

WINTER

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Camille, 10, said she thought the giant bears were “cool” and fun to climb. She was one of about 40 children participating in basketball clinics at the park, hosted by the Trail Blazers youth development staff.

Matt Dietrich, lead youth development coach, said he enjoys hosting clinics around the state to help the Blazers’ youngest fans get active and have a positive experience with basketball.

“I can’t believe I get paid to do this,” he said after one of the half-hour clinics.

Once the temperature dips below freezing, parents who want to keep their children’s minds and bodies active will have a harder time finding outdoor activities like the basketball clinics. Here are some of the area’s best winter options for keeping kids entertained after school and on the weekends once the weather turns cold:

City offerings

The city of Hermiston’s parks and recreation department offers classes, sports leagues and events for children year-round. Most of the department’s fall classes wrap up soon, but the third installment of the “Film Kids” and “Mini Filmmakers” classes begin in November. Film Kids ages 9 to 16 can work with DSLR cameras, lighting and sound equipment and editing software to shoot collaborative short films on Tuesdays from 6:15-7:15 p.m. starting Nov. 7. Mini filmmaker students ages 5 to 8 can practice creating short films with their classmates from 4:15-5:15 p.m. on Thursdays starting Nov. 2.

On January 6, indoor basketball leagues for school-aged children and



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Children play on new playground equipment on Wednesday at Sunset Park in Hermiston.

basketball clinics for pre-school children begin.

The department also has special events planned. Children can have pancakes with Santa on December 16 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Hermiston Community Center, and on December 7 at 6 p.m. the city will hold its free annual tree-lighting ceremony on NE Second Street next to city hall.

Head west

Twenty miles down the interstate, kids and teens can swim, play basketball or climb the rock wall at the Boardman Recreation Center. The center’s indoor swimming pool includes lap swimming, recreational swim areas, a whirlpool and water slide. The center also features gyms, exercise equipment and a 27-foot rock climbing wall with routes of varying difficulties. Times vary for open gym and family swim, but schedules can be found each month on the Boardman Recreation Center Facebook page.

The recreation center is next door to the SAGE Center, an interactive visitor center where children can learn about agriculture and sustainable energy in

the region. Displays include a video simulation of a hot air balloon ride over Morrow County, interactive games and a running model of equipment used to make french fries at nearby potato-processing plants. During the winter the center is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday at 101 Olson Road.

Indoor entertainment

Located on Highway 395 across from Wal-Mart, the Desert Lanes Bowling Center offers bowling, food and an arcade-style game room where players can win tickets to redeem for prizes. On “tightwad Tuesday” games are half priced from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. and the bowling alley runs specials on bowling throughout the week, including family days on Sundays, where bowling is \$2.75 per game, shoe rentals are \$1 and children 4 and under bowl free.

Families can also hit the movie theater together. Most movies at Hermiston Cinema are only \$5.50 on Tuesdays. The theater also offers special events, including one-time screenings of old musicals and sensory viewings designed

for children with sensitivity to light and noise. On Saturday morning the theater is having a free showing of The Lego Batman Movie for children while collecting nonperishable food for local food banks. Doors open at 8:15 a.m. and seating is on a first-come, first served basis until full.

Get in touch with nature

At McNary Dam in Umatilla, parents can take their children to tour the interpretive displays at the Pacific Salmon Visitor Information Center, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. The dam’s powerhouse, with views of the turbines that generate electricity, is also open to the public, provided guests check in with a security guard and those 18 and older provide photo ID. Cameras, purses and other bags are not allowed.

Outdoors, families can also bundle up and play disc golf on the McNary Dam course (which starts near the northwest corner of the parking lot), play on the West Park playground or wander the nature trails that stretch from the dam to the Interstate 82 bridge.

ZABRANSKY

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season looked like.”

ES: What does it mean to you to be inducted into the Great American Rivalry Series’ Hall of Fame?

JZ: “Oh this is a pretty cool honor. I don’t quite know the history behind this precisely, but I know the history behind this rivalry and it’s a long-tenured and pretty heated, pretty ferocious rivalry. These guys have always been a good opponent for us Bulldogs. You get ready primarily to try to win a state title when you start out, but this is as big of a game as any for any sport. That’s almost 100 years of playing each other and that’s extremely unique. There’s not a lot of rivalries like that in America maybe, so it’s bittersweet to get this award on the last time these guys play each other but I’m pretty

honored and humbled to receive it here.”

ES: After your football career ended, what did you get into?

JZ: “For the past 10 years my home base was in Houston, Texas, where I followed (my) pro football career for five years and then got into a career in the oil and gas industry. But I moved back to Boise in January and opened a real estate company called Zabransky & Clark Real Estate. I’m onto my third career and hopefully this one will stick for longer than five or six years.”

ES: Are you still involved with the sport of football at all?

JZ: “I have a couple of clients in Boise that I do some skill development stuff, so I stay around the game. Also I color commentate for AM630 The Fan Game of the Week in Boise. I try to stay around it as much as possible.”

ES: Looking back on your athletic career,

could you have dreamed of having the experiences you did coming from a small town in Eastern Oregon?

JZ: “When I was a little kid I dreamt of being a professional athlete. I told my mom when I was seven when she dropped me off at Mighty Mites (youth football) practice ‘Hey I’m going to play professional sports’ and she was like ‘oh that’s so nice.’ And as I started getting closer and closer to graduating high school it became fairly real that I was a pretty decent athlete and that I might get a shot at the next level, but you go from being a big fish in a small pond to a small fish in a big pond and you do that again and again from college to the pros and you can’t fear the challenge. You just have to go in and work as hard as you could. That was something that was never an issue, hard work was not something that was foreign to me and as long

as a man applies that and puts his head down and is coachable they’ve got a shot. It’s not always about the fastest guy on the field or the strongest, a lot of the time it’s grit and determination that will succeed. I knew I had a chance, but to write that sort of a script and to finish off my college career the way that it did? No, I couldn’t have foreseen anything like that. It’s crazy how it all turned out like it did, kind of capped off my college career at the ESPY awards and winning those two awards and putting my college life to bed per se, it was so unique.”

BY THE WAY

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summer of next year.

For those already looking ahead to Veterans Day, the annual **Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce** breakfast honoring veterans will be Friday, Nov. 10 at 8 a.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center. The chamber is still collecting photos of veterans for a tribute slide show. They can be emailed to kelly@hermistonchamber.com or dropped off at the chamber offices, 415 S Highway 395, by Nov. 6. All veterans and family members are asked to RSVP to at 541-567-6151 or info@hermistonchamber.com. For a full listing of Veterans Day events in the area, plus a special tribute to local veterans, check out next week’s *Hermiston Herald*.

Eighty pounds of prescription drugs were collected on Saturday at a deposit site for unused pills set up in front of the **Hermiston Police Department**. The event was one of many across the state of Oregon, and across the United States, organized by the DEA to crack down on the opioid crisis affecting people across the nation. A similar event in April brought in more than 12,000

pounds of prescription pills to collection sites around Oregon.

For the 60th year, the **Dad’s Cake Bake** raised money to benefit students at **West Park Elementary School** in Hermiston. With a “Let the Adventure Begin” theme, 61 culinary creations brought in \$1,000 during the Oct. 9 event. **Mary Gorham**, a second grade teacher, said **Ford Bonney**, who donated his services as auctioneer, interjected a humorous dialog as cakes were on the auction block.

The tradition started in 1957 when **Herold Miller**, then president of the **West Park Parent Teacher Organization**, suggested the event as a way to help raise money to put crosswalks around West Park and Good Shepherd Hospital, which used to be next door to the school. This year’s diamond anniversary event featured a performance by kindergarten students and awards for cakes, including “Best Theme” and “Most Humorous.”

*You can submit items for our weekly By The Way column by emailing your tips to editor@hermistonherald.com or share them on social media using the hashtag #HHBTW. Follow the *Hermiston Herald* on Twitter at @Hermiston-Herald.*



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY MARY GORHAM

More than 60 cakes were featured during the **Dad’s Cake Bake** Oct. 9 at West Park Elementary School in Hermiston. In its 60th year, the event raised \$1,000.



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