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while her partner was away he would lash out at her when she returned.

"It definitely wasn't a good situation," Walker said.

She was also dealing with physical limitations of a rare muscle disease known as dermatomyositis, which makes her unable to work and difficult for her to leave the house. She knew that if she didn't seek help, she probably would never improve mentally and emotionally.

Walker said she started therapy with Lifeways, and while sessions have been immensely helpful, there is one thing she feels has helped bring her out of her shell: the Umatilla County Peer Support Network.

Through the network, Walker participates in a variety of peer-based talk therapy sessions, where in those sessions, she and her peers talk through issues that they

deal with on a daily basis that have provided barriers or limitations in their overall life.

The program was started by Cody Chase, shortly after he joined Lifeways as a therapist in 2009. At the time, the organization had no peer-support groups, and after asking about it, Chase was encouraged to start a program.

"It's a program that I've built on my own time," he said. "I worked on it during lunch, before and after work ... I built it up from my own case load. I asked my clients if they would be interested in participating, and many of them were."

Since Chase started the program in 2009, it has expanded. He said they started off with one session, one day a month. Since that period, they have expanded to offering 10 groups that meet at least once a week.

Chase said they have moved some of their support network sessions into The Arc of Umatilla County building, which has been

helpful, but he wants to find a permanent location for the effort, so that they can be self sustaining and grow.

Chase said they are currently working to provide opportunities for the general public to participate in certain groups, without having to be a registered Lifeways client.

"We're kind of in a soft opening for that right now," he said.

Currently, he said they offer two groups that allow general public members to participate. One develops community service projects that allow participating to fulfill a purpose and get out into the community to do some good.

The group called "Connections" has completed projects including making and distributing Valentines at senior living facilities and packaging about 5,000 eggs for local churches for Easter egg hunts. The group is currently collecting used medicine bottles that will be sent to Malawi, Africa, where they will be used to pack-



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Umatilla County Peer Support Network board member and peer, Tammy Walker, puts some supplies away Thursday afternoon that were used in a community service project for the peer network.

age medication for those that need it.

Walker said those types of opportunities have given her a purpose in life, since she can't work, while also allowing her to socialize.

Chase said that has always been the goal for the group.

"It is amazing when you give somebody a little bit of energy from another person and watching them blossom

into a whole other human being," he said. "Even though we live in a very technological world today where the Internet makes it easier to communicate, we're not talking to each other face to face."

Amy Funk, a peer-support specialist for the effort, said people need that emotional connection.

"When you talk to somebody face to face, you feel it," she said. "There's no emotion in a text message or an email and it's less personal."

Chase said his main goals with the program are to provide Lifeways clients and the community a place they can belong and have a purpose by helping others. He said talking through issues can help people overcome life's struggles, creating a healthier community.

"I want all of Hermiston to get involved in this," he said.

He said the purpose of the groups is to provide a place for people to get together and share their life experiences.

"Who understands depression better than someone with depression?" he said. "If someone is lonely, who better to communicate that struggle than that person?"

Walker said she is now a board member for the effort and is looking into starting a couple of support groups of her own. She is interested in starting a class for people who have dealt with domestic violence.

"I want to use my experience and work with other people who have experienced that to help each other," she said. "We're all going down the same road. We might as well all get together to help one another."

Chase said there are many individuals, like Walker, who have so much to give, but end up getting figuratively "locked away and forgotten about" because there is such a stigma with mental health. He hopes with the peer network to overcome that stigma so that they can make for a healthier and thriving Hermiston.

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unsure of the outcome. Puzey said the OTC had requested a new project schedule from the Port of Umatilla to review at the meeting, but he requested another month to complete the document.

"I have no idea what their deliberations or their decision will be," he said. "What I was told is that they wanted a detailed project schedule by

(Tuesday), and my response to them was that I could provide that to you one month from today. I don't know what they'll do. I made the best case that I could make."

The first proposed site west of Bud Draper Road was inside Umatilla city limits, and, although city maps indicated the property was zoned industrial, city officials denied the warehouse site review plan after discovering an error made years ago incorrectly changed the zoning

from residential. The city purchased the disputed property from the port to resolve the disagreement. The site east of Bud Draper Road is zoned industrial in Umatilla County, outside the city limits of Umatilla.

Puzey said the grant required matching funds from the port to be eligible, and the port met the requirement by upgrading the access to the dock with a new road at the corner of Roxbury and Bud Draper roads, so both

the west and east sides of Bud Draper met the requirement.

He said the access to utilities is similar for both sites, and the plans for the warehouse — a 75-by-200-foot concrete tilt-up building — have not changed.

"It would be quite similar to the Aramark building out there, and it'd be a cross-dock operation, so someone like Aramark, where you've got a need for short-term storage for a product that comes in, goes back out, that's what

we're talking about," he said. "We built this with the concrete tilt-up so that if you have a need to build refrigerators, you wouldn't be starting over from scratch. The concrete tilt-up, which is the same type of construction you see in the data centers, it is very heavy and quite expensive in price per square foot, but it allows you the refrigerated option if you were just to install the equipment."

The planned durable building with a functional

office would be close to the Columbia River and the interstate system, Puzey said, and the warehouse could store items such as food products or other consumables.

In other port news, the Commission unanimously passed a motion supporting the Blue Mountain Community College bond on the May 19 ballot because of the link between a strong economy and an efficient local community college.

MUSIC:

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what it meant to me, and I knew what it could mean to others. I wanted to keep pursuing it."

Looper has since become a judge for the national competition, which he has done for the last five years. This year, he is leading the whole Oregon event, which will welcome dozens of students who will compete in 75 categories ranging from singing to musicianship to preaching and artwork.

Through the Christian music industry, Looper landed a position teaching music at a Christian school for several years, which he said further developed in him a passion for teaching youth to follow their musical dreams.

COMING TO HERMISTON

Through the music ministry, he helped organize and participate in a touring group that ultimately

brought him to Hermiston.

During a concert he was giving with a traveling band at the Hermiston Assembly of God Church, Looper met Pastor Terry Haight. Haight could see how good Looper was with teaching and guiding others in the ministry. Haight asked Looper if he was interested in taking over the adviser position for the locally-based SUM Bible College run out of the Hermiston Assembly of God Church.

Looper said he felt that was the direction he was meant to take. After a bit of praying, he accepted the position and made the move to Hermiston in the summer of 2014.

While the position isn't entirely music-based, Looper said he hopes to use his musical background to supplement opportunities for college students in the SUM Bible Program. He said, back home in Redmond, he organized events for local communities in an effort to spread word of the ministry through music, games, activities and other social ac-

Info about SUM Bible College

Students interested in enrolling in SUM Bible College, can contact Jacob Looper by email at jlooper@sum.edu. The cost of attending is \$10,000 per year, and every credit above 10 is free. Through the college, students take online and other virtual and physical classes through a program at Hermiston Assembly of God. Fall registration begins soon.

tivities. He said he hopes to do more of the same in the local community.

"Music is probably one

of my biggest passions," he said. "I feel like I can use a lot of my gifts here."

He hopes to inspire a

whole new generation of singers, musicians and ministry-inspired performers who can also help others.

He said he also hopes to offer vocal, piano and saxophone lessons to interested young musicians.

"I'm looking to build up my music presence here," he said. "First and foremost, I put God first. I want to help them build their buildings as tall as mine is. I want them to build their knowledge, so that they can go out into the world and inspire as others have for me."

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