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25 YEARS LATER

Survivors, community reflect on Thurston Shooting

BY RYLEIGH NORGROVE
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THURSTON — Each day, 12 children die and 32 more are injured from gun violence in America.

Twenty-five years ago at Thurston High School, two more names — 16-year-old Ben Walker and 17-year-old Mikael Nickolauson — were added to the nearly 900 students who have died by gun violence at schools since that tragic Thursday morning.

On May 21, 1998, 15-year-old freshman Kipland “Kipp” Kinkel opened fire on his classmates.

Wearing a trenchcoat, Kinkel walked into Thurston High School’s cafeteria, armed with more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition and two pistols. He started firing his father’s Ruger .22 caliber rifle.

That day, Kinkel killed two students and



AP ARCHIVE PHOTO / DON RYAN

Students walk hand-in-hand to Thurston High School in Springfield, Ore. on May 26, 1998, the first day of classes after the May 21 shooting.

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Celebrating culture

RYLEIGH NORGROVE / THE CHRONICLE

Youngsters perform a traditional Samoan dance at Guy Lee Elementary’s AAPI heritage celebration last week. From left: Sarona Putuga (9), Maliya Anderson (11), Api Lopesi Leilua (9), Priscilla Pulalasi (12), Amelia Putuga (10) and Nevaeh Young (11), who are dancers with the Talavou Pacific Arts Academy.

Event illuminates 'intersectionality of City's identity'

BY RYLEIGH NORGROVE
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SPRINGFIELD — It was the first-ever Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage event at Guy Lee Elementary last week — and the sunny, summer evening was filled with families playing games, dancing, and sporting new henna tattoos.

The event highlighted and uplifted cuisines, music and cultures within the AAPI community.

Food trucks, vendors, musicians, and dancers snacked on Korean corn dogs, Taiwanese tamales, egg tarts, Asian-inspired empanadas, sushi, and bubble tea. The AAPI celebration was spearheaded by a team of dedicated community members, parents, and teachers.

Melissa Kruse is a mother of two students at Guy Lee, and was the event’s main organizer. For her, the celebration was a way to support her community’s cultural education.

“Even though my kids are in the Spanish program, I wanted them to have this opportunity to celebrate their culture as well,” she said. “We did a study and found that the second-largest demographic at our school is Asian and Pacific Islander. So we decided to do something to celebrate that.”

She noted that events highlighting diversity like AAPI were not around when she grew up and commended the school’s commit-

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Pandemic in periphery

BY RYLEIGH NORGROVE
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After three years of historic illness and changes, last week rang in the end of the federal public health emergency for COVID-19. As a result, Oregon’s pandemic measures will undergo similar changes.

Ending the public health emergency comes as COVID-19 weekly cases and hospitalizations are down drastically from previous years.

Nearly 38 months since the first Covid case was reported in Oregon, state officials are lifting many of the protective measures they say have helped reduce infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.

One of the first changes is no longer recommending five-day isolation periods for those infected with COVID-19. Now, officials say people are best staying home until they’re fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms have improved.

“These are similar to recommendations we make to folks who are recovering from influenza or RSV,” said Dean Sidelinger,

Oregon Health officer, during an online media event Wednesday. “And we feel that this is the best response and evolution to our guidance as we enter this phase of the pandemic.”

Still, Sidelinger said that going into summer, Oregonians should be as up to date as possible with their Covid vaccinations and boosters.

“That offers you and your loved ones the best protection. If you’ve not yet received a COVID-19 bivalent booster, please get that,” he said. “If you are an individual who’s at higher



Sidelinger

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INSIDE



Matteus de Silva, 10, charms the crowd while behind a keyboard at the Willamalane Spring Marketplace.

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