

Award: Kidney and partial liver are living donations

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donations are rare in hospitals the size of Good Shepherd, as most patients that would be a candidate for donation end up being transferred to a larger hospital for care first. Good Shepherd's last such donation was in 2008.

In November, however, a Good Shepherd employee recognized that a patient's organs would be able to be donated if the patient's family agreed to do so before the patient was removed from a ventilator. "You have to recognize really quickly that, that potential exists," Thompson explained, noting doing so can be difficult in the midst of trying to save a life.

In an all-hands-on-deck effort, staff from multiple departments worked to make arrangements and to support the family as they made the decision with a chaplain and other advocates by their side. Once the decision was made, doctors, nurses and other staff lined the hallways in a silent "honor walk" as the patient was wheeled to surgery. Director of Acute Care Services Sara Camden said such honor walks are a way to show respect for the patient and their family.

"We know it takes courage to make those decisions," she said.

Some of the staff who participated in the honor walk have a personal connection to organ and tissue donation, and know how it can save or dramatically change a life. Camden said she is a living donor — she gave up one of her kidneys for her stepfather a few years ago. And Vice President of Nursing Brian Patrick was overjoyed his daughter got a call in the middle of the night that there was a kidney for her and she needed to rush to the hospital immediately.

April is Donate Life Month, to bring awareness to the need for organ and tissue donations. Andrea Vandomelen, hospital development manager for Pacific Northwest Transplant Bank, said there are more than 100,000 people in the United States who are on the waiting list for an organ transplant, which can mean years of waiting — time not everyone on the list has.

MORE INFORMATION

For more details about organ donation in Oregon and Washington, or to register to be an organ donor, visit donatelifenw.org.

Some organs can come from living donors, such as a kidney or a part of one's liver. Tissues, such as corneas, can be donated in many circumstances after a patient has already died. But other lifesaving organs, such as a heart or lungs, are only available in very specific circumstances — a patient must be declared brain dead by two different doctors but still have healthy organs that continue to work. According to the PNTB website, less than 1% of hospital deaths meet the criteria for organ donation.

The Hope Award presented to Good Shepherd from PNTB is shaped like a teardrop, representing the tears of those who have lost a loved one and doctors who have lost a patient, but also the tears of joy from transplant recipients and their loved ones. Recipients and donor families are able to make choices about whether they would like to share or receive information about each other, either on an anonymous basis passed through a third party, or with the intent to speak directly and perhaps form an ongoing relationship.

Thompson encouraged everyone who would wish their organs to be donated in the event of their death to register for the Donate Life Northwest Donor Registry, a legally binding authorization. For those who aren't on the registry, but are a candidate for organ donation, the decision is made by the deceased's next of kin. Whether people register or not, Thompson said they should discuss their wishes with their family members now, so that their loved ones are not blindsided or asked to make a decision not knowing what they would want.

PNTB is the federally designated transplant bank for Oregon, Southern Washington and Western Idaho. In 2020, there were 523 organ donations in the PNTB service area.

Election: Spencer will fight for equitable education

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for 20 years gives him some unique insights as he helped connect children from around the world with Eastern Oregon high schools.

With the Pendleton School District beginning to resume full-day classes after a year-long COVID-19 shutdown, Thompson anticipated that many of the students struggled with the time out of the classroom and needed to make up for lost time.

He recalled the year his childhood school in Douglas County opened late because Interstate 5 construction made the school building inaccessible. Despite starting the school year in October, Thompson said the school made up for it by holding classes six days a week and every day that wasn't a holiday.

"I'm probably the only person I've ever talked to (who) went to school the day after Thanksgiving," he said.

Like many of the other candidates, Harrison praised the district for how they were able to adapt to the pandemic, noting that Pendleton's reopening plans were more workable than some of the others she's seen.

Position 4

This is the first time either Preston Eagleheart or Joey GrosJacques have run for the Pendleton School Board, but both have already built up a record of public service.

GrosJacques grew up in Pilot Rock, and he "fell in love" with education after he started serving on its school board in 2015. Getting hired to help lead Blue Mountain Community College's TRIO Student Support Services program spurred a move to Pendleton and cut short his term in Pilot Rock.

But GrosJacques is ready to get back in the saddle in Pendleton, where he hopes to use the same "students first" mindset that he does at BMCC.

An enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Eagleheart is the managing director of Cayuse Government Services, a tribal enterprise that provides technology services for city, tribal and state governments.

Beyond his work, Eagleheart touted his experience as a member of the Oregon Native American Chamber Board of Directors and the Oregon STEM Investment Council, a group charged with working with the state to double the percentage of fourth and eighth graders

CANDIDATE PROFILES

POSITION 1

Beth Harrison
Age: 49
Occupation: Stay-at-home mother, volunteer and dietician
Birthplace: Seoul, South Korea
Years in Pendleton: 12
Highest level of education: Master's degree, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Family: Married, seven children

Rodney Thompson
Age: 79
Occupation: Retired
Birthplace: Anniston, Alabama
Years in Pendleton: 42
Highest level of education: Bachelor's degree, Oregon State University

Family: Married, two children and two grandchildren

POSITION 4

Preston Eagleheart
Age: 45
Occupation: Managing director at Cayuse Government Services
Birthplace: Pendleton
Years in Pendleton: 40
Highest level of education: Master's degree, Gonzaga University
Family: Married, four children

Joey GrosJacques
Age: 28
Occupation: Project director of TRIO and student support services at Blue Mountain Community College
Birthplace: Pendleton
Years in Pendleton: 2

Highest level of education: Master's degree, Western Governors University
Family: Single

Patrick Gregg
Age: 36
Occupation: Attorney at Corey, Byler & Rew
Birthplace: Portland
Years in Pendleton: 12
Highest level of education: Law degree, Willamette University
Family: Married, three children

Briana Spencer
Age: 30
Occupation: Computer support technician
Birthplace: Pendleton
Years in Pendleton: 30
Highest level of education: High school diploma
Family: Single

who are proficient in math and science, and doubling the number of students who earn post-secondary degrees in STEM fields.

When either Eagleheart or GrosJacques takes office to fill the Position 4 seat held by George, they'll have to deal with a budget that'll be affected by legislative negotiations at a state level and is still missing the \$300,000 in local revenue from a previous levy, which was voted down by Pendleton residents in May 2020.

"There's a lot of unknowns moving into this next fiscal year," Eagleheart said. "And really understanding where these dollars are allocated to is going to be very important."

For his part, GrosJacques said he's tracking the ongoing negotiations in Salem, noting the Oregon School Boards Association feels like the state's education budget proposal is still insufficient.

Eagleheart was arrested on DUII charges in 2002 and 2003. Eagleheart said those incidents were the result of bad decisions he made in his 20s, and he felt lucky that he didn't hurt himself or others at the time. He said he's taken steps to move past those mistakes, and Oregon court records show he hasn't faced criminal charges since 2003.

A third candidate, Chris Garrigues, will be listed on the ballot, but he's no longer seeking the seat.

At a Monday, April 19, school board meeting, McBee announced that Garrigues had been hired as a math teacher at Pendleton High School. Because state law prohibits district employees serving on the same school board

where they work, Garrigues' campaign is effectively over.

"I have heard nothing but good things about Joey and Preston," he wrote in an email. "The school district will benefit to have either of their voices representing the community."

Position 7

In the race to succeed McBee for Position 7, both candidates pointed to their life experiences as inspirations for their campaigns.

Like many students in the Pendleton School District, Briana Spencer said she spent her childhood dealing with issues like poverty, the foster system and providing care for younger family members.

An enrolled member of the CTUIR and an activist who helped organize local Black Lives Matter protests over summer 2020, Spencer said a willingness to engage in public service should be a shared responsibility.

"I'm running to continue that fight of improving and providing a quality and equitable education for all students and to continue ... an upward path of providing an education that will ensure children have a bright future and (a) fighting chance in society," she said.

Gregg grew up in Wilsonville near Portland, and he felt like the quality education he received helped propel him toward future success. Although he chose a career in law, Gregg said he's the child of an educator and a police officer, and they helped instill a sense of public service in him.

With two of his three children now moving through the Pendleton school system

and his wife working as the ASPIRE coordinator at Pendleton High School, Gregg felt ready to contribute at the board level.

One of the most persistent aspects of the Pendleton School District is an achievement gap between American Indian and white students. Whether it's math or English scores, graduation rates or attendance, American Indian students tend to perform lower than their peers in Pendleton.

Spencer said part of the solution could lie in a better understanding of tribal customs and traditions surrounding funerals and exercising treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather.

But Spencer said the district could also play a more active role by regularly attending meetings for the Nixyaawii School Board, the CTUIR Education and Training Committee or the Tribes' Head Start Policy Council.

Gregg said the board would need to ask the superintendent why there's a gap, and then set benchmarks to address the issue.

"If a particular approach isn't working, then I think we shouldn't be hesitant to revisit that approach and figure out, 'OK, we've tried this, that hasn't helped close this gap,'" he said.

Spencer has experience serving on a school board, having previously served a term on the Nixyaawii School Board. She was recently elected again to the board after spending some time away, and if she wins the seat on the Pendleton School Board, she will have to choose which one to serve on in accordance with state law.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

A sign advertises COVID-19 testing at the Pendleton Convention Center during a testing event sponsored by CHI St. Anthony Hospital on Feb. 8, 2021.

COVID:

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extremely rare blood clots in women who received the shot.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has launched an investigation into the case of an Oregon woman who died two weeks after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The Oregon Health Authority does not know if there is a causal connection between the vaccine and the woman's death.

Still, *The New York Times* reports federal officials appear to be inching closer to lifting the Johnson

& Johnson moratorium as cases of clots have remained uncommon.

Vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna have remained available throughout the pause and thousands of Oregonians are getting vaccinated each day.

OHA director Patrick Allen said, at its current daily inoculation rate, 80% of Oregon adults could receive a first dose of vaccine by July 4.

"Sustaining that pace depends on Oregonians continuing to choose to get vaccinated," he said.

Oregon has reported more than 178,000 coronavirus cases since the pandemic began and 2,484 related deaths.

Renovations:

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2018, the burden of housing and caring for people in crisis shifted to the jail, officials say.

Now, with the closure of the Aspen Springs Psychiatric Hospital in Hermiston, which provided the county and state with sorely needed mental health treatment beds for patients needing acute care, some officials are concerned the jail could see an even greater influx of inmates in crisis.

"We've made a criminal out of somebody who is in crisis when they're not a criminal — they're just somebody who's in crisis," Shafer, who worked for the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office for 18 years, said. "And now, because of COVID and everything else, we have a lot of people who are in crisis, and we have no place to take them. We don't have a Blue Mountain Recovery Center or Aspen Springs. Now, we're relying on this jail."

This, officials say, places jail staff in a difficult position. "Law enforcement and corrections deputies don't have the training or expertise in treating those in crisis," Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan said. "That's where the genuine need is."

Rowan said he would prefer that inmates struggling with mental health or addiction be housed in facilities geared specifically toward treatment.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Jail uniforms sit on shelves at the Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton on Thursday, April 22, 2021.

"We have become a sort of ad hoc mental health facility," he said. "If I had it my way, we wouldn't house those individuals. We would find them a local resource where they can be housed and stabilized and where they can get the treatment that they need."

Building new facilities where inmates with mental health struggles can be separated from those incarcerated for more serious offenses could provide an answer.

"Our mission in the county is to get the sheriff's office out of mental health," Murdock said. "We openly don't feel the sheriff's office should be dealing such a major role in playing with mental health. And they don't either because that's not what they're trained for."

Years in progress

Faced with limited resources and the challenges presented by the rural locale, Eastern Oregon law enforcement houses inmates in the jail not only from

Umatilla County, but also from Wallowa, Union and Morrow counties, as well as the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, according to officials.

The jail also serves as a "transfer hub for many other correction facilities in several western states," according to Murdock.

This is partly why the jail population has increased over time, officials say. In its early years, the jail's average daily population was just 135 inmates. Today, that number has increased to more than 230 per day, making renovations crucial, officials said.

"Some of the infrastructure that was assumed back at that lower population doesn't meet the needs of the future," Rowan said.

Murdock said the "expanded utilization" of the jail has compromised its ability to maintain safe and secure facilities, noting the jail was "designed to handle far less prisoners than the

current load."

"In the end, the biggest overriding reason for the renovation of the jail is to deal with the fact that it isn't able to accommodate the number of inmates we're keeping there," Murdock said.

This makes it even more important to keep inmates struggling with mental health or addiction separated from other groups, officials say.

"It's for their own safety," Rowan said. "Because the behaviors they display are unfavorable to others. So if they start acting out, then it could upset the other people housed with that individual. It's a matter of safety for them to reduce the risk of anything like a fight breaking out or something like that."

Rowan said he's optimistic that the funding will come this time around.

"I'm very hopeful," he said. "We're ready to go. We have bid-ready documents that we can send out once funding is secure. Then we'll have a better timeline on when we can start and finish the project."

Murdock noted that lawmakers have long been, and remain, invested in supporting the project.

"We've been working on this for a long time," Murdock said. "Just when you think you're there, you aren't. But I think there are a number of key people in Salem in the Senate and the House who are very supportive of our program, understand it, and it will, I hope, prevail."