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BRIEFLY

Thankful for Bridges event hopes to tear down walls

A pair of friends from the Hermiston area are working to show their support for immigrants and other groups feeling marginalized following the presidential election.

Alex Hobbs and Selene Torres-Medrano will host the Thankful for Bridges Community Celebration on Saturday, Dec. 3, from 1-5 p.m. in the Umatilla High School commons area.

"For the community that may be feeling apprehensive about the election, we want to provide some resources," Hobbs said.

Those resources will include Jonathan Shaklee of Oliver & Shaklee Immigration Law Firm answering legal questions, Sheriff Terry Rowan and local police speaking on immigration enforcement, Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe answering concerns about education, members of the Hispanic Advisory Committee, members of the Latino Coalition of Tri-Cities.

The presentations will start around 2:30 p.m. but first attendees can just enjoy free tamales, rice and beans plus entertainment by local musician Dallin Puzey and the band Los Coralillos.

"We want to be really casual because I think people kind of shy away from political events, so we want to have music and food and relax," Hobbs said.

She said the idea came from a "Love Trumps Hate" rally Hobbs attended after the election. She said the showing of solidarity was a nice idea, but she felt like it left a lot of questions unanswered for the people who showed up worried about how the Donald J. Trump administration might affect their lives.

She and Torres-Medrano decided they wanted to do something that would provide some "peace of mind." are encouraging people to bring a donation of canned food for the Agape House or Desert Rose Ministries if they attend.

—Jade McDowell

STUDENTS EXPRESS CHRISTMAS SPIRIT THROUGH

ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Ben DeCarlow, a teacher at Armand Larive Middle, takes a decibel reading during the canned food drive kick-off at an assembly at Armand Larive Middle School. Food collected will be distributed through the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express.

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
Community Editor

The deafening screams of students filled the gymnasium recently at Armand Larive Middle School.

There wasn't a sporting event going on — Ric Sherman was in the house. He was getting the crowd pumped up to beat Sandstone Middle School in the annual food drive for the Hermiston Police Christmas Express.

The sixth graders topped out at 118 decibels, said Ben DeCarlow, a seventh and eighth grade science teacher who also heads up the food drive at Armand Larive. Their effort earned them 68 extra points for their inter-school contest with the seventh and eighth graders. The eighth graders reached 105 decibels, receiving 55 extra points; and the seventh graders hit 103 decibels which garnered 53 points.

Rather than receiving one point for each can, items are assigned points. Food with higher nutritional value counts as more, said Stacie Roberts, Armand Larive principal. She told students the focus isn't how many Ramen noodles can be collected. The idea, Roberts said, is to provide healthier foods.

"That's what we need for our families," she said.

A retired educator, Sherman gets excited about Christmas Express, a program in its 47th year. It started, Sherman said, when Ken Hodge, then manager of the Hermiston Sears, had some extra toys and called Bob Shannon, who was the Hermiston police chief, asking if he knew of some needy

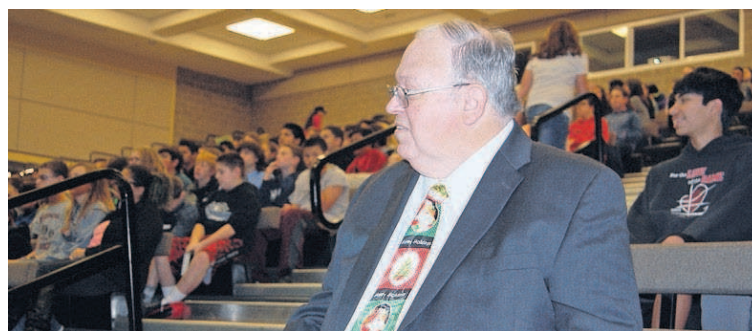
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STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Students at Armand Larive Middle School get pumped up during an assembly about the annual food drive competition with Sandstone Middle School. Food collected will be distributed through the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express.

'THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTION OF FOOD TO THIS PROGRAM IS THE SCHOOLS. OUR KIDS ARE REALLY GREAT KIDS!'



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Ric Sherman waits to announce the kick-off of the annual food drive during an assembly at Armand Larive Middle School. Sherman started coordinating the effort in 1979, with food being distributed through the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express.

Classic building transforms into modern offices



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Visitors gather in the refurbished former RoeMarks Men's and Western Wear building during an open house for the Simmons Insurance Group on Tuesday in Hermiston.

Simmons Insurance Group cuts ribbon on renovated RoeMarks building

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

A distinctive downtown brick building, as old as the city itself, has a new life as Hermiston's newest, and most modern, office complex.

The former RoeMarks Men's and Western Wear building on the corner of Main Street and Northeast Second Street sat empty for nearly four years before Simmons Insurance Group purchased it in May. After hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of renovations on the two-story brick building,

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