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Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

Community comes together in wake of student's death

Mapleton High School freshman Brandon Kimble died Thursday



NED HICKSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

A symbol of strength stands outside the Mapleton gymnasium.

It's a sobering fact that, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide is the second leading cause of death for people between ages 10 and 34 in the state of Oregon.

It isn't a statistic limited to large cities, urban areas, the wealthy or poor. And early Thursday morning, it was a statistic that unfortunately found its way into Mapleton with the suicide of high school student Brandon Kimble — a good-humored freshman who moved to the area two years ago and played on the Sailors' football team as a wide receiver this past fall.

According to Lane County Sheriff's Office Lt. Billy Halverson, the call came in at 3:21 a.m. from a family member who had found Kimble. Police arrived and determined that the

By NED HICKSON
Siuslaw News

15-year-old had taken his own life.

Sheriffs contacted the school to allow faculty to prepare for the arrival of students and initiate a crisis response team, which arrived from Siuslaw High School at about 10 a.m. and opened a "Care Room" in the school's library, where the news was given to the school's students.

"It's a conversation you never expect to have," said Mapleton School District Superintendent Jodi O'Mara. "The nice thing about Mapleton is the amazing closeness of the community. It also happens to be the hardest thing when something like this happens."

"It affects everyone very deeply." O'Mara contacted Siuslaw School

District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowski, who offered extra support from school counselors in addition to the crisis team headed up by school psychologist Robyn Wallace-Blanchard.

"Once everyone was here, we met, determined those students who were most at-risk emotionally, and then tried to establish a sense of normalcy for those who needed it, as well as special help for those who needed something more," said Wallace-Blanchard. "That included staff members and parents."

While students were given the option to return home with a parent's consent, most opted to stay on the school grounds.

See MAPLETON 11A

Chamber adds fourth underwriter

Driftwood Shores joins Korando Dental, TR Hunter, Three Rivers as supporters

Florence Area Chamber of Commerce now has a fourth corporate underwriter in Driftwood Shores Resort and Conference Center.

Chamber Executive Director Bettina Hannigan began pursuing additional corporate sponsorship earlier this year during annual chamber membership renewals. TR Hunter Real Estate became a new underwriter in August and Korando Dental Group became one in September, joining longtime underwriter Three Rivers Casino Resort.

Hannigan said that Driftwood Shores has a lot to offer the local community, especially with its Surfside Restaurant and Lounge, premium rooms, suites and condos, indoor pool and perfect location to watch the early winter sunsets.

"Florence Area Chamber of Commerce keeps us involved with our local community."

—TAMI CLARK, DRIFTWOOD SHORES SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR

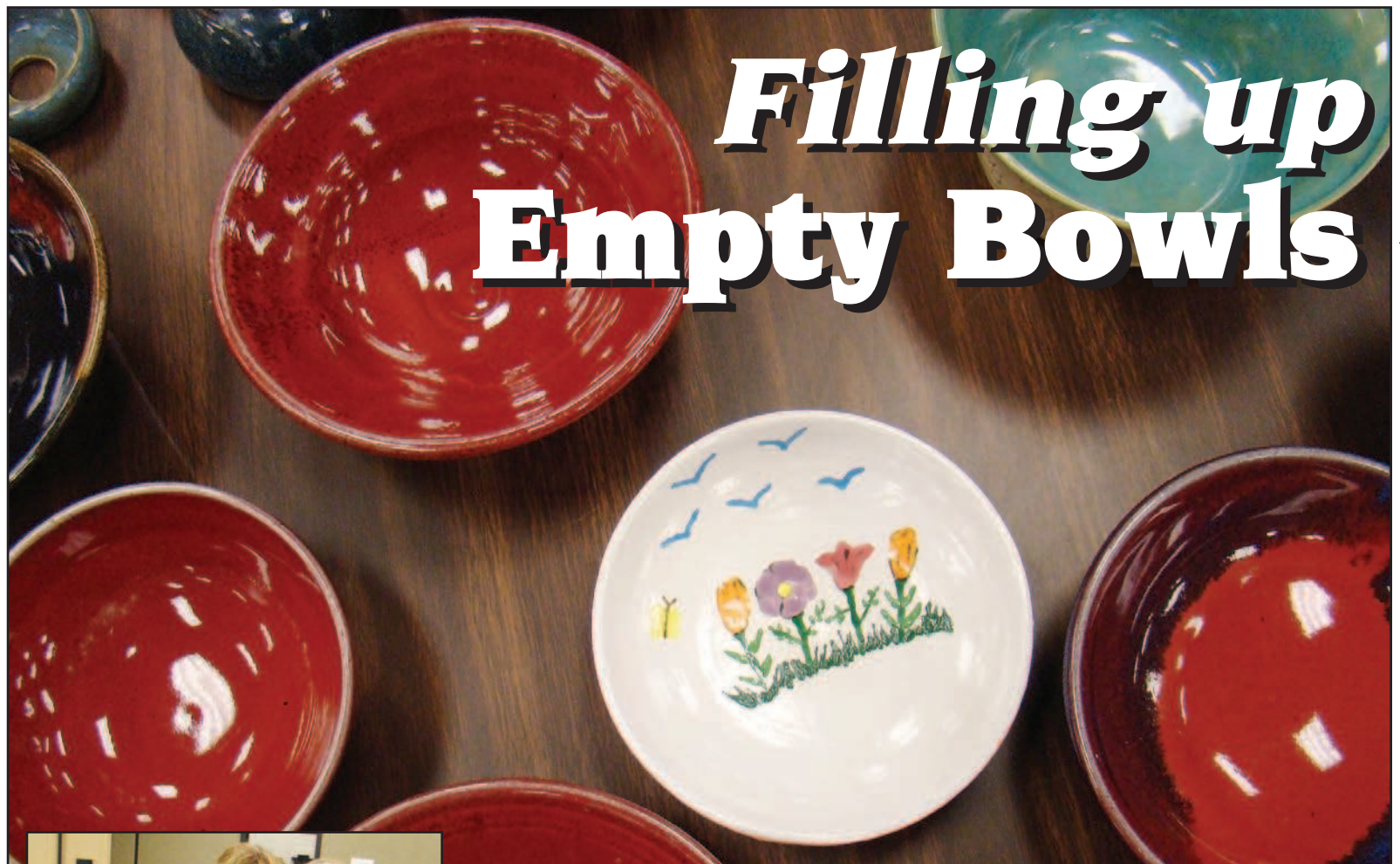
about increasing their membership. They know the value of working with the chamber and saw how much more bang for their buck they can get from being an underwriter."

The chamber's four underwriters get premium placement on the chamber's website and publications, live leads from people requesting relocation packets and Visitor Center information and additional event advertising, public relations and chamber resources.

Clark said, "Driftwood Shores Resort believes in the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce and wanted to support it at a higher level. We have received tremendous value from our involvement with the chamber over the years."

She said that the chambers' efforts to bring new business and more visitors, host fundraisers and workshops and connect local business owners has helped grow her operation at Driftwood Shores.

See UNDERWRITER 11A



Filling up Empty Bowls

PHOTOS BY JACK DAVIS/SIUSLAW NEWS

Annual event helps fill Florence Food Share pantry

More than 700 hand-crafted bowls and ceramic ware are for sale through Sunday at the Florence Events Center during the annual Empty Bowls fundraiser. Now in its 21st year, Empty Bowls dedicates all proceeds to Florence Food Share. Local artists and more than 75 Siuslaw High School students created the handmade bowls. Dozens of silent auction art items are also up for bid with bowl prices starting at \$5. Each bowl comes with a certificate good for one free bowl of soup at participating local restaurants.



Oregon homeless student numbers increase

Department of Education reports that area districts' rates are higher than state average

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

A newly released report from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) provides unsettling new data regarding the number of homeless K-12 students in local communities.

The new numbers, verified by Siuslaw School District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak, state that 61 students in the

Siuslaw district currently self identify as homeless.

The study also shows that the Mapleton School District currently has 31 students that have no permanent home or shelter.

These individuals amount to approximately 4.3 percent of the student body at Siuslaw, slightly higher than the statewide average of 3.7percent.

According to the ODE study, these numbers are similar to

those of the past few years and indicate the ongoing need for local schools to provide support for students that goes beyond the basics of books and instruction.

"These kids and families, that self identify (as homeless) are eligible for basic supply assistance," said Grzeskowski. "They can get clothing and toiletries, study materials and some additional support if needed."

He believes that the district's

responsibility is more than simply teaching; it is also about providing a framework of acceptance and caring for all of his students.

"Our goal is to be as inclusive as we can be to every kid, and especially to kids living in tough situations," Grzeskowski said. "We want to reduce stress in their lives, to make it easier to

See RATES 11A