

A shot in *the heart*

By ERIC A. HOWALD *Of the Keizertimes*



Volunteer gig becomes a calling for Keizer teacher

Cortney Clendening didn't plan on delivering snacks and water via wagon to homeless residents in downtown Salem last December.

"ARCHES needed volunteers for the day center and that's why I went, but they had three staff members in quarantine so they sent me out with outreach workers," Clendening said. "I asked a zillion questions and had the opportunity to connect with people. When you have the chance to wrap a scarf around the neck of someone who is cold ... it hit me right in the heart."

She went back the following week and volunteered again, in Cascades Gateway Park after the banks of the Willamette River swelled and took with it the possessions of some camped by the river.

Clendening returned to ARCHES the following day and assisted in a hotel where some of those who had been flooded out were staying.

"By the end of the day, I had a list of all these things that were needed: shoes, socks, underwear, clothes. I put out a call on Facebook and things just started showing up at my door," she said. "There's now whole spaces in my house that are clothes and other items waiting to be sorted."

Cortney Clendening visited a day center for unsheltered residents expecting a one-day gig as a volunteer, it turned into a mission.

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Unparalleled Playwrights debuting work at cultural center

By BROOKLYN FLINT *Of the Keizertimes*

The 45th Parallel Playwrights expected to work on their original plays for a year. Two years later, their work will finally debut at the Keizer Cultural Center.

Lynn Millar moved to Salem from California three years ago and started looking for a playwright group to help improve her writing.

"I went to the Saturday Market and walked up to the Salem Theater Network table and asked, do you have a playwrighting group? He said, no. And I said, well, let's start one," Millar said.

The man working at the Salem Theater Network table then gave Millar emails of people that he knew were also interested in joining the group. Soon after, the Keizer Homegrown Theater offered a space for their meetings.

The 45th Parallel Playwrights will be hosting free showcases of all the writers' works on July 18 at 3 and 6:30 p.m. in the Keizer Cultural Center. The production



Members of the 45th Parallel playwrights mug for the camera at a recent meeting.

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is titled *Eight Unparalleled Plays*.

The group started meeting in person once a month in 2019 but switched to online meetings twice a month due to COVID. In the future, Millar hopes to do a meeting online and then one meeting in person every month, although she is unsure when that change will be made.

Each meeting, members will bring several copies of their work depending on how many roles are in their play, Millar said. The other members will read out the play so that the author can hear the words of the characters and make adjustments if needed.

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