



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

Cruz Correa rinses off a car during an I Love My City event hosted by Hermiston Assembly of God on Saturday.

LOVE:

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morial service for JJ Hurtado, age 14, who was killed by a man he saw as a father figure before that man killed another person, wounded Hurtado's mother and then turned the gun on himself.

"Just to see the response of the city, if anything it revealed that we have a lot of hurting people," Haight said.

The hurt didn't seem to just be local. Turning on the news revealed terror attacks, riots, shootings and political strife.

As the congregation turned to their faith for comfort, they wanted others to feel God's love as they did. That's why on Saturday afternoon Haight was in the Les Schwab parking lot, working alongside red-clad parishioners covered from head to toe in soap and grime, scrubbing cars clean while their owners sat in the shade enjoying cookies and — if they wanted — prayers for the struggles they were facing.

Other I Love My City participants were handing out free water at Butte Park, washing cars at a second location near Office Max, entertaining children at a block party at Viewcrest Apartments and going door to door offering prayers and words of encouragement.

"We're just trying to convey the message that God is still good, and he still loves us," Haight said.

He said washing someone's car for them or handing them a bottle of water while they watch their child's soccer game is a way to express that love. Whatever religious beliefs someone in the community might hold, he said the I Love My City volunteers wanted to be there to help them.

"When people are hurting, for some people you just need to come and sit with them, and others are looking for answers," he said.

Haight said the church has already gotten interest from other pastors about joining future I Love My City events, so the bright red T-shirts seen



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

Volunteers from Hermiston Assembly of God give free car washes in the Les Schwab parking lot during the church's I Love My City event on Saturday.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY CLAYTON HAIGHT

(Left to right) Bradley Bacon, Cameron Ballard, Roger Brown, Rikki Higgins, Tina Brown and Jewls Bacon hand out free water Saturday at the Butte Park soccer fields as part of the I Love My City campaign in Hermiston.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY CLAYTON HAIGHT

Katelin Spencer hands out a pair of play glasses Saturday at Viewcrest Apartments in Hermiston as part of the I Love My City block party.

around on Saturday will likely be seen again in Hermiston on a larger scale. The congregation is open to ideas for future projects and to new volunteers.

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Church holds basement sale

A huge basement and yard sale is planned at Trinity Lutheran Church. The event is Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 485 W. Locust Ave., Hermiston. For more information, call the church at 541-567-6471.

Mentorship program created to support struggling families

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
Staff Writer

Hermiston's Faith Based Advisory Committee is poised to launch a new program for at-risk families in the community.

The program, called Family Promise, will match trained mentors with local families who need some extra help, meeting with them regularly to help provide support in navigating anything from budgeting to parenting.

"The goal is to help families be self-sustaining," Oasis Vineyard pastor James Lafolette told the Hermiston City Council on Monday night.

The committee has been searching for the right person to adapt the nationally available program to Hermiston's needs, and Lafolette said they believe they have found that person in Made to Thrive director Kris Dammeyer.

Made to Thrive is a nonprofit that helps disadvantaged students ages 4-17 choose an extra-curricular activity, register, pay participation fees, purchase equipment and have people at their games or performances cheering them on.

Lafolette said the two organizations will be "separate and distinct" nonprofits but will work in partnership, with Dammeyer working part-time for each and

referring families between the two programs. He said Dammeyer has been studying the training materials sent by Family Promise and is "gnawing at the bit" to get going.

"She didn't have to invent something from scratch or reinvent the wheel, it's ready to roll out," he said.

He said a trainer from Salem will come to Hermiston "soon" to train potential mentors, drawing from Made to Thrive's dozens of volunteers as well as new members of the community interested in mentoring a family. The first year will be a sort of pilot year, he said, with only a few families, but they expect things to grow quickly after that.

Lafolette said they estimate the Family Promise budget will be about \$35,000 a year — including about \$20,000 for Dammeyer's salary — and are hoping in the future to pay for it with a combination of city money, grants and fundraising.

City councilor Rod Hardin, who represents the council on the Faith Based Advisory Committee, said

he felt good about the arrangement with Made to Thrive.

"It's been a long process, and we've explored a lot of options, but I think this is it," he said.

Dammeyer said that Made to Thrive now serves 207 students in the community. Through that work, she said, she has formed relationships with "lots" of families who could benefit from mentorship through Family Promise, so it made sense for her to be the one pairing mentors and families together.

"Now we get to provide them with two resources," she said.

Dammeyer said the goal of Family Promise is not just to have someone available to help walk families through the process of getting services they need. It's also about giving them a "good, solid, faithful, loyal friend."

"Family Promise is something exciting and I'm looking forward to it," she said. "They (the committee) have been praying the right person will step forward and I'm just hoping I can be that person."

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STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Sydney Richwine
MCLOUGHLIN HIGH SCHOOL

Sydney is our ASB president for 2016-2017. She has held class offices all four years as well as being involved in Varsity Club, National Honor Society. Sydney is a three sport Athlete playing Soccer, Basketball and Softball. She is a four year Honor Roll student as well as Greater Oregon League Scholar Athlete. As well as being an outstanding leadership student and volunteer at the high school Sydney is involved in her youth group.

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