

# Cooking up adult foster care in Keizer

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

The front door is purple for a reason.

After all, purple was Mavis Wellin's favorite color.

This particular front door is at the new Apple Blossom Manor, an adult foster home at 289 Apple Blossom Avenue N in Keizer. The home is operated by Sharon Cook, who is having an open house on Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.

Sharon had a deep connection with Wellin.

"The last two or three years I've been wanting to do this," Sharon said while sitting next to husband Randy, who renovated and remodeled the house into a building with room for five senior residents. "Mavis Wellin was my inspiration. She was my best friend's mom. (Her children) asked me to take care of her when she fell and broke her arm. I had never taken care of anyone besides family. She was wonderful. We had so much fun together. I got her back to eating. Pretty soon I had her working and exercising, getting up and going. Her mind was still there.

"I loved her," Sharon added. "That's when I went, 'This is my calling.' I loved her as much



Sharon Cook stands at the entry to the home she's opened for adult foster care.

as my own mom. I asked her once what her favorite color was and it was purple, so the front door is purple."

When the Cooks took over the circa-1960 home last summer, Randy went to work. Hallways were widened by a foot and painted, with new flooring throughout. Each of the five rooms for residents has a half-bathroom. The 1,000 square foot addition includes

a living room, a shower room and a laundry room that also serves as a kitchenette. All told, the house now has two furnaces, two hot water heaters, two laundry rooms and air conditioning. Randy still has plans to build a 14' by 16' deck that will lead to a garden area. Hall lights come on automatically including LED lights under the rails, while each closet has switch-operated lights.

In addition to the five resident rooms, there is also a care room for employees. Initially that will be one employee. Sharon will be at the house 24/7.

"I'm excited to do this," Sharon said. "I want it to be top of the line."

Sharon's first client, a 103-year-old man who used to live two houses down on the opposite side of the street, moved in Wednesday. By state requirements the Cooks are required to supply furniture for each room, but families can bring in their own furniture if desired.

"They can decorate the walls anyway they want, or I

can do it for them," said Sharon, who added that each room has wi-fi internet and TV. "I've had more fun putting this house together. So many things just worked out. It was amazing. This was God sent."

Among the things that came together for the project: a high school classmate of Sharon's heard what she was doing and made afghans for each of the rooms.

"It's amazing to me. I'm blown away by all of the support. It's incredible," she said.

Rooms cost \$3,400 a month which includes meals. The largest room, in the back of the house, cost \$5,000 a month since it's big enough to include a second bed for couples that don't want to be separated. There are eight cameras throughout the house, though not in the bedrooms to ensure privacy. Randy plans to eventually convert part of the garage into an office.

Between Randy's regular construction work, his time as a construction captain for the Big Toy project and updating

this house, time and money have been spread thin. Thus, creativity and thrift shopping was utilized for some of the furniture.

"Sharon brought a lot of stuff from our house and also bought a lot from Goodwill and Craigslist," Randy said. "For example, we found this big ottoman (in the living room) that matches this old couch we had."

A recliner - Randy's favorite place in the house - was \$30 at Goodwill, while two other

chairs were a combined \$60.

"It's been really fun for me," said Sharon, who worked at the Keizer Bob's Hamburgers for 21 years and met Randy while there. "I have a flair for decorating, but I had to do it on a shoestring budget. It was just so neat, the things that happened throughout the process."

Potential clients can call 971-273-7188.

"I'm so excited about this house, I can hardly stand it," Sharon said.

## obituaries

Submit an obituary through our website at keizertimes.com or send an email to: editor@keizertimes.com

### Neville James Grieve

July 17, 1921 - June 25, 2015

Neville James Grieve was a 1940 graduate of Vancouver Technical School. At the age of 93 he went home to heaven on June 25 in Salem to be with his Savior.

He was born July 1921 in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada to Robert and Deveren Grieve. His father went home to heaven when he was 14, so he became the man of the house. In addition to going to school, he got a delivery job on his bike and supported his mother and two sisters until in 1949 he married Emilie, whom he met while dancing on roller skates.

He worked in a coffee roasting plant for many years and also drove taxi for an extra side job. After being laid off, he moved his family to the U.S. He settled in Salem and got a job at JC Penney where he was head of custodial and maintenance for 30 years. He also often helped avoid service calls by keeping the air conditioning running.

He played a lot of cribbage, so much he could look at a hand and not have to count it, he knew by looking at the cards how many points were in the hand. He was a member of the Web Foot travel group when he got into his first pair of rollerblades at the age of 72. He did a lot of roller skating and rollerblading till the Skate Palace closed down and there

were no rinks around the Salem area.

He was an avid dancer with Emilie. They square danced and round danced. After she went home to heaven he continued to go to round dance classes and was an "angel" to those who

wanted to learn but didn't have a partner. In addition, he started dancing at the Salem Senior Center, which later moved to Keizer. He would dance tirelessly the whole time, giving avid opportunity for three women to dance who might not have danced much otherwise. He is now dancing with Emilie again, in Heaven.

He is survived by three children and their spouses, Ken and Dagmar, Mike, Kathy and Dale, 11 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded by his wife of 44 years Emilie, his two sisters, one brother and one great-great grandchild.

Donations may be given to the Keizer Senior Center.

There will be a celebration of life service on Friday, July 17 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Keizer Senior Center, 930 Plymouth Drive NE. Assisting the family is Virgil T. Golden Funeral Service.

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