

GoFundMe account set up for Baker City boy

A 7-year-old Baker City boy died in a sledding accident Friday in a residential area of McCall, Idaho.

Weston Gibbons, the son of Jason and Angie Gibbons of Baker City, died after he was struck by a 2018 Land Rover Velar driven by Susan McCandless, 58, of McCall, the Idaho Statesman newspaper reported.

According to police, two children were sledding down a driveway when one of the sleds went out into the road into the path of McCandless' vehicle. McCandless tried to stop but was unable to avoid striking the boy.

Weston was taken by ground ambulance to St. Luke's Hospital in McCall where he died of his injuries.

A GoFundMe account has been established for the family under the title of "Weston Gibbons Memorial Fund." A goal of \$1,000 was set, but by 9 a.m. today, the fund had received donations totaling \$5,130.

The family also includes a younger sister, Lizzie, and an older brother, Waylon.

The children attend Haines Elementary School where Weston was a second-grader.



Weston Gibbons

SHOPPING

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Karson Karolski, a fifth-grader, participated in the event with Baker City reserve officer Justin Phlaum.

Karolski brought a list of gift ideas for his family, picking a skateboard for one sister and a pair of boots for another sister, among other gifts.

The boots would have taken up the majority of his \$80 budget, but Phlaum bought the footwear so Karolski could

choose more gifts for his family.

Phlaum said he enjoyed participating in the event, and helping Karolski, because he likes to give back to the community.

After the shoppers had finished they traveled to the Baker City Nazarene Church to play games, eat lunch provided by the Blue Mountain Baptist Church and, of course, wrap their presents.

All the money, food and transportation for the event was donated. Bi-Mart

donated \$500 of the total \$1,200 that was spent.

The event was organized by the Baker City Police, led by Officer Shannon Regan. She had seen the La Grande Police Department put on a Shop with a Cop event and wanted to bring the idea to Baker City.

Baker City Police Chief Dustin Newman was also familiar with the event.

Regan said Baker City Police hopes to make Shop with a Cop an annual Christmas tradition here.

MIRANDA

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As she's learned more about what she has to look forward to, she has put together a "bucket list" and is determined to focus on spending more time with her family rather than worrying about finances and other challenges of daily living that she and her family face.

This is the first winter the Marble family has spent in their three-bedroom rental home that includes a full basement they've converted into a playroom for the children.

It's just across the street from a Northeast Oregon Health Authority apartment complex where they lived after first moving to Baker City. The two-story apartment required Miranda to navigate stairs or to be carried up them by Daniel routinely because the bedrooms and bathroom were all on the second floor.

worker is a natural fit to help those seeking housing to discover other services they might need, but have difficulty finding on their own.

And, although Gekeler's office is in La Grande, she says she will travel to Baker City to meet people who need her help.

Gekeler's position is funded by grant money recently awarded to the Northeast Oregon Network (NEON) through the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. NEON is a nonprofit agency that serves Baker, Union, Wallowa, Umatilla and Malheur counties.

The funding is aimed at preventing and reducing opioid misuse and helping residents of the region access treatment, says Eric Griffith, NEON's executive director.

People like Miranda Marble, who have been prescribed opioids to treat their illnesses, qualify for the program as well as others who might be addicted to the drugs, Griffith said. Applicants are interviewed and are required to complete intake forms to determine their eligibility for the program.

Those who qualify include, for example, those who might have a variety of crises in their lives, such as food and housing needs and physical and mental health issues, Griffith said.

"If an individual is in a crisis — say they've got a couple of kids at home and health issues — it makes it hard for them to prioritize their own health," Griffith said. "If we can help somebody get out of a crisis situation and get to a position of empowerment and



Gekeler

better well-being we can help people to be in a better place."

An in doing so, help them avoid becoming dependent on opioids, he says.

NEON, which has its headquarters at 2008 Third St., Suite A, in La Grande, was awarded grant funding of \$200,000 per year for the next three years from the Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program, Griffith said. The money will be used to support the NEON Pathways Community Hub.

The Hub "seeks to empower individuals in Eastern Oregon by removing social barriers that make it difficult for them to focus on their own health," states the NEON website at neonoregon.org.

A second grant of \$250,000 per year for three years, comes from the Rural Health Opioid Program.

The funding will allow NEON to expand support for the role of community health workers to help people in the region at risk for opioid misuse, Griffith said.

The workers connect residents with resources such as financial assistance, food access, housing, transportation, medical referrals, smoking cessation, and a variety of other programs.

In helping the Marble family, for example, Gekeler has established a GoFundMe site titled "Help Miranda Get a Wheelchair Accessible Van!" The van would make daily living easier for the family and allow Miranda to be more independent, Gekeler says.

She also is working to find volunteers to help build a wheelchair ramp to the front door of the family's home.

The grant money is not paid directly to the fami-

lies, but goes instead to pay workers to help them access services, Gekeler said.

"I'm a conduit for finding other resources for them," she said. "This is a better way to help people access health care."

The Rural Health Opioid program also will allow NEON to add new partners and expand the services available to the five-county area.

At this time, NEON works with 10 organizations, primarily hospital and clinics, that employ community health workers, Griffith said.

The organization also can partner with mental health and social service providers, as well as schools.

"Across the nation, you see a focus on treatment," he said. "We need more resources dedicated to prevention."

The opioid misuse crisis will need health care workers, law enforcement, mental health and others to play a part in finding a solution, Griffith stated in a press release.

"Efforts are being made from the federal government and on down to local government and even small nonprofit organizations to address the opioid crisis," he said.

There are no direct partnerships in Baker County at this time, he said, but the grant money could pay an entity in the county to add a community health worker to its staff. NEON has contracted with St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Ontario and is "looking at expanding to Baker County as well," Griffith said.

More information is available by calling Griffith at 541-624-5101 or Gekeler at 541-963-5360.

Going caroling

Eighteen young members of the Blue Mountain Baptist Church in Baker City, along with seven adults, traveled around town Thursday evening to sing Christmas carols for members of their congregation.

The contingent divided into three groups so they could visit more homes, said Laura Wilcoxson, one of four teachers at the church's Thursday night class for students in grades four through eight.

"The kids had a blast," Wilcoxson said of the caroling trip. "They wanted to keep going."

After caroling for about an hour, the group returned to the church to decorate cookies, Wilcoxson said.

Man charged with sex abuse

By Chris Collins
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

A registered sex offender is in jail today on charges of luring and sexually abusing a teenage boy.

Baker City Police arrested Frank Hugh Colton, 52, of 2210 16th St., at 11:28 p.m. Friday in the 2400 block of First Street. He is charged with two counts of luring a minor, a Class C felony; and one count of third-degree sexual abuse, a Class A misdemeanor, said District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff.

Colton is accused of us-

ing his cellphone to lure a teenage boy, who he knew. He is alleged to have met with the victim and touched the boy sexually, Shirtcliff said.

The crime of luring a minor is committed under Oregon law if a person "furnishes to, or uses with, a minor ... a visual representation or explicit verbal description or narrative account of sexual conduct for the purpose of inducing the minor ... to engage in sexual conduct."

"It doesn't have to be done with technology, but often it is," Shirtcliff said.

FIRE

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When officers arrived, they found a 2005 Ford Ranger engulfed in flames.

Officers discovered the vehicle had been stolen earlier in the night from David Gardner Jr. of 1517 Baker St.

Police later arrested Donovan Feeley, 15, on

charges of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and second-degree arson, both Class C felonies, District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff said.

Feeley was taken to the juvenile holding center at The Dalles. He will be arraigned today, Shirtcliff said. The investigation is ongoing and others are likely to be charged, he said.

NEWS OF RECORD

DEATHS

Harley Spriet: 50, of Baker City, died unexpectedly on Dec. 20, 2018, at his home. A private family memorial service will take place at a later date. Arrangements are under the direction of Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Online condolences may be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

FUNERAL PENDING

Robert Lane Watson: Memorial service will be Saturday, Jan. 5, at 11 a.m. at the Baker United Methodist Church, 1919 Second St. There will be a reception afterward at the church. Private inurnment will take place later at the Prairie City Cemetery. Memorial contributions can be made to Heart 'N Home Hospice or Best Friends of Baker, through Coles Tribute Center, 1950 Place St., Baker City, OR 97814. To light a candle in memory of Lane, go to www.colestributecenter.com

POLICE LOG

Baker City Police
HARASSMENT, INTERFERING WITH A POLICE OFFICER, RESISTING ARREST: Christopher Allen Prince, 28, 1815 Balm St., 11:39 p.m. Friday at his home; jailed.

Baker County Sheriff's Office
PROBATION VIOLATION: Christopher Allen Prince, 28, 1815 Balm St., 4:04 p.m. Sunday at the Baker County Jail, where he was already in custody on other charges.

Accident reports
On Gem Mine Road, 12:06 a.m. Friday; Deputy Scott Immoos was dispatched to a snowmobile accident in which the rider, Perry Powell, 56, of 45833 Gem Mine Road, was injured after his snowmobile overturned, according to the sheriff's department. Eagle Valley ambulance and the Keating Quick Response Unit transported Powell from the accident site to be picked up by a Life Flight air ambulance. No other information about Powell's injuries was available in time for this report.

December 21-27

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AQUAMAN PG-13

Jason Momoa, Arthur Curry learns that he is the heir to the underwater kingdom of Atlantis.

FRI - THURS: (3:30) 6:30, 9:30

MARY POPPINS RETURNS PG

Decades after her original visit, the magical nanny returns to help the Banks siblings and Michael's children through a difficult time in their lives.

FRI - THURS: (3:45) 6:45, 9:35

SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE PG

Miles Morales comes across the long-dead Peter Parker. With Parker's guidance, Miles will become Spider-Man; and through that he will become part of the ever-expanding "Spider-Verse"

FRI - THURS: (4:00) 7:00, 9:40

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Wednesday	Beef Stroganoff.....	\$8.95
Thursday	Chicken Fried Steak.....	\$9.95
Friday	All You Can Eat Mini Shrimp.....	\$9.95
	Steak & Shrimp.....	\$10.95
	Pan Fried Oysters.....	\$10.50
Saturday	NY Steak.....	\$13.95
Sunday	Breaded Pork Loin.....	\$13.95
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Haines United Methodist Church Christmas Eve Service 3 p.m.

Sundays: Gather at 11 a.m. • Service: 11:15 a.m. Reverend Lisa Payton, Pastor Just west of Haines on the Anthony Lakes Hwy

HAWAII

...always a good idea

Baker Valley Travel 541-523-9353