



Steve Tool/Chieftain
Student athletes — (L to R) JCS students Tori Suto, Ella Coughlan, Steven Beckman and Emma Hite signed letters of intent to attend their respective colleges on athletic scholarships. All four athletes are also honor roll students and noted the importance of their classwork.

Athletes: Four Joseph Charter School seniors getting tuition help

Continued from Page A1

athlete who drives himself mercilessly, he plans to attend TVCC long enough to get his prerequisites done before transferring to another school to obtain a degree in sports administration at a school that will offer him a scholarship to continue wrestling.

The senior chalks up his success to his love of the sport.

“I like coming up and helping kids out, teaching kids who want to learn,” he said. “It’s a passion of mine.”

Also a scholar, Beckman earned a 3.85 GPA.

“Our coaches get on us if we’re slacking a little bit,” he said with laugh. “It makes us want to keep our grades up.”

Ella Coughlan is a runner extraordinaire. Eastern Oregon University thought so as well. Like the others, she doesn’t hang it up if it’s not at an official practice.

“I go to practice five days a week and sometimes six,” she said. “All through summer, all through fall and all through spring.”

She, Hite, plans to study elementary education at

EOU. Coughlan is also an ace student with a 3.9 GPA.

“Having sports has helped me keep my good grades up and keeps me motivated to do well in school,” she said.

Tori Suto is one of the finest golfers in the state. Playing even against golfers at the 4A district-level; she has placed 10th, fourth and second place at state with her senior season remaining. The senior developed her skills by going the extra mile with dedicated practice.

“When you’re from here, you have to put a lot into it,” she said. “Because of the weather, we start late, and right now, certain parts of the course are flooded.” In the winter, she plays indoors, hitting into nets in the garage and practicing her swing in front of a mirror for a half-hour stretch.

Suto knows the importance of maintaining her classroom as well as greens work — earning the honor of co-valedictorian of her class.

What will she study at College of St. Mary’s?

“Art and Education — my two loves,” she said.

4-H: Wallowa County families host Portland teens

Continued from Page A1

“I didn’t really expect them to have a modern house because the videos showed them living in, like, log cabins,” said seventh grader Gigi Bareilles. “I didn’t think they’d necessarily have phones. But they were, like, listening to modern music and everything. I was kinda surprised.”

Working up-close and personal with livestock was a new, and sometimes amazing thing. Many of the Portland 4-H’ers had animals — but mostly dogs, cats, and bunnies. “I’ve never been that close to animals that big — cows and horses. It was kind of a shock,” Bareilles said. Larkin and Braibish took a turn at gathering and pushing Todd Nash’s errant calves back into the correct pasture. “It’s fun and you have to think,” Braibush said. “You have to be smarter than the calf. Sometimes that’s not easy.”

Other students brushed, rode, and communed with horses. “There’s a lot of hair out here,” said Hadley Kersens, holding up a fluffy-looking currycomb. She and Rita Tran helped out on the Ketscher ranch, with duties that included vaccinating calves and tending to



Ellen Morris Bishop

Portland 4-H’ers Maya Braibish and Julia Larkin take a break from helping Todd Nash fed his cows on a dreary April morning. The girls were part of then in-student groups participating in the 2019 4-H Urban 2 Rural exchange.

fences and water troughs, as well as learning a few pointers on horse-care.

Some tried new foods that were never on the menu at home. Eighth grader Jason Co, who stayed with the Wentz family, sampled biscuits and gravy, chili lasagna, and cinnamon rolls for the first time — foods that his traditional, first generation Asian family never ate. His favorite? “Pot roast,” he said.

The work ethics and friendliness of their host families made lasting

impressions on the Portland 4-H’ers. “The people we stayed with (the Royce family) were really nice and welcoming. They gave out a really positive energy. They were a fun family to stay with,” said seventh grader Bella Pylant. “And they all worked really hard.”

“The reason why I did the 4-H thing is to learn more about other people,” Co said. “We hear a lot about the urban-rural divide. I wanted to see the differences. But it’s not so much a divide, it’s just a different lifestyle.”

“This program was initially based in natural resources issues,” said Debi Warnock, Wallowa County’s 4-H extension agent. “But it’s become broader than that. It’s more about the fact that people are basically the same no matter where they live.”

Wallowa County students in grades six through nine will have a chance to participate in the exchange by living with a Portland 4-H family next year. For more information, contact Warnock at 541-426-3143.

Opinion: Community journalism plays a critical role

Continued from Page A1

we deserve it or not. But the unique offerings that a local paper provides to a rural community transcends these discretions so long as we are all willing to forgive.

If Wallowa County residents could only resort to state and national news outlets, they would not only miss out on the local issues of the day, but also the voices of our neighbors. More than just a source of information, community journalism can help foster positive rural cultural and economic development,

while at the same time protect the community’s identity and memorialize the nostalgia of its past.

Empirical evidence documents the positive impact between strong community journalism and strong civic engagement and community values. J-Source Innovation Editor, Robert Washburn argues, “it appears there is a larger economic imperative to have strong, vibrant news media, to assist community resiliency, which is defined as the ability of a community to withstand and adapt in the face of major changes.”

Today I offer both a question and starting point for a dialogue on what community journalism can do for Wallowa County.

So what can we do for you? We can keep the residents of Wallowa County informed on the health of our local economy by reporting on both new and failing industry. We can lift folks’ spirits by documenting citizens award banquets. We provide a venue for public discourse and engagement in the marketplace of ideas — and outlet for our neighbors to share their voices through letters to the


editor. We can spread hope through a renewed commitment to honor the successes of our young people; our future. And we cover our local political institutions to safeguard the rule of law in our community.

I’ve made mistakes. Most of us have. Most of us will continue to do so. But mistakes don’t define this community. Resilience, understanding, determination and justice are the characteristics that define us. At the Wallowa County Chieftain we will strive harder to always serve as the institution that Wallowa County needs.

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Dr. Heisinger will be seeing patients at Wallowa Memorial Hospital regularly for clinic visits and surgery. Ask your physician for a referral today.



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