



Amanda Weisbrod/The Observer

Nickel said she feels comfortable with her job at Mac's Grill for EOU's food service for now, but she one day hopes to become a novelist or a video game story writer.

CHD

Continued from Page 1A
writing. She first came to the Supported Employment Program in 2016 on a CHD therapist's referral and was one of the program's earliest successes, according to Fletcher.

Ever since middle school, Nickel said, she's struggled with anxiety, depression and self-confidence. She wanted to find a job but the process was too daunting. But once Fletcher paired her with an employer — EOU chef Ron Wheeler — in late 2017, Nickel found confidence in herself and her employability.

"Finding and getting a job were aspects I lacked before coming to the program," said

Nickel, who is a cashier and food service worker at Mac's Grill on EOU's campus. "The CHD gives me the support that I need to succeed."

Fletcher, who personally oversees Nickel's case, said she has seen a definite improvement in Nickel's confidence since she started the job with Wheeler at EOU.

"Her confidence just wasn't there at first," she said. "She's almost at full-time now, and the Monica I met two years ago didn't feel like she was able to do that. She is a completely different person."

Not only did Fletcher help Nickel find her confidence and a job, but she also helped the student apply to EOU in the first place through the Sup-

ported Education Program, an offshoot of supported employment that assists clients who want to further their education. Now that she's at EOU, Nickel can follow her dreams of becoming either a novelist or a video game story writer — she hasn't decided which one yet.

"I didn't understand what the (college) application was asking for, and navigating that can be a challenge," Nickel said. "But Julie helped me with the application process and even met with my academic adviser a few times. She is there for whatever I need." ■

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SIDEWALK

Continued from Page 1A
said, will spend between \$35,000 and \$50,000 of its own money on the sidewalk project as part of a matching grant.

All of the sidewalk will be in a public right-of-way. Carpenter noted that no portion of a Safe Routes to School project, according to government regulations, can be on property that belongs to a school district.

Carpenter said work on

the sidewalk will start this spring and will be finished before the start of the 2019-20 school year. He is excited to be part of the project.

"It is great to team up with the school district and tackle a glaring need," the public works director said.

The H Avenue sidewalk will pass by La Grande High School's new synthetic track. Mendoza hopes that during the construction of the sidewalk a branch can be installed that would run to the

track facility. This would make the track facility handicapped accessible.

The superintendent said it would be easier to do this while the main sidewalk is being installed since the work crews putting it in would be there with the needed equipment and materials.

While it has not yet been determined how the branch sidewalk would be paid for, Mendoza said, "our goal is to make the track ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible." ■

EOU

Continued from Page 1A

She noted that Eastern has staff at many community colleges who work to help community college students make a seamless transfer to EOU.

Eastern's ties with Blue Mountain Community College are particularly strong. Eastern has a co-admission-co-enrollment program in place with BMCC. Co-enrolled students have full access to resources from both colleges. This includes resources like advising, tutoring, the library, and accommodation services, according to BMCC's website. Tuition and fees are assessed based on courses taken at each school respectively.

Lund noted that many of Eastern's partnerships with community colleges extend four decades. She said EOU has been a trailblazer in establishing partnerships.

"We have been a leader in this area. We have been thinking outside the box," Lund said.

Lund also pointed out that SB 3 includes provisions that are meant to minimize competition between universities such as EOU and community colleges. The bill would require Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission to approve all applications by community colleges for the establishment of applied baccalaureate degree programs. The HECC oversees the operation of both community college and four-year state universities in Oregon.

Lund said she believes the HECC would be careful to prevent the unnecessary duplication of academic programs offered by state universities and community colleges.

"I am confident that wisdom will prevail," said Lund, noting she believes the HECC would work to avoid the duplication of programs because it would be a waste of limited resources.

Casey White-Zollman, vice president for public relations at Blue Mountain Community College, said that the wording in SB 3 would make duplication unlikely but not impossible.

Community colleges adding four-year programs would have to meet accreditation

standards, Lund noted, and implementing applied baccalaureate degree programs could be expensive for community colleges since faculty would likely have to be added. This would be quite costly since many of the faculty would be required to have PhDs to allow for community colleges to meet accreditation standards, Lund said, and professors with advanced degrees command higher salaries.

Another obstacle community colleges would face is that they are not allowed, under state law, to add degree programs unless there is a demonstrated need within the communities they serve. For example, a community college could not add a dental hygienist program unless there is a shortage of dental hygienists in the area.

"There has to be a real need in the community," White-Zollman said.

The baccalaureate degrees community colleges would be able to add under Senate Bill 3 could only be applied baccalaureate degree programs. Applied baccalaureate degree programs are those that are more technical and hands-on, such as diesel technology, dental hygienist and advanced manufacturing.

Lund said that programs like these are not offered at Eastern. Connie Green, interim president of Blue Mountain Community College, agrees.

In a Feb. 7 letter Green wrote to Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena) she said that applied baccalaureate degrees offered by community colleges are "generally niche programs that serve a local workforce and do not duplicate existing four-year programs."

Green also said in the letter, provided to The Observer by Hansell's office, that applied baccalaureate degree programs would fill an important need in Oregon.

"Applied baccalaureate degrees offered by community colleges can provide a four-year pathway in rural communities where no other pathways exist, and in more urban areas where pathways exist but with limited capacity," Green wrote.

SB 3, which was approved 29-0 by a vote of the Senate, has been assigned to the House Education Committee. ■



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Dawson Larman (61) plays on both the offensive and defensive line for the Elgin High School football team. He is shown above tackling an Enterprise player during the Huskies' Old Oregon League district playoff game in October. Larman is also a post for the Huskies' basketball team, and is involved with the school's choir, pep band, concert band and calypso band.

ELGIN

Continued from Page 1A

involvement through his father's work ethic. "I'm trying to give back to my dad and follow in his footsteps of being a productive member of the community," he said. "I don't want to sit back and watch progress happen. I want to be a part of that change."

Dan, who has worked for the City of Elgin for nine years, said all of his children, including his two daughters, Maddie, 14, and Maycie, 12, are active and involved with both school and their community. He has repeated one tried-and-true piece of wisdom to the three of them over the years.

"You can talk about it, or you can be about it, which means you can be a part of the problem or you can be a part of the solution, and that's with life in general," he said. "Dawson and my daughters, their mom — all of us — have been involved in the annual Elgin clean-up day every year since it started. I couldn't be more proud of all my kids."

The Elgin High School junior is a center and defensive end on the football team, a post on the basketball team, and a member of the calypso band, choir, pep band and school band. He also has a part-time job at a local restaurant in Elgin during the school year and plays bass guitar in his church's band. While the student councilor already has a lot on his plate, he's using his extracurricular involvement to his advantage in his new role as liaison between the city council and the school district.

"I plan on connecting the city council and the school district by not only delivering the sports activities and club events that are going on to the council, but also

the financial side of the school district with grants and scholarships that are being offered," he said. "The part I'm most excited about is to give back to the community, and understanding how the council works is going to be really cool for me to see."

Although Larman was the only applicant for the student councilor position, Elgin Mayor Allan Duffy said he is confident the EHS junior would do a great job because of his work as a lifeguard at the Elgin Community Center pool in the summertime.

"Larman is very dedicated to his community and wants to learn what's going on," he said. "The council was impressed that he wants to get even more involved."

Last summer was Larman's first as a lifeguard, and he said he's "definitely" doing it again this coming season because he sees it as a way to be a positive role model for the young kids of Elgin.

"I feel like if I can set a good example for them by being an older kid they can look up to, it's another way to reach out to the youth to get them involved in their community," he said.

Larman said he applied for the position of student councilor because it was an opportunity to lead kids his age and younger toward more involvement with making the City of Elgin an even better place to live. This way, he can be a role model for others, just like his father is for him.

"I love serving my community and I love giving back to people," he said. "I wanted to influence the teens at my school and grades below me to take that initiative and be a part of the change for the future." ■

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