rim Manor, Columbia Basin Care Facility, Edwards Jones, Kramer’s Market, and National Community Action Month.

**About the Wasco County Network on Aging**
The Wasco County Network on Aging (WCNoA) was convened in 2011 by Scott McKay, director of the Mid-Columbia Senior Center, to explore ways to improve the health and well-being of seniors living in Wasco County. The WCNoA has representatives from numerous local agencies and organizations including OSU Extension, Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, Parks and Recreation, the Mid-Columbia Housing Authority, Mid-Columbia Medical Center, Area Agency on Aging, Aging and People with Disabilities, and Flagstone Senior Living. The group determined that a calendar of local offerings and monthly educational events targeting various aspects of health would have the greatest potential impact on health and happiness among seniors.

**About Oregon State University Extension Office**
Oregon State University Extension Service offers life-long learning opportunities to the people of Wasco County through a variety of classes, outreach, and education programs that focus on youth development, family and community health, and agriculture. OSU's involvement with and underwriting of the Passport to Happiness Project is one of the many ways Extension seeks to promote learning throughout the life course and improve the health of our community.

**About Blue Marble Creative**
Located in White Salmon, WA, Blue Marble Creative is a communications design firm that works with organizations committed to making a difference in social, environmental and health issues in the areas of education, natural resource management, health and wellness, and responsible tourism. Blue Marble Creative translates ideas and vision into tangible communication tools and materials that help clients engage with the right kind of people, get their buy-in and affect change. Services include communications strategy, brand identity development, user experience design, website design and development, publication and presentation design and information graphics.

**CONTACT:** Lauren Kraemer, Wasco County Family and Community Health Faculty, Lauren.Kraemer@oregonstate.edu or 541-296-5494