

https://www.thedalleschronicle.com/gorge_life/extension-cord-be-a-community-food-hero/article_8a620680-547c-52f7-a9a0-82da3327dd30.html

Extension Cord: Be a community 'Food Hero'

Extension Cord, by Lauren Kraemer

Jun 8, 2018



Food Hero volunteers will receive training in modeling healthful eating and cooking, food safety, community food resources and more.

Josh Kohanek photo/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Oregon State University Extension Service, along with community partners, will offer Food Hero volunteer training Wednesday, June 27, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at One Community Health, 1040 Webber St., The Dalles.

Food Hero volunteers will receive training in modeling healthful eating and cooking, food safety, community resources and basic nutrition, with ideas for stretching dollars through demos and cooking workshops at schools, food pantries, farmer's markets, grocery stores, and health clinics.

Trained volunteers will receive a Food Hero T-shirt and apron, a resource notebook and recipes and volunteer opportunities to contribute in their community with a delicious lunch featuring Food Hero recipes.

The training is free and pre-registration is required by Friday, June 22. Contact Lauren Kraemer at 541-386-3343 x38258 or email Lauren.Kraemer@oregonstate.edu for more information or to register.

Food Hero mission is to help low-income Oregonians improve their health through the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.

It is a multi-channel social marketing campaign that aims to meet goals through work in direct education and policy, systems and environment levels.

To learn more about the Food Hero campaign and to check out hundreds of simple, delicious, healthy recipes along with coloring sheets, shopping tips, or to sign up for our monthly magazine, visit foodhero.org online.

The volunteer training has come to fruition following several years of collaboration, brainstorming, and community engagement that have resulted from two recent coalition-building efforts in the community.

The coalitions were formed in support of two Oregon Solutions projects, which are collaborative problem-solving processes approved by the governor and facilitated by state staff to help communities come together around difficult or entrenched problems.

Following some alarming data points collected by local health providers, North Central Public Health District staff initiated the first Oregon Solutions process to address Wasco County's higher than average childhood obesity rates.

Over 30 community partners met for 6 months to develop a variety of solutions to address this issue, one of which was expanded community-based nutrition education and additional trained volunteers to help families learn about healthier options and how to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into their meals.

This work continues under the banner of the Fit in Wasco County Coalition which has recently approved a new moniker, Fit in the Gorge.

More information on the regular monthly meetings can be found at facebook.com/fitinwasco.

The second Oregon Solutions process was initiated after another needs assessment, which highlighted greater than average rates of food insecurity and hunger in the Gorge.

Once again, community partners met and the need for education stretching food dollars and shopping on a budget was highlighted.

The Food Security Coalition continues to meet and additional information can be found at gorgegrown.com/foodsecurity.

— Lauren M. Kraemer, MPH, is assistant professor of practice for Extension Family and Community Health, Oregon State University Wasco and Hood River County Extension.