

THRIVE:

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tion in Hermiston last year, called Thrive. Through the program, the goal is to provide children in less than desirable circumstances, including those foster care, those suffering from abuse and neglect and those who are homeless, with extra-curricular opportunities, such as music lessons and instruments and athletic opportunities and equipment.

Dammeyer said she started the organization in January 2014, but only started working with children last June.

She said she knows what it is like to have a particularly difficult childhood and wanted to provide children a chance to develop an interest in something that could possibly save their lives.

"It can change the mindset of a child," she said of the having a hobby. "It can make them feel like they can do something. You never know if you are going to be that one person that says or does something that changes that child's life."

After getting permission from the administration, Lewis agreed the guitar could go to a good home. What he didn't know, however, was that his offer to donate the instrument couldn't have come at a better time.

Dammeyer said she had just given the organization's last guitar away when she was messaged



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTOS

From left: Two Rivers Correctional Institution officer Vince Demos, correctional officer Theresa Swart, Thrive director and founder Kriss Dammeyer and inmates David Woodworth and Patrick Tyson pose for a photo after they worked together to donate a guitar to Thrive, an organization that provides children in need with extracurricular activities.

by a 16-year-old girl whom she hadn't before been able to help.

"This girl had really had a rough go and is homeless now," she said. "We hadn't been successful in finding anything that she would be interested in. She was basically dying inside. Then one day, she sent us a text and she told us she wanted to have guitar lessons, but we had just given our last guitar away."

Dammeyer said, the next day — Christmas — she received a call from TRCI telling her about the guitar.

"I just couldn't believe it," she said.

Dammeyer drove to TRCI recently to pick up the guitar and meet its

donor. She was surprised to learn that Lewis, like many of his inmate peers, had a similar childhood to the children she is trying to help and identified with the work she was doing with Thrive. The two talked about their pasts while identifying why they felt they could make a difference.

Lewis said he is currently serving a life sentence for aggravated murder, for which he was sentenced when he was 18 years old. He said he came to prison basically as a child, and it took awhile for him to grow up.

"Had they had something like this, how many kids would have turned out differently?" he said

to Dammeyer. She agreed.

Dammeyer said it is her goal with the organization to try and stop the cycle of abuse and criminal activity among youth.

"We want to make sure that these kids don't one day end up here," she said to Lewis.

Lewis said he could not feel better about helping a child who probably doesn't have anyone to depend on, otherwise. He said it may be a small gesture to give a guitar away that he wasn't going to keep, but it means a lot to him that he can do something good for someone else while he serves his life sentence in prison.

"The guitar, itself, is a little thing, but the opportunity is huge," he said.



Two Rivers Correctional Institution inmates Patrick Tyson, right, and David Woodworth, left, walk down a hall in TRCI with correctional officer Theresa Swart. Tyson objected to the idea of an old guitar being thrown away instead of reused somehow. The guitar has since been donated to a 16-year-old girl who has a history of homelessness.

"This has made my year."

Lewis said he doesn't plan to stop with just one instrument donation. He plans on putting a proposal together to support the organization further, either by collecting unused instruments at the prison for donation or by doing a fundraiser. He said there are plenty of unused instruments around the facility that could be donated to Thrive.

"This is just the beginning," he said. "I just wish we could do more."

Dammeyer said 1,900 children are affected by child abuse and neglect every day in the United States and four of them will die.

"That is unacceptable

to me, and I wanted to do something to change the statistics," she said.

Dammeyer is interested in donating instruments, especially guitars, and athletic equipment can call her at 541-571-6169. She said guitar lessons are the most popular offering for children.

Dammeyer said she is currently helping 20 children, and, because the organization is new, she is held to that number because she wants to ensure those children can continue their lessons or activities for more than just a few months.

"We want to support these kids for as long as we can," she said.

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Spanish, she said, but can also be translated into English.

"The attorneys will be here to give information and hopefully answer any

questions from our community members," she said. "Hopefully, a lot of members of the community will take advantage of this great opportunity, because where can you get some free information without getting charged? Sometimes the attorney fees are kind of

expensive."

A church in the Tri-Cities planned a presentation there, and Duron said she reached out to have the attorneys present in Hermiston.

"Basically, what they will be explaining to people is who can apply, when they can do it and who should do it," she said. "There's a lot of misinformation out there. Oftentimes, not everyone has their facts straight, so this is from attorneys that that's their main specialty is immigration."

She said the attorneys are Thomas Roach, Alva Guizar and Eamonn Roach, who have more than 35 years of experience in immigration law.

Hermiston attorney George Anderson said he has known Thomas Roach, Tri-Cities, for some time.

"He is coming down here not because he needs business — he has more than enough business — he is coming down here because he cares deeply about helping the Hispanic community," he said. "He, frankly, is a giant in immigration law in the state of Washington and the Pacific Northwest, so it's very fortunate that he is coming down here."

Hermiston's Hispanic Advisory Committee Chairman Eddie De La Cruz said the presentation

will help prepare the community.

"We want to make sure the community is already prepared when these applications come out," he said. "They're supposed to come out right around April, but we want to make sure they get the right information."

He said the committee desired to provide a similar event and plans to help promote the presentation sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"This immigration attorney meeting we are going to have is very critical to our community," he said.

"Right now, it's one of the hottest topics. The executive order gets signed. People are asking a lot of questions. People are kind of confused. So this (meeting) right here is perfect."

For more information, contact Duron, 541-720-3387.

Executive actions on immigration

According to information from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:

"On November 20, 2014, the President announced a series of executive actions to crack down on illegal immigration at the border, prioritize deporting felons, not families, and require certain undocumented immigrants to pass a criminal background check and pay taxes in order to temporarily stay in the U.S. without fear of deportation. These initiatives include:

- Expanding the population eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to people of any current age who entered the United States before the age of 16 and lived in the United States continuously since January 1, 2010, and extending the period of DACA and work authorization from two years to three years
- Allowing parents of U.S. citizens

and lawful permanent residents to request deferred action and employment authorization for three years, in a new Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents program, provided they have lived in the United States continuously since January 1, 2010, and pass required background checks

- Expanding the use of provisional waivers of unlawful presence to include the spouses and sons and daughters of lawful permanent residents and the sons and daughters of U.S. citizens.
- Modernizing, improving and clarifying immigrant and nonimmigrant visa programs to grow our economy and create jobs
- Promoting citizenship education and public awareness for lawful permanent residents and providing an option for naturalization applicants to use credit cards to pay the application fee."

BAN:

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the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which is tasked with implementing regulations and collecting taxes for commercial marijuana operations.

Smith said the city's ordinance will only apply to people attempting to establish a commercial operation, not people who produce marijuana in their own home for private use.

According to OLCC information, the agency will begin accepting commercial license applications by Jan. 4, 2016, for marijuana producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers "that local governments may not prohibit licenses in their jurisdiction except via general election."

Smith said city officials plan to attend an upcoming OLCC listening session from 7 p.m.

to 9 p.m. Thursday at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, to

try to better understand the agency's implementation plans.

OLCC marijuana listening session

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission will host a public listening session to allow people to express comments about the agency's mandate to implement the recreational marijuana law passed by Oregon voters from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, Pendleton.



PRIORITIES

A hundred years from now it will not matter what My bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the Life of a Child.



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