

# Willow Lake golf range under new mgmt.

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

Keizer residents Rich and Heather Howard have stayed busy since purchasing the Willow Lake Golf Center and Driving Range on Nov. 1.

But none of those days have really felt like work.

"I've worked seven days a week, 13 hours a day since we've owned it and I don't feel like I've worked a day," said Rich, who has played golf for 40-plus years and wanted to own a business like Willow Lake for nearly as long.

"When I lived in Hillsboro there was a driving range and I loved that place and I thought I'd really like to have something like that of my very own," Rich said. "I didn't just want to own a business. I wanted to own a business that was in an industry that's a passion of mine, something I can pour my heart into."

When the Keizer driving range went on the market, Heather, a McNary graduate,



Rich and Heather Howard on the Willow Lake Golf Center and Driving Range. The Howards purchased the business on Nov. 1 and have lots of improvements planned.

encouraged her husband to follow his dreams.

"I'm all about following your dreams," Heather said. "It was his dream. He had doubts and I just said make your dreams come true and do it."

In his early 20s, Rich wanted to be a teaching profession-

al but never followed through with it.

However, he's now working towards becoming a PGA teaching professional. Willow Lake will also partner with the McNary Golf Club professional teaching staff to provide lessons at the range.

city councilor, has worked at the front desk answering phone calls.

"It's amazing just to see everything that's brought this place together and it's going to be really great for families in the community," Heather said. "Keizer is a family."

While Rich is the golfer in the family, Heather is bringing her career as a massage therapist to the range.

The Howards also expanded business hours and plan to add beer, wine and food options to go along with on-site massage and golf-related stretching and fitness programs.

"We're maintaining many of the programs that existed here and building on them," Rich said.

With the weather getting colder, outdoor propane heaters have been added to the range.

The Howards also want to enhance their retail space and have discussed building a miniature golf course on the property and adding golf simulators.

"We're looking at everything, Rich said. "Lots of outside the box thinking is taking place. It's super exciting

to think about where this place is now, where we're going to take it. We've got a great community to be a part of."

The Willow Lake Golf Center, located at 6020 Windsor Island Rd. N., is hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony and Keizer Chamber Greeters on Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 8:30 a.m.

"We've got a great community to be a part of."

— Rich Howard,  
Owner, Willow Lake  
Golf Center

## Help make the holidays brighter for a local senior

Home Instead Senior Care is setting out to make the holiday season a little less isolating for local seniors.

Almost a third of seniors 65 and older live alone according to AARP. When seniors have few friends and families to surround themselves with feelings of isolation often follow.

Home Instead Senior Care's office serving Salem is inviting the community to come together to provide gifts and holiday cheer to seniors who may be isolated from friends or family this holiday season through its Be a Santa to a Senior program. Last year, more than 160 local seniors received their requested gifts.

Be a Santa to a Senior is a community program partnering with Salem businesses, non-profit organizations, retailers, numerous volun-

teers and members of the community. The local effort is headquartered at Shopko Pharmacy, 1230 Lancaster Drive S.E., in Salem.

A gifting tree is already set up at the site with ornaments that include a senior's first name and desired gift. Holiday shoppers can choose an ornament, buy the requested gift and return it to the store with the ornament attached. There's no need to worry about wrapping — program partners will wrap and Meals on Wheels will deliver the gifts to local seniors in time for the holidays.

For more information about the program, visit [BeaSantaToASenior.com](http://BeaSantaToASenior.com) or call (503) 361-5477. You can learn more about helping help seniors in isolation in your community at [imreadytocare.com](http://imreadytocare.com).

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