

Central Oregon Council on Aging – www.councilonaging.org

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Central Oregonians Ring in 2009 with COCOA

January 7, 2009 -- As the local nonprofit Area Agency on Aging, Central Oregon Council on Aging (COCOA) depends on donations and annual contributions to support independent living services to seniors. Year-end gifts and contributions help to provide the agency with resources needed to sustain many necessary and important programs for retired and aging seniors living in Central Oregon.

One of the fundraisers COCOA services depends on is an Annual Holiday Campaign. "This year we were very aware of the troubling economic situation, and continue to be concerned over the stresses placed on all of the citizens of Central Oregon," explains Executive Director David Hamilton. "As we prepared to send out the holiday letter we still hoped to reach our goal of \$20,000, but were bracing for a possible shortfall in contributions. We are glad to report that our many dedicated supporters and community partners have proven, once again, that they are as committed to keeping COCOA services alive as we are."

The generosity of individuals, businesses and organizations has so far reached a total of \$19,000, and staff reports that they expect to continue to receive year-end donations throughout January. "Our goal of \$20,000 is ever so near," says COCOA Administrative Assistant Jane Roger. "Our hearts are filled with gratitude and appreciation for everyone who contributed to the holiday campaign."

This last year COCOA services directly touched the lives of more than 25,956 aging Oregonians. Staff and volunteers delivered meals, administered in-home care services, answered questions and gave assistance on tax issues, Medicare and many other topics. And they continued to advocate for caregivers; all services that are vital to aging Oregonians for maintaining safe, healthy, independent lives.

Meals on Wheels is without a doubt the agency's most recognized and supported service. Year-end and on-going contributions to this program help make it possible for COCOA to deliver nutritious hot meals to people who cannot leave their homes. Meals, programs and services are also provided at area senior centers for those who are able to get out and about.

"Echoing our December campaign, I would like to encourage everyone to keep Central Oregon seniors in their hearts, and COCOA services on their short list throughout 2009," says Hamilton. "This community's support is vitally important to seniors who now face increasing difficulties due to the economic downturn. Every donation will help to keep our many critical support services alive and available for an ever-growing population of aging seniors, and all donations will be warmly received by the seniors we serve."

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