

Oregon Health News

News & Stories for Oregonians

Vaccine Voices: 'Opportunity to share happiness during these stressful times'

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Oregon communities continue to impress, coming together in thoughtful, creative and giving ways to stay connected and healthy.

On Dec. 10, [Jefferson County Public Health](#) (JCPH) and the [Latino Community Association](#) (LCA) hosted a fun and successful vaccination event at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Nearly 250 adults and children received free COVID-19 vaccines, boosters and/or flu vaccines.

"We need to have vaccines and boosters accessible for all community members and listen to our health professionals in order to end the pandemic," said Antonia Botero of LCA.

Each of the 35 children who received a Pfizer pediatric dose were gifted with a brand-new athletic ball, choosing from soccer balls, basketballs, footballs, volleyballs and dodgeballs. Not to be left out, children younger than five who still cannot be vaccinated were also given a ball!



Antonia Botero from Latino Community Association and Michael Baker, director, Jefferson County Public Health.

After being vaccinated and completing their 15-minute observation period, folks visited the show barn to receive an Oregon Health Authority goodie bag containing food, Latinx products and totes with masks and hand sanitizer. Capping off the event was a hot meal of tamales and champurrado provided by LCA.

"I miss the times when we could celebrate with our community and this was an opportunity to share happiness during these stressful times of the pandemic," said Botero. "I actually saw some kids running to get their vaccine so that they could get one of the brand new sports balls. Before this day, I'd never seen a kid running to their vaccine!"

Community events like this one bring together an array of dedicated individuals to ensure smooth operations. On this night, staff and/or volunteers from JCPH, LCA, Jefferson County EMS (to help administer vaccines) and local bilingual college students were on hand to fulfill their assigned roles and also to spread a bit of cheer.

"All staff were in the Christmas spirit, wearing sparkly Santa hats and Christmas headbands," said Tami Kepa'a, public information officer with JCPH. "JCPH Director, Michael Baker, being a good sport and showing off his brand new beautiful blue

snowman suit and tie – he is known in the county for always wearing a suit and tie – was so fitting.”

For so many Oregonians, the last couple of years have been isolating, filled with uncertainty and darkened by loss, making community connections and support more critical than ever. “We [at JCPH] have an amazing team, always willing to go the extra mile to make our community smile,” said Kepa’a.

For more information, visit the [Jefferson County Public Health website](#).

To find a vaccine/booster provider or testing site near you, visit [Get Vaccinated Oregon](#).

For up-to-date information on high-volume vaccine and booster sites throughout Oregon, [read the story on our blog](#).

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