

# McCleery

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“We didn’t want to abandon the kids for summer, so we went from the backpacks to Friday pantry, and opened it up to not just Morrison, but Dallas High School and LaCreole (Middle School).”

They served 19 students for the summer in a unique set up where only the students, not their parents, picked out food from the pantry. They rely on counselors to recommend students for the club.

Members still pack bags for 13 elementary students and 36 older students have membership cards to the pantry.

“A lot of the students here live on their own and I know that it helps them especially — those who don’t have a support system at home,” said Garry, a student at Morrison. “It really does help us lot.”

Kahneeta, also a Morrison student, said McCleery’s idea has become an important resource for her family. She said she shops the pantry each week, even if there’s no school on Friday.

“We were at a point where this was the only income of food that we had,” she said.

Dana Goodale, a counselor at Morrison, said Kindness Club provides more than food. When the backpack program started, she began to see a difference in the recipients’ attitudes toward school.

“Students who were shy and insecure about their academic ability were feeling more comfortable speaking up in classes and started showing up early every morning to get breakfast at school and

enjoy the company of their peers,” she said. “It really was amazing.”

Goodale said before the pantry and backpacks, staff members sponsored students to participate in Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program, but couldn’t help all students who needed it.

“Debbie has found a way to tap into community folks who want to give back and support students in a way that only three or four staff members cannot,” Goodale said.

Now the club has 12 board members and about 120 people who follow the club’s Facebook page. Each week, inventory is taken at the pantry and needs posted on Facebook. Donations of clothing, toiletries and other necessities come in, as well.

Friday pantry also establishes bonds that show students that school staff care about them.

“She’s made a big difference in our kids’ lives,” said Annette Anderson, a teacher at Morrison. “I’ve worked here are Morrison for nine years, so well before the pantry was in operation, and it’s such a change to able to have assistance to help the kids.”

McCleery said her mission to help students through weekends has become much more than she imagined. Recently, the club has teamed up with Christmas Cheer so it can accept tax deductible donations.

“It’s exploded way beyond my expectations for sure. I think all of us would say that,” she said. “I think it’s been very healing for more than just me. It’s given a lot of us an outlet.”

# Gordon gets crash course as mayor

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — Jeremy Gordon isn’t used to his new title yet.

“People started calling me mayor right away,” he said. “I said, ‘that’s too quick. Slow down.’”

Since being appointed Falls City’s mayor on Nov. 20, following former mayor Terry Ungricht’s resignation, nothing’s slowed down for Gordon.

Ungricht, who still serves as the acting city manager, is giving him a crash course in city governance and what it means to be mayor.

“There’s a lot city government does that ... is just not on people’s radar, that wasn’t on my radar. I assume that the sewer is going to work. I assume the water is going to be clean, all these services,” Gordon said. “Just how much work it requires to maintain the things that are necessary to be a city, I have a new appreciation for that.”

He describes the learning curve as “immersion-style, like learning Spanish and being dropped off in Monterrey, Mexico.”

A resident of Falls City for two years, Gordon said becoming mayor wasn’t how he envisioned serving his community, at least at first. He said after becoming a father — his son Harvey just turned 1 — and reaching the mid-point of his career, he believed it was time to start giving back.

“I kind of imagined myself starting with committee work and learning that way, but then Terry stepped down and the opportunity came up,” he said. “I was approached by some people I really respected in the community about applying. There was kind of a process of me reflecting on that.”

Gordon had a conversation with his wife, Dana Schowalter, about what that would mean for their family, and together they agreed he should apply for the position.

“It actually made some sense with some of my work



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
**Jeremy Gordon was appointed mayor on Nov. 20.**

experience,” he said.

Gordon works for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as the project manager for its Flexible Option online degree program and on state authorization compliance for the university. He’s able to work in both roles remotely.

The former project is new, and required a lot of listening and information gathering, two skills he believes will be well-used as he serves as mayor.

“I’m pretty good at listening and getting all the facts together before I respond,” he said. “I think that will be helpful in leading the council meetings.”

The other half of his job

entails working with state government to keep the university in compliance with standards to offer an online degree program.

Gordon said his new post offers him an opportunity he’s excited about.

“One of the positives of it is that my family is going to be a lot more integrated into the community events and things like that,” he said. “We are going to spend more time doing that. That’s positive for my son and our family.”

He and Schowalter moved to Oregon from Milwaukee after she accepted an assistant professor of communications post at Western Oregon University.

“I talked to my boss when she in the interview process at Western. She’s the director of online learning at University of Wisconsin, so adept at technology. We worked out a strategy,” Gordon said. “It’s been working out really well.”

The couple landed in Falls City after a trip to looking for housing. Gordon said another professor lived in Falls City at the time and invited them to stay in his house while they searched.

“It turns out, the owner in Falls City hadn’t put the house up yet, but was planning to,” he said. “We just fell in love with the house, just right down the road on Dayton Street. It eventually worked out to buy that home.”

Coincidentally, the home is known as “the mayor’s house” to longtime residents because a former mayor lived there, Gordon said.

“When we moved here, there was an expectation that we would take care of that house,” he said. “It has some significance to the residents.”

He said the house may not have been home to a former mayor and the current mayor, but a future mayor, too.

“We joke that my 1-year-old will be mayor someday,” Gordon said, chuckling. “He’s very popular.”

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### Sudoku

**Difficulty:** ★☆☆☆☆

					2	1	5	
			1	9	7	4		3
		6						2
7				3	4	9		8
	1	9	2		8	6	3	
6		3	9	1				4
9						2		
8		7	4	2	6			
	4	1	7					

Row →

Three-by-three square →

Column ↓

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	9	4	7
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

**How to do Sudoku**

Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.

The Christian Science Monitor

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