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OREGON LIFE

# Healthy Families

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registerguard.com/healthyfamilies

MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2016

SECTION C

## HEALTHY HINTS

### OLD PARK IS NEW AGAIN

**Willamalane Park and Recreation District** is celebrating the reopening of Meadow Park's playground with a ribbon cutting and concert on Wednesday. Willamalane built a new playground, featuring outdoor musical instruments, with play equipment in separate areas for children ages 2 to 5 and 5 to 12. Also added to the park are a new paved plaza, benches and bike racks. The picnic shelter was replaced by a new structure and the restroom building received new fixtures, doors and paint. The ribbon-cutting ceremony is at 11 a.m. Wednesday at the park, which is at 851 Mill St. in Springfield. Later, Son de Cuba will perform at 6:30 p.m. The group plays a danceable blend of salsa, merengue and Latin jazz. For more information, visit willamalane.org.



### WALK THE LABYRINTH

**Find a path to reducing stress** from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday during the monthly labyrinth walk. The free drop-in walks, held in the chapel at Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend, are open to the public. The labyrinth is a 26-foot Chartres canvas labyrinth — the pattern is from Chartres Cathedral in France. Anne Gordon, Sacred Heart labyrinth facilitator, will be on hand to answer questions. Sacred Heart is at 3333 Riverbend Drive in Springfield. For more information, call 541-913-3185.

## VOLUNTEERS



BRIAN DAVIES/The Register-Guard

**Suja Jang and Rouanna Garden** lay out fabric for a quilt under construction as quilters from Comforts for Children work at the Campbell Community Center in Eugene. For 25 years, the volunteers of Comforts for Children have made quilts for the community's at-risk children.

# THE COMFORT BRIGADE

For 25 years, volunteers have made quilts for children in need

By CARA ROBERTS MUREZ  
For The Register-Guard

**A**t the Campbell Community Center on a Thursday afternoon, a lot of quiet action happens all at once. Joy Little works at one table, matching up colors and patterns using a stack of donated fabric.

Nearby, Marion Buntin is preparing to sew the bindings on two small quilts.

Suja Jang shows the others, including group co-director Mary Parish and member Rouanna Garden, a quilt she's recently finished that features a beach-and-ocean theme.

Together these ladies — along with several other regulars, and countless individuals and community groups who make quilts and comforters at home — are Comforts for Children.

This volunteer-based organization donates small quilts, and a smaller number of bed-sized quilts, to a number of local organizations that work with infants, children and teenagers who are considered at-risk because of income level, health issues or family circumstances.

The group's goals are to keep kids warm and provide them with a little bit of handmade love and comfort.

Since it began 25 years ago, Comforts for Children has provided more than



**Joy Little designs a quilt on paper** during a weekly Comforts for Children gathering. Little, 84, has volunteered for 13 years.

### GET INVOLVED

- ◆ Community members are invited to drop in and join the Comforts for Children quilters group from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Thursdays at the Campbell Community Center, 155 High St.
- ◆ This is also a good time to drop off finished projects, check out quilt kits or donate materials.
- ◆ Volunteers can check out kits, which are all the pieces for a completed quilt/comforter. A comforter is like a quilt, but tied with yarn to keep it together instead of being quilted.
- ◆ Donations are welcome, including child-friendly fabrics that are cotton, poly-cotton blends and flannels; quilt batting, especially polyester four ounce; and heavy crochet thread.
- ◆ For more information, contact Mary Parish at 541-726-6703 or email parish5621@comcast.net or visit www.comfortsforchildren.org

30,000 quilts and comforters to local kids.

"There's a need," Parish said. "All children like blankets."

Parish became co-director

of the group with fellow member Mary Hawkes after the group's founder, Jean Littschwager, retired from the post in December after 24 years.

Littschwager, a former elementary school teacher, started the group because she knew the impact of difficult home lives on children, and she knew the bonds they could have with comfort items, such as blankets, according to the city of Eugene.

The city provides space for the group at its Campbell Community Center.

From its beginnings, volunteers weren't required to have special skills, only an interest in making a difference for kids.

"What Jean wanted to do is involve as much of the community as she could," Parish said.

### Fun for volunteers

Little, 84, has been volunteering with the group since 2003.

Little's typical job is to put together packages of ready-to-go fabric pieces, large backing, batting, crocheted thread and directions so that others can sew the quilts in their own homes.

Little enjoys matching the colors and prints, which on this day includes a fabric with red, yellow, blue and green hot air balloons.

"It's important for the children to have the quilts, and that's why I enjoy doing it," Little said.

It has the side benefit of

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## PARENTING NOW!

# For nontraditional families, a village is taking root

*LGBTQ parents have made much progress recently, but discrimination and social hostility still linger*

By JUDITH RAISKIN  
For The Register-Guard

**P**opular television shows such as "The Fosters" and "Modern Family" portray the daily, unexceptional experiences of lesbian and gay parents, the particular challenges their families face and the new relationships they make possible in their extended families and communities.

Like other parents, LGBTQ

(lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) parents are involved for many years with all aspects of their kids' lives: schools, extracurricular activities, friendship circles. They, too, share concerns about their kids' health, the use of social media and the balance of work and family life. Academic research has concluded that children raised in lesbian or gay households develop and succeed as well as children raised

by heterosexual parents (and by certain measures, slightly better). But there are issues that LGBTQ families face that are different and often are invisible to their straight friends and community.

LGBTQ parents face legal and social challenges that can threaten their family's security and affects their daily experience as parents. Before the recent legalization of same-sex marriage, lesbian and gay parents could piece together (at significant expense and anxiety) contracts, "second-parent" adoptions (allowing non-biological

parents legal status) and other legal documents to try to get some of the protections guaranteed by marriage. Marriage equality solved many legal issues for lesbian and gay couples who marry. It is not clear, however, what legal protections marriage offers them in regard to their children. Many LGBTQ parents also have high medical costs for reproductive technologies not covered by insurance (for example, donor insemination) or face discrimination by some adoption agencies.

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# A nation of cancer survivors calls for specialized care

**By MEHMET OZ  
AND MICHAEL ROIZEN**

If you're among the 15.5 million Americans who've survived cancer, at some point you've wondered, "What's next for me?" Living beyond this disease is a cause for celebration, and it also requires a new way of looking at your health, says an eye-opening report.

Once survivors say goodbye to their cancer-treatment team, it's time for their family doctor or internist to step in. Survivors need more than just careful cancer checks; they need care for the other health conditions that 70 percent of them have, as well as support in making great lifestyle choices and spotting long-term effects of their cancer treatments. Yet these health needs may get overlooked, say researchers from the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute.

Just one in eight family doctors in a recent survey said that they discuss sur-

vivor care plans with their patients who've had cancer, even though plans like that are a road map to great health care. Adults who survived childhood cancer are five times more likely to develop health problems such as heart disease, breathing problems or liver and kidney damage than people who haven't had cancer. But they might not get the tests that reveal these problems early, when they can be treated most successfully. And, believe it or not, survivors may be more likely to smoke and less likely to follow a healthy diet.

Develop your cancer-survivorship plan. A good plan is personalized for you, easy to understand and straightforward to use. Your oncologist can help you create one, if she or he hasn't already. (Check out the American Cancer Society's website at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) and search for "survivor care plans").

Your plan should include names and phone numbers of doctors and other health-

care providers so you can make a quick call with questions and concerns. It should include your cancer-treatment history, the tests you'll need in the future and when you'll need them, and possible long-term effects that you might experience due to your cancer therapy. It also should outline goals for staying healthy: eating foods that you (easily learn to) love and that love you back, staying active, managing your weight and getting emotional support as you move forward. You can share this roadmap with health-care helpers, including psychologists, dietitians, doctors, nurses and radiologists.



Drs. Oz & Roizen

Move every day. Do what you can, then try to build up to 30-60 minutes of daily walking or whatever exercise makes sense. Include stretching and strength-training moves, too. Talk to your doc about what's right for you. A growing stack of research shows that activity can help cancer survivors live longer, with a younger RealAge. Movement also reduces stress and can improve sleep.

Fill your plate with foods that love you back: produce, lean protein and good fats. Will a healthy diet alone cut your risk for cancer's return? (We know it can't hurt, and can only make you feel better!) In one study of women with breast cancer, those with the highest levels of healthy plant compounds called carotenoids in their blood were 43 percent less likely to see their cancer return, while a later look at the same evidence found no benefit. But a nutritious diet can help you stay generally healthy and may discour-

age other types of cancer from developing. Limiting red meat, cutting out processed meats (bacon, sausage, cured meats) and keeping alcohol intake to one drink a day help.

Manage your weight. Once treatment is over, aim for a healthy weight — something the American Society of Clinical Oncology recommends for all cancer survivors who are obese (weighing more than 185 pounds, for example, if you're 5 feet, 6 inches tall). Obesity boosts your risk for developing at least 11 cancers, so staying at a healthy weight not only lowers your risk for recurrence of your original cancer, it'll help you avoid other types of cancer. You'll slash your risk for diabetes, heart disease and achy knees, too.

Mehmet Oz is host of "The Dr. Oz Show," and Mike Roizen is chief medical officer at the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute. For more, go to [www.RealAge.com](http://www.RealAge.com).

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**Marion Buntin, 77,** works at her sewing machine during a weekly gathering of Comforts for Children at the Campbell Recreation Center in Eugene. Buntin, a volunteer with the group for 10 years, says helping at-risk children is a high priority for her.

BRIAN DAVIES/The Register-Guard

## Quilts: Goal is to involve community

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being an enjoyable activity for her.

"It's been fun," Little said. "I always like to come and be with the other people."

Lorraine Mombert, 68, of Eugene, began volunteering as a new quilter in 2013.

She says she learned "how to sew straight." On this day, she's sewing together triangles to eventually make pinwheel or zig-zag patterns in the quilts.

"She's really creative and puts interesting colors and things together," Parish said about Mombert.

**Opportunities to help**

There are many ways to help the group.

Every Thursday afternoon, people meet at the center to sort and cut donated fabric, sew or finish quilts, or put together quilt kits for someone else to sew.

Community members can "check out" a quilt kit, like you would do with a library book, complete it at home and return it on another Thursday afternoon.

Others can provide their own fabric and make quilts, about 35

inches by 44 inches, at home, dropping off their finished projects.

Sewing the ready-to-go kits or making and bringing quilts can be a great project for a club or homeschool students, Parish said.

"We aren't making them, you see, it's the community," Parish said.

**For the kids**

Marion Buntin, 77, of Eugene, said there are three reasons she's volunteered here for the past 10 years.

It's a super group of people, she said. She enjoys designing, so this activity fulfills this interest. And, she herself experienced abuse as a child, so helping other children feels especially important to her.

"It benefits the children who are at risk," Buntin said. "And it's a high priority for me."

The quilts benefit a long list of local organizations from The Child Center, which serves children with emotional and mental health challenges, to Womenspace, a shelter for victims of domestic violence. Other recipients have included 1st Way pregnancy center and both local hospitals.

Several programs co-

ordinated by Lane County Public Health receive quilts, such as Babies First, which works with children in the community who have a risk for developmental delays, and Nurse-Family Partnership, which works with first-time moms who are on the Oregon Health Plan.

Many of their clients have a lower income and may not have the resources to get the "welcome baby" items that they would really like to have for their children, said, Chelsea Whitney, a maternal and child health supervisor for Lane County Public Health.

"This gives us a great first welcome baby gift," Whitney said. "I think every child in our community deserves to be welcomed into life with a nice gift."

"Another reason we love it so much is because these quilts are often very bright in colors, and so we use it as part of our teaching with parents about the importance of tummy time and ways to get down on the floor and play and engage with your baby," Whitney added.

Comforts for Children makes an exception

to its small quilt size for First Place Family Center, a St. Vincent de Paul program that provides a day center for homeless families with children and an interfaith night shelter program supported by local churches and faith centers.

For the night shelter program, Comforts makes bed-sized quilts for children.

"It's wonderful for the kids to have something brand new. That's pretty special for a lot of our kiddos. Of course, not to mention the warmth," said Diana Wise, assistant director at First Place Family Center.

The quilts, Wise said, are beautiful.

"You know the old saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child,' well it takes a community to help those who are less fortunate," Wise said. "We are blessed to live in this community of loving, giving, compassionate, generous people, of which these women are a part."

—

Cara Roberts Murez is a freelance writer who lives in Eugene. She has worked as a writer in Oregon for the past 18 years.

## Is it a midlife crisis or just a new stage?

For some, normal adult transitions can trigger sadness and depression

**MAYO CLINIC  
NEWS NETWORK**

Is a midlife crisis real, or is it a common myth that you may feel significant uncertainty or discontent at a certain point in your adult life?

"People often wonder if someone can have a midlife crisis," says Jennifer Wickham, a licensed professional counselor for Mayo Clinic Health System. "It's a good question to ask, as all of us go through personal issues and transitions in our lives."

The term "midlife crisis" was coined in 1965 by Dr. Elliot Jacques, a Canadian psychoanalyst, to describe challenges during the normal period of transition and self-reflection many adults experience from age 40 to 60. During these years, adults may commonly question who they are in this world and in their life, what their purpose is, and how have they used their time thus far. These questions can be triggered by the realization of the passage of time or changes that may occur with a health scare or a diminished ability to perform physical tasks.

"Your midlife crisis, or transition, may occur around significant life events, such as your youngest child moving away or finishing college,"

depression, and Wickham says it's important to recognize these symptoms if you're not feeling quite like yourself.

- ◆ Have your eating or sleeping habits changed, or are you feeling tired and run-down?
- ◆ Do you have feelings of pessimism or hopelessness?
- ◆ Do you have feelings of restlessness, anxiety or irritability?
- ◆ Are you feeling a loss of interest in activities that you once enjoyed, including sex and hobbies?
- ◆ Are you having thoughts of suicide or attempts at suicide?
- ◆ Do you have physical symptoms, such as headaches or other aches or pains, that don't respond to treatment?

Wickham offers tips to help:

- ◆ Stay active.
- ◆ Go for daily walks and get some fresh air.
- ◆ Stay social.
- ◆ Stay engaged with friends and family.
- ◆ Meditate.
- ◆ Take a yoga course.

"Though this is a normal transition of adult development, if you or a loved one believes that you are engaging in out-of-character behavior or making sudden changes to major life areas, such as work or relationships, it can be helpful to seek the support of a professional," adds Wickham.

## Parenting: Families are connecting through social media

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LGBTQ parents often are not recognized as parents or face hostility in social settings. They look for friendly communities and work to create supportive environments wherever they live. Because Oregon was one of the first states to implement second-parent adoption and full domestic partner benefits, many LGBTQ people moved to Oregon or chose to stay here for a safe and comfortable place to raise their children. Known for its "lesbian baby boom," Eugene is a community where

you can find teachers, principals, coaches, doctors, counselors and clergy who have nurtured many children and families who identify as part of the LGBTQ community.

Over the past 25 or so years in Eugene, LGBTQ parents have come together to form support groups of families with kids of similar ages, wanting to meet other LGBTQ parents and raise their children knowing other two-mom or two-dad or other constellations of LGBTQ families.

While many extended families (grandparents,

aunts, uncles, etc.) provide loving support for their LGBTQ family members and their children, some do not. LGBTQ family groups provide the connections that are vital for raising happy and secure children. They help the parents and kids as they struggle at times to have their families recognized as legitimate and valuable by the larger community. They provide the kind of "village" that all families need.

Other types of support have developed recently. National and local LGBTQ parenting groups have formed on-

line through social media. A Facebook group that started this February added 13,000 members by its second week, connecting LGBTQ parents who engage in dizzying discussions ranging from identifying welcoming preschools to building relationships with "diblings" (donor siblings) to discussing racism with their children. Parenting Now! hosted two "LGBTQ Parenting Cafés" to assess the specific challenges LGBTQ families face and to find what kind of support would be helpful.

When LGBTQ families are included in our com-

munity, everyone benefits. LGBTQ parents enthusiastically contribute their time and talent to schools, kids' activities, city politics and more.

For many LGBTQ families this is a time of long-sought acceptance and celebration. Tragically, there is also backlash in the form of new anti-LGBTQ legislation and violent attacks across the nation. With our local Pride festival coming up on Saturday from noon to 6 p.m. in Alton Baker Park, this is a good time to recognize the contributions LGBTQ parents make to

help create a vibrant and nurturing community for all our children and families.

Judith Raiskin is associate professor of women's and gender studies at the University of Oregon. She is currently working on a book based on interviews with LGBTQ parents and their children. Parenting Now! is a nonprofit offering groups and workshops so that all children are raised by nurturing, skilled parents. Contact: [www.parentingnow.org](http://www.parentingnow.org), on social media and at 541-484-5316.