

Our Community

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MINISTRY PROVIDES HOPE FOR HOMELESS

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
Community Editor

A couple of years ago Mark Leslie found himself homeless and hungry.

Hearing about Tacos and Testimonies, Leslie headed to Desert Rose Ministries where he was met by people that fed him — physically and spiritually.

Grateful for people reaching out to him and knowing he has a unique ability to touch others that are homeless, Leslie now gives back through House of Hope. The organization, which is in the process of getting its nonprofit status, is separate from the ministry at Desert Rose.

Recently, House of Hope received a boost from The Shift Church in Albany. With a mission of “We exist to live with one hand to the gutter and one hand to the sky,” the idea of helping House of Hope came about when parishioner Eric Jefferson heard the Hermiston ministry was serving the homeless.

The Shift, Jefferson said, chooses charities and tries to help them out. Erecting a tent in the church’s gymnasium, he said people filled it with sleeping bags, hoodies, gloves, personal hygiene supplies and other miscellaneous items.

Jefferson was thrilled to be a part of the project — especially getting to make the five-hour drive to deliver the supplies.

“I have a love for Jesus and a truck,” he said with a laugh.

Linda Durant, vice chairman of the House of Hope



Eric Jefferson of The Shift Church in Albany brought a pick-up load of donations Nov. 30 for the House of Hope ministry in Hermiston.

STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

board of directors, was ecstatic with the donation.

“They rounded up a lot of things we can use,” she said. “They were very generous to help meet the needs of people in this area.”

The ministry, Durant said, has gained steam in the past year. In addition to the all-volunteer executive board, there are about a dozen liaisons — who are affiliated with local churches or nonprofit organizations — who are also voting members.

House of Hope has been operating in the space with Desert Rose — providing outreach to the hungry and homeless. Monday through Saturday mornings, people can drop in from 7-11 a.m. for coffee, tea and cereal. In the afternoons, they can return

between 3-6 p.m. for soup and bread or sandwiches.

“People can stick around and talk and stay warm,” Leslie said.

The number of people served fluctuates according to the weather, Durant said. This past May, around 75 stopped by in the mornings and 100 in the evenings. During one of the colder months last winter, they saw 175 for breakfast and 188 in the evening.

The board, Durant said, is hoping to find a larger space that will accommodate administrative offices and a thrift store.

“The full vision for this is very big, which is housing the homeless,” she said. “We’ve been doing what we can in the interim with

the space we’ve been at.”

Leslie is excited about the possibilities. It helps in providing an opportunity for people to get back on their feet so they can become productive members of the community.

“They showed me I was worth more than I thought of myself,” he said.

Services provided by House of Hope are currently operated out of Desert Rose Ministries at 512 E. Main St., Hermiston. For more information, call Leslie at 541-391-6435 or Durant at 541-449-5038. In addition, the public is invited to board meetings the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Hermiston Assembly of God Church, 730 E. Hurlburt Ave.

IN BRIEF

Library announces youth holiday parties

‘Tis the season for holiday parties — and the Hermiston Public Library has a pair planned for area youths.

The first one, which is open to kids in fifth grade and younger, is Friday from 4:30-6 p.m. The Candy Land Holiday Party features craft projects, cookie decorating (and eating), games and activity booths. There is no admission charge.

For grades 6-12, the Teen Advisory Council will meet Monday, Dec. 19, at 4 p.m. Those attending should bring a present valued at \$5 and be prepared to “steal” a gift when it’s their turn. Also, bring your inner artist for cookie decorating. Also, an ornament hunt is planned Wednesday, Dec. 21 between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Prizes will be awarded for finding all 10 ornaments.

The library is located at 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. For more information, call 541-567-2882.

Aglow celebration features holiday fun

A holiday celebration featuring the viewing of a comedy DVD with Ken Davis is planned for the December Walla Walla Aglow Community Light-house.

The public is invited to attend Saturday at 10 a.m. at Whitman Court, 305 Ash St., Walla Walla. A freewill offering will be taken for the event, which includes lunch.

The author of 12 books, Davis heads up Lighten Up ministries, which produces inspirational and motivational live shows, DVDs, books and conferences designed to make a positive difference in people’s lives. The event also features the singing of Christmas carols.

Aglow is an international organization that ministers to its members and shares God’s word in the community. For more information, call Kathy Owsley at 509-540-2684, Lora Sykes at 509-540-0212 or visit www.ecwaglow.

Irrigon sets holiday food drive

Santa and maybe an elk or two will appear during the Holiday Food Drive in Irrigon.

Sponsored by the Friends of Irrigon Library and the Irrigon Fire Department, people are asked to bring non-perishable food items to donate to needy families in Irrigon. The event is Saturday from 4-7 p.m. at the Huwe residence, North Washington and First streets,

Irrigon.

The free event includes cocoa, cider, coffee, cookies and candy canes for the little ones.

For more information, call 541-922-0138.

Giving Tree helps kids in Irrigon

The Irrigon Giving Tree is available for the public to help area children in need during the holiday season.

The tree is set up in the lobby at Irrigon City Hall/library, 490 N.E. Main St. People can take a tag or two with children’s gift information, shop for gifts and wrap them.

The gifts need to be returned with the tag attached by Monday, Dec. 19. For more information, contact Aaron Palmquist at 541-922-3047 or manager@ci.irrigon.or.us.

Bookminders to discuss bestseller

A feel-good story about the angry man next door is featured during the upcoming Bookminders meeting.

The Hermiston Public Library’s book club will discuss “A Man Called Ove” by Fredrik Backman. The meeting, which is open to the public, is Wednesday, Dec. 14, at 1:30 p.m. at The Pheasant Bar & Grill, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston.

A *New York Times* best-seller, the story unfolds after new neighbors flatten an old man’s mailbox. It leads to a warm and comical tale of crazy cats, unexpected friendship and the art of backing up a U-Haul.

The club meets the second Wednesday of each month. For more information, call 541-567-2882.

Elgin Opera House stages holiday favorite

‘Tis the season — the Elgin Opera House has just the performance to get people into the holiday spirit.

“A Christmas Story: The Musical” is based on one of the most popular Christmas movies of all time. Set in the 1940s, the story follows Ralphie Parker and his quest for the Holy Grail of Christmas gifts — an official Red Ryder carbine-action 200-shot range model air rifle. The 9-year-old plots numerous schemes to achieve his desperate desire for the coveted BB gun.

Performances are Fridays and Saturdays (through Dec. 23) at 7:30 p.m. and matinee shows are Saturdays (through Dec. 24) at 2:30 p.m. Tickets range from \$8 to \$17.

For more information, call 541-663-6324 or visit www.elginoperahouse.com.

Boardman offers twice the holiday fun

Hermiston Herald

Double your holiday fun this weekend in Boardman — activities include the Kiwanis Breakfast with Santa and SAGE Saturday.

People can start their Saturday morning out with a pancake and sausage breakfast from 8-10:30 a.m. at the Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St. Of course, Santa Claus will be on hand — so parents should be prepared for photo opportunities.

In addition to the meal, kids are invited to participate in a craft activity. Also, horse-drawn wagon rides will be provided by Equine Elegance. The cost is \$3 per person. For more informa-

tion, contact 541-314-4365 or kemberli@boardman-chamber.org.

Afterwards, people are encouraged to head to the SAGE Center for SAGE Saturday, which features a Holiday Gift Workshop.

Children and their parents are invited to participate Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman. Several craft options are available to choose from to create a gift (some supplies are limited).

There is no charge for admission or activities. For more information, call 541-481-7243 or visit www.visitsage.com.



Children pet the horses while waiting their turn for a carriage ride during the 2015 Kiwanis Breakfast with Santa. This year’s event is Saturday at the Boardman Senior Center.

FILE PHOTO

Winter storm wreaks havoc on road trip

As I watched a skiff of snow begin to form outside late Monday night, I wondered if the traction on my Nikes would be enough to safely transport me from the newsroom door to my Jeep.

I should have worn my Vibram-soled Merrell shoes. The weather report indicated Old Man Winter was blowing in, but I chose comfort over practicality.

I like to think I make rational decisions based on information available. However, there was that time when I was stranded during a winter storm in Imnaha.

Friends who travel with me are convinced that I put a capital O and C in obsessive-compulsive disorder when it comes to preparing for trips. So, it still baffles me that I actually hit the road with minimal planning.

It was nearly 15 years ago when Bonnie Kessell and I volunteered to help Charlotte Jeffries move her sister’s belongings out of a remote Wallowa County house. We didn’t even have overnight accommodations arranged.

Before heading out of

town, we stopped by Les Schwab. Charlotte was sure that her tread-bare tires would be just fine — meaning it would be cheaper to merely buy chains.

I was having none of that — I had seen the bald tires AND the winter storm warning. After much contemplation and Les Schwab caramel corn, it was decided I would get SkyMiles for the privilege of putting the tires on my American Express card. That was the first of many purchases that contributed to my next free airline trip.

As we headed up Cabbage Hill, it became apparent the windshield wipers were lacking. Two sets of wiper blades later, they still weren’t functional. Charlotte decided to head to a gas station to find some chivalrous man to install them.

Starting up the engine, the bladeless wiper arms began wreaking havoc on the windshield. The simple thing would be to merely turn them off. But no, Charlotte jumped out, pulled the arms away from the wind-

shield and we proceeded to the gas station with them protruding like Martian antennas.

Of course that wasn’t the only technical difficulty we experienced during the trip. A big chunk of ice disconnected some of the wires between the U-Haul trailer we had rented. I surmised we had a 50-50 chance in correctly matching the colored wires. Charlotte decided green should go with red.

“They just go together, like Christmas colors,” she reasoned.

I suggested it could be black and blue because that’s what our bodies were going to look like when we short-circuited the system, causing a wreck and resulting in contusions and massive hematomas.

It was well after dark when we arrived in Imnaha. Luckily, the owners of the Imnaha Store & Tavern also managed a small motel and RV park. Room No. 2 would become home for the next couple of days.

In the morning, we hobbled with the coffee klatch before driving 23

miles on the treacherous snow-covered mountain road. More than an hour later, we arrived to find that Charlotte’s sister hadn’t loaded anything into the U-Haul.

It became apparent as the day wore on that we weren’t going to make it home that night. Between all the crap in the house and the storm warning, which had become a full-fledged storm, we were stuck in Oregon’s easternmost settlement.

We were grateful that Dave and Sallie had saved our room for us — not that anyone else was venturing to Imnaha during the storm. We hung out in the store/tavern, getting our fill of food and Imnaha stories.

It was an adventure, but I’ve never been back to Imnaha. I’m afraid our pictures are on the wall as Charlotte wrote a hot check to these kind country folks who carry big guns.

Tammy Malgesini is the community editor. Her column, Inside My Shoes, includes general musings about life. Contact her at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.



Tammy Malgesini
INSIDE MY SHOES

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