

NEWS



Contact:
Bob Wayt
503-614-1218 (direct)
503-686-5134 (cell)

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FORMER DOCTOR FINDS CURE FOR CHRONIC ILLNESS, DEPRESSION: VOLUNTEERISM

Lyme disease nearly took Beverly Drottar out.

It sapped her energy and chipped away at her cognitive abilities. To make matters worse, the disease – caused by the bite of an infected tick – went undiagnosed for probably 15-20 years, she said.

“I thought I had early-onset Alzheimer’s,” Drottar recalled.

The slow, steady decline affected every facet of her life. She was tired, depressed and could no longer work as an emergency room doctor, where she had thrived on the fast pace and pressure.

But volunteering, suggested by a therapist, brought her life back into balance.

“It made perfect sense,” she said. “I love working with children and have a really strong interest in nature.”



Beverly Drottar has been an outstanding volunteer for THPRD’s Natural Resources Department after conquering Lyme disease. She is now training to become a certified Oregon naturalist.

Drottar started working with youth at Portland Audubon Society's outreach program. The effects were almost immediate.

"I loved it," she remembers. "Being around kids, developing curriculum and spending time outdoors was energizing."

Today, she volunteers 350-400 hours a year to several organizations, including 30 to the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District, where she assists with the Natural Resources Department's service projects and learning activities.

"Beverly is amazing!," said Melissa Marcum, THPRD's Natural Resources volunteer coordinator. "She energizes and inspires the kids she works with through the district's service learning programs. She gives them memories of their experiences in the natural world that they will have forever."

Drottar also volunteers for the Girl Scouts, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, the Sierra Club and Washougal School District.

It's not as fast-paced as the life of an ER doctor for sure. But this new speed allows Drottar to connect with other aspects of her character. She found her natural playfulness, dressing in a long skirt and bonnet to become "Granny Barnes," a character she plays at Girl Scout camp.

"I say, 'Howdy Howdy Howdy' all day long," she said. "The kids love it!"

She's also regained much of her physical strength, recently leading a 16-mile hike down the Deschutes River as part of her training to become a certified Oregon naturalist.

"I hike three or four times a month," Drottar estimated. "At 63, I'm more physically fit and happier than ever before."

About THPRD

Formed in 1955, THPRD is the largest special park district in Oregon, spanning 50 square miles and serving about 240,000 residents in the greater Beaverton area. The district provides year-round recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Offerings include thousands of widely diverse classes, 95 park sites with active recreational amenities, nearly 70 miles of trails, eight swim centers, six recreation centers, and 1,500 acres of natural areas. For more information, visit www.thprd.org or call 503-645-6433.

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