

Where Are They Now? Dillon Dethlefs

Dillon Dethlefs used his "Chance to Become" Scholarship to learn a trade and start a promising career.

By Scott Laird

During a recent heat wave this summer, when temperatures rose well above 90 degrees in Vernonia, Dillon Dethlefs was outside working in even hotter conditions. "I was working out in Goldendale, Washington and it was 104 degrees," said Dethlefs, in a phone interview at the end of his work day. "I was out there working on a wind turbine."



Dillon Dethlefs working on a wind turbine at the Windy Flats Wind Farm in Goldendale, WA.

Dethlefs is a graduate of Vernonia High School (VHS), class of 2012, who suffered through the after effects of the flood in 2007 when he was in middle school. He attended classes in modular classrooms, with no lockers for students, and was in the last class to graduate before the school district moved to their new campus.

While he says he struggled in high school quite a bit, the small size of VHS really worked in his favor. "I wasn't sure I was going to graduate," he says. "But my school

experience was awesome. I participated in sports. And our class sizes were not too big, so if you ever had a problem you could just go ask the teacher and they would sit down and spend some time with you. If it wasn't for the teachers there at VHS I wouldn't have made it through. I'm sure I wouldn't have graduated from a bigger school somewhere else."

Dethlefs was a four year letterman in wrestling and a three year letterman in varsity football. He also played club rugby in St. Helens during his senior year.

continued on page 12

School District to Integrate Standard Response Protocol

By Scott Laird

The Vernonia School District (VSD) has officially adopted a new Standard Response Protocol (SRP) which will be implemented beginning this school year. The SRP will provide administration, staff, students, first responders and families with a uniformed response to any emergency incident. Information about the SRP was sent out to all students and parents this summer as part of the school registration packet.

The SRP is based, not on individual scenarios, but instead provides established actions for all emergency events including weather events, fires, accidents, intruders, and other threats to student safety.

"The safety of our students and staff is critical for us as a school district and this is another measure we can continue to build on to ensure our kids are safe while they are here at school," says Superintendent Aaron Miller.

This SRP was developed by the "I Love You



LOCKOUT



LOCKDOWN



EVACUATE



SHELTER

Guys" foundation and is being used by school districts nationwide to advance student and school facility safety.

"This refines the language we use into uniformed and consistent vocabulary," says Miller. "And this way we can share information with parents so they understand our communications."

The "I Love You Guys" foundation was started by Ellen and John-Micheal Keyes following the death of their daughter Emily. Emily died when a gunman entered Platte Canyon High School in Colorado on September 26, 2006, held seven girls hostage, and eventually shot and killed Emily. While Emily was being held hostage she sent her parents a text message stating, "I love you guys."

"This was a positive response to a family's loss," said VSD's Marie Knight, who has received training

in implementing the SRP. "They decided to move forward and try to improve things for school districts and take their tragedy and turn it into a positive."

Superintendent Miller, who has also attended a training, as did VSD staff member Rachel Wilcoxon, has been in the audience twice to hear John-Michael Keyes speak. "He speaks at many events for school administrators all across the country," says Miller. "This really is a nationwide movement and a response to school shootings and an attempt to develop standard responses that are going to help decrease the damage."

The SRP premise is simple – there are four specific Actions that can be performed during an incident. Training materials provide an icon for each Action, followed by a Directive. Actions are carried out by all active participants including

continued on page 16

Community Action Team: The First 50 Years

Part 6 – Houselessness Comes to Columbia County

By Leanne Murray

When Community Action Team (CAT) opened its doors in 1966, they primarily served older adults and children.

As large-scale homelessness appeared in America in the mid-80s, CAT added services for homeless families and individuals through a variety of state and federal programs. As those programs and funding streams have changed, the team at CAT has also watched the nature of homelessness change.

In fact, it has changed so much that there is a growing trend to use the term houseless instead of homeless. When most Americans hear the word homeless, they conjure an image of someone shaggy and dirty, lazy and dishonest, maybe addicted. No one would deny that there are individuals for whom that description is fairly representative. But more and more, that stereotype is less accurate for the majority of people who technically qualify as homeless according to measures set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD does not consider a tent or a public place to be adequate housing, and most people would agree. However, there are others who, at least temporarily, would consider their tent their home. This is one reason why the term houseless has been introduced.

Another, possibly more significant, reason for the new term lies behind an effort to dispel the prevalent stereotype of the homeless population. For the

vast majority of those who experience houselessness, they do everything they can to avoid it or to get out of it. Sometimes it becomes unavoidable when life takes a detour: a job lost, an expensive health crisis, a dissolved relationship.

To use a metaphor borrowed from medicine, people experiencing homelessness/houselessness can be found on a broad spectrum. There is a saying among families who have a child with autism, "If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism." The next one you meet is likely to exhibit very different traits. People representing one end of the spectrum might not be able to speak aloud or adequately control their muscles; they may need some degree of supervision and care for their entire life. At the other end of the spectrum you'll find individuals who are able to maintain good jobs and relationships with relatively few barriers. You may not even know they have autism.

So is the spectrum that represents homelessness. Yes, there are people who do not have the skills or resources to effectively function in society on their own. And there is another end to the spectrum.

Elizabeth Muthersbaugh* is the perfect example. She is originally from

Columbia County and has been back since 1988. Since then she has worked at the same local employer, moving up in the ranks for almost 30 years. She raised her family here, she plans to retire here. There is just one significant problem. When she stops working, she will only have her Social Security benefit to support herself, a net total of \$1,008 per month. She will not be able to afford to stay in the rental home she has lived in since 1989.

Last year, at age 68, Muthersbaugh was hospitalized three different times with pneumonia and could only work part-time when she was able to return. She had already worked through two bouts of breast cancer treatments in 2004 and 2011. She is a hard worker, a loving mother and grandmother, a responsible neighbor, and thrifty by nature. Her Toyota is a 2001 model and her adult granddaughter lives with her to share expenses. She is full of gratitude for her life and her health. You would enjoy meeting her.

And yet, Muthersbaugh is genuinely afraid that she will become homeless after she retires at the end of the year. Her fear is not unfounded. And circumstances just like hers are becoming commonplace; it's a big concern.

continued on page 9

inside

3 burning down the mill

10 2016 Jamboree & Logging Show

11 echoing evergreen day camp

19 my fair lady

