

Quilt Show director guiding event into the future

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Dawn Boyd says that she doesn't consider herself a "serious" quilter. But she's very serious indeed about shepherding the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show (SOQS) into the future.

The new SOQS executive director is a trained, professional organizational leader and event manager.

"That's what I went to school for, that's my passion, that's my skill set," she told *The Nugget*.

Boyd found her calling as an organizational leader and an event manager in a natural progression, out of activities with her daughters in school in Grants Pass.

"I'd volunteer for something and find out the next year I'd ended up in a leadership role," she recalled.

One of those volunteer roles was running the Grants Pass Marching Band Competition.

She had been working as a middle school paraprofessional, but event management exerted a powerful pull.

"I kind of got bit by the bug that I wanted to do (that professionally)," she said.

She graduated from George Fox University with a degree in management and organizational leadership — and the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show came calling. It seemed like

an ideal opportunity for Boyd. "I had been to the show a couple of years with my mom," she recalled.

When Boyd accepted the position at the end of last year, the SOQS board of directors reported that a state-wide search was conducted, and several promising candidates were interviewed. Jan McGowan of Nonprofit Consulting who helped the board with the search and selection process noted "how fortunate we were to find Dawn with such an extraordinary skill set that so closely matched to the unique requirements of this organization."

The Quilt Show is an unusual event in that it is held in downtown Sisters and there is no charge for admission. The show evolved out of local enthusiasm for the craft of quilting and has grown over four decades to be an internationally recognized event.

"There's such a beautiful history to it," Boyd said.

Boyd sees her role as stewardship of the legacy of SOQS — and positioning the organization and event for the future.

"I'm just taking what I inherited and just want to refine it, fine tune it (and pass it on) in even better condition than it is right now," she said. "One of the aspects of that is to bring it into the next generation."

To that end, Boyd hopes to

create an immersive sensory experience that can be enjoyed by whole families.

"It's not just an event that we host, but it's an experience for everyone for that day," she said.

One of the key aspects of SOQS is that it operates almost entirely on the efforts of hundreds of volunteers.

It's a huge job. As board chair Jeff Omodt put it: "It's a tough business model to ask any manager to coordinate. Sustained by year-round fundraising and planning we put on a one-day event featuring 1,200 quilts from around the world, hung and taken down the same day, taking over the entire town. With paid staff of only three and hundreds of volunteers, we deliver an event that will dazzle the more than 10,000 visitors with the awe and wonder of quilt art ... simple, right?"

Boyd says she balances the intensity of the job "with just a lot of nice, quiet downtime... Give me a Marvel movie on Netflix and I'm a happy camper."

The grandmother of five

with a sixth on its way, she spends a lot of her off time Facetiming with family. Her husband Jeff is still in Grants Pass. He visits regularly while anticipating retiring from his municipal job soon and moving to Sisters.

Boyd has found the Quilt Show family and the Sisters community at large most welcoming.

"It's amazing," she said. "The volunteers and the board and the people in the community (have been) so immensely supportive... It's



PHOTO PROVIDED
Dawn Boyd has the reins in hand at the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show.

been wonderful. It's a wonderful community."

The SOQS is set for Saturday, July 13. For more information visit www.sistersoutdoorquiltshow.org.



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