

KIDS CLUB

Continued from Page 1A

“It was a very difficult decision,” said Margaret Davidson, executive director of Community Connection. “We love the program. It (the closure) is sad but the money is not there.”

On the bright side, La Grande Parks and Recreation director Stu Spence said Wednesday morning the city will be looking into ways in which it might be able to meet the needs the closure of Kids Club will produce.

Community Connection started Kids Club in 1995, and it has operated at the Riveria Activity Center since 2002. Davidson said Kids Club has been running at a deficit the past three or four years, primarily because it has been unable to obtain large grants from community foundations that it once did. The Ford Family Foundation, the Collins Foundation and the Oregon Community Foundation are among the foundations that have supported Kids Club in a big way during much of its history.

Kids Club also has suffered from declining attendance in recent years.

The program served 241 individual children at its peak in the 2007-2008 fiscal year, and since then atten-



Staff photo by Dick Mason

Local youth line up Tuesday to get snacks at Kids Club, a child care program in La Grande. Without funding, the program will close in early June.

dance has steadily dropped. Kids Club served a total of 172 individual children in 2016-17, 116 in 2017-18 and 96 in 2018-19. Kids Club has had 61 individual children attend during the fiscal year that started July 1, 2019 and runs to June 30. Few of these children were one-time drop-ins. The average child attended Kids Club about 160 hours a year, according to Community Connection

statistics.

Families on average pay between \$2-\$3 an hour per child to attend Kids Club.

Several circumstances may have hurt attendance, Thomas said, including La Grande School District’s switch from half day to full day kindergarten in 2015, which reduced parents need for child care. The school district in 2006 also moved all sixth graders from

elementary schools to the La Grande Middle School. Once at the middle school, Thomas said, many sixth graders perceived themselves as too old to attend Kids Club.

Kids Club, which has operated year round, is now open to children age 5 to 12 each school day from 7-8:30 a.m. and 2:30-5:30 p.m. Children play games in Riveria’s gym, get meals and snacks, participate in education

activities, including painting and science, technology, engineering and math. The youth also can do homework in classrooms while receiving tutoring from Kids Club instructors.

The club’s staff includes Janine Thomas, who has been with the program for the past 16 years, the last 11 as its director.

“This is one of the greatest jobs I have had,” Thomas

said. “It has been a great joy. Every day is different, you never know what you are getting into.”

Thomas said some children like the program so much that after they get too old for it, they come back in different capacities. One 13-year-old came back to work as a volunteer and another was hired to be a Kids Club teacher.

Thomas said children attending Kids Club sessions in the afternoon have a lot of pent up vigor.

“They have a lot of energy because they have been sitting behind desks all day,” she said.

Children coming in the morning are a bit more subdued.

“They are a little quieter, they are sleepy heads,” Thomas said.

She said it was hard to accept the news that Kids Club is closing.

“I do not want it to go away,” she said.

Davidson said for Kids Club needs an additional \$75,000 in 2020-21 to continue running past June. Davidson said the possibility of donors coming forward with that much funding is remote, but she is not giving up hope.

“I’m an optimist,” Davidson said. “I always think the glass is half full.”

TRUMP

Continued from Page 1A

Trump has eagerly predicted vindication, deploying the verdict as a political anthem in his reelection bid. The president claims he did nothing wrong, decrying the “witch hunt” and “hoax” as extensions of special counsel Robert Mueller’s probe into Russian 2016 campaign interference by those out to get him from the start of his presidency.

Trump’s political campaign tweeted videos, statements and a cartoon dance celebrating that he was “vindicated.” Trump himself tweeted that he would speak from the White House on Thursday about “our Country’s VICTORY on the Impeachment Hoax.”

A majority of senators expressed unease with Trump’s pressure campaign on Ukraine that resulted in the two articles of impeachment. But two-thirds “guilty” votes would have been needed to reach the Constitution’s bar of high crimes and misdemeanors to convict and remove Trump from office. The final tallies fell far short.

On the first article of impeachment, abuse of power, the vote was 52-48 favoring acquittal. The second, obstruction of Congress, also produced a not guilty verdict, 53-47.

Only one Republican, Mitt Romney of Utah, the party’s defeated 2012 presidential nominee, broke with the GOP.

Romney choked up as he said he drew on his faith and “oath before God” to announce he would vote guilty on the first charge, abuse of power. He voted to acquit on the second.

Both Bill Clinton in 1999 and Andrew Johnson in 1868 drew cross-party support when they were left in office after an impeachment trial. President Richard Nixon resigned rather than face revolt from his own party.

Ahead of voting, some of the most closely watched senators took to the Senate floor to tell their constituents, and the nation, what they had decided. The Senate chaplain opened the trial with daily prayers for the senators, including one Wednesday seeking “integrity.”

Influential GOP Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, who is retiring, worried that a guilty verdict would “pour gasoline on the fire” of the nation’s culture wars over Trump. He said the House proved its case but it just didn’t rise to the level of impeachment.

“It would rip the country apart,” Alexander said before his vote.

Other Republicans siding with Trump said it was time to end what McConnell called the “circus” and move on. Trump ally GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham said it was a “sham” designed to destroy a presidency.

Most Democrats, though, echoed the House managers’

warnings that Trump, if left unchecked, would continue to abuse the power of his office for personal political gain and try to “cheat” again ahead of the 2020 election.

During the nearly three-week trial, House Democrats prosecuting the case argued that Trump abused power like no other president in history when he pressured Ukraine to investigate Biden and his son, Hunter Biden, ahead of the 2020 election.

They detailed an extraordinary shadow diplomacy run by Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani that set off alarms at the highest levels of government. After Trump’s July 25 phone call with Ukraine, Trump temporarily halted U.S. aid to the struggling ally battling hostile Russia at its border. The money was eventually released in September as Congress intervened.

When the House probed Trump’s actions, the president instructed White House aides to defy congressional subpoenas, leading to the obstruction charge.

One key Democrat, Alabama Sen. Doug Jones — perhaps the most endangered politically for reelection in a state where Trump is popular — announced he would vote to convict. “Senators are elected to make tough choices,” Jones said.

Questions from the Ukraine matter continue to swirl. House Democrats may yet summon former national

security adviser John Bolton to testify about revelations from his forthcoming book that offer a fresh account of Trump’s actions. Other eyewitnesses and documents are almost sure to surface.

In closing arguments for the trial the lead prosecutor, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., appealed to senators’ sense of decency, that “right matters” and “truth matters” and that Trump “is not who you are.”

“The president’s basic lack of character, his willingness to cheat in the election - he’s not going to stop,” Schiff told The Associated Press on Wednesday, predicting more revelations would become public. “It’s not going to change, which means that we are going to have to remain eternally vigilant.”

Pelosi was initially reluctant to launch impeachment proceedings against Trump when she took control of the House after the 2018 election, dismissively telling more liberal voices that “he’s not worth it.”

Trump and his GOP allies in Congress argue that Democrats have been trying to undercut him from the start.

But a whistleblower complaint of his conversation with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy set off alarms. The call had been placed the day after Mueller announced the findings of his Russia probe.

When Trump told Pelosi in

September that the call was perfect, she was stunned. “Perfectly wrong,” she said. Days later, the speaker announced the formal impeachment inquiry.

The result was the quickest, most partisan impeachment in U.S. history, with no Republicans joining the House Democrats to vote for the charges, though one GOP congressman left the party and voted for impeachment and two Democrats joined

Republicans to oppose. The Republican Senate kept up the pace with the fastest trial ever, and the first with no witnesses or deliberations.

Trump’s legal team with star attorney Alan Dershowitz made the sweeping, if stunning, assertion that even if the president engaged in the quid pro quo as described, it is not impeachable, because politicians often view their own political interest with the national interest.

Need extra room?

Alliance Self Storage

Give us a call!

541-786-8984

Alliance Self Storage

2105 E L Ave., La Grande • allianceselfstorage123@gmail.com

Thank You Chamber Members

Green Fire Production

www.VisitUnionCounty.org

Big Valley Safety Training

Call today to connect with a

SENIOR LIVING ADVISOR

INDEPENDENT LIVING • ASSISTED LIVING • MEMORY CARE

A Place for Mom has helped over a million families find senior living solutions that meet their unique needs.

There’s no cost to you!

(888) 651-5669

! We’re paid by our partner communities

Portable Oxygen For The Way You Want to Live

Includes Everything You Need to Regain Your Freedom

At just 2.8* lbs, the Inogen One G4 is the ultralight portable oxygen concentrator you have been waiting for. The Inogen One G4 is approximately half the size of the Inogen One G3. Meets FAA Requirements for Travel

inogen

REQUEST YOUR FREE INFO KIT TODAY!

CALL TODAY! 1-855-839-0752

*With a single battery @ 201 Inogen Inc. Weight measured

BEST OF HAWAII
FOUR-ISLAND
TOUR

13 days, departs
year-round

VAT vacations

FROM \$2,249
\$1,999*

1-877-840-6119

Promo code N7017

*Prices are per person based on double occupancy plus \$299 taxes & fees. Single supplement and seasonal surcharges may apply. Add-on airfare available. Offers apply to new bookings only, made by 3/31/20. Other terms and conditions may apply. Ask your Travel Consultant for details.