

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHAT: Regional Nursing world Cafe
WHEN: Tuesday, January 15, 2008
WHERE: Red Lion Ballroom, Medford Downtown
TIME: 8:30-12:30

Community and Nurses Take Action to Address Nursing Shortage

Medford, OR 1/11/08 -- The Gordon Elwood Foundation, Rogue Valley Workforce Development Council, and the Jefferson Regional Health Alliance are convening 75 nurses on Tuesday January 15, 2008. Their goals are clear and address a workforce concern that touches us throughout our lives, a workforce that will experience an unprecedented shortage if we do not act now and together as a community.

In 1999, before his death, Gordon Elwood, a man many thought to be homeless, left his surprising \$9 million dollars in savings to serve youth, individuals, families and communities within four counties in southern Oregon. In Gordon's own words he was a

miser, and that greatly affected his family. He was excited about the possibilities of “doing some good” in other peoples lives. In the case of the nursing shortage, his legacy lives on as doing something good for individuals is doing something good for the larger community that his foundation serves. “We are relying on the intelligence that exists in within our community’s nurses who will come together to share knowledge, stimulate innovative thinking, build community engagement, and explore possibilities for this critical workforce issue. This is a national experience, but we need to address our regional needs and not wait for the answer to come from elsewhere. We have a unique set of circumstances and we can use that to advantage our community instead of experiencing our future at a disadvantage,” shares Kathy Bryon, executive director of the Gordon Elwood Foundation. “We were asked two years ago to convene unlikely partners and communities in this effort to address the nursing workforce shortage,” says Bryon. A vision of *successful youth and individuals, thriving families and communities*, provides the foundation’s momentum for sponsoring such an event. “Our mission is to help communities evolve as the environment changes over time.”

“At this time 25% of Oregon residents are over 65 years of age. In 2012 Oregon will be the 4th oldest state of the union. The impending decline in the supply of registered nurses will come at a time when the first of 78 million baby boomers begin to retire and enroll in Medicare,” states Jim Fong, executive director of The Job Council and staff to the Rogue Valley Workforce Development Council.

Tuesday’s convening of about 75 nurses will be organized using a process called the World Café. This process intentionally makes collective knowledge visible very quickly and identifies strategies and action steps that are many times surprising combinations of insight and creativity and are revealed in ways that people has not previously imagined. The movement between tables and conversations allows people to cross pollinate ideas, and reduces the common tendency of participants to “hang on” to initial positions and opinions. “You come out with insights and actions that everyone has had a part in creating,” states Fong.

The pre Café organizing was done by a group of 10 or more individuals representing organizations such as the VA, Rogue Valley Manor, Kids Health Connection, Josephine County Public Health, Jackson County Health and Human Services, Asante and Providence Health systems. The invitation process mirrors the workforce demand. You want to invite a cross section of diverse experience and perspectives. The more diverse the richer the dialogue and the possibilities for change. All this delivers a broader engagement among community members to “create the future they want in stead of living with what shows up as a result of a business as usual process.”

“If we do not act, it will get worse. Nursing faculty are leaving their jobs here and elsewhere. According to the Oregon Center for Nursing, by 2010, an estimated 65 full time equivalent nursing faculty positions in Oregon will be vacated due to retirements. In Maryland, the state legislature joined with local businesses and hospitals to rise over \$50 million to double the nursing student enrollments. Part of the initiative called for recruiting additional nurse educators and paying them salaries competitive with hospital positions to retain them over time,” offers Jan Heineken, RN, PhD. and associate dean for OHSU southern region.

Tuesday’s Café will jumpstart new thinking, new opportunities and hopefully help to create a strong nursing workforce and future for the Rogue Valley.

Goals

- 1) To promote connection and collaboration between individuals and institutions, employers, educators, and the public at large around the nursing workforce issue.
- 2) To identify fresh regional strategies for supporting a strong, excellent nursing workforce in southern Oregon.
- 3) To inspire institutional and community action that is aligned with these strategies.

Agenda

- 8:00- Registration & Refreshments
- 8:30 Welcome & Introductions Kathy Bryon, Gordon Elwood Foundation
- 8:40 Voices of Community
- 9:00 Nursing Workforce Data Presentation Kathy Ingram, Researcher
& Jim Fong, The Job Council
- 9:20 Interactive Café Conversations Jon Lange,
Jefferson Regional Health Alliance

Round One

- 9:40 Table One
10:00 Table Two
10:20 Table Three

- 10:40 Tables report back on top two strategies Everyone
- 11:00 Break- 10 minutes new refreshments
- 11:15 **Café Round Two** Jon Lange
- 11:45 Focus Groups Report back
- 12: 15 Follow-up steps Kathy Bryon and Jim Fong
- 12:25 Closing