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support services, she knows she cannot give up.

"I feel like they didn't stop, so I can't stop," Messenger said. "I have to keep going."

She hopes more people will join the fight during the 19th annual Relay For Life of Hermiston event June 26 and June 27 at the Armand Larive Middle School track. This year's Relay for Life of Hermiston focus is "What is Your Hope in 2015?" Messenger said.

From 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. June 26 in the Armand Larive auxiliary gym, people can bid on various items in a silent auction, featuring everything from plants to potatoes to baskets that teams have made. Opening ceremonies begin at 6 p.m., during which this year's grand marshals, 8-year-old Mateo Rockwell, who was diagnosed as a toddler with testicular cancer, and his mother, Natasha, will speak. At about 6:30 p.m. the overnight walk will begin, lasting through the night. At 7 p.m. is a sur-

ivor dinner, hosted by Linda Miller, who collects cans all year to raise money to host the meal for cancer survivors and their caregivers.

About 100 survivors and caregivers were served last year, Messenger said.

"It's just the way that we honor them for the fight that they are doing," she said.

Messenger said the event will also feature activities throughout the night, including themed laps. One team is hosting the Chicken Dance for a lap, and another team's themed lap is the Civil War — University of Oregon vs. Oregon State University. During the themed laps, people dress up and interpret the laps the way they think the teams envisioned them, and prizes are awarded.

At 10 p.m. will be the luminaria, where candles are lit and placed into paper bags in remembrance of people who have lost their fight with cancer.

At midnight, there will be pizza party with Papa Murphy pizzas, and the movie theater has donated bags of popcorn to accompany the films shown.



Hermiston Relay for Life 2013 grand marshals Lisa Nino, pictured center left, and Angela Mercado, center right, lead the survivor lap around the Armand Larive Middle School track during last year's event. This year, the grand marshals will be Mateo Rockwell, 8, a testicular cancer survivor, and his mother, Natasha. The event will take place from June 26 through June 27.

HERALD FILE PHOTO

From 2 to 3 a.m. there will be a Cookie Monster party. The Roundup City Cloggers will also perform. At 10 a.m. June 27 the event concludes with the Letters to Heaven ceremony, where people send off their messages and hopes by releasing balloons.

Messenger said the event is open to everyone, even if

they are not members of a team.

"It is a family event all night long, and we encourage anybody and everybody to come," she said.

The money raised by the teams and at the event goes toward cancer research, gas cards for patients and families, hotel stays for people who have to travel to

receive treatment and the "Look Better, Feel Good" program, which benefits breast cancer patients. The money raised also goes to supporting a national phone number, where, at any time of day or night, somebody can call and speak to someone about cancer or have their questions answered. That phone number is 800-

227-2345.

At the event, people can walk around the track with the relay teams and get more information and sign up for next year's teams.

"Even though the event is over the next morning at 10 a.m., we still raise money until Aug. 31," Messenger said. "It's a great opportunity for (people) to find out what we do and what we're about."

She said this year will be especially poignant for her because it will be the first year without her mother, who lost her battle to cancer earlier this year. She said Relay for Life of Hermiston also lost member Nancy Brown to cancer.

"It's going to be a little bit harder of a year for our relay families just because of the losses we have had, but because of those losses, it makes us want to fight a little bit harder," Messenger said.

To learn more about Relay for Life of Hermiston or how to donate or participate, visit www.relayforlife.org/hermistonor, or call Messenger at 541-720-1405.

ADAMS:

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her away from other drugs. Methamphetamine became her drug of choice, however, at the age of 19.

"It was definitely peer-driven," Adams said. "I used to have half the high school in my front door and out the back every day."

Although Adams remembers happy times in her childhood, she said her life was shaped by traumatic events. She said she was molested as a child and raped at age 19. She turned to drugs as an escape.

"I've been angry over the years, but as I became an adult, I had to accept those things happened to me and move on," she said.

After abusing methamphetamine and being a prostitute to make money while in California, Adams said she got clean for the first time in her life, and she stayed sober from 2000 to 2009, during which time she moved back to the Hermiston area and got a good job.

"I relapsed a week short of doing my nine years," she said.

Adams said she fell back into the habit after she became lax with her recovery — she started making poor choices — stopping off at the bar for a glass of wine after work, and living with someone who was using methamphetamine.

She said she found a meth pipe in her house one night when she had too much to drink and decided to take a hit. It was empty except for the drug residue. That was enough and she got hooked again.

"I've been angry with myself ever since," she said.

Fred Widman, director of Reliant Services, a certified drug, alcohol and mental health treatment center in Umatilla County, said being determined to stay clean is an important part of recovery. Recovery, he said, depends on the individual, and people must stay vigilant in their efforts. He said recovering addicts must practice continued self-care, always reassess their goals and be forward-thinking. As part of the continued self-care, not associating with people or things that may cause a relapse is key.

"In recovery, it's very important to surround yourself with like-minded people," he said, adding people dealing with addiction should also hold themselves accountable and associate with people who will also help them stay accountable.

After relapsing, Adams said she was sober off and on and in trouble with the law off and on, as well. This year, she was given the chance to go into drug treatment, and she agreed. She said the turning point came when she realized lying to the judge and her parole officer took too much effort.

"Everybody's rock bottom is different, but when you don't have the strength anymore to keep lying, I knew it was time," Adams said.

Adams entered Baker House of New Directions North in Baker City

in February and spent 64 days in residential treatment. During that time, her schedule was heavily restricted and her days filled with classes and counseling sessions.

"I don't know how I made it through the program," she said. "There were a couple of times I wanted to leave."

Regular phone calls with her mother, however, and the desire to get, and stay, clean, helped her persevere, Adams said.

When she got out in April Adams said she knew she had to make changes in her life, beginning with separating herself from bad outside influences. As a result, she is filled with optimism about her future.

"This time, I've got a good head start because of drug treatment," she said.

How long the recovery process takes is hard to say, Widman said, and people overcoming addiction need to always stay vigilant.

"Accountability and consistency is key," he said.

Adams said she is slowly getting her life back on track. She has a job delivering newspapers. She is staying in a local shelter. She has a relationship again with her oldest son, who is also pushing her to stay clean.

That relationship, and the desire to see her other children and reunite as an entire family, are keeping her going, Adams said.

"I just have to want it, and I want it so bad this time," she said. "I know I can do it."

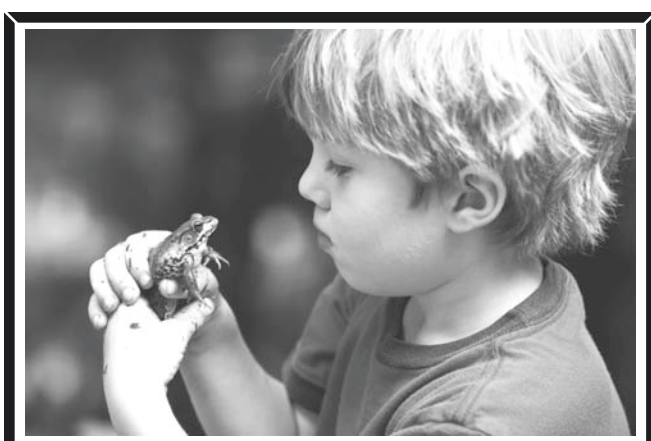
Widman also said people should not rush the recovery process. Adams said when

she got out of the treatment center, her first impulse was to try and contact her other children in California, but other family members, including her son, urged her to wait. Widman said this is good advice.

"What I see in my position is everyone wants everything back so fast," he said. "I say, 'Don't get too well too quick.' I say, 'Be patient. It's a process.'"

Widman said to be successful in recovery, it is important for people overcoming addiction to be patient because their brains are healing — developing new neurological pathways.

"I've worked with 5,000 people who are trying to get sober, and that's the biggest one that I see: people get in too much of a hurry," he said.

**PRIORITIES**

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