



Feel-Good
STORY

Saluting the people that make
us proud of our community

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Rist honored with Service to Education Award

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Back in early-March, McNary choir teacher Josh Rist spent all day preparing a special lesson for his students. He was under the impression that principal Erik Jespersen would be in attendance observing his class.

Jespersen was in his class, but he was joined by over a dozen members of the community to present Rist with the Service to Education Award for the 60th annual Keizer First Citizen & Awards Banquet — which took place virtually on Saturday, March 20.

“It was an overwhelming surprise and totally unexpected,” Rist said. “In a year where a lot of work that teachers do is going under the radar, it felt validating and encouraging to be recognized. It was a really special moment.”

Marion County Commissioner Danielle Bethell nominated Rist for the award.

“Josh is a one of a kind educator. He truly has a gift of sharing his art and passion with students. But from a teacher perspective he’s a solid mentor to so many. He’s authentic in his relationships with each student, he sees them for who they are and he allows them to be individuals,” Bethell said.

“I’ve watched him find creative and meaningful ways to keep his students engaged and pouring out their love for music. In a time where so much is uncertain and students are really getting left behind academically, Josh invested a great deal of time into his students and

motivated them to keep growing in their musical talents.”

Rist has always had a passion for music, but he first got the itch to start teaching as a 19-year old while on a trip to Nigeria. Rist was there as a humanitarian, serving a poor and impoverished part of the country, and carried around a battery powered keyboard to teach piano lessons to kids.

A children’s choir director in Nigeria reached out to Rist and asked him to direct and teach one of the choirs.

Although Rist had little experience with directing a choir, he believes that he found his calling in that moment.

“He let me have the floor and I didn’t know what I was doing. I just imitated the teachers that I have had in the past. But in that moment I found something that left a lasting impression. I felt so alive. It was very powerful,” Rist said.

Rist attended Oregon State University and received his bachelor’s degree in music education in 2012 — he got his master’s degree the following year. He

then began working as the choir director at Hermiston High School.

Rist was the choir director at Hermiston for three years and said that he had no intention of leaving. However, when he got a call from Mary Lou Boderman — the coordinator of music and drama for Salem-Keizer Public Schools — about a job opening at McNary, he saw it as an opportunity that he couldn’t pass up.

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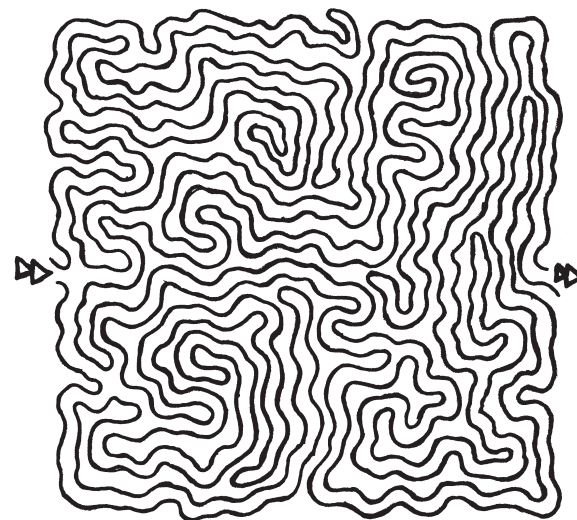
brainfood

sudoku

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3		2	6	5				9
	8				1	5		2
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1		6	4					7
	7			6	9	4		3
			5	8				6

Enter digits 1-9 into blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, & every 3x3 square.

sudoku answers pg A20



maze by Jonathan Graf of Keizer