

# Program helps folks with mental issues stay working

Employment Works is a four-caseworker effort by Options for Southern Oregon

By Shaun Hall  
of the Daily Courier

Terry Foster is way busy these days with his landscape maintenance business.

“We could work seven days a week,” he said, before heading out in rain gear to put bushes and trees and lawns into shape.

But, it wasn't always that way for Foster, until his therapist referred him to an employment specialist who advises people with mental health issues.

Foster, 57, eventually became more comfortable around people. His organizational skills improved. And his list of customers grew.

“They helped me a lot,” said Foster, who runs T & Jan's Landscape Maintenance along with his wife, Jan. “They taught me how to talk to people. They gave me more confidence.”

Foster's caseworker helped him develop a worksheet that spells out tasks and prices, and the caseworker helped with an advertising brochure.

Last year, Foster got married, an alliance which among other things appears to have helped his business, because, it seems, customers take to a woman on the job.

“Husband & Wife Team” is bannered across one of Foster's business fliers.

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Foster was helped by



SHAUN HALL/Daily Courier

Terry Foster said he has succeeded with the help of an employment specialist who works with people with mental health issues. Foster and his wife, Jan, right, operate T & Jan's Landscape Maintenance.

Employment Works, a four-caseworker effort by Options for Southern Oregon, Josephine County's mental health services provider. At any given time, about 20 clients are being counseled. They work a wide range of jobs — from computer technicians to dishwashers and cooks, said Zoe Ann Northcutt of Options.

“Matching a person's skills and a good working environment is key,” she said. “We really want to work with the client's goal for employment. We really focus on strengths.”

Working with clients typical-

ly means working behind the scenes. It often means checking in with them: How's the job going? How are the tasks? How are the relationships going?

“We believe work is an important part of recovery,” Northcutt said. “It gives them a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. It provides routine. It can be a social outlet. It provides a paycheck.”

Most employers are very open to the program, she continued. They are willing to give people a chance. They are very understanding.

“Employers sometimes don't

know about mental illness, so we do education,” she said. “I liken mental illness with having a hidden disability. I think people are afraid of the words ‘mental illness.’”

Program participants aren't dangerous, Northcutt said. “That's not the population we work with.” They're regular Joes and Janes who “have a symptom.”

“They still are able to function and interact. They are just like you and I with hopes, dreams, and aspirations.”

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Terry Foster drives a big

## Local employers raving about Employment Works

Three local employers have positive things to say about workers they have employed through Employment Works, a program aimed at giving work to people with mental health issues:

■ The YMCA has employed three or four of the program's clients, mainly in part-time janitorial and maintenance positions.

“We do it because we have a need,” said YMCA Executive Director Kevin Clark. “We're helping them out as well as helping us out. You get to see the changes in them and realize we played a part in that.”

If there's a problem — as happened with one worker who seemed to have medication issues — program caseworkers can be consulted, Clark said.

■ Another employer, the Herb Pharm in Williams, has employed one program client for 10 years. He does janitorial work and washes containers.

“He has his own pace,” said Georgia Moulton, the company's personnel manager. “He takes the load off the other employees. He's a pleasant positive guy.”

Ten years ago, the man spoke few words, but now carries on conversations and is well-liked.

“He has blossomed,” Moulton said. “We feel good about that. He does his fair share. We've worked around his condition.”

■ Another employer has been the The Lodge at Riverside Event Center. Wynniss Grow, the retired director of convention services and catering, said she has employed disabled people in 40 years of hospitality work, and has employed program clients for 10 years at the Riverside.

“There's no reason why they cannot be employed,” she said. “These people should be given a chance.”

white pickup truck with landscaping tools in the bed. The truck pulls a trailer that holds a couple riding lawnmowers, along with rakes and such.

“I love what we're doing,” he said, just before hopping in the cab and heading out with his wife for the day's landscaping work.

Foster said he had never heard of the Employment Works program until his therapist referred him to it three or four years ago.

“It turned out to be a good thing,” Foster said. “He had a lot of good ideas. My business went from mediocre to skyrocketing.”

## Briefly

### Pear Blossom Baby Contest will be Saturday

The 25th Annual Pear Blossom Baby Contest, sponsored by Soroptimist International of Medford, is Saturday at the Rogue Valley Mall.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., with the contest starting at 9:30 a.m. on the lower level of the mall in front of JC Penney. The contest is open to babies 5 months to 16 months old.

There are six categories: quickest smile, girl and boy, bluest eyes, darkest eyes, prettiest hair and chubbiest. They are all eligible for the title of Baby Bud and Baby Blossom. All winners will ride in the Pear Blossom Parade on April 10.

The entry fee is \$10 and entry forms are available at the JC Penney photo studio.

Proceeds from the event will go to the Maslow Project and Jackson County Relief Nursery.

### Chamber of Commerce has pancake fundraiser

A pancake breakfast fundraiser is being held Saturday to benefit the Grants Pass and Josephine County Chamber of Commerce.

The event is scheduled from 8 to 10 a.m. at Applebee's, 250 N.E. Agness Ave. in Grants Pass. Chamber board members and staff will be waiting tables.

The meal includes two pancakes, two slices of bacon coffee or juice for \$7.

Get tickets in advance at the chamber office, 1995 N.W. Vine St., or at Applebee's the day of the event.

Call the chamber at 541-476-7717.

# Overcoming exercise anxiety isn't difficult

Are you as physically active as you should be? No?

What are the reasons you have for not being exercising? Motivation? Lack of time? How about embarrassment?

If that is one of your reasons, you are in very good company. More than 50 percent of people in the United States had their first humiliating experience in a sports or physical fitness setting.

A nationwide survey released earlier this year by the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association found that about a third of the 1,700 respondents said they were too intimidated to work out at a gym.

For many, it all started in childhood. Were you the kid that was the last one picked when sides were being chosen for dodge ball? Or, you couldn't finish all the sit-ups required during PE?

Billy Streat, a professor in the University of Alberta's Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, says a negative lifelong attitude towards physical activity can be determined by a bad experience someone had with a coach or physical education teacher.

One study participant wrote, “I am a 51-year-old woman whose childhood experiences with sports, particularly as handled in school, were so negative that even as I write this my hands are sweating and I feel on the verge of tears. I have never experienced the humiliation toward any other aspect of life as I do toward sports.”

Maybe you think everyone at a fitness club will stare at you while you figure out how to use a piece of equipment. Or the



Healthy Lifestyles  
**Scott Draper**  
for the Daily Courier

golf foursome behind you is watching your every stroke.

“In a vicious cycle, fear of exercise embarrassment is contributing to our couch-potato culture, and many of the people who need to exercise more are the ones likely to feel uncomfortable doing it,” says strength and conditioning coach Todd Durkin, a spokesperson for the IDEA Health and Fitness Association.

Exercise anxiety is definitely a problem in our society, but I think there are some easy steps that might help you become more confident.

■ This is your life; forget about what others think. No matter what physical activity it is — golf, racquetball, a dance class or using a treadmill — every single person around you was once new to the activity. You can be self-conscious now for a relatively short period of time or you can be self-conscious for the rest of your life.

■ While some people are natural athletes or are more graceful or may catch onto a group exercise routine faster, the reality is most of us are simply just people trying to get some exercise, better ourselves and lead a healthier life.

■ You may think everyone is watching you, but I guarantee

you most people are so involved in what they are doing, they really aren't. No one is paying as much attention to you as you envision they are. And, if they are, what is there to criticize? That you are being physically active and getting into shape?

■ Ask for assistance. I bet you'll be pleasantly surprised that most people are happy to help you. People love being the “expert” and we all know what a good feeling it is to be able to help someone else.

■ Grab a pal. There's safety in numbers, so get a friend or co-worker who also may be feeling a little apprehensive about exercising and be each other's motivation. Walk after work, join a gym or take tennis lessons together. People who have a work-out buddy are three times more likely to continue their healthy lifestyle change.

■ Stay focused on how important physical activity is to your health. Compare yourself to yourself and no one else — not even your buddy. Did you walk farther than you did yesterday? Can you lift three more pounds than you did last week? Congratulations!

■ Lighten up and learn to laugh at yourself. So what if you slipped off the stability ball or hit your golf ball into the water. Take a deep breath, smile and try again.

You won't believe how good it feels once you banish the workout demons that have been holding you back and get on with your healthy, active life.

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Healthy Lifestyles appears the first Wednesday of the month and is written by Scott Draper, former tennis pro and

the owner of Club Northwest. Reach Draper in care of The Daily Courier at P.O. Box 1468, Grants Pass, OR 97528 or at the club, 955-2582.

The Daily Courier and Scott

Draper suggest you check with your own physician before starting a course of diet or exercise and are not liable for any damages resulting from misuse of the information in this column.

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## Community calendar

Submit notices for the Courier in writing at least four days before the event.

### THURSDAY

#### Club meetings

CALIFORNIA STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, Chapter 165, luncheon business meeting, 11:30 a.m., Elmer's, Biddle Road, Medford; earthquakes and seismic safety; \$5-\$10; 541-779-2912.

ZONTA CLUB OF GRANTS PASS, noon, J.J. North's, GP Shopping Center.

VFW BINGO, 5 p.m., 410 Main St., Rogue River; 541-582-1488.

EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION, 7 p.m., Grants Pass Airport, 1330 Brookside Blvd.; 541-955-0951.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY ARTISTS ASSOCIATION, 7 p.m., Fruitdale Grange, 1440 Parkdale Drive; 545-479-1602.

ROGUE VALLEY WOMEN'S BARRBERSHOP, 7 p.m., Boys and Girls Club, 203 S.E. Ninth St.; 541-476-7006.

SCANDINAVIAN HERITAGE CLUB, 7 p.m., Masonic Center, Third and E streets; 541-471-1963, 541-479-3262.

#### Support groups

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, call for meeting schedule, 541-474-0782.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, call for meeting schedule, 541-955-3823.

TOPS CLUB NO. 941, 8:30 a.m., Rogue River Community Center, 132 Broadway, Rogue River; 541-955-0743.

TOPS CLUB NO. 491, 9 a.m., Newman United Methodist Church library, 132 N.E. B St.; 541-474-1876.

TOPS CLUB, NO. 141, 10:30 a.m. weigh-in, 11 a.m. meeting, Immanuel United Methodist Church, 200 W. Watkins, Cave Junction, 541-592-2238.

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION SUPPORT GROUP, 11 a.m., Conference Room C, Three Rivers Community Hospital Washington Outpatient Center, 1505 N.W. Washington Blvd.; 541-846-6703.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP,

5 p.m., The Suites, 1301 S.E. Parkdale; 541-956-6241, 541-689-4831.

S-ANON, for those whose lives have been affected by someone else's sexual behavior, 5:45 p.m.; 615-833-3152.

SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS, 5:45 p.m.; 12-step group for those with sex or lust addiction; 866-424-8777, www.sa.org.

GRANDPARENTS AS PARENTS, 6:30 p.m., Boys and Girls Club, 203 S.E. Ninth St.; Jackie, 541-479-9407.

TOPS CLUB No. 949, 6 p.m. meeting, Rogue River Library, 412 E. Main St., Rogue River; 541-955-7285, 541-479-3142.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY, biblical 12-step program, 7 p.m., Parkway Christian Center, 229 N.E. Beacon Drive; child care available; 541-476-1491.

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS, 7 p.m., Crisis Resolution Center, 320 Ramsey Ave.; 541-476-7216, 866-335-9192.

#### Ongoing classes

JOINT RELEASE, 10 a.m., Divakar Yoga Studio, 220 S.E. H St.; \$10 drop-in, \$60 for 10 classes; 541-944-5126.

AGELESS MOBILITY, 12:05 p.m., GP Community Center, Fourth and L; no-impact exercise for joint wellness & movement recovery; \$2; 541-218-6787.

WATERCOLOR, all levels, 1 and 5 p.m., Major Art and Framing, 1951 Redwood Ave.; call for fee, 541-471-0403.

KUNG FU SAN SOO, 2 p.m., GP Community Center, Fourth and L streets; self-defense; \$4.95; 541-474-2202.

PARTNER STRETCHING, 3 p.m., Divakar Yoga Studio, 220 S.E. H St.; \$10 drop-in, \$60 for 10 classes; 541-944-5126.

BEGINNING TAP DANCE FOR ADULTS AND SENIORS, 4 p.m., Immanuel United Methodist, 200 W. Watkins, Cave Junction; call 541-592-5082 for fee.

KUNG FU SAN SOO, 4:15 p.m. children, 5:30 p.m. adults, Martial Arts and Fitness, M Street between Sixth & Seventh streets; \$10 per visit, \$65 per month, one

free no-obligation lesson; 541-955-2903.

ADVANCED BELLY DANCE, 6:30 p.m., Zarifa's, 914 S.W. Sixth St.; \$25 per month; 541-474-9879.

ENERGY TECHNIQUES, 6:30 p.m., New Hope Healing Arts, 2576 New Hope Road; \$75 for 3 sessions; 541-479-1544.

A COURSE IN MIRACLES, discussion & study group, 7 to 9 p.m., 737 N.W. Kinney; hosts Dennis Broderick, 541-441-1230, and Loree Arthur, 541-441-3270.

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