



PHOTO BY GARY MILLER

Sisters Habitat for Humanity operates on the work of volunteers. The organization honored them last week.

## Habitat volunteers honored

While many new volunteers have joined the Sisters Habitat for Humanity crew this year, one volunteer hung up his hat after more than 28 years serving the organization. Russell Williams, 96, was one of the first volunteers when Sisters Habitat was formed in 1991. He continued to volunteer in the Thrift Store and then the ReStore until last month.

Last week, he and the many other volunteers were honored at the 11th annual Sisters Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue.

During the event 98 people, who have spent more than 100 hours of their time during the past year, were presented with certificates from the President's Volunteer Service award program. Two groups were also honored for their work with the housing organization; The Heart of Oregon Corps YouthBuild, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 280. A grand total of 252 people volunteered more than 27,000 hours at Habitat's Thrift Store, ReStore, at the job

site and serving on committees. That's the equivalent of one person working 14 years, Executive Director Sharlene Weed said.

In addition to the President's awards, Connie Cross was presented with Sisters Habitat's 1,000-hour club award. This club was formed in 2009, and since that time 102 Sisters Habitat volunteers have been inducted. The club was formed to honor volunteers who serve a cumulative 1,000 hours.

Cross is a volunteer at the Thrift Store and spends her time pricing and organizing books. She also serves on the board of directors and a store committee.

"Connie is an amazing volunteer, she has passion for people, books and projects. I appreciate her ability to see the bigger picture. If you want something done she is a great person to ask, and I love how she raises her eyebrows and gives you her honest opinion. I am very grateful to have her as a volunteer, she is the best," Thrift Store Manager Josie Newport said.

Homeowner Penny Guinn spoke at the event to thank

volunteers. Guinn, who will soon be moving from her home to be near her kids, said "I am grateful for my house and the equity I've earned. It's bittersweet, but without my home I would not be able to make this move. Thank you all for what you've done for me."

Those interested in volunteering with Sisters Habitat can attend a volunteer orientation session which is offered on the first and third Wednesday of each month. For more information and to register contact Marie Clasen at [marie@sistershabitat.org](mailto:marie@sistershabitat.org) or 541-549-1193.

Through Habitat for Humanity, families and individuals in need of a hand up partner with Sisters Habitat to build or improve a place they can call home. Future homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers, and pay an affordable mortgage. Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves.



### Your Story MATTERS

Audry Van Houweling, PMHNP  
Columnist

## The cost of exclusion

A few weeks ago, along with millions of other Americans, I sat on a blanket, ate my pie, and watched the fireworks light up the sky. Patriotism is a loaded term — what it means is particular to the individual. For

some it is a sentiment that comes with great pride, for others ambivalence, and for others skepticism and shame. We have all had our own unique American story; some of us have been prosperous and graced with opportunity while others have a story of struggle.

My mind went all sorts of places during the 15 minutes of bright booms above me. As I surveyed the near-idyllic small-town gathering surrounding me gasping and cheering, I felt a deep sense of privilege that somehow life afforded me to be in that moment cozied up to people I care about, safe as can be, without worry. I ruminated on the timeless words "all men are created equal... with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit

of happiness." A powerful standard still not guaranteed. I thought of my own roots, my generational story, and the hardship and resilience that made possible my own citizenship and opportunity. And in the flashes of illumination above came the images of children engaged on the border — some only infants — sleeping on concrete floors in overcrowded compounds, likely without parental care, not allowed to be physically comforted, and amidst my gratitude and patriotism was a mix of shame, anger, and sadness.

Movement and nomadism are a part of human nature. Whether we are moving across town or across borders, the reasons we do so are varied, but most often

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## Kiwanis helps woman pursue her mission

Sisters resident Karly Lusby has a mission — and with support from the Kiwanis Career Opportunity Fund (COF), she hopes to make it a reality soon.

Lusby's goal is to develop a certification program in Central Oregon for teaching English as a second language (TESL). In research that led her to ask for COF assistance, she said she was "stunned to learn that no program existed for certification and training on our side of the hill."

Lusby's background includes a bachelor of arts degree in sociology/literature from Pacific University, teaching Montessori

preschool, camp counseling, and running three small businesses. She notes in her COF application that she "loves working with people, often in groups, and teaching."

Believing there is a need for an accessible TESL program in Sisters, Lusby's plan is to offer both group and private lessons. She notes that her dream is to become a teacher trainer, thus to be able to train and certify other TESL instructors.

Much of her own learning will be online, though the program she has selected will require some travel to Eugene.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Karly Lusby, left, is the most recent recipient of a Kiwanis Career Opportunity Fund grant.

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