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Get some tax help

With tax season in full swing, some people may need assistance filing their forms.

Sponsored by the AARP, certified volunteers participated in Internal Revue Service training. The program was created to assist the elderly, disabled and low-to-moderate income persons with their tax returns.

The AARP Tax-Aide program is available in several communities:

- Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave.

- Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatton St.

Appointments can't be scheduled, so people should come prepared to wait in the lobby until a volunteer can provide assistance.

For more information, including what items to bring with you, visit www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide.

Migrant education forum

The InterMountain Education Service District will hold a forum for migrant parents and families in Umatilla and Morrow counties today from 6 to 8 p.m. at West Park Elementary, 555 SW 7th St., Hermiston.

The meeting is designed so families can discuss migrant education.

"There are a lot of concerns regarding immigration because of all the changes, so we decided to bring an attorney to answer questions," said Obdulia Munoz of the IMESD.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Woman of the Year was given to Liz Marvin at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Citizens Awards Banquet on Feb. 1 in Hermiston.

SPOTLIGHT ON

EDUCATION

SCHOOL STAFF, STUDENTS WELL-REPRESENTED AT DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS BANQUET

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
Staff Writer

Schools and students are an important part of the Hermiston community, and the annual Distinguished Citizen Awards always take time to honor both.

Along with the usual education honors, this year the woman of the year award went to Liz Marvin, in large part for her service to Hermiston students. Garth Lind was named teacher of the year at the ceremony and Elias Ismael Arenas and Vanessa Ambriz-Mendoza were picked as Altrusan young citizens. Here's why they won:

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Liz Marvin, the Project College Bound coordinator at Hermiston High School, has spent the last 12 years helping Hermiston students think about what they'll do after high school, and helping them get there. She works with the ASPIRE mentoring program, and is the advisor of the College Savings Group, where a group of students get to raise money for college, which is then matched by state and federal funding. She's one of the school's go-to people for everything college-related — financial aid, school applications, and sometimes just moral support.

"My job is a lot of problem-solv-

ing, being a resource," Marvin said.

College applications can be overwhelming for students, between the mountains of paperwork and understanding financial aid. Marvin offers her expertise and support to both students and their families, guiding them through the process, and explaining programs like FAFSA — the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

"A whole lot of them just want to know the steps. I try to break it into small pieces, the nuts and bolts," she said. "We really try to give them a road map and support them."

She also hopes to teach them some practical skills. On a Tuesday lunch meeting with students from her College Savings Group, she reviews the group's plans for a weekend visit to some colleges in Portland — but also to explore the city and do some other activities.

"We'll visit a thrift store, like a Goodwill," she said. "I'll have them price out a job interview outfit and items to furnish an apartment."

Marvin said her favorite part of the job is helping students and developing relationships with them — many students continue to keep in touch and ask Marvin's as they navigate financial aid in college.

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STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Elias "Ismael" Arenas was one of two Altrusan Outstanding Young Citizen award winners named at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Citizens Awards Banquet Feb. 1 in Hermiston.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Vanessa Ambriz-Mendoza was one of two Altrusan Outstanding Young Citizen award winners named at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Citizens Awards Banquet Feb. 1 in Hermiston.

Sunset Park may get assist from Trail Blazers

Moda Assist Program donates money for playground equipment

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Staff Writer

For every assist on the court from the Portland Trail Blazers this season, the city of Hermiston could score big with money to build a new playground at Sunset Park.

The Trail Blazers and Moda Health are donating \$10 for each Blazer assist to playground equipment at one of three parks across the state. This year, Sunset Park will compete with Jason Lee Elementary in Portland and Lillian A. Goodspeed Park in Tillamook for the grand prize.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Park equipment similar to what is seen here will be available to the Hermiston Parks and Recreation Department if it wins the voting in the Moda Assist Program.

The winner will be determined by an online fan vote, which ends March 20 at www.trailblazers.com/assists. At 5 p.m. Tuesday the

Hermiston project was in the lead with 1,026 votes, about 150 more

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