



Photos by Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Cotton Ferrell, center right, and others eat their lunch on Tuesday at Warrenton Grade School. The school provides a free lunch on weekdays throughout the summer until Aug. 26 through the federally funded Summer Food Service Program.

Lunches: Program served more than 1,150 students a day last summer

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to eat, chatter with friends and horse around together on nearby playgrounds.

Christian Saputo, 15, sat outside the Warrenton Community Library Wednesday, eating a corn dog next to his younger sister Franki Ramirez, 7, as a growing crowd of kids played on a picnic space next to the library.

Saputo said his parents work all day, and his mom asked him to walk his sister to the library. "I don't mind making a lunch, but Franki likes to get out and socialize," he said, adding he first learned about the program while living at Sunset Lake Resort & RV Park.

The Moss family, whose father Dalan is a school board member, sends at least five kids across the athletic fields outside the grade school each day to grab lunch, trade Pokemon cards, play outside and socialize with their peers.

"It gives them a break from us, because kids can be kind of annoying," said 14-year-old Kale, sitting with his three brothers and sister.

Michelle DeVos, head of Warrenton's preschool pro-



Amanda Oseguera, right, and Stephanie Davis, Warrenton-Hammond food service manager, prepare food for the free summer lunch program on Tuesday at Warrenton Grade School. More photos online at DailyAstorian.com

gram, walked in Tuesday with 16 preschoolers and nine grade schoolers to the feeding site inside the grade school.

"It's all about school readiness," she said, adding she uses the program to get her younger students used to using a cafeteria.

Hungry Oregon

While most of the kids coming to her for lunch wouldn't go hungry otherwise, Davis said hers nonetheless might be the only well-balanced meal some students get for the day.

Nearly 1 in 6 Oregon

families faced insecurities in access to nutritious food between 2012 and 2014, according to the Department of Agriculture. Of those, more than 6 percent skipped meals and faced hunger because they could not afford food.

Vicki Duffy, who works in food service for Warrenton, said she has never run out of lunches in eight years of the Summer Food Service Program. She packed 20 lunches on Wednesday, but still fell eight short, as organizers in the first week try to gauge how many people will be taking advantage

of the program.

"It just breaks my heart," Duffy said of having to turn away eight children. I have eight kids who wanted lunch. They'll get it tomorrow ... and the rest of the summer, too."

Levee: 'I'm keeping my fingers crossed that we can solve a multitude of problems'

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Knight said the Bonneville Power Administration could pay to help move the levees in Warrenton back to create more wildlife habitat as part of requirements to offset the environmental impact of its hydroelectric dam network. The agency earns wetland mitigation credits by doing wetland restoration projects, many of them overseen by the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce.

Though the timeline and other details remain unknown, Warrenton City Manager Kurt Fritsch has expressed enthusiasm for Knight's idea.

"This proposal quite frankly is like a manna from heaven for the city, should it come to fruition, and addresses so much of our financial need concerning levee improvements and eventual certification," Fritsch told the City Commission in a memo.

Knight said he first learned of the idea from Port Commissioner Stephen Fulton and contacted the task force, which had worked on such a plan in the late 2000s. He said CREST staffers are now evaluating lands behind the levees and preparing to contract with an engineer to determine which parts of the levees might work for a project with Bonneville.

While moving the levees at the airport might not create enough mitigation credits to entice Bonneville, he said, there appears to be enough opportunity for work on the Skipanon Peninsula. The Port is also having a hydrological study done at the airport to assess the rising water table.

Fulton works on wetlands issues for Warrenton Fiber

Co. and has at times clashed with CREST over land use issues.

Meanwhile, CREST has told Knight the task force is interested in replacing one segment of the levee system on the Skipanon River's east bank, according to Denise Lofman, CREST director.

Because the move will restore estuary habitat, the task force can use funds from Bonneville Power Administration's fish and wildlife program.

"Getting the levees certified is certainly the right thing to do, and we want to help with the process," Lofman said. "It's a win-win, because there will be a new levee, and there will be fish and wildlife benefit."

She added that CREST started discussing the levee replacement with Knight after Oregon LNG, a company that sought to build a liquefied natural gas facility on property leased from the Port on the Skipanon Peninsula, announced in the spring it was canceling the energy project.

"As long as Oregon LNG was going to be using the peninsula, we weren't going to do anything," Lofman said.

The levee project could help the Port save up wetland mitigation credits needed to offset future work such as repairing the agency's piers after recent storm damage.

"I'm keeping my fingers crossed that we can solve a multitude of problems," Knight said.

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Father Nick: 'He is not only beloved, he has the ability to reach people'

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said. "People's needs are the same everywhere. When people lose a loved one or family members, it's the same."

Flashing his famous smile, he added: "Except there are some differences in the social aspects."

Raised in Tanzania, East Africa, on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, Nilema attended seminary to study accounting before his call to the ministry. He served with a small parish near Mwanza in the Lake Victoria region, before an assignment at Saint Therese Parish in east Portland in July 1992 as a member of the Associated Life Community of Priests, a missionary order that fills the need for priests.

In 1997, Nilema arrived in Seaside, which, he said, was even smaller than his Tanzanian birthplace. He devoted his attention to the community, especially the ill, the elderly and those with special needs. He formed a ministry at Providence Seaside Hospital and administers to families in Astoria at Columbia Memorial Hospital. He is a key founder of the emergency shelter with Alan Evans of Helping Hands Reentry Program in Seaside. He initiated a Sunday Supper at the church that has nourished thousands in his years here. His ministry extends from Astoria to Wheeler. "My family here is not only the Catholics," he said. His calling, he said, is to serve all people.

FAREWELL SEND-OFF

A farewell celebration takes place 4-7 p.m. Friday, at Our Lady of Victory Parish Hall and at St. Peter the Fisherman Parish Hall in Arch Cape after the 5:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday.

Building a new church

Dedication of the new 8,400-square-foot church in 2012 was the culmination of a 20-year effort by congregants, replacing the 97-year-old Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church with a new building more than twice its size. At the time, church council President Chris Rose credited Nilema for moving ahead despite the obstacles.

"We had four priests before Father Nick who all knew we needed a new church," Rose said. "Father Nick had the courage to say, 'Let's do it.'"

The building features a hand-carved life-size wooden crucifix from Nilema's homeland of Tanzania.

Working with law enforcement in Seaside is a role Nilema has participated in since his arrival. "When they need my help, they call me, when I need their help I call them," Nilema said.

Nilema was especially close with Sgt. Jason Gooding, the Seaside police officer shot while making a felony warrant arrest in February. "With Jason it was heartbreaking because I worked with him so closely," Nilema said.

In mourning Gooding earlier this year, Nilema called the death "a big, big loss for our community." The officer had a passion for what

he was doing, and "he was so willing to ask for help" when he needed advice or support to better serve Seaside.

"He was always telling me, 'You know, Father Nick, we have to put our efforts together to help take care of our people,'" Nilema said.

Nilema is returning to the Moshi Diocese in northern Tanzania.

Arriving in Seaside will be a longtime colleague of Nilema's, Joseph Barita, 59, of Moshi, Tanzania. The two men grew up in the same town in East Africa, and studied together at a seminary as young men. Barita and Nilema were ordained together on July 3, 1988, and both have served in Oregon parishes. Barita first served in the United States in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, coming to the country in 2000. From 2010 to 2014 Barita served as pastor at St. Frederic in St. Helens.

Barita returned briefly to Tanzania when his father was ill, but is now coming to Seaside to take on the responsibilities of his predecessor.

"He is not only beloved, he has the ability to reach people," said parishioner Kay Foetisch-Robb of Father Nick, as he is affectionately known. "Small children run up to him, old people. He has the ability to reach anybody."



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