



Hood River News

Kaleidoscope

Brimstone Boulders

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Dani Annala new OSU Extension 4-H coordinator

Dani Annala has been hired as the new Oregon State University Extension Service 4-H program coordinator in Hood River County.

Annala, who started on Jan. 6, is responsible for the management, oversight and leadership of the 4-H Youth Development program in the county. She was previously the 4-H program coordinator and county leader from December 2010 to July 2015.

"I'm excited to return to lead Extension 4-H in Hood River County," Annala said.

"Being the 4-H program coordinator here for four and a half years was one of the most enjoyable and meaningful positions I've held."

Annala has a variety of experi-



Dani Annala

ence in the Columbia Gorge: She spent the last 18 months as food safety coordinator for the Diamond Fruit Company in Odell; and prior to that, she was a relationship manager and branch manager for Northwest Farm Credit Services in The Dalles.

She has been involved in several local, state and national organizations, including the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents, Oregon 4-H Foundation, OSU Extension Association, the Hood River Valley FFA Alumni Association and the Mid-Co-

lumbia Junior Livestock Show.

Annala holds two degrees from OSU: A bachelor's in agricultural business management/general agriculture and a master's in agriculture education.

"With more than 6 million members, 4-H is the largest out-of-school youth program in the United States," said an OSU press release. "4-H empowers young people with hands-on learning experiences to help them grow and thrive. By creating a safe and welcoming environment, young people develop the skills needed to make a positive impact on the world around them."

LUNCH AND LEARN

Crossing the Border: Looking into immigration

By TRISHA WALKER
News staff writer

The third in a series of Lunch and Learn presentations at the Hood River Library, held Jan. 23, tackled the difficult topic of immigration and why people are risking their lives and the lives of their families to cross the border between the United States and Mexico.

(What would have been the third presentation, "Gender Identity," was canceled Jan. 16 due to inclement weather and has been rescheduled for Feb. 6.)

More than 20 people came to hear Nubia Contreras speak on the theme of "Crossing the Border/ Cruzando la Frontera." Contreras, born and raised in Hood River, is the daughter of immigrants. She is a certified prevention specialist with Hood River County, a DJ and board member at Radio Tierra and the new community liaison for Columbia Center for the Arts.

"My parents migrated here in the '80s, and I don't think they thought that their daughter would ever be doing this conversation," she said.

Her parents crossed the border some 40 years ago, her father more than 10 times and her mother once.

"My parents did cross, and 27 years later, I'm here," Contreras said.

"I have that luck and privilege of being born and raised in Hood River. People want a better life, to afford a house and a roof over their heads that's not going to crumble because of war violence."

There's a common perception that migrants are coming to steal jobs and sell drugs, or that they wake up one morning and decide to make the trip. In reality, it's a matter of survival.

"It's not a fun thing to do," Contreras said. "There's a lot of dangers. There's not enough water most of the time, not enough food. When my parents crossed over, my mother said she had a plastic bag with a set of clothes ..."

"It can cost \$10,000-\$20,000 to be smuggled into the U.S. (today) ... and I think people are so desperate they're willing to risk it because anything is better than their current



Photo by Trisha Walker

NUBIA CONTRERAS presented on the topic of immigration at last Thursday's Lunch and Learn at the Hood River Library. She will present again on Thursday, Jan. 30 on the topic of "My American Dream."

situation," she said. "Keep that in mind. They're just here to work and for a better life. And I don't think that's a crime."

Contreras showed three YouTube videos to highlight issues surrounding immigration: One of a border crossing simulation, another featuring a border patrol agent and a third on the much-publicized caravan that was headed to the U.S. border in 2018. In one, a smuggler says, "Immigration is unstoppable. It doesn't matter what President Trump says."

In another, agents show how migrants have cut through razor wire installed on the border wall between San Diego and Nogales or dug tunnels underneath. In a third, a pregnant mother of two talks about how her children's lives were threatened by criminals and her hopes of asylum in America.

"Would you have that determination yourself ... travel thousands of miles, maybe wear out your tennis shoes because you don't have the luxury of taking a suitcase. Would you consider putting yourself and your family through that?" Contreras asked audience members.

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The 'gift' of caregiving

GEM and AGA host first of three-part series on caring for aging loved ones

By EMILY FITZGERALD
News staff writer

Even though taking care of an aging loved one — or being the aging loved one yourself, in need of help — can be overwhelming at times and scary at others, Andy Wade encourages people to keep the experience in perspective.

"Life is not a series of crises or problems to be solved ... It's so easy to get overwhelmed with the task, or the problems, or the frustrations or whatever it is that you're dealing with, that we forget that at the core (of caregiving) is love. At the core (of caregiving) is our relationship with one another."

Wade, a Mennonite Pastor and Warming Shelter volunteer, presented to a group of about 20 gathered in FISH Food Bank's meeting room Wednesday afternoon for the first of a three-part brown bag lunch presentation series, co-hosted by Gorge Ecumenical Ministries (GEM) and Aging in the Gorge Alliance (AGA), about



Photo by Emily Fitzgerald

PASTOR Andy Wade presenting at the Jan. 22 brown-bag on aging.

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HEARTS OF GOLD

For year-round work, Christmas Project honored Feb. 29

Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital Foundation will award the annual Hearts of Gold honor to the folks behind Hood River Christmas Project.

Next month's celebration in the group's honor will be a benefit for another community project, a day respite program for people living with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Hearts of Gold happens Feb. 29 at 6 p.m. at th Best Western Plus Hood River Inn Gorge Room.

For more than 20 years, health professionals and community members have been honored by the Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital Foundation with "Hearts of Gold" awards. For 2020, the foundation is honoring the Christmas Project as a group for their substantial impact on our community.

"We are thrilled to honor this group and the impact they've had for almost 100 years in existence," said Providence's Susan Frost.

For Bruce Holmson, his heart of gold urged him to step up and help lead the Hood River Christmas Project in 2006 when some of the regular volunteers said, "Bruce, you're it."

From what he knew, the organization began in the 1920s as an Elks Club organization and over the years other



Submitted photo

HOOD RIVER Christmas Project volunteers, from left, Mary Finley, Leslie Hidle, Teri Fisher, Cindy Winfield, Bruce Holmson, Elise Byers, Heather Walker, Tracey Tomashpol and Lindsay Holmson.

groups took on the responsibilities. Participation varied throughout the years and Holmson, with several other

key volunteers, created more structure by forming a board of directors in 2006. Many people don't know that vol-

unteers in year-round roles make it possible for the group to help those who need it most during Christmas time.

Coordinating food and meals, registering families, making deliveries, sorting gifts and ensuring toys are given to kids are just some of the roles for volunteers. There's also a sub project called Tree of Joy, in which businesses sponsor kids and seniors by taking a card from a giving tree and fulfilling wishes.

According to a press release, the efforts by the Hood River Christmas Project are monumental each year. They also fundraise throughout the year and many know of the Christmas Project from the fashion shows coordinated for years by Cathy Carter in partnership with downtown merchants.

"When more than 300 volunteers, like Carter and others, show their hearts of gold the results are amazing," Frost said.

Just tallied for 2019 — the group served 470 families made up of 1,787 individuals, including 868 children.

When the Providence Hood River Foundation board received a "Hearts of Gold" nomination form for the project, it was clear this group deserved recognition, according to Frost. It was also the first nomination to be made by another organization and not an individual. The Christmas Project was nom-

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"We want this to be a living room for outdoor sports in the Gorge." — Conor Byrne, B1

BRIEFS

Border talk tonight

Fresh from a volunteer trip to the U.S.-Mexico border, Mariah Carlson is giving a presentation on her experience at 6:30 p.m. tonight at the Hood River County Library, 502 State St.

Slopeswell helps PERIOD

Slopeswell Cider is hosting a fundraiser for PERIOD@HRV through March; \$3 for every One Breath Kombucha; will go to the club to supply products to menstruators in need.

'Dreams' closes Feb. 1

Columbia Center for the Arts' January exhibition, "Dreams," closes Feb. 1. Also featured is artist Dan Pillers in the Lobby Gallery. For more information, visit columbiarts.org.

