

# Creative Life Project: Make way for imagination

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — The nonprofit Creative Life Project is bringing a spark of imagination to Grant County.

Executive Director Nick Smith said the program offers youth a way to create art, such as painting, videography, photography, music production and dancing.

“Our goal is to provide individuals with unique opportunities to use their creativity,” he said.

Smith works with a board that includes President Caleb Sturgill, Vice President Lindsey Weymouth, Secretary Ann Weymouth, Treasurer Elise Delgado and board member



Contributed photo

**Creative Life Project volunteers at a Halloween teen party. From left: Caleb Sturgill, Nick Smith, Lindsey Weymouth, Ann Weymouth and Elise Delgado.**

Jamie Brown.

The organization, which operates as a branch of the nonprofit Allovors, has a mission statement which reads: “To provide a safe, communi-

ty-supported environment that encourages collaborative sharing of life, skills and talents. Our programs are designed to stimulate collective creativity and excitement for life through fun, artistic pursuits.”

Lindsey Weymouth said they aim to give kids a place to

channel creativity in a calming environment.

“Some kids don’t even realize they have a talent until they’re encouraged and provided with a way to create art,” she said.

Smith added, “We want to introduce younger kids to art and provide older kids with opportunities and tools to identify their own talents and create art based on what they like.”

The group will hold a Winter Whiteout “Fun-Raiser” Event, set for 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 18, at Canyon City Community Hall.

All ages are invited for black-light mural painting and T-shirt and ornament painting, along with music, lights, dancing, games, prizes and refreshments.

There will be a drawing

for a cord of wood, and a gift basket which includes art supplies, donated gifts, treats, lights and surprises.

Funds raised will support the program’s future activities.

Tickets are available at Sue-Z-Q’s or at the group’s Facebook page at a cost of \$1 each or six for \$5. The winner will be announced at the event and doesn’t need to be present to win.

Smith said the organization has already held two successful events, including its first in September with art, music and dancing at the John Day City Park, which drew about 75 youth and parents. The group also hosted a teen party at the Elks Lodge in October with similar activities.

Smith has contributed at the activities, playing upbeat music and providing flow art

entertainment, which combines lights with dance in sync with the music. Lindsey enjoys painting with brightly colored acrylics, teaching art lessons and helping youth find their own style.

“I love seeing the smiles on the kids’ faces,” she said.

Smith said the group wants to hold imaginative events that are not commonly available in rural settings.

“I enjoy the good energy that has been at our events so far, from start to finish, seeing every age involved, creating art,” Smith said.

The group holds monthly meetings at the Corner Cup at 100 E. Main St. in John Day.

For more information, call Smith at 541-620-1496 or visit the group’s Facebook page at facebook.com/creativelife-project.

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is now accepting donations for the

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## Depot in Prairie City makes ‘endangered’ list

By Cheryl Hoeffer  
Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — The ailing Sumpter Valley Railway Depot in Prairie City has just received an “endangered” diagnosis — the first step on the road to recovery for the damaged building.

Through the efforts of museum director Kathy Smith, the

depot building was one of 15 locations throughout Oregon to make the 2016 list of Restore Oregon’s “Most Endangered Places,” announced Nov. 13 at the Restoration Celebration in Portland.

Nomination to the list means the depot will receive time from Restore Oregon staff, outside technical assistance, the offer of a seed grant and increased public attention for the duration of the listing to make vital repairs to the historic community landmark.

Smith is thrilled with the nomination.

“This is a huge addition to any grant we would write to fund these repairs,” she said.

Most of the building’s problems are weather and critter related, along with others due to incorrect work done at the last restoration in 2007.

Water from rain and snow, and repeated freezing and thawing, has damaged the wood trim and siding. Too damaged to restore, the wood trim and siding need to be replaced, Smith said.

Woodpeckers have built nests embedded in the woodwork, creating gaping holes. Smaller birds are now using some of the holes, removing insulation as they take up residence. Smith said they have since installed a woodpecker



The Eagle/Cheryl Hoeffer

**Looks can be deceiving. The majestic Sumpter Valley Railway Depot in Prairie City is in critical need of repair.**

box. Bats have also started invading the west side of the second floor, and plans are in place to install bat boxes, too.

Several of the repairs done in 2007, which were thought to be correct at that time, have proven to put the historic structure in a “compromising position,” Smith said. They include incorrect bricks used for the building’s four chimneys, blown-in insulation which turned out to be a type that encourages bedding by bugs and no fabric underlayment installed, which has resulted in insulation coming down through the ceiling.

Other upgrades in 2007 included the HVAC system, electrical upgrades, windows and UV storm windows and security and fire alarm systems.

“From 2007-2015, eight years have passed, and a great deal of damage to the exterior has occurred,” Smith said. “It needs to be restored and/or replaced so we can stay in the restoration category and not go to reconstruction.”

According to Smith, a Conservation Assessment Program was done in 2012 by Heritage Preservation and the National Institute of Conservation. That report concluded several primary areas of concern: damaged siding, lack of paint, inadequate flashings and damaged chimneys, doors and windows.

The two-story building — which is on the original railway depot site — was constructed in 1910 when the Sumpter Valley Railway in Baker City extended passenger service to Prairie City. Train services were on the ground floor: the waiting room, station agent’s office, baggage area and freight room. The second floor provided living quarters for the station agent and family.

When rail service to Prairie City stopped in 1933, the depot closed. In 1973, it was “scheduled for the wrecking ball,” Smith said.

However, the community, led by resident Babs Brainard, rallied to raise funds for its restoration. In 1979, volunteers began work, and on May 5, 1981, the depot was entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

The Depot today houses a vast collection of rocks, minerals and other artifacts from the De Witt family, as well as photos, documents and historic items from other longtime area families. It is a stately centerpiece of Depot RV Park on the banks of the John Day River.



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### Grant County Chamber Monthly Newsletter

’Tis the season to be happy, be thankful and rejoice!

As I look around the world and our nation and observe all that is going on, I can’t help but think how fortunate and grateful we should be that we can live and raise our families in a beautiful area such as Grant County - an area where we know our neighbors and most local people on the street by their first names. It is also comforting to know that in a time of need this county responds like one big family.

As we approach the holiday season, let’s all remember to help support our local businesses who, throughout the year, help support numerous worthwhile local events, including our children’s school sports and activities. You might be pleasantly surprised to find their prices are competitive and sometimes less expensive than the box stores.

Please remember to purchase a few Grant County Greenbacks from the Chamber Office as gifts for bonuses and for friends and loved ones; they spend like cash at all participating Chamber businesses, which are displayed on the bills. We also want to welcome Mobile Glass as a new Chamber member.

Our next open meeting will be held at the Outpost on Thursday, Dec. 17, at 12:00 noon. Our guest speaker will be Randall Mee, the new Blue Mountain Hospital Administrator, so make sure to come and hear about what is going on in the medical field and spend a few minutes visiting with other members and business owners.

Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a very prosperous New Year,  
Jerry Franklin  
President



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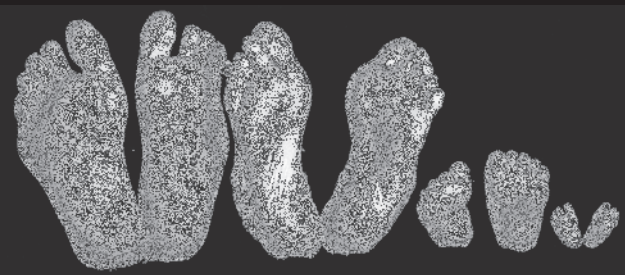
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