

Faith-based community comes together to serve

'I Love My City' events this weekend

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

The "I Love My City" campaign is gearing up for a work day and a combined community worship service.

The two-day event will feature nine area churches and the Columbia Basin Board of Realtors. Rev. Terry Haight of Hermiston Assembly of God Church is excited about the increased involvement of the faith-based community.

"They are jumping on board with it," Haight said. "Also, I know there are other groups that independently approach and do things with the city."

As summer turned to fall in 2016, members of Hermiston Assembly first organized the initiative. Donning red T-shirts emblazoned with "I Love My City," about 70 volunteers spread out across the city to be of service to others. They organized a pair of car washes, distributed food and drinks at local parks, held a block party and went door-to-door offering to pray with people.

A season of change sprouted as church parishioners sought ways to promote healing in the community after several tragedies. The idea, Haight said, was to spread God's love through simple and practical ways.

A spring cleanup effort is Saturday, May 18 from 9 a.m. to noon. People who aren't connected to a specific church that's involved can register at www.ilovehermiston.com or meet at McKenzie Park for instructions and work crew assignments. In addition to targeted cleanup areas, it will include free car washes at Les Schwab Tire Center, 830 N. First St., and Smitty's Ace Hardware, 1845 N. First St. Also, "I Love My City" T-shirts are available for \$10.

The worship service is Sunday, May 19 at 10 a.m. at Eastern



Contributed by Lukes Photos

Members of New Hope Community Church organized an October 2017 cleanup effort near the Hermiston Butte as part of the "I Love My City" campaign.



EO File Photo

Siblings Emmylou Sword and Tucker Sword wash cars during an April 2017 "I Love My City" event in Hermiston.

Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 Airport Road, Hermiston. The faith-based community will gather and worship as one body of believers, Haight said. Child care will be provided for kids up to age 5. Children 6 and over are encouraged to sit with their families during the service.

"It's a bilingual service with various pastors. We try to get as many people involved as possible," Haight said. "It's a relationship building opportunity among the churches."

Since the initial "I Love My City" event, nearly a dozen churches have joined the effort. The idea is to organize community service activities several times a year — everything from cleanup efforts and car washes to gift-wrapping and children's activities. Sometimes it's one church or several congregations working in conjunction with each other. Then, the churches all come together once a year to do a larger organized effort and hold a combined church service, Haight said.

The combined efforts have grown — the first year included 300 volunteers, which increased to 400 last year. And 800 people attended the combined worship service in 2017, increasing to 1,200 last year. With the involvement of additional churches, Haight is hoping for 500 volunteers and would love to see as many, if not more, people at the service.

"We want to get as many people involved as possible," he said. "Also, it's not something we just do once a year. 'I Love My City' should be a lifestyle."

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

FAITH BRIEFING

Climate conversation mixes faith, science

PENDLETON — The Rev. Kathy Keener of the First Presbyterian Church will discuss the role of faith in environmental stewardship at Tuesday's Third Tuesday Climate Conversation. The meeting begins at noon in the Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub's theater room, 230 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton.

In the fight against climate change, an increasing number of faith-based organizations have taken up the cause as a struggle against ecological crisis and social injustice. Many people are unaware of faith groups that study ecological theology, bridging faith and science, developing policy and taking action on behalf of the creation. Rev. Keener, who is completing 27 months as interim pastor at First Presbyterian Church, has a special interest in sustainability and ecojustice.

To reduce noise interruption to the conversation, East Oregon Climate Change Coalition (EOC3), the meeting's host, will be providing light refreshments for those who wish to partake. A \$10 donation, or whatever attendees wish to contribute, is suggested. Beverages may be purchased at the bar ahead of the presentation.

For more information, email eastoregonclimatechange@gmail.com or find the group's page on Facebook.

Blue Mountain Community Foundation seeks grant applications

WALLA WALLA — Blue Mountain Community Foundation is pleased to announce that its Discretionary Grant Guidelines and Application Form are now available online for local nonprofit organizations seeking support. The due date for submission is July 1, 2019, at 11:59 p.m.

Applications will be accepted from tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organizations and public agencies in Columbia, Garfield and Walla Walla counties in Washington, and Umatilla County in Oregon. Total grants in excess of \$230,000 will be awarded in the areas of basic

needs, health and wellness, education, arts and culture and neighborhoods and communities.

The Guidelines and Application Form are online at the Foundation website, www.bluemountainfoundation.org. Only online applications are accepted.

For more than 30 years, the Blue Mountain Community Foundation has worked to strengthen the well-being of communities in the Walla Walla Valley. It has grown to over \$50 million in assets and has over 340 charitable funds directed to benefit the people of Walla Walla, Columbia and Garfield counties in Washington and Umatilla County in Oregon. The Foundation distributed more than \$2.5 million in grants and scholarships in 2018.

Additional information may be obtained by calling the Foundation office at 509-529-4371 or emailing bmcf@bluemountainfoundation.org.

First Christian Church suspends Sunday breakfasts

MILTON-FREEWATER — The regular breakfasts that have been held before services at the First Christian Church in Milton-Freewater are suspended for the duration of the summer.

Other regular Sunday features at the church include an adult Sunday school class based on the book of Acts at 9:15 a.m., and an adult class titled "Discipleship and Missions" led by Pastor Steve Lyons at 9:30 a.m. Junior and senior high school and Kids Klub youth groups meet at 9:30 a.m., with church worship following at 10:45 a.m. Junior church meets during worship time.

Other regular church offerings include a Bible study group at Park Plaza on Sundays at 7 p.m.

Valet parking is available during the church's regular services, accessed by the ramp from the Southwest Sixth Avenue side of the church. An elevator is available at the north entrance, parking lot side.

For more information, call 541-938-3854. Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to noon, or by appointment.



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Spanning from the classroom to the field, the mission of the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilder Program (CBSHP) is to provide real-world application, exposure, and opportunity to local high school students. Working in partnership with skilled tradesmen from the Northeast Oregon Homebuilders Association, students construct and sell one high-quality home per year.

For more information: www.columbiabasinstudenthomes.org



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