

Joint Press Release

Healthy Klamath Coalition/Klamath County School District/Klamath Falls City Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Dec. 9, 2020

Attachments: Photos of water bottles and logos; photo of city schools distribution; photo of county school distribution

Healthy Klamath provides free water bottles to city, county students

Project aims to promote hydration and help prevent spread of COVID-19 in schools

Public school students in Klamath County are receiving free water bottles thanks to a Healthy Klamath project to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Healthy Klamath, with a community outreach grant from the Oregon Health Authority, purchased nearly 10,000 water bottles for students as a way to promote hydration and reduce the spread of germs at frequently touched surfaces, such as drinking fountains.

The idea is to provide water bottles for students to use at school because drinking fountains under the COVID-19 safety and health protocols are no longer accessible. District superintendents had expressed concern that not all students would have a water bottle available to bring to school with them.

Klamath Falls City Schools will distribute 2,800 blue water bottles, and Klamath County School District will distribute 6,800 white water bottles during their free grab and go meal programs. The water bottles are co-branded with the Healthy Klamath logo on one side and a school district logo on the opposite side.

“When Healthy Klamath originally applied for the grant, we were hopeful that we would be in a position to help the Klamath Basin in a positive way,” said Merritt Driscoll, executive director for Blue Zones Project and co-chair of the Healthy Klamath Coalition. “We are pleased to be able to provide a water bottle to every student at the two school districts, and help support our schools in their efforts to provide a safe environment for the youth in our community. We look forward to additional ways we can collaborate as the school environment changes.”

Superintendents from both school districts said the water bottles will help mitigate the spread of the virus as schools reopen to in-person learning. Due to COVID-19 case rates in the county, students in both districts are currently doing distance and online learning at home with their classroom teachers.

KFCS Superintendent Paul Hillyer called the Blue Zones organization, which includes Healthy Klamath, a great partner for education in Klamath Falls.

“We really appreciate how they have helped our children by providing individual water bottles for each. They also have donated hand sanitizing stations for all of our schools,” Hillyer said. “These gifts will help reduce the likelihood of the spread of sickness in our schools.”

KCSD Superintendent Glen Szymoniak agreed.

“I continue to be amazed at the support that our students receive from the Klamath community,” Szymoniak said. “It will take all of us working together to get students safely back in school and life back to normal.”