

Inmates donate to earthquake relief

On hearing of their good deed, an anonymous donor matches their gift

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Ron Edgemon (left), the president of the Oregon State Penitentiary Capital Gavel Toastmasters Club, gives Myrna Seibert, a volunteer with Mercy Corps, a check for \$1,065 Thursday. Several inmate clubs collected money to donate for Haiti earthquake relief efforts. (Timothy J. Gonzalez | Statesman Journal)

About 225 Oregon State Penitentiary inmates chipped in to make a \$1,065 donation Thursday to Mercy Corps of Portland for its earthquake-relief efforts in Haiti.

That's no small donation, given that inmates typically earn about a dollar per day working inside the maximum-security prison in Salem.

Leaders of five inmate clubs that spearheaded the fundraising drive gathered Thursday in the prison's activities section to hand over a check to Myrna Seibert, a volunteer with Mercy Corps.

In turn, Seibert gave the inmate group a rundown of Mercy Corps' efforts to help Haiti rebound from massive destruction caused by the Jan. 12 earthquake, which killed as many as 300,000 people.

Seibert's presentation included photos of the rubble left by the quake and some of its victims.

"It was like a war zone, as you can imagine, with that many people hurt," she said.

Seibert praised the prisoners for helping.

"A little bit goes a long way, and I applaud you so much for your open hearts," she said.

To raise money for Mercy Corps, inmate organizers set up a donation table on the floor of the prison's control room March 2 and 3. Prisoners walk through the central area on their way to dinner and after they eat.

Inmates who opted to donate filled out forms to withdraw the money from their individual inmate trust accounts.

For some inmates, reasons for taking part in the fundraising campaign ranged from seeking new purpose in life to atoning for past mistakes.

"It's our way of giving back to society," said Lee Warren, the president of the 7th Step Club.

Ron Edgemon, the president of the Capital Gavel Toastmasters Club, emphasized that many inmates banded together to do the good deed.

"This whole thing was about a variety of clubs coming together and a bunch of men coming together," he said.

The inmate effort inspired an anonymous donation to Mercy Corps, according to Edgemon and Seibert.

A matching donation of \$1,065 came from a community donor, who visited the prison Wednesday evening and was impressed by the inmate fundraising campaign.

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How to help

The American Red Cross and the Salvation Army continue to accept donations for Haiti relief efforts.

Donate online at www.redcross.org, by calling (800) RED-CROSS, or by texting the word "Haiti" to the number 90999.

Donate online at www.salvationarmyusa.org, by phone at (800) SAL-ARMY, or by texting the word "Haiti" to 52000.

WCCF donates to local food share



Vi Goodman, l-r, Secretary for Lake County Food Share accepting donations from Rebecca Hargis, WCCF Food Drive Site Coordinator.

Staff at the Warner Creek Correctional Facility (WCCF) spent the month of February collecting non-perishable food items and cash as part of the Governor's Food Drive program. According to the Oregon Food Bank's 10 Hunger Facts for Food Drives, families and children face the greatest need.

- 49 percent of households receiving emergency food are families with children.
- 37 percent of those who ate food from an emergency food box last year were children.
- Children who are hungry have more difficulty learning in school.
- Early childhood hunger and malnutrition can result in irreversible health problems, such as hypertension, diabetes, kidney and heart disease, later in life.

During the drive, held from February 1 to March 1, the staff participated in fundraisers that ranged from a bake sale, a silent auction and selling homemade calzones either served hot with a drink or take and bake style. The silent auction raised \$353 for the food drive but it would not have been such a huge success if it weren't for the assistance of local merchants. Les Schwab Tire Center, True Value, Oregon SunStone Aviation and State Line Gun Shop all generously donated items or gift certificates to be auctioned off.

A total of \$1,127 was raised between the fundraising activities, donations and staff payroll deductions, of which \$160 was donated to the Paisley/Summer Lake Food Share program. The Lake County Food Share program in Lakeview received \$475.50, along with 74.3 lbs. of food. The remaining \$480 was raised from staff payroll deductions and will be distributed to the regional Klamath/Lake Counties Food Bank. Boxes were made available in the administration building and the security office to collect non-perishable food items. Oregon Food Bank can collect and distribute approximately 5 pounds of food for every \$1 through its food distribution program. A \$10 donation provides a 3-to-5 day supply of food for a family.

Editor's Pick of the Week http://www.lakecountyexam.com/?page_id=35

Posted on March 31, 2010 at 10:30 am in [Lake County](#) by Ryan Bonham, Lake County Examiner

WWCF, TVCC host biz panel for inmate students



James Cleland, foreground, and Tim Tucker, background to the right, talk business with a group of WCCF inmates who recently completed a business class coordinated through WCCF and Treasure Valley Community College.

Inmate students that participated in a business class at Warner Creek Correctional Facility (coordinated through Treasure Valley Community College) recently held an interactive business panel with members of Lakeview's business community.

Tim and Marie Tucker as well as James and Kim Cleland served as guests at the panel, sharing with inmates their experiences and philosophies relative to their business backgrounds.

The Tuckers own Lakeview's Subway franchise, while James Cleland is a contract engineer that works on an independent contracting basis. Kim previously operated a family-owned stained-glass business in the Sacramento, Calif. area.

The Tuckers spoke briefly on their career histories, having previously lived in the Portland area where Tim worked in the technology field and Marie worked in health care. They eventually moved to Lakeview, and operated an insurance business followed by a real estate business.

Ultimately, the couple made the decision to pursue a franchise business, which led to the opening of Lakeview's first franchise fast-food restaurant in the form of Subway. Tim noted that the decision was partially spurred by the ready-made aspect of setting up the business.

"I figured I wouldn't have to reinvent the wheel," he said.

James Cleland described his career as an independently-contracted engineer, working on electronic equipment, in which he said he's been involved since 1985. Technology allows him to work on an Atlanta, Ga., job from his home in Lakeview. Kim said that she started out working in the family business, which started as a hobby that expanded into something much larger, and later became a nurse. She cited the challenges associated with working seven days a week due in keeping the business running.

Regarding an inquiry to the Tuckers pertaining to economic impacts in the local community, Marie said that the local community does not see the extreme highs and lows of larger communities, primarily due to the isolated nature of Lakeview.

The inmate students broke into three focus groups, in which the guests rotated through and answered specific business-related questions. The groups allowed for one-on-one interaction, and more spontaneous inquiries on behalf of the inmates.

Questions ranged from company-based contracting versus local contracting for the Subway restaurant. —Tim said that the Subway company provided the mandated guidelines but work was subcontracted out to local companies — to trade-offs in transitional from operating as a sole proprietor into a career field.

In the case of the latter, Kim Cleland said that she missed the creativity afforded by running her own business.