

Teens from 1A

Wise said she felt that she was attempting to fix a situation that was caused by a system that had failed early on.
 “We’re trying to make sure people don’t get there,” Davis said.
 Wise agreed.
 “I feel strongly that, if we want to create a better future or a better

America, or even just a better community, we need to look at the children,” she said. “They are the big impact. In 10 years, your 8-year-old is 18 and voting for everything. I think a lot of people don’t realize their kids are the biggest impact.”
 Wise is looking to shape the teen program with this point of view.
 “I remember myself at 16, being the oldest of seven kids,” Wise said. “I was thinking I was already the

adult. I had my license and my own car. I would pick up groceries when my mom would ask. I also had a part-time job.”
 Wise had all the responsibilities of an adult, but none of the control over her life.
 She felt that she needed a fun place that she could decompress with her peers, get help with homework, find scholarship opportunities and, most of all, have a sense of control.
 Wise believes that some of that control can be gained with a legitimate leadership role, one where high schoolers can have an impact on another person’s life.

“I’m hoping to bring in some leadership roles into our program so maybe teens can help with some of our middle school kids,” she said.
 Of course, sometimes the high schoolers will need someone they can rely on as well.
 “I want to give them more adults that aren’t their warden. My mom couldn’t be my friend and my advocate and my parent all in one. This organization needs to have adults that teens can come and talk to and say, ‘Hey, if I wanted to rent a two-bedroom apartment, how would I do that?’”
 These mentorship roles would lead into other opportunities for the

students, such as teaching them how to apply for a job and fill out a resume, which could lead into the different types of vocational activities the future could offer.
 “We will have people come in from the community and talk to them about different subjects,” Wise said.
 But above all, Wise and Davis want to make the experiences fun.
 “In the high school, you feel like you’re in a high school,” Wise said. “No one liked high school. I don’t care who you talked to, even the popular kids. I want them to walk into the door and go, ‘Wow, I want to hang out on the couches here. I

feel safe, I feel cool, I feel open to asking questions.’ And I can put this on my resume and I can learn. ... Whether it’s something like learning to cook or volunteer, or where kids can learn algebra, I want every single kid that walks through my door, whether they stay for years or months, that they can say, ‘The Boys and Girls Club gave me this.’
 “And when they’re 70 years old, they can look back and go, ‘The Boys and Girls Club had impact.’”
 For more information on Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County and its programs, visit bgcwl.org or call 541-902-0304.

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Living from 8A

But affordable housing and more living-wage jobs are getting pushback from some members of the community. Building businesses can bring up fears of industrialization.

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or is it keeping things pristine? There’s got to be a compromise somewhere in there.”

There are also those who say that assistance programs like SOS and Florence Food Share are only perpetuating the area’s problems by enabling bad habits through subsidization.

“We’ve had that comment over and over again,” Teter said.
 He, along with county and city officials, believe the crisis is systemic and will continue no matter what care these organizations provide. They are merely slowing the bleeding of a dying system.
 To end the crisis, Teter believes that people must make a fundamental change about how they view the world.
 “If the community wants this to improve, they have to be willing to allow people to make changes,” he said. “When the city government is talking to different businesses to bring in these living

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