

# Can you go screen-free for a week?

Hermiston, Pendleton will offer events that focus on family, health

By JENNIFER COLTON  
East Oregonian

More than a dozen events in Hermiston and Pendleton will work to keep Umatilla County residents unplugged next week.

Screen-free week is a national event to encourage people to “read, play, think, create, get active and spend more time with family and friends instead of watching TV, surfing the web or playing with apps and video games.”

In Hermiston, events will focus on family and health.

“Basically every evening next week, we have an event as part of screen-free week,” event coordinator Angie Treadwell said Wednesday. “We’re very excited, and everything planned is going to be fun for any age.”

The week begins Monday with Zumba and salsa from 6-7 p.m. at Sunset Elementary. On Tuesday the city launches “Walk Hermiston!” a monthly community walking event

complete with prizes, walking journals and informational booths.

The kick-off is 6-7 p.m. at Riverfront Park.

“Our goal is to get everyone together and socializing so they can form walking groups and continue walking,” Treadwell said.

Walk Hermiston! continues the first Tuesday of every month through October.

Wednesday’s events include disc golf, parachute play and stories with the Ready2Learn program from 6-7 p.m. at Sunset Elementary.

Thursday will bring the

family bike event with a Star Wars theme. Participants can take one of three bike routes — one for families with children, one for intermediate riders and one for experienced riders — and take a chance for prizes including one of five bicycles, T-shirts, Star Wars merchandise and bicycle helmets. Registration for the bike rides begin at 5:30 p.m., and the events begin at 6 p.m.

Children will also have the opportunity to plant flowers in pots, part of a Mother’s Day activity sponsored by the Hermiston Breakfast Kiwanis.

On Friday, screen-free week continues with “healthy brain activities for kids” from 4:30-6 p.m. at the Hermiston Public Library, followed by the Eastern Oregon Art Festival on Saturday. Events will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Hermiston’s Main Street.

The week ends with “take a walk with Mom” on Sunday for Mother’s Day.

All Hermiston evening events will include early childhood activities from Umatilla-Morrow County Head-Start. The Hermiston program is a partnership of the Oregon State Univer-

sity Extension SNAP-Ed, Hermiston School District, Good Shepherd Health Care System and the City of Hermiston.

In Pendleton, events will take place each afternoon at the Roundup Athletics Club, Pendleton Center for the Arts and Tamastlikt Cultural Institute, culminating in the opening of the Pendleton Farmers Market on Friday, May 6, and Yoga for Kids on Saturday, May 7, at the Pendleton Yoga and Dance Studio.

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## HERMISTON

# Handbell choir works in concert

By JADE MCDOWELL  
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When members of a musical ensemble play instruments that can only sound one note, cooperation becomes very important.

That’s the reality of the Hermiston Handbell Choir and Chimes, which rehearses Wednesday evenings at the First United Methodist Church. Instead of one musician playing the entire melody, each musician has only a few notes of that melody that they must play at just the right time to create a seamless song.

“If you make a mistake, just smile,” director Dean Mason told the choir on Wednesday as someone played one of their bells a beat too soon.

The choir — made up of 10 people playing 37 bells and 37 chimes between them — was rehearsing for a concert with the Heppner Handchime Choir on May 7 at 4 p.m. at the church.

Most of the choir attends First United, but a few members come from other churches. The choir used to be divided into a beginner’s group (the Ding-a-Lingers) and a more advanced group (the Ringleaders) but these days smaller numbers mean everyone rehearses together.

“It’s a pretty social group,” Mason said.

He said if people want to join, it helps if they can already read music, but it’s not a requirement. One choir member, he said, started out with a bell in each hand and



Pat Scott, left, and other members of the Hermiston Handbell Choir and Chimes, go over their music in preparation for a concert May 7.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

simply had someone mark the pertinent notes on their sheet music with a “Left” or “Right.”

Dean’s wife Judi Mason has been playing handbells for about 35 years. It may seem like a simple matter of just waving the right bell when pointed at, but she said there is a lot more technique than meets the eye. Musicians must master the proper flick of the wrist instead of just “spilling the water” and they must know how to create different sounds by placing a gloved thumb on the bell, dampening the reverberation against their body or plucking

the clapper inside the bell.

“The bigger the person, the bigger the bell,” she said, explaining how most people end up with the specific bells or handchimes that they usually play in concert.

Pat Scott, who has been in the choir for about three and a half years now, said before she joined the group she already knew how to read notes from playing the piano, but there was still a learning curve.

“It’s like when you play the piano, and you can read the notes, but you have to put expression in,” she said.

Scott said his favorite part of participating in the

group is the camaraderie as they pull together to rehearse every week. She also enjoys bringing music to others.

“I like playing during Easter and Christmas, when we go play at nursing homes and places like that,” she said.

The group’s next concert, in combination with the Heppner Handchime Choir, is Saturday, May 7 at 4 p.m. at Hermiston First United Methodist Church, 191 E Gladys Avenue, with a potluck supper to follow at 5:30 p.m.

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# EOU names first female provost

By GEORGE PAVLEN  
East Oregonian

Longtime professor and administrator Sarah Witte has been named provost at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande.

Witte has been serving as EOU’s interim provost since June 2014 when she stepped in following the departure of Steve Adkison. Adkison accepted a similar position at Henderson State University in Arkansas.

“I am thrilled to join the leadership team at EOU,” Witte said. “My role as interim provost was mainly focused on sustainability planning, so I am looking forward to working with faculty, staff and academic leadership to build on the institution’s central educational mission and to create dynamic academic futures for our students.”

EOU President Tom Insko said Witte was chosen from a national search that boiled down to three finalists. In the past, Witte has served twice as interim dean of the College

of Arts and Sciences and as vice provost of Academic Affairs. She joined EOU in 1990, was promoted to assistant professor in 1993 and then to associate professor in 1995.

Witte is also the first woman to serve as provost of the university.

“With nearly 26 years of experience at EOU, Sarah offers a depth of knowledge and a perspective that will prove invaluable as we work to reposition our university to grow and prosper in the coming years,” Insko said. “On numerous occasions she has been placed in leadership positions during difficult times for the university and she has always accepted the challenge.”

Witte holds a bachelor’s degree in English from Creighton University, a master’s degree in English from Marquette University and doctorate in English from the University of Iowa.

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Witte

## HERMISTON

# Freshman accepted to Stanford summer program

By JENNIFER COLTON  
East Oregonian

Even as a high school freshman, Camden Gutierrez has big dreams, and the first-generation college student is doing what he can to make those dreams realities.

In January, Gutierrez applied for a summer program at Stanford University. The Hermiston teen was accepted and will attend a pre-collegiate summer institute on “Investigations in Bioscience and Biotechnology.”

“I doubted I would even get in, especially coming from a background like mine,” Gutierrez said. “I come from a background where education wasn’t really valued because work is considered more important.”

Both of Gutierrez’s parents come from Mexico, and neither is fluent in English. His mother works at Shearer’s Foods; his father works for Boyd’s Tree Service out of Kennewick. Neither attended college, but Gutierrez said his parents moved to the Hermiston area from Los Angeles when Camden was 5 to give

their children a chance at a better life.

“I want to take advantage of the opportunity and show them education is important,” he said. “My parents have always told me, ‘Oh, you could be a doctor.’ I don’t know, but maybe I’ll live up to that.”

For now, Gutierrez is considering studying biology and the sciences and already setting his eyes on prospective colleges, including Stanford. When he found the Stanford summer institute, he decided to apply — even expecting to be rejected despite his 4.0 grade point average and active school participation. The application required transcripts and letters of recommendation, multiple essays and a \$50 application fee.

“It was difficult, especially as a first-generation college student because you don’t have that support. My parents aren’t familiar with any of this, so I’m learning as I go,” he said. “I kept expecting I

was going to get a rejection letter.”

After submitting the application, Gutierrez felt relieved and moved on to one of his other passions: competing at the Oregon State Family, Career and Community Leaders of America competition. It was at that convention he borrowed a friend’s cellphone to check his email.

“My phone died, and I asked the girl next to me if I could use her phone for five minutes. I saw the notification, and I put my hand over my mouth and started screaming silently. I had to leave the room,” he said. “It was a really exciting moment for me. I wish I could relive that moment.”

The excitement overwhelmed everything for the next 24 hours — until Gutierrez’s mom asked how he was going to pay for it. The Stanford course costs \$6,300. Gutierrez jumped on the website and found information for a financial aid package he had not applied

for. The deadline was the next day.

“I skipped school the next day to go get the information from our taxes and to fill out the financial aid application. I turned it in seven minutes before the deadline,” he said with a laugh.

He received a scholarship that will pay for part of the program. With help from extended family, Gutierrez made the rest of the tuition.

The program makes for a busy July for Gutierrez, who will attend the FCCLA National Competition with the team from Hermiston High School on July 2-8 before returning and attending the institute from July 11-30.

Gutierrez works part-time as a restaurant dishwasher, and he uses his own money to pay for his trips with FCCLA and items like the college program application fees.

“It was such a relief to know I can make both trips happen now,” he said. “I haven’t had anything handed to me, but I know you have to work hard for what you deserve. I’ve always worked hard, and that’s how you make things like this happen.”



Gutierrez

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