

# Virtual job event connects students to opportunities

Working during the COVID-19 pandemic means being resilient and thinking outside the box, so when Donna Lowry, who works as a Transition Network/PreETS Support Specialist at the InterMountain ESD, had an opportunity to do that, she ran with it.

The Transition program works with students with developmental disabilities to provide support as they transition from high school to the workforce. One tool used previously by the program are Job Club events, where students can learn about opportunities for employment.

Recently, the statewide Pre-employment Transition Services team has been working on determining how to present events virtually. Then, a student Lowry works with in eastern Oregon wanted to find out more about working at Panda Express. After contacting the corporate office, Lowry worked with Michelle Smith, Panda Express field recruiter for the northwest region, and they organized a Virtual Job Club event, where they presented to students, teachers and transition specialists.

During the Zoom event on January 27, Smith gave a presentation where she

prepared food and talked about the Panda Express organization, their work ethic, upward advancement, entry positions, salaries, benefits and more. Lowry said the student that she developed the event around introduced Smith at the event, which was a great connection.

More than 100 students from across Oregon, from Ontario to Medford to north of Portland, participated virtually in the Job Club event. "Students were from all over the state, and there were a number of teachers who logged on as a class," Lowry said.

The virtual event was a culmination of many hours of work by Lowry and her ESD counterpart, Lon Thornburg, transition network facilitator, who

has created a manual and communicated with many educators to be able to ultimately host events regionally in Umatilla, Hermiston, Boardman, Athena/Weston, La Grande, Burns, John Day and Monument.

Lowry said the Job Club was definitely a positive outcome. "The event was over-the-top successful in providing transition services to hundreds of students."

She also said the program has had registration requests already for the next event being held at the end of this month and throughout this school year.

For additional information about future Job Club events, please email donna.lowry@imesd.k12.or.us.

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By Doris Brosnan

Thanks go to readers who support this column by contributing their "good news" tidbits. Its fourth week appearance comes only because of contributions from willing individuals.

Good news for Valentines will be St. Patrick's Altar Society serving a take-away lasagna dinner on Sunday, February 14. Tickets are available at Murray's, single for \$15, two for \$25, and must be purchased in advance. Proceeds will help with facility repairs.

Andy Fletcher is drawing attention to Columbia Basin Electric's promotion of energy efficiency at the residential level. He encourages homeowners to go online to the cbec.cc website to learn about incentives and to schedule free home audits that check efficiency of weatherization, lighting, HVAC and irrigation. Good news for the consumer to get these free evaluations of the energy and cost-saving status of the home. Information is easily available at the above web site or by calling Columbia Basin, 541-676-9416.

The good news about the new streetlamps on Main Street in Heppner includes they were bought with grant funds and that they are LED lights. They will cost much less to use, and they will save energy substantially. They are expected to last many, many years, casting brighter light farther than the lights they replaced, many broken or otherwise not working, into previously shadowy areas.

A great web site for 4-H members and for other students wanting information about the program is extension.oregonstate.edu/4h/morrow. Erin Heideman is also available with information at erin.heideman@oregonstate.edu. The good news for 4-H'ers is found on that site includes virtual workshops, classes and conferences that cover a vast array of topics. A sample of what instructors and leaders are offering

## Good News Only

via Zoom and videos is cooking, financial literacy, babysitting-training, pretzel-making, outdoor cooking and how to make leather earrings.

Good news for hearty souls wanting a fresh-air workout is the walk from near the health clinic up to the cross. Stroll it, jog it, run it – choose your pace – but be sure to treat the properties of the Robinson Ranches and WCVEDG thoughtfully, since they welcome respectful hikers onto their properties. Closing gates and taking debris with you are two ways to show this respect.

Jayden Wilson, a senior at HHS and quarterback for the Mustangs, has signed a letter of intent to play football at Western Oregon University in Monmouth. Presently, Jayden plans to study exercise science, with a future in strength and conditioning coaching in mind. Jayden chose WOU over six other college offers, which is good news for his parents and friends who will be able to watch him play not terribly far from home.

Good news about Earl and Peggy Fishburn's grandson Alex Dye came from Great Lakes, Illinois, last week. With his associate degree in Fire Suppression and because of his interest in EMT work, Alex chose to continue his education with the US Navy in the corpsman division. When he graduated from boot camp on the 4th, Alex received one of only six Navy League Awards, for his "enthusiasm, supportive attitude, and willingness to help other recruits, exceeding Navy training standards." Alex will be stationed in Texas.

Carson Brosnan, a sophomore at Oregon State, has been chosen as the Marine ROTC midshipman, moving up from having served as a squad leader during the fall term. As the Company First Sergeant (MIDN 3/C), Carson is an administrative assistant to the company commander. He will "assist the company

commander in taking accountability and processing paperwork and chits" for the rest of the school year. That his superiors have such confidence in him is certainly good news for Carson.

Paige Grieb, a graduate of HHS, considers her return to familiar halls and staff members as good news for her right now. At the U of O, Paige earned a bachelor's degree and then a master's degree in education. Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic struck and openings for new teachers were curtailed. Paige offered private tutoring to some at-home students, who eventually turned to classroom-focused classes. While applying at some Washington and Oregon school districts for next fall, Paige is continuing her education as an education assistant and a substitute teacher at HHS.

Congratulations go out to Braden and Amber Britt, whose son, Montgomery Britt, was born on Monday morning. Auntie Sherrie Ober is thrilled to pass on the good news that all is well with the 19", 7+lbs Monty and his parents.

One result of this column's addition to the Gazette Times is learning that many ex-Heppnerites continue to subscribe to the newspaper. Owner Dave Sykes didn't have time to check the numbers when asked how many but simply smiled and said, "Lots." Just good to know that a connection with Heppner continues among individuals who have moved away but want news of family, friends, businesses, politics and all-things-Heppner.

Readers are encouraged to bring smiles to faces by sharing good news. Anyone who has a tidbit is invited to email it to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or to call 541-676-5382.

Hoping some good news comes to everyone reading this.

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