

Federal grant for youth drug prevention

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IVN Contributing Writer

Shawn Martinez, Josephine County’s prevention and treatment coordinator, is currently pursuing a federal grant which, if afforded, will be used to enhance existing drug abuse prevention strategies that target youth. Josephine County’s primary method of drug abuse prevention currently revolves around outreach and education. The grant is dictated by the U.S. Department of Justice and is entitled the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Site Based Program. There are six specific categories within the grant that can be applied for but only two of them may be awarded to a local government.

Specifically, Josephine County will be applying for the Overdose Prevention Program which will award the county’s anti-drug abuse program \$300,000 over a period of three years. “Our focus is going to be look-

ing at getting the prevention specialists and school resource officers into high school and middle school,” Martinez said, outlining her strategy. The exact plan has yet to be finalized so the schools that will benefit from this grant has yet to be announced. However, and if at all possible, Martinez said that a “comprehensive approach” is her ultimate goal.

The federal deadline is April 25 so the proposal will be sent to the Justice Department around April 20. Martinez expects to hear back from the federal government sometime over the summer.

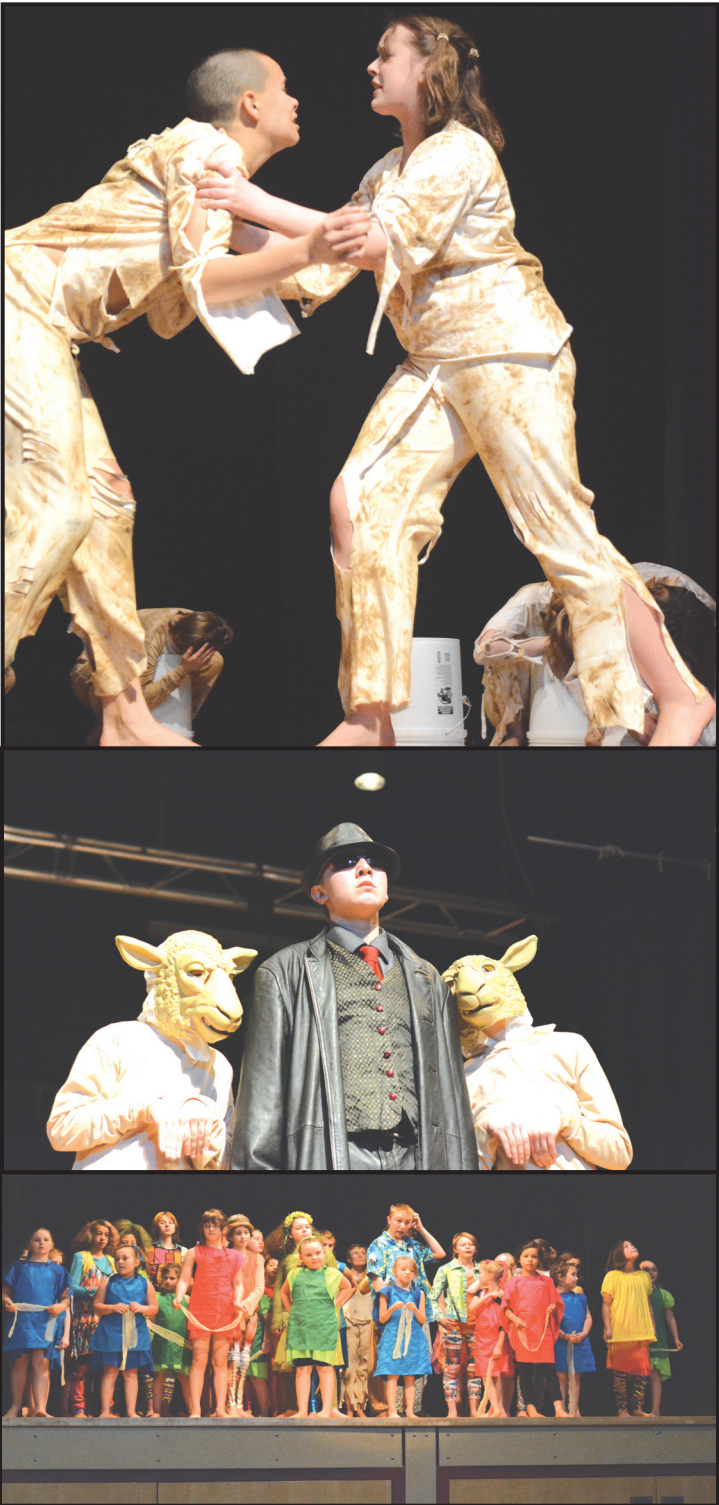
“There’s a limited number of these grants available and so, as with any federal grant, there’s tough competition,” said Martinez. Although it might be a tough fight, Martinez believes, that Josephine County has a good shot at qualifying because the area has experienced a statistically significant increase in treatment for opioid addiction.

Additionally, opioid use among

Oregon’s 11th-graders over the past 30 days is ranked as the seventh highest in the nation. Martinez has also been informed by the chief of police during a recent meeting that there has been six naloxone injections, a drug that instantly stops an opiate overdose, administered in the last six months. This is reportedly quite high considering the relatively low population of Josephine County. Because of the opioid problem, which of course is not limited strictly to youth in Josephine County, the Office of National Drug Control, a component of the White House, conducted a roundtable meeting several months ago to discuss the issue.

Martinez insists that the Office of National Drug Control’s visit will certainly add another layer of legitimacy to their proposal.

“We have a need and I think that we can show we have a need,” Martinez concluded.



(Photos by Birdy, for the Illinois Valley News)

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