

Thadd's Place continues to grow

Construction complete on reception area, meeting area for grief center in John Day

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Thadd's Place has seen new additions and continued support as the grief organization continues to grow.

Sylvia Ross, Paul Smith and Joe Bellinger explained to the John Day City Council March 9 the progress of Thadd's Place, its importance and upcoming fundraisers and events.

Thadd's Place is a grief center situated between Chester's Thriftway and Body, Fitness and Dance in John Day, with the mission to help individuals experiencing the loss of a loved one through emotional support, access to relevant education resources and space for healing in a supportive community.

The organization had their first fundraiser in June 2020 that was impacted by COVID-19, but they still raised \$35,000 through the golf tournament and drive-through dinner in the parking lot at Thadd's Place. They served over 400 dinners in about 45 minutes, according to Ross.

After the fundraisers, they went out for bid on the construction inside the center and, so far, have completed a reception area and meeting room. Ross said they also just finished a 10-week peer companion training with 18 volunteers that will be working with individuals in grief in the community.

"We have more volunteers signed up and ready to go through the training," Ross said. "In February, we started seeing grief clients at Thadd's Place, so we are officially open."

Bellinger said people of any age or type of grief can come to Thadd's Place for help. He said Thadd's Place is also planning a golf and gala this year on June 26.

The team is also working on constructing additional group rooms to reach a variety of different people such as a play therapy room for children or additional group rooms to sit down and talk, according to Bellinger.

"It is a huge space, and we have ideas like child therapy rooms, and it continues to grow," Bellinger said.

Ross said there is no fee for the services provided at Thadd's Place, and



Eagle file photo
Alana Shaffer, left, and Jordan Ross atop a banner with the Thadd's Place design at the ninth hole of the John Day Golf Course during a fundraiser tournament. The Thadd's Place design was chosen by Thaddeus Cowan Thompson's son Nathaniel.



Eagle file photo
Golfers pose at a tournament fundraiser in 2020 for Thadd's Place, a grief center in John Day.

the team has worked hard to run the program off of grants, donations and fundraisers.

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.

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.

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."



Contributed photo
Dayville School Superintendent Kathryn Hedrick led successful efforts to renovate and update the campus during her tenure.

New superintendent coming to Dayville

Haberly from Pleasant Hill to replace retiring Hedrick July 1

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

A new superintendent from Pleasant Hill is coming to Dayville.

The Dayville School Board announced March 10 that Brandon Haberly will be the new superintendent and principal for the school district starting on July 1.

Dayville School Board Chair Casey Fretwell said several members of the community had the chance to meet with Haberly, and everybody is excited for him to start his job.

"He communicated to the board a great work ethic, high moral standards, great knowledge about various programs and a commitment to kids' education," Fretwell said.

The school board did an extensive search for a new superintendent, and Haberly stood out from the candidates because they felt that he would fit well with the district and community, and his enthusiasm for the job and the city was great, according to Fretwell.

"I would like to thank the Dayville School Board for the opportunity to join their team and serve our students, staff and community," Haberly said in a press release. "My family and I are extremely excited. I will arrive July 1 ready to listen, learn and get connected as quickly as possible."

Fretwell said the current superintendent, Kathryn Hedrick, decided to retire and did well in her job as she worked with the community and helped find funding opportunities to renovate buildings.

The retirement was not a huge surprise to the board because Hedrick notified them when she took the job that she had about six years, according to Fretwell.

"The school has recently gone through a bond project, and it feels like a new



Contributed photo
Dayville Superintendent Kathryn Hedrick said repairs to the school's roof and awnings are almost finished.

school, new superintendent," Fretwell said, "and I have high hopes for the possibilities to come."

Hedrick said she is ending her six-year tenure having successfully led a bond project and obtaining state grants to renovate and upgrade the campus. She added that she also helped stabilized enrollment and saw the growth of early learning education, daycare and the preschool.

"The school has implemented new curriculum in all disciplines and teachers enjoy almost unlimited professional development options," Hedrick said. "(I'm) grateful to the Dayville community for such a great six-year run... The community's support of its schools and students is inspirational and commendable."

Haberly is currently the assistant middle school principal in Pleasant Hill and has held a variety of jobs, such as a principal in the Yupit, Alaska, School District and physical education specialist and athletic director in North Douglas and South Lane school districts.

New county resident escapes fires near Talent

Day appreciates the friendly welcome he received

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

A new county resident originally from Talent had a close call before he arrived.

In September, Spencer Day made the move to Grant County to begin a new job at the Restoration Fuels torrefaction plant, but he narrowly escaped the Labor Day fires in Oregon.

"I was moving here for that position, and I ended up getting detoured by two hours because of all the fires," Day said. "I was liv-



Contributed photo
New Grant County resident Spencer Day with his granddaughter Arianna who was born last month.

ing in my trailer house, and I was really lucky because the fire went around the trailer park (in Talent), instead of going through it. You could

say I was lucky or blessed." He said he was unsure if he still had a home at the trailer park until a day after the fire ravaged the vicinity.

Day's abode survived, and he made the move to Prairie City's Depot RV Park. Shortly after, he bought a home in Canyon City where he currently resides.

Day is a Vietnam veteran who was a nuclear reactor operator in the Navy, working on a variety of equipment during his time of service. He said it was a little unnerving when he first moved here because he didn't know anybody in the county. However, he said the friendship he has at church helped build con-

nections with others in the community.


"Adjusting to Grant County wasn't hard at all because I grew up in a small town down in Orleans, California," Day said. "Going from Talent to here, you don't have the shopping, but that's fine because I don't need a lot, and the people here have been friendly."

Since he moved to Grant County, he has enjoyed the friendship people offer. Day looks forward to nicer weather in Grant County so he can have the chance to hike, bike and take photographs.

"I'm friendly and outgoing, and I like to joke a little bit," Day said.

Another benefit: His granddaughter Arianna who lives in Caldwell, Idaho.

"I am now a lot closer to my granddaughter, and it is easier to see her more often," Day said.



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