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PROGRAM

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This is the tenth year for the Wallowa County Urban/Rural Exchange program, launched by local rancher Todd Nash as a way to educate kids from both sides as to the culture of the other half of the state.

Now, a decade into the program, “We have to turn away kids who want to come,” said Maureen Hosty, the 4-H faculty member from the Portland side who arranges for kids to come to Wallowa County.

“Kids walk away saying this is a life-changing event,” Hosty said. “It really opens up their eyes about how ranchers and farmers bring food to the table. They also get a deeper understanding of the culture and lifestyle from schools to medical access.”

It’s an immersion experience, with kids living as one of the family and invited to take part in everything a ranch kid does during the three days (they leave the morning of the fourth day), including going to school on Monday.

Wallowa kids visited Portland in a reciprocal program as well.

Both Emmett and Miguel were willing to try almost everything offered (Miguel drew the line at riding a horse), and they were astonished by a lot of what they observed.

“What’s different about the culture is it seems like it’s all one big family,” Emmett said. “We’re always waving at every truck that goes by because we know those people.”

“Everybody knows each other,” Miguel agreed, adding the surprising fact that “the neighbors aren’t (physically) close.”

The boys got to know those neighbors better when a group of area ranchers met for a branding day hosted by Don and Debbie Wentz and Carrie and Levi Hermens of Wallowa.

That, said Emmett, was the most fun.

“Everything excites them,” said Amy Ramsden, mother of the three Ramsden boys. “Emmett was especially impressed by breakfast — that great, big breakfast of sausage and pancakes and all — every morning he wants to know what’s for breakfast today.”

They’re full of questions about everything, said 15-year-old Gus Ramsden — Why do you wear a cowboy hat? Why do you rope the cows? What do you do for fun? — and answering those questions and comparing lives really helps both sides get to know one another.

“It really shows us what it’s like to live in the city — it’s completely different,” Gus said.

That reciprocal interest surprised Emmett.

“The Ramsdens were a lot more accepting of other cultures than I expected,” he said. “They just helped us know how to do the work of the ranch.”



Emmett, Miguel, and Lute are shown in a field, using long-handled tools to pitch hay. They are wearing blue t-shirts and green baseball caps. In the background, there are stacks of hay and a wooden structure.

By Sunday Emmett was getting the lingo and nodding knowledgeably as Zeb explained how their horned Corrientes Cross cattle stood a better chance against wolves than the polled (hornless) Hereford calves they had just fed.

As much as they enjoyed their stay, neither Portland boy wants to be a rancher.

Emmett thinks he may end up a marine biologist. Miguel is leaning toward electrical engineering, but being a lawyer also is a possibility.

One thing is sure: although Miguel was happy to be part of the experience for three days, ranching is definitely not on his career list (there’s that whole horse-riding thing, for starters).

Win money for your cause and help the Joseph playground!



It’s the Rotary Club’s Community Spelling Bee Tuesday, April 26, 6 p.m. Odd Fellows Hall, Enterprise

Three-person teams of adults and high school students will compete. Proceeds will be shared by charities selected by the winning teams and Rotary, which is supporting the Joseph City Park playground renovation .

To enter, go to <http://tinyurl.com/zl23gb6> or contact Marilyn Dalton, 541-426-9411. Entry fee: \$75 (find a sponsor or we’ll help).

Have fun – cheer your favorite team, challenge decisions or buy a team’s second chance with a donation.

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SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Wallowa County Fair Board Scholarship(s) will provide scholarship assistance to Wallowa County 4-H/FFA members. Applications are available from the Fair office for graduating high school students who will be attending college, vocational or trade school during the 2016 – 2017 school year. Amounts will range from \$250 to \$1000.

Applications are available and can be picked up at the Wallowa County Fair office or e-mailed to you from wallowacountyfair@gmail.com.

Candidates must submit the following by May 1, 2016
1. Completed and signed application
2. High school transcript or statement of GPA from Registrar.
3. Three letters of reference with one being advisor or leader.

Education Foundation dinner Friday

Wallowa County Chieftain

This year is the year the Enterprise Education Foundation hopes to break the \$1 million mark in donations — with your help.

The foundation’s “We Love Our Kids” dinner and auction, scheduled for 6 p.m. Friday, April 8, at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise, has helped fund K-6 music and K-12 art teachers in the district for going on 12 years.

The money raised, combined with funds from other fund-raisers and donations, comes to about \$40,000 per year.

Businesses, individuals, artists and galleries, and even school children have all donated prizes and auction items to the event.

Tickets are almost sold out. Call Enterprise Elementary School office at 541-426-3812 for tickets.

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

This week’s athlete of the week is Blaze Lepper of Enterprise. The Outlaws sophomore has made a smooth transition to spring sports after serving as a key post player for the basketball team this past winter.

Blaze represented Enterprise exceptionally Friday afternoon, when schools from across parts of Oregon and Washington gathered in Milton-Freewater for the annual Mac-Hi Carnival of Speed. He finished second in shot put with a throw of 42-01.75. He also finished 23rd in the discus competition and helped lead the boys to a ninth-place team finish.

Congratulations, Blaze.

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