

COMMUNITY

# Class gives blended and stepfamilies tools to ease transition

BY MAEGAN MURRAY  
HERMISTON HERALD

Francis Gossler knows from experience the issues that may ensue when two families come together to form a blended or stepfamily.

Gossler said when she married her husband, Dave Gossler, two years ago, their children handled the situation in very different ways. While her daughter accepted it right away, her son took a bit more time. The same went for her husband's children.

"You have two different families coming together who aren't used to the same parenting styles, same rules," she said. "There can be a lot of resentment and tension."

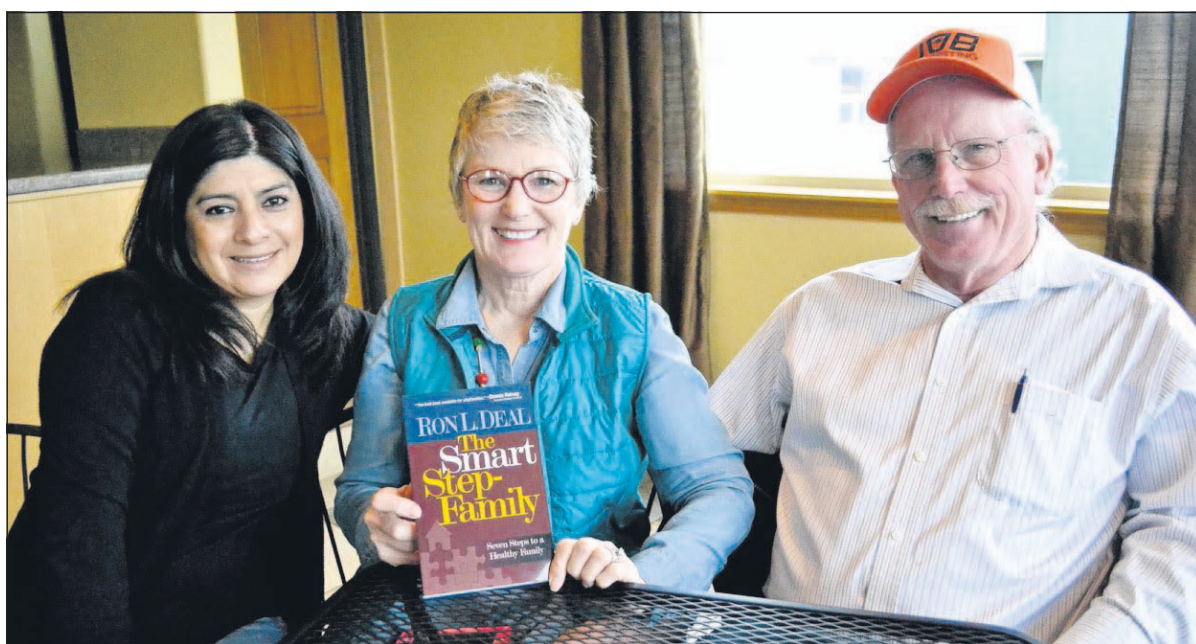
Gossler said while her children were used to doing chores every week, her husband's children did not follow the same routine. She said her husband's children were also used to having more activities such as sports available at their disposal, while her children were not.

Combine those differences with varying disciplinary practices and the already difficult transition of the families merging, and Gossler said she and her new husband had to develop a system of their own. She said they worked together to create a family dynamic that would allow them to work out some of their differences and come up with some compromises, as well.

Gossler said she realizes it certainly doesn't come easy, and a lot of work is sometimes involved.

"It can be really hard," she said.

In the last few years, the Gosslers had been involved in a divorce care class with another couple, Tracie and Jake Broyles, at New Hope



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Francis Gossler, from left, Tracie Broyles and Jake Broyles offer a class for blended and stepfamilies each Wednesday night at New Hope Community Church.

Community Church. Last year, the two couples decided the Hermiston community needed a class to help provide tools for stepfamilies to build stronger relationships and figure out systems that would work for them.

The class was so successful last year that the two couples decided to offer the class again this year. While the class, which runs for eight weeks, had its first session last week, both couples said people can start the class at any time.

"It doesn't have to be in chronological order," Jake Broyles said. "You can proceed through the book however you want."

Broyles said the class follows the book "The Smart Step-Family," by Ron L. Deal. The book provides

parents and family members with a set of tools they can use to ease the merging of stepfamilies, as well as provide those families that have already been established tools with how to grow together. The book costs \$14, however if a family cannot afford the book, the group can work out a way to get them one at no charge.

The class is free to anyone who is interested, and it takes place at 6 p.m. Wednesday nights at New Hope, 1350 South Highway 395, as part of the church's family night. A home-cooked meal is provided to those who are interested at 5 p.m. before the class starts. The dinner costs \$3 for adults and \$2 for children.

Though Broyles said he and

Tracie have been married now for 14 years, they learn things from the book and the class they teach every week. Many things, they said, they wish they had known when they first got married.

Tracie Broyles said, between the two of them, they have four kids, or two each. While three of the four children were adults by the time she and her husband got married, Tracie Broyles' daughter was in her mid-teens at the time.

Jake Broyles said he quickly learned his parenting style wasn't necessarily going to work for Tracie Broyles' daughter. How to discipline and communicate with their step-children, he said, is one of the most important tools he learned from teaching the class.

Broyles said the biological parent needs to take the lead when it comes to disciplining their own children, while the stepparent needs to step back.

"Just because your parenting skills worked when raising your son doesn't mean they will work the same with my daughter, and vice versa," Tracie Broyles said.

Jake Broyles said parents in families frequently feel they can just merge the two families together, and everyone will be happy, but it doesn't work that way. He said, to compare it to something tangible, families are like ingredients. He said stepfamilies can't just expect to be blended together in a blender where they will turn out creamy and smooth. He said families are more like a crock pot — each person is a different ingredient, and everyone will cook at a different speed.

The couples hope the class will provide parents and families with a few more ways to deal with certain issues that arise.

Gossler said the work to become a cohesive stepfamily is a never-ending growing process.

"I think through our whole lives, we will still be working through things," she said. "Dealing with graduations, vacations, kids and grandkids. This is a life-long process. This class helps give you some tools. I know I've taken many of these home and used them in my own home."

Jake Broyles said the class may be a Christian-based program, but having a Christian background is not necessary.

"This class is for anyone," Tracie Broyles said.

# Honoring Martin Luther King Jr.

## Annual MLK Community Peace Walk planned Monday in Hermiston

BY SEAN HART  
HERMISTON HERALD

Since 2001, a local club has honored Martin Luther King Jr. with an annual march in Hermiston.

Hermiston Black International Awareness Club President John Carbage said people should begin gathering for the MLK Community Peace Walk between 11:30 a.m. and noon Monday outside the Hermiston United Methodist Church, 191 E. Gladys Ave.

After welcoming remarks by Carbage, the attendees will sing "Lift Every Voice and Sing" during the short march west on Gladys Avenue, before turning south on North First Street, east on East Main, north on Northeast Third Street and west on Gladys, ending with a ceremony at Hermiston City Hall.

From there, the procession will continue back to the church for a ceremony from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the sanctuary, followed by refreshments in the fellow-

ship hall.

Carbage said Brandon Clay, the Pacific Northwest Chapter president of Union Pacific Railroad's Black Employee Network, will deliver the keynote address about how his life has been affected by King's life and legacy.

"I think Martin Luther King opened a lot of doors," Carbage said. "I am the manager of terminal operations for Union Pacific Railroad, and I would not be in the position that I am in if Martin Luther King had never stood up for civil rights. I would not be able to vote today. I would not be able to lead other people that were not of my same race. We would not have a black president if it was not for Martin Luther King."

About 100 people usually attend the annual gathering that celebrates King's work in civil rights for all minorities, Carbage said. Although the local African American community is comprised of only about 60 or 70 people, he said, the

### MLK Community Peace Walk

People will gather between 11:30 a.m. and noon Monday outside of Hermiston United Methodist Church, 191 E. Gladys Ave., for a march and ceremonies honoring Martin Luther King Jr. The community walk, culminating in a ceremony at Hermiston City hall, will take place from noon to 1 p.m. A ceremony will then take place from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the church, followed by refreshments.

area is home to many minorities.

"You have such a broad melting pot here in Hermiston," he said. "It's not based on how many African Americans we have in the community. It's based on how many minorities

we have in the community. Martin Luther King wasn't for uplifting the black man. He was for uplifting the minority, for minority rights. At BIAC, we want to be an all-inclusive group, so it's not just for blacks."

Former BIAC president and Vietnam veteran Robert Davis said, each year, the walk has "a beautiful response and participation" from Hermiston residents.

"It kind of warms my heart because it shows there are passionate people around that are concerned about civil rights and equality and fair housing, fair living and raising up awareness to the spirit that Martin Luther King was representing," Davis said. "As a pastor and a civilian, he stood up for all people. I'll use one of his quotes: He says that God is not just interested in black men. He's interested in all men."

Carbage said the club was started to promote the MLK Community Peace Walk, which is the club's largest event, but funds are also being collected to provide scholarships for local minority students who will attend a local college. He said the club will ask the students to speak at the annual walks.

The club also supports the Hermiston Warming Station and mentors young men experiencing domestic issues, he said. Currently, about 20 people

are members of the BIAC, which meets at 2 p.m. the second Saturday of each month at Starbucks, he said.

"We do have members from all races currently holding positions in the club," Carbage said. "We encourage all people to join. We're dealing with older members, so we need some young members to keep the club going to keep the dream alive."

For more information, call Carbage, 541-701-7073.

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Questions? Call 541-667-3460.



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