

DIRECTOR: “(Students) don't need to be forced to see other people for their gender, their race, their sexuality or any of that. It's overwhelming for these kids.”

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In a call with the *Keizertimes* on Monday, Nov. 29, Bethell stressed that her decision to look at other options was what is best for her and her family, but may not be best for everyone.

“I understand that my post, for some reason, alarms people because I'm on the school board. But I'm first and foremost, a mom and my kids are my priority,” said Bethell. “I get asked every day, twice today by two different families on separate sides of the district, what else they can be doing for their kids. And I don't have the answer because every family is different. All the circumstances that go into every household are unique and I'm not set apart from that.”

Bethell's post comes as safety in Salem-Keizer schools has become a hot topic in both the community and on the school board. Bethell said that the safety she was referring to was “not necessarily the fighting” but the “political environment” that

exists in schools that “fosters the pitting of one against the other.”

“In some of the classrooms in this district, we want to force kids into some level of identity when they haven't even figured out how to comb their hair properly,” said Bethell. “We're forcing kids at young ages to take on the education and definition of certain types of identity, whether it be gender or sexuality or race or culture, and it's literally by opinion, stealing their innocence from them.”

Public school curriculum has become a highly politicized topic across the country as school boards and parents have worked to ban “political” topics from schools. In Newberg, Ore., the school board voted in September to ban district employees from displaying any sort of political or controversial symbols or images, such as support for Black Lives Matter or LGBTQ

pride.

Bethell, who is conservative, claims that this isn't political. She said her daughter, who is in middle school, doesn't need to be forced “to see other people for their gender, their race, their sexuality, or any of that. It's overwhelming for these kids.”

Bethell lives in Keizer and graduated from McKay High School in Salem in 1997. She said that she ran for the school board in 2019 because she was a “pissed off mom.” Due to the way the school district and school board are set up, however, Bethell said the role hasn't come with the influence she expected.

I literally have no power as a school board member

— DANIELLE BETHELL
Salem-Keizer School Board Director

“I literally have no power as a school board member,” Bethell said. “The only authority that we have as a school board is to hire and fire the superintendent and pass a budget.”

Bethell said that her and her family have yet to make a final decision but that multiple people had messaged her with different opportunities for homeschooling pods in the community.

VOLUNTEER of the Week

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Where and how do you volunteer?

- Keizer Chamber Runs (Emcee & Packet Pickup)
- Keizer Chamber KeizerFest (They plug me in where I'm needed)
- Portland Oregon Chive Charities (Admin for Oregon Chapter)
- Shop with a Cop (Marion County)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (Out of the Darkness Walk Chair-Salem, Oregon)

Why do you volunteer?

“I volunteer because I want to be that change in people's lives for better. To give people a little nugget of hope when they're hurting. Showing someone love and support during the lowest points in their lives could be the moment they needed to push through. Supporting families that are suffering a loss makes them know they aren't alone. Giving someone the tools they need to be successful themselves, gives them purpose. Whether you're there for them with a financial gift, a holiday meal, an experience, or sometimes just a hug, you are making the world better.”

What does volunteering do for you?

“Volunteering is a form of life for me. It's gotten me through the lowest points in my life by filling the void I had. It opens my heart to view the world and people differently. Being a good person and doing good deeds overall improves your life. Mentally, Physically, Emotionally, and Spiritually. That moment you instill hope and faith in another person, is life changing for you too.”

How would you get others to volunteer in their community?

“I would ask other community members to find an organization that hits their heart. Have you been homeless? Volunteer at a shelter. Have you lost a loved one to Suicide? Volunteer with an organization like AFSP to support others like you. Have you gone hungry? Volunteer at a food bank. Have you gone without a Christmas? Volunteer for KNOW's Giving Basket Program and give kids a Christmas. Find a need in something that hits your heart personally. It's so much more meaningful. There will always be needs out there, you just need to find the one that best suits you.”

St. Edwards hosts pre-Thanksgiving feast



Hungry locals enjoy the pre-Thanksgiving Keizer Community Dinner on Wednesday, Nov. 24 at St. Edwards Church.

Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes



Volunteer Michelle Litsey helped serve dinner at the event.

Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

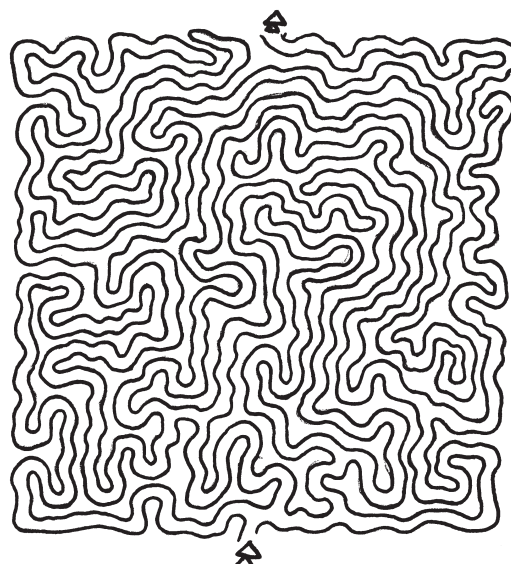
brain food

sudoku

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8					1	2		
	2				9	5	1	
7	8		4			3	5	
		2		3		7		
3	6				2	8	4	
1	4		9			7		
	5		2					6
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Enter digits 1-9 into blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, & every 3x3 square.

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maze by Jonathan Graf of Keizer