



Contributed photo/Joni Kabana

Whiskey Gulch Gang members celebrate '62 Days on June 15.

The 99th celebration of '62 Days

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

While there were modifications and bad weather during the 99th celebration of '62 Days, community members still came to help out and enjoy the event.

Colby Farrell of the Whiskey Gulch Gang, which organizes the '62 Days Celebration, said the event had a smaller turnout than years past due to the rain and restrictions, but it was still a moment for people to attend and be with other members in the community.

"We weren't expecting a huge turnout because it was not quite our normal celebration, but a few people did come through and more came toward the end, and I think they had a really good time," Farrell said.

The biggest highlight for Farrell in this experience was being able to see it all come to fruition and show people that, even with everything going on, an event like this can still happen.

Farrell spent a lot of time

planning for the event and said Emergency Operations Center staffer Nathan Gordanier told him he spent 40 to 50 hours researching the regulations and had the plan approved by the EOC's core medical group, Canyon City officials and the state.

"I appreciate all the support that we got, and hopefully this will make it so that other events can start happening and we can return to some sense of normalcy in the county," Farrell said.

The group is waiting to see what will happen with the demolition derby, especially with the news of a spike in cases of COVID-19 in counties around Oregon, but they are doing everything they can to make it happen, he said.

Next year, for the 100th celebration, Farrell hopes things will be easier. He said, if anyone has any ideas or wants to get involved, contact the Whiskey Gulch Gang. He said it would be nice to bring back some of the old attractions, such as the Medicine Wagon Show, and some of the old contests.



Contributed photo/Sylvia Ross

From left, standing, Jordan Ross, Alana Shaffer, Charlie Knowles, Cooper Ross and Jack Knowles; sitting, Cody Knowles, Kaila Shaffer and Nathaniel Cowan Thompson.

Thadd's Place: Providing support at moments of loss

'Nobody grieves alone'

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Greif is defined by Merriam-Webster as a "deep and poignant distress caused by or as if by bereavement."

Significant bereavement can be difficult to overcome, but Thadd's Place is looking to provide support so people won't have to grieve alone.

Thadd's Place was named after Thaddeus Cowan Thompson who passed away in February 2019 at the age of 39 after a battle with cancer.

"Picking a name was pretty easy because Thadd's place is a reflection of who he was, and his legacy and this idea of telling people of how important grief is was because of his death," said Thadd's Place Secretary Sylvia Ross.

Before Cowan Thompson passed away, he had his loved ones promise to get grief counseling, and his wish was that they take care of each other and get the proper help, according to Ross. She added that going to counseling helped make a difference for his loved ones after Cowan Thompson's passing.

Thadd's Place is a grief center currently in construction between Chester's Thriftway and Body, Fitness and Dance. The center is hoping to open by August, and Ross added that this would be a great resource for the community in Eastern Oregon since one of the nearest grieving center is The Dougy Center in Portland.

"The mission of Thadd's

Place is to companion individuals experiencing the loss of a loved one through emotional support, access to relevant education resources, and space for healing in a supportive community," said a press release from the group.

For a person coming to Thadd's Place for the first time, Ross said there will be business hours on the front door and a front receptionist to greet each visitor. The visitor can then share their situation with the receptionist, and then they would discuss where to go from there.

The visitor can then decide if they want to be in a group or individual sessions, and then the frequency of the visits would be set up, which is usually once a week. If a visitor goes through a grief group, the program is a 13-week program based on Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt's book "Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart." The 13 weeks include an introduction and conclusion week, and a week given for each touchstone.

One of the big goals at Thadd's Place that Ross shared was being able to create various types of support groups so people do not have to grieve alone.

"Our goal is to have different groups of people, like have a coffee group with moms who have lost children or a group of children who have lost a parent," Ross said. "What we see with Thadd's place eventually is to have different groups functioning at all times."

As the facility continues to grow, there are many

plans to add additional rooms and programs as people of all ages will have different ways to connect and overcome grief together.

For kids the facility would like to get walls up and have a fun room, a rock wall climbing room, a library and more because there is science behind kids getting together and having them play while talking about hard things, according to Ross. They also expect to have volunteers down there offering different group activities such as therapy by painting or by playing basketball together.

"That eventually would be what we want the facility to look like," Ross said. "On the elderly side it would be awesome to have raised beds outside so the elderly can come and garden and grow flowers that they could take to the grave of their lost ones — doing normal things together with other people who are struggling."

Ross added that grieving loss can also come in different forms than losing a loved one.

"There are so many dynamics that go into grief, and we're all going through it," Ross said. "Even right now, we've been talking with (COVID-19) and people are grieving the loss of their job and the lifestyle they used to have because they used to have an income... I don't know if I can say there's one person in this county who has not experienced loss of some sort."

The services provided by Thadd's Place will be free, and as a nonprofit organization, it gives the group the opportunity to raise funds

and look for grants. "Grief facilities are run off of volunteers that have a passion to be there and donations," Ross said.

On June 27, there will be a golf tournament, which has sold out, followed by an open house where people will be able to walk through Thadd's Place to learn more about the organization and their vision. There will then be a drive-through dinner by donation at 6 p.m. The winner of their raffle for a cooler full of gifts worth over \$1,000 and a three-minute shopping spree will also be announced.

"My goal is that the community will come out and support it enough where we can do some remodeling inside the building and get a couple walls up," Ross said.

The organization has also seen a great amount of support from the community in terms of donations and in support of the grief center.

Ross said it has been amazing selling raffle tickets as some people also provide their grief story and how they wished a place like Thadd's had existed.

"One person said, 'Wow, I really wish this was here 20 years ago because I lost my son, and it has been so hard and I felt alone,'" Ross said. "So just sitting down there and selling raffle tickets, we have been able to start fulfilling the mission of Thadd's Place, which is nobody grieves alone."

For people interested in donating to Thadd's Place, money can be sent to P.O. Box 422, John Day, OR 97845, and other resources can be found on the Facebook page "Thadd's Place."



Eagle file photo

From left, girls varsity head coach Kristi Moore and seniors Kaytlyn Wells, Tyler Blood and Baylee Combs Friday during the senior night ceremony before the girls' final home game of the season. The Lady Pros' beat Stanfield 56-48.

Kristi Moore taking new job with ESD in August

Blue Mountain Eagle

During a Grant School Board meeting June 3, the board expressed their appreciation of Kristi Moore's work as she submitted her letter of resignation as the Grant Union High School dean of students and career coordinator and accepted a position with the Grant County Education Service District.

"Grant Union is a great place to be, and I love the kids, and I have a great staff," Moore said. "I've enjoyed getting to know the parents and kids and working with the community and have an impact on our community through the educa-

tion experience." In August, Moore will begin her position as the county curriculum specialist for the ESD. "I'm definitely gonna miss the students the most, but I'll continue to see them at basketball," Moore said. "And I look forward to working with some of the other communities and getting to know their kids, teachers and administrators."

Moore said this an exciting opportunity for her since she will be able to work with and support teachers in schools around the county. While Moore is resigning as the dean and career coordinator, she will continue to coach the girl's basketball team at Grant Union.

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