

Hood River Valley Adult Center continues serving meals

By TRISHA WALKER
News staff writer

It's not business as usual at the Hood River Valley Adult Center, but Executive Director Amy Mallett is doing her best to continue serving meals to the patrons it serves.

And she's doing it with senior center staff only.

The center is closed to the public, but from noon to 1 p.m. every weekday, those 60 and over are able to pick up a "drive-thru" hot meal in keeping with its usual senior lunch schedule.

Staff is also delivering to Meals on Wheels clients.

Mallett said that, with the vulnerable population the center serves with its Meals on Wheels program, the only way to control the possible spread

Mardi Gras canceled

The annual Meals on Wheels fundraiser — the center's largest — has been postponed from its scheduled date earlier this month. "It will be rescheduled," Mallett said. "When all this is over, everyone will be ready for a party."

of COVID-19 is to utilize staff instead of its usual cadre of volunteers.

"I want to control it the best I can," she said, "and I can do that with staff. When they're not at work, they're at home and not in public."

This is especially important because not all of the seniors who receive meals are able to come to the door for delivery; at some houses, food must be brought inside.

"We are meeting needs with home delivery and the drive-up meals," she said. The center

has also been handing out surplus potatoes, onions, apples and pears, milk and bread in addition to meals.

"Yesterday it was meatloaf, mashed potatoes, lemon bars and vegetables," she said. The same nutritional guidelines are being met.

Costs have gone up because staff are delivering meals — and because of the additional supplies it takes in the form of trays and containers — but HRVAC has also received food donations from businesses like Full Sail, Pietro's Pizza and

Sawtooth.

"That's been helpful," Mallett said.

Because of the increase in costs, the center has applied for emergency grant funding, "and now it's a waiting game," she said.

"We will go into reserves if we need to."

All nonprofits are facing the

same budgeting dilemma, she added. "Everyone's budgets for the year are blown. My board said, 'Serve our seniors, I don't care what it takes.' And I have the best staff in the world, who show up every day."

Mallett comes from Santa Barbara and said she thought people were helpful there.

"But here, this is beyond

anything I've ever seen," she said.

While closed, HRVAC is undergoing a thorough cleaning, Mallett said. Everything from tables and walls to pencils and pens are being sanitized, working in a grid pattern throughout the building.



Submitted photos

CHEER IN CHALK

On March 25 and 26, someone left a series of encouraging sidewalk chalk messages for local health workers who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 response, at Hood River County Health Department and Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital. "The Health Department staff was greeted this morning with some wonderful sidewalk art! It was a great spirit boost for us all!" said Count Environmental Health Supervisor Mike Matthews. Susan Frost of Providence said the staff at the hospital and clinics was also uplifted to see the messages.

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