



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Lori Case, left, and her daughter, Miranda Case, share a quiet moment Friday afternoon, June 10, 2022, at the First Christian Church, Pendleton. The family is raising money for Miranda's heart transplant surgery.

Needing a new heart

Pendleton teen and her family work to raise money for her heart transplant

By YASSER MARTE
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Miranda Case sat with her parents on the benches of the First Christian Church, Pendleton, and recalled her open heart surgery.

"I remember being in the hospital when I was 4 and a half, but I don't remember the surgery," she said. "I just remember being there."

Case, who is going to be a sophomore in high school, was born with left hypoplastic heart syndrome, a rare congenital left heart defect. The syndrome causes the right side of the heart to pump blood to the lungs, making it difficult for oxygen-rich blood to go through the rest of the body.

Since her birth, Miranda has been through four surgeries. But she doesn't allow her condition to get in the way of living a normal life.

"I have my regular seven-hour school day I go to during the week," Case said. "And I go to dance. It's traditional dance — hip-hop, jazz, contemporary. Practices are normally an hour and a half, which is four to five days a week."

She's performed on stage and at the Oregon City High School state dance competitions.

"I plan to go to college, but I don't know what I want to pursue," Case said. "But at this point and time I do plan to go to college."

She has lived with a tight community who's been supporting her since she was baby.

Along with contemplating her future, she deals with the thought of having to tend to her heart's medical



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Lori Case, left, and her husband, Tod Case, talk with their daughter, Miranda Case, about her dance routines Friday, June 10, 2022, on the steps of the First Christian Church, Pendleton. The family is raising money for Miranda's heart transplant surgery.

needs for the rest of her life.

"It's very nerve-racking about getting a transplant because she'll be on anti-rejection meds the rest of her life," said her mother, Lori Case.

Her father, Tod Case, echoed his wife.

"It's always a concern when they place a different heart in her body that her body could reject," he said.

Miranda Case is under Status 1B on the transplant list. Those individuals are generally not required to stay in the hospital as in-patients and have the second-highest priority on the heart transplant list.

Although she is no stranger to

heart procedures, her parents carry the brunt of emotional weight going from one surgery to the next.

"The first surgery was the hardest until we had to have an open heart surgery that was not planned," Lori Case said. "We knew that she was going to have to need three but when she had the fourth one, that was very nerve-racking."

According to Lori Case, this upcoming heart transplant procedure will take place in Seattle. The family is unaware of when a heart transplant will occur, but when a match does arrive they will have only a few hours to arrive in Seattle.

In the meantime, the Case family has found ways to spread the word of the surgery and help fund Miranda's medical finances.

"Funding is through COTA, Children's Organ Transplant Association. Anyone who is under 18 can qualify to use them as a fundraising agent," Lori Case said. "They do not charge us anything and a hundred percent will go in honor of Miranda's name."

Children's Organ Transplant Association is a nonprofit organization that will cover costs across the board, when they turn in their receipts — hospital bills, food, hotels, travels and the anti-rejection medications. Any leftover funds stay put, and if Miranda Case needs another heart transplant she can use Children's Organ Transplant Association again as an adult.

The goal is to raise \$50,000. So far, the Case family's efforts have raised \$17,000 on COTA's website: cota.org/campaigns/COTAforMirandasJourney.

The Cases have helped spread awareness about Miranda's situation in a variety of ways, including selling snacks and candy bouquets at the Pendleton Farmers Market.

If the Cases make \$25,000 by June 30, they are eligible to receive a \$2,500 grant for Miranda's surgery.

Oregon hikes fine for Port of Morrow to \$2.1M

DEQ increases penalty for additional nitrate violations in Eastern Oregon

East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has increased the penalty against the Port of Morrow from \$1.3 million to a little more than \$2.1 million.

State environmental regulators levied the initial fines in January, accusing the port of excessively spreading nitrogen-rich wastewater as fertilizer on area farmland for years. DEQ announced in a statement Friday, June 17, the additional \$800,000 is "for additional violations involving over application of wastewater containing nitrogen to agricultural fields in the Lower Umatilla Basin, an area with longstanding groundwater contamination."

The Port of Morrow has been appealing the \$1.3 million in fines. Port Executive Director Lisa Mittelsdorf was not available June 17 for comment.

According to the statement from DEQ, the Port of Morrow is one of many sources contributing to nitrate contamination in northern Morrow and Umatilla counties — an area known as the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area.

The primary source of contamination in the area, about 70%, is from fertilizer use on irrigated farmland, according to the management area's action plan. Additional contributors are dairy and cattle farms (about 20%), food processing facilities, such as the port, that reuse wastewater to irrigate fields (about 5%) and residential septic systems and other sources (about 5%).

The Port of Morrow collects wastewater from food processors, storage facilities and data centers in its industrial park outside Boardman. The port has a DEQ water quality permit that allows it to use the nitrogen-rich wastewater for irrigation on nearby farms, but the permit includes limits on how much nitrogen the port can apply to the farmland and how much nitrate and moisture can be present in soil prior to applications.

"The amended notice cites the port for addi-

tional occurrences of applying wastewater containing nitrogen to fields that already had too much existing nitrate or moisture in the soil," according to the statement. "Having too much nitrate or moisture in the soil when applying wastewater increases the likelihood of nitrates flowing down into the groundwater rather than remaining in the soil for crops to use."

DEQ also reported the port documented additional violations to DEQ in its annual report and in email and phone reports of non-compliance. The additional violations occurred from November 2020 to February 2021 and November 2021 to February 2022.

The revised fine totals \$2,100,351.

DEQ in its amended notice stated it "acknowledges that the port is committed to finding a long-term solution to the management of its wastewater that both promotes beneficial reuse and is protective of public health and the environment."

Even so, according to the notice, since DEQ issued the notice, the Port of Morrow has not submitted a plan to achieve compliance with the nitrogen loading limits in the permit. The new notice requires the port to "develop and implement an approval plan to achieve compliance with both the nitrogen loading and moisture content limits in the permit."

Because the port already has an appeal going with the initial fine, the DEQ explained it does not need to submit a new appeal, although it can submit an amended request for a hearing.

The state environmental department also encouraged the port to collaborate with local partners to complete a "Supplemental Environmental Project" that addresses high nitrate concentrations in the drinking water in the groundwater management area. DEQ stated the port could resolve as much as 80% of the penalty through such a project.

Oregon Rural Action in a press release before the DEQ announced the larger penalty issued a notice that Morrow County Commissioner Jim Doherty was meeting with Boardman residents in the West Glen neighborhood where most of the 60 wells tested had above the maximum contamination levels for nitrates, with dozens up to five times the level.

Over half of state's dirtiest power plants are in Umatilla, Morrow counties

By ANTONIO ARREDONDO
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Two Oregon environmental groups just posted their power plant cleanliness findings, and the results look grim for plants in Umatilla and Morrow counties — at least for now.

Six of the top 10 dirtiest plants in the entire state are found in the two counties, research from the Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center and Oregon State Public Interest Research Group found.

The two sister groups looked at data from the EPA's eGRID, a comprehensive database that shows the environmental charac-

teristics of nearly all of the nation's power plants.

While none of Oregon's power plants fell in the top 100 dirtiest in the country, this doesn't mean that the power plants were in the clear. The top operating plant, Hermiston Power Plant in Hermiston, produces 1,564,008 metric tons of CO2 emissions.

"Climate change is here and already impacting lives," Celeste Meiffren-Swango, state director at Environment Oregon, said. "We need to do everything we can to move away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy."

That action has already taken place in Boardman. The final coal-powered plant

in the state — rated the dirtiest plant in Oregon in 2020 — was dismantled in 2021.

With coal plants out of the picture, next up could be natural gas plants. These plants, mostly operated by Portland General Electric, are also changing.

"Our natural gas plants constitute a part of our generation fleet that is changing, and will continue to do so," Allison Dobscha, a spokesperson for PGE, said. "These plants will serve a different purpose in the future than they do today, serving more as capacity resources that can provide flexibility and reliability when needed."

The remaining nine plants on the list are powered by methane gas, and the pro-

posed shift away from gas to cleaner energy is something Meiffren-Swango is hopeful for.

"This list underscores how methane is an extremely

potent gas," the Environment Oregon director said. "We will figure out better ways to power our lives before it's too late."

With Oregon Gov. Kate

Brown signing a clean energy bill that promises 100% renewable energy for electricity by 2040, Meiffren-Swango believes that change is coming, and soon.

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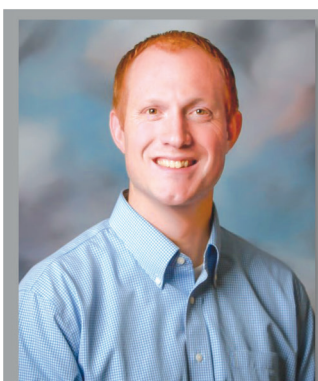
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