

DONATIONS from page 1A

"A friend of mine told me, 'You know, we should really get donations down there,'" Fritz said. "I was like, 'Okay!' Put a post on Facebook, and away it went."

Thus far, Fritz stated she has received 40 black bags of clothing, "a couple bags of shoes, some blankets and towels, plus three bags of toiletries."

Florence Food Share has also donated 500 pounds of soup for the venture.

"We're trying to keep clothes and shoes down to a dull roar, so we're not accepting those anymore," she said. "We're still looking for blankets, coats, socks. Any kind of food product people want to send along. Toiletries, diapers, that's what we really need now. If people want to send down toys

for Christmas gifts for kids who have lost everything, that would be great too."

Donations will be accepted until Tuesday afternoon, at which time Fritz, her husband Mike and daughter Shannon will pack their trailer and head out early Wednesday so "people can have a good Turkey Day."

Cash donations will also be accepted, and any help with the gas money would be greatly

appreciated, as the Fritz family expects to drive around 9 miles per gallon.

Fritz and her family are also donating all of the proceeds they make from their business, Hillbilly Jams, Jellies & More, which has a booth at the Picca-Dilly Flea Market in Eugene, located at the fairgrounds.

"We don't really have the time on our hands, but we made the time," Fritz said. "I'm just thankful we're able to do it and the community is coming together."

Drop off locations are at Frank's Place in Mapleton, located at 10788 Highway 126, or in Florence at the Florence RV and Automotive, located at 4390 Highway 101.

Donations will be accepted until noon on Tuesday, Nov. 20.

Fritz thanked the community for coming together in this way.

"Anything helps," she said.

Operation Christmas Child gift collection continues

Florence Evangelical Church, 1318 Rhododendron Drive, is once again the area collection point for Operation Christmas Child, the world's largest Christmas project of its kind.

Florence residents, families, churches and groups can help spread joy to millions of children around the world by filling shoeboxes as Christmas gifts for them. The gifts can include school supplies, clothing and toys for children ages 2 to 14.

From the distribution sites, boxes are flown to countries around the world, and then delivered to communities by trucks — and even donkeys, camels or canoes.

This year's National Collection Week is Monday, Nov. 12, to Monday, Nov. 19.

Florence project coordinators hope to collect at least 500 shoebox gifts this year. Collection hours at Florence Evangelical Church are Monday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Plus, Wednesday, Nov. 14, from 5 to 8 p.m., and Monday, Nov. 19, from 8 to 10 a.m.

Donations to help with postage are also appreciated. For questions about dropping off shoeboxes or putting them together, call the church at 541-997-2523.

Operation Christmas Child has been an annual project of Samaritan's Purse since 1993.

The project has delivered gift-filled shoeboxes to more than 124 million children, in more than 150 countries and territories.

For information, visit www.samaritanpurse.org/occ.

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GYM MASCOT from page 1A

Submitted concepts up for consideration included a burly sailor, an anchor, a warship and the letter "M" accompanied by a slogan.

Although the Oct. 3 school board meeting was expected to reveal the board's final vote, there were concerns that a full inventory of local opinion had not been accounted for. This prompted the board to expand the voting process to the entire community.

"Anyone can cast their vote for the design they would prefer to see in the center of the Mapleton High School gym floor," the school district said in a press release. "Everyone should get an equal vote."

With the choices pared down to either keeping the original logo or an "M" accompanied by the slogan "Home of the Sailors," the board committed to upholding whichever design the community favored.

Giving the vote to the community was a decision made in light of an influx of opinions, both in person and in writing. While the initial question of Salty's future was framed as an opportunity for a modern, equitable upgrade, the subtext of gender inclusivity spurred some public comments.

"We have always been Sailors! It is a sad country when gender is a problem with a school mascot," read one comment on the district's website.

Debates on discriminatory

mascots are nothing new. Nationwide, controversy about using Native American names and imagery has been going on for years. Oregon itself passed a law in 2012 prohibiting Oregon public schools from using Native American names, symbols or images as school mascots. At least 15 Oregon high schools were affected by the ruling, which gave schools until July 1, 2017, to comply.

Outside the Native American controversy, other high schools have opted to change their mascots in the face of public pressure: South Eugene High School changed their name from "Axemen" to "Axe" after a heated debate on gender bias; South Albany High School dropped the name "Rebels" in response to the 2017 Charlottesville, Va. riots; and Franklin High School in Portland removed their Quaker mascot amid complaints it violated the separation of church and state.

Mapleton's Salty, however, has not received such public condemnation.

"In all of the feedback, we got very little or none that strongly felt they weren't represented because of Salty," said Burruss. "It didn't end up being an issue, which was interesting and good to hear."

Community concerns were relatively mild compared to more contentious mascot debates. Still, Burruss emphasized her and other board members' commitments to stewarding a district that is representative of

community values.

"We really are trying to be conscientious and represent our student body — past, present and future," she said.

Also resting on the board members' minds was the issue of fiscal responsibility.

In a non-binding recommendation from the Oregon School Board Association, legal counsel stated, "A mascot should not discriminate in any way or have the effect of favoring one protected class over another (the protected class could be race, gender, religion, disability, etc.)."

A current estimate to resurface the gym floor puts the bill at \$26,795. Should non-discrimination laws be passed which prohibit Salty, this number could rise.

"We want people to understand that that is a real possibility," said Burruss. "We went ahead and made the decision to put Salty back on there understanding that that may happen."

Despite the possibility of future state law changes, Salty's place in Mapleton's community has been solidified by a process which allowed the public a brief evaluation of their identity and values.

"If people were very offended by it, that would have played a larger role in the conversation," said Burruss. "The majority of people were supportive of leaving Salty in the middle of the gym, so that's what we're going to do."

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