

Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Volunteers build beds for children in need

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Volunteers with the nonprofit organization Sleep in Heavenly Peace have a soft spot for kids, helping provide comfortable beds for children in need.

Susie Brown, who started a local SHP chapter, called it “an amazing movement” in which volunteers with the nonprofit work with other organizations and individuals to build and deliver beds to families in Eastern Oregon, who have children sleeping on a couch or the floor.

She said that since the John Day chapter became official on May 22, volunteers have been gathering monetary donations as well as supplies and tools to build beds and provide bedding.

Brown and her husband, Mark, and their daughter Natosha McLeod first learned of SHP in March while watching an episode of “Returning the Favor,” hosted by Mike Rowe, also known for his TV show “Dirty Jobs.”

“We all had tears in our eyes,” Susie said, adding it weighed on their minds for several days.

Susie filled out paperwork to start a local chapter, and the family has attended “build days” in Twin Falls, Idaho, where they’ve seen the process.

SHP had nine chapters when the program featuring the nonprofit aired, and now there are 88 chapters in 32 states, and it’s still growing.

The Browns work with a core set of volunteers. They will gather for an inaugural build day Aug. 11 in Dayville, in honor of the late Jake Streeter, who was a longtime resident and volunteer firefighter.

“Once Mark and I saw this, we knew we could help our communities,” she said, adding that no matter what a family’s situation is “we are there to help the children.”

“Children do better emotionally, mentally and physically when they have a space of their own and are



Contributed photos

The Brown family started a local chapter for the nonprofit organization Sleep in Heavenly Peace. From left, chapter vice president Natosha McLeod and her parents, build manager Mark Brown and chapter president Susie Brown. The Browns along with volunteers are scheduled to build five bunk beds on Aug. 11 for their inaugural build.



Susie Brown is chapter president of the Oregon Sleep in Heavenly Peace nonprofit, which helps provide beds and bedding for kids in need.

able to get a good night of sleep,” she said. “This carries over to their studies and education.”

She said she enjoyed building and delivering beds with the Twin Falls chapter.

“This is such a great experience, and you get to see how it affects the families firsthand,” she said. “There are usually many tears of gratitude from the parents, which makes me pretty emotional also, and the kids are so excited and happy — this is the reward for all our efforts.”

She said the local nonprofit will serve children ages 3-17 who live



The Sleep in Heavenly Peace logo.

in Grant, Harney, Baker and Malheur counties with builds happening in various places. The beds and bedding are given to the families free of charge.

“We have a core team of volunteers who are taking on assignments, but we are always looking for more volunteers to help with this,” she said. “This is a community project and something that we want the community involved in.”

For more information, email Susie Brown at susie.brown@shpbeds.org or visit the Facebook page shpjohnday or the main website shpbeds.org.

New physician assistant enjoys country life

April Bieber is new PA at Strawberry clinic

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

New physician assistant April Bieber said she’s enjoying rural life since joining the crew at Strawberry Mountain Community Clinic in May.

“I love the area, the landscape of this area and the people,” she said.

She said she’s happy to have the opportunity to live and work in a small town.

“I have always enjoyed living in the country,” she said. “Living in the city for three years made me more sure of that. I would rather commute behind a herd of cattle than a line of red tail-lights.”

This is a return trip to Grant County for Bieber, who makes her home in Mt. Vernon.

Most of her clinical rotations were spent in Atlanta, Georgia, but she also spent a month at Strawberry Clinic in the spring of last year.

Her parents, Rodney and Judy Bieber, lived in the area in the early 2000s for more than eight years and now live in Colorado.

April Bieber said that between the end of her rotation in John Day and graduation she called the clinic frequently inquiring about a position.

“This is a great clinic,” she said. “This is a team I really enjoyed working with in rotation and could see myself coming back to work permanently.”

Bieber graduated from Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia, in December of 2017.

Before joining the PA program there, she attended Walla Walla Community College in Walla Walla, Washington, and lived in Portland.

Her background includes work-

What’s a PA?

A physician assistant, or PA, is a mid-level provider that is licensed by the state to see patients and to diagnose and treat them. A PA is different than a doctor or physician, but they function so similarly that most patients won’t notice a difference between them. PAs go through a shorter program and, therefore, always work with a physician who oversees their work.



April Bieber

ing in a wide range of medical settings, including pediatric units, wildfires and a stint at the Oregon Medical Examiner’s Office. She was also an autopsy technician at Oregon Health & Science University.

When she’s not working, Bieber said she enjoys spending time with her boyfriend, the Grant County trapper, and she’s been rediscovering talents such as hiking, camping and baking. She also enjoys traveling.

Bieber said she’s looking forward to the Grant County Fair, Aug. 15-18, and attending the Lonestar concert there on Aug. 17.

For now, she’s keeping busy at the clinic.

She said she likes the diversity that family practice medicine offers, especially in a rural setting.

“We get to see and do a lot — a broad spectrum,” she said.

She added that she also enjoys emergency medicine and plans to cover that role more in the future.

“I was attracted to family medicine because of how you get to know your patients in a small community atmosphere,” she said. “I’m accepting new patients with schedule availability and look forward to meeting the people of Grant County.”

To set up an appointment with Bieber, call the clinic at 541-575-0404. Clinic hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, with availability at 7 a.m. on varied days.

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