

## Enjoying Easter in quarantine...



PHOTO BY BRENDA JAROS

Bun Bun and Chloe enjoyed the beautiful sunshine on Easter in their own backyard.

## St. Charles launches 'Hero Fund'

In recognition of the sacrifices of those on the front lines caring for COVID-19 patients in Central Oregon, St. Charles is launching a new fund through St. Charles Foundation to provide bonus pay to eligible employees.

The St. Charles Hero Fund will provide bonus pay to caregivers who work on the front lines for the month of April to honor the risks they are taking and show our appreciation. To be eligible, caregivers must work in direct patient care or on-site at a clinical location at least 80 hours in April. The hero bonuses will be paid on May 15.

"St. Charles caregivers in our hospitals, clinics, home health and patient support areas come to work every day knowing that even with taking appropriate precautions they could contract this serious virus," Sluka said. "They provide essential care,

while having to worry about potentially bringing home COVID-19 to their families. I am in awe of their heroism and honor the sacrifices they are making to care for others during this crisis."

St. Charles is facing a daunting economic environment because of COVID-19. St. Charles has committed \$1 million to the Hero Fund and is asking the community to match efforts in support of the caregivers.

"We have seen an incredible outpouring of support through donations of masks, food and other items for our teams," said Lisa Dobey, executive director of community and philanthropy for St. Charles. "This is another opportunity for the Central Oregon community to show its love to our caregivers on the front lines of this fight."

Future hero bonuses for St. Charles caregivers will

be determined based on the success of community donations to the fund. To kick off the fund and inspire others to contribute, St. Charles President and CEO Joe Sluka is donating 50 percent of his paycheck during this timeframe to support caregivers.

"Caring for our people throughout this pandemic is critical so we can ensure they will be able to care for others," Sluka said. "If possible, and with generous community support, we hope to extend the Hero Fund beyond April."

For more information on how to donate, visit <https://foundation.stcharleshealthcare.org/ways-give/st-charles-hero-fund> or call 541-706-6996.

## Local scholarships will be awarded on schedule

By Charlie Kanzig  
Correspondent

The Graduate Resource Organization (GRO) voted unanimously to proceed with the local scholarship program for the class of 2020 at its monthly meeting held via Zoom on Thursday, April 9.

"Though we do not know exactly how we will deliver the news, seniors who applied for scholarships through GRO can rest assured we are moving forward with selection of recipients on the same timeline as if we were not dealing with the closure of schools," said Tim Ross, GRO board chairman, after the meeting.

Though not able to meet in person, scholarship committee members are currently working through the selection process and hope to have the work complete by late May. The original Senior Celebration Night had been set for May 28 and it appears that announcements of recipients will still be made around that time, according to Ross.

"We are pleased that this is one thing certain to not be lost by the class of 2020," said Rick Kroyts, ad hoc member of the GRO board and counselor at the high school, alluding to the fact that as of now the seniors will not be able to gather for a commencement ceremony or events like the prom this spring.

Chairman Ross cautioned

that it is still possible that some donors may have to withdraw funds due to the economic downturn. "People are facing some hard times right now," he said.

A committee is working on ideas on what to do in place of the traditional celebration.

"We will see what a group of creative, passionate committee members can come up with," said Principal Joe Hosang.

Last year GRO awarded a total of over \$200,000 in local scholarship money and the amount for 2020 is in the neighborhood of \$240,000 thanks to the addition of a dozen new awards from local donors including businesses and individuals.

"Our commitment to supporting the graduates of Sisters High School is stronger than ever in the face of this national disaster," said Ross.

According to Hosang, once details of how scholarship winners will be notified are ironed out, messages will be sent out to seniors and their families.

GRO also helps facilitate funds for educational enrichment for grades 5-12 through The Roundhouse Foundation. According to Ross, some funds are still available for spring and summer opportunities. Information about how to apply can be found on the GRO website at <http://shs.ssd6.org/sistersgro/>.



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