



Conflicting reports surround COVID outbreak at Bonaventure Senior Living

On Sept. 1, the Oregon Health Authority reported that an outbreak that began Aug. 23 at Bonaventure of Keizer Assisted Living and Memory Care had infected five people. On Sept. 9, the outbreak had spread to 24 people and one resident had died.

Aubrey Kelly's grandmother began living in the Memory Care unit at Bonaventure of Keizer in late July of this year.

On Sept. 8, Kelly received a phone call from her grandmother telling her that she had a fever. Kelly was surprised, since she was supposed to be informed if her grandmother was ever sick.

"I started trying to call Bonaventure and I could never get through. I'm talking 20 times I tried to call and I couldn't get through," Kelly said.

Bonaventure said in an email to the *Keizertimes* that their telephone service "has been experiencing sporadic outages and we have notified the carrier."

After being unable to reach anyone on the phone, Kelly's sister went to the facility that night and a caregiver said her grandmother had been in bed for two days with a fever and a cough.

Kelly returned to the facility the next morning, and said the assistant director told her there was no documentation of her grandmother having a fever or her grandmother ever being tested for COVID.

As of Sept. 13, Kelly said three different caregivers said her grandmother had

a fever, but no one knew if, or when, she was tested for COVID. Kelly said she was told all Memory Care residents are supposed to be tested on Saturdays.

"Because of the outbreak and because of the terrible use of personal protective equipment that I have witnessed, I think she probably does have COVID," Kelly said Friday, Sept. 10. "But I still can't figure out if she's been tested."

In response to a list of written questions from the *Keizertimes*, Bonaventure officials said there have been 22 COVID cases since Aug. 16, not 24 as OHA had reported. They also said COVID was "introduced into Bonaventure of Keizer on Aug. 19, 2021 by a fully vaccinated person. It is likely that it was introduced by more than one source."

All 22 cases, according to Bonaventure, are residents. The Assisted Living and Memory Care facilities at Bonaventure of Keizer have a combined 96 licensed beds. Bonaventure said the outbreak also included the Independent Living facility.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) data on vaccination rates at long-term care facilities, which was last updated Aug. 16, shows that 34% of staff members at Bonaventure of Keizer are vaccinated. The same data shows that 99% of residents are vaccinated.

The vaccination rate of staff at the Bonaventure of Keizer is the second-worst among long-term care facilities in Marion County. Another Bonaventure facility, Bonaventure of Salem, reported a 12% vaccination rate among staff on Aug. 16.



Local schools welcome back students for first day

The morning of Wednesday, Sept. 8 served as a momentous day in Keizer as K-12 students made their way to their first day of full, in-person school in 18 months — with a multitude of students stepping on their school's campus for the first time.

Despite their being numerous COVID-19 protocols at each school — such as a mask requirement for all who enter the school and vaccination requirements for staff — school personnel were thrilled to be back on campus.

"I am so fired up for today. I couldn't sleep last night I was so excited about a sense of normalcy," McNary Principal

Erik Jespersen said. "We still have a pandemic that we are working through, but to have kids here five days a week, to be fully engaged in their learning and having school back to somewhat normal is amazing. I am so excited. This is probably the most excited I have been in 24 years of education."

"It feels great to see kids walking into the classroom. For many of our kids this is their first time. This is just one sign of us being back on track," Assistant Superintendent Iton Udosenata added. "After months of planning, I'm just excited that the day has finally arrived."



Councilor Ross Day resigns following outburst at Nov. 1 council meeting

Councilor Ross Day resigned from his position on the Keizer City Council following a Nov. 1 meeting that left Council President Elizabeth Smith "shocked and speechless" and Keizer Mayor Cathy Clark publicly condemning his behavior.

"I've got a great family, a great job, I don't need the drama of the city council. They wanted me to sit around like a bump on a pickle, and that's not who I am," Day said during a phone call following the news of his resignation.

"We thank Ross Day for his service and wish him well in the future," Clark said in a written statement.

Day's resignation came days after a meeting in which he vehemently opposed the naming of the Community Diversity Engagement Committee and said the committee would be used by its members as a platform to attack others and call people racists, homophobes and bigots. During the meeting, Day also called *Keizertimes* publisher Lyndon Zaitz a "liar" and said the local paper was a "parrot" for people in the community that he described as "idiots."



McNary grad numbers leap: Latino students lead the pack

After recording their best graduation numbers in more than a decade in 2019, the McNary High School class of 2020 again posted some of the best numbers in the Salem-Keizer School District.

McNary's four-year senior cohort graduated 91.21% of students in 2020, just over 10% higher than the district average. It was the second year in a row that McNary graduated more than 90% of their senior class.

"This isn't a blip. We have been tracking these numbers for the last six years and we have seen consistent growth year in and year out," McNary principal Erik Jespersen said. "It's validating to know that we are going in the right direction as a collective school."

One of the biggest sources of pride for Jespersen was seeing the four-year graduation rate for Latino students.

When Jespersen took over as the McNary principal during the 2014-15

school year, Latino students, which represent approximately one-third of the McNary student body, had a 73% graduation rate. During that same year, white students posted an 86% graduation rate.

Over the last six years, the gap has completely closed. According to Jespersen, 2020 was the first year in school history that Latino students had a higher graduation rate (91.48%) than white students (91.25%) — the Latino graduation rate numbers improved nearly 7% from last year.

The 91.25% Latino graduation at McNary is 12% higher than the state average.

"It's so incredibly gratifying to know that if you are walking in our hallways, the chance you are going to have success is extremely high and it propels you to be a successful citizen for the rest of your life. It just matters. We don't have gaps at our school. We serve all of our kids. It's a really great feeling," Jespersen said.



State Rep. Bill Post to resign at the end of November

After announcing in late September that he had moved to Nevada, Republican state Rep. Bill Post told the *Keizertimes* that he would be resigning from his position as the House District 25 representative effective Nov. 30. Post had originally

said that he would continue to serve as state representative while living in Nevada.

"After further discussions with an elections attorney and talking it over with my wife, it appears that the best action I can take for my district and my family is to resign before my term is over and give my successor a chance to serve during the 2022 Short Legislative Session," Post said in a press release sent to the *Keizertimes*.

Post has been a resident of Keizer since 1994 and has served as state representative for Keizer, St. Paul and Newberg since 2014. While Post had announced in early September that he would not be seeking re-election, his current term wasn't set to officially expire until January 2023.

Continued on page A8