

Resolving to be more like my dog

What's the point of making a New Year's resolution? Most studies indicate the majority of people that actually make resolutions don't achieve them. For those who do decide to make New Year's resolutions, it's suggested to only tackle one. And according to a recent poll from Marist College in New York, the most popular is "being a better person."



Tammy Malgesini
INSIDE MY SHOES

Studies show that dog owners can take a lesson from their canine kids in regards to becoming better people. So, in 2018 I will take cues from the General, my somewhat quirky 5-year-old German shepherd, and Lucifer, my husband's majestic 8-year-old German shepherd. In the coming year, I will follow their lead by incorporating the following into my life:

•**RELAX:** According to the American Kennel Club, dogs typically sleep about 50 percent of the time. While I'm not going to sleep half the year away, I will further embrace the value of naps. Also, relaxing will include slowing down and taking time for myself — whether that's reading, taking a walk or engaging in other hobbies.

•**EXCITEMENT:** Even

though Lucifer and the General's lives are pretty routine, they enjoy the sights, smells and sounds of daily walks. In addition, the General's exuberant yelp when he realizes he gets to hang out with me at work is absolutely priceless.

While I can't promise that I'll howl with excitement, I'll look for ways to spice up routine activities. Although I won't feel compelled to mark everything along the way, I will attempt to stop and smell the flowers, which is going to be extremely exciting this spring.

As one of my Christmas gifts, John revealed that he purchased and planted more than two dozen tulip bulbs.

•**SIMPLE THINGS:** Whether it's riding shotgun to the store or getting leftovers from a dinner out, our dogs are thrilled by little things. While I thoroughly look forward to taking trips and going out for special occasions, I will take steps to initiate small things that touch the lives of others — meeting my friends for coffee, making a favorite meal for my husband and regularly sending cards or letters to my parents.

•**BOUNDARIES:** John and I have found that our

dogs respond better with structure. It reduces acting out and behavioral issues. For me, it's important to maintain boundaries regarding relationships and workloads.

When I'm feeling stress or have too much on my plate, I don't dig holes in the yard or tear up a newspaper. However, rather than trying to be superwoman while my blood pressure skyrockets, it will be much healthier for me to talk about what's happening and sometimes say no.

•**UNCONDITIONAL LOVE:** Regardless if I'm happy or sad, my dogs are there for me. They don't care if I'm having a bad hair day, if I haven't showered or if I've put on five pounds. They love me. Period.

While I won't be wagging my tail or licking other's faces, I can certainly take a big lesson from Lucifer and the General in expressing love, care and concern to those in my pack, including my husband, parents and my chosen sisters.

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.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL.

City of Hermiston staff, elected officials and their families put together 420 food boxes assembly-line style during their annual holiday party at the Hermiston Conference Center in December. The boxes were distributed to needy families via the Hermiston Christmas Express program, along with toys for families with young children. Police Chief Jason Edmiston said Christmas Express purchased \$4,000 in turkeys and \$6,200 of other food, combined with produce donated from local farms and 13,925 food items collected by local students.

HOW BEST TO SAY THANK YOU?

The Hermiston Police Department and city of Hermiston just concluded the 48th annual Christmas Express program. Each year since I took over in 2004 we have tried to fine-tune and make the operation as efficient and effective as possible with the incredible amount of donations that come from the community. I have ensured a thank you note is sent to everyone we know to have donated money, equipment or services.



Police Chief Jason Edmiston

This year I was approached by a community member who asked if I ever thought about recognizing those people who donate to the program. I was a bit taken back because I do try to recognize the people who make the machine run.

But the question itself is still a good one. Is there a best way to recognize and thank people for the good they do to make Hermiston a welcoming and diverse community? To be quite honest, my greatest fear in attempting something like that is two-fold: one, some people may not want to be recognized and two, I may forget someone.

Cash donations for the 2017 program came in at a staggering \$15,651. This included a \$9,000 donation from the Hermiston Rotary International Club (the largest monetary contributor to the program each year) and other donations ranging from \$10 to \$3,500. The gentleman who donated \$3,500 this year, donated

the same amount last year. We had an anonymous \$500 cash donation this year and clubs such as the Umatilla Lodge of Perfection for Scottish Rite, The Funrunner ATV Club, and both the Big River Men's and Ladies Golf Clubs donated. I'm going to opt not to name the individual donors, but you know who you are and you know if it wasn't for each of you, our program would eventually wither away.

Each year when I give presentations and talk about our program, I always say despite being born and raised here, it wasn't until I started working this program that I realized how generous our area farmers are.

Make no mistake, this program would not be successful if it weren't for people like John and Skip Walchli with donations of food and equipment from both their farms, Troy Betz and Greg Juul of Bud Rich Potato, and Alan Cleaver of Columbia Basin Onion.

We have other partners that donate services and equipment as well. This includes the Walmart Distribution Center, Sanitary Disposal, Living Faith Church, Hammell Transport and of course perhaps our biggest partner, Dave Hughes and his staff at the Agape House.

Presents flooded the lobby of the police department and the overwhelming majority of those come from people unknown to us, at least by name. Altrusa International consistently donates

an incredible amount of toys and the KOHU staff (to include sports announcer Erick Olson) do a great job of creating competition that goes for a good cause — a child having the opportunity to open a present Christmas morning. The tenants at Desert Sage Manor spend all year making dozens and dozens of beautiful quilts that are given away during our program. We have received hygiene products from local dentists as we know there is a direct correlation between hygiene and self-esteem, especially with our youth.

Lastly, I would like to thank Ric Sherman, not only for his 30 years of service as an educator in Hermiston, but the non-stop work he puts into this program each year assisting and reminding me about various things. Ric is instrumental in energizing the second group I'd like to thank, that being the students and staff of the Hermiston School District. The amount of food (nearly 14,000 cans) and presents collected during the canned food drives ensures we are able to push out food boxes weighing nearly 100 pounds once all the produce and turkeys are added.

I pray I have not inadvertently forgotten someone, but this is my humble attempt to remind people that we here at the Hermiston Police Department know the silent majority is out there doing good things for all the right reasons and we appreciate it.

Jason Edmiston is the chief of the Hermiston Police Department.

BTW

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and more about the Promise campaign, visit www.promiseoregon.org.

The 2017 Christmas Spirit Awards from the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation were recently presented to Kriss Dammeyer and John & Marge Walchli.

Recognizing those who exemplify the spirit of Christmas throughout the year, this is the 22nd year the foundation has presented the awards. Dammeyer is the founder of Made to Thrive. The non-profit organization seeks to stop the cycle of poverty, child abuse and neglect by offering an opportunity for those at risk to participate in healthy community activities. The Walchlis were recognized for their ongoing generosity to the community. The longtime farmers lend their time, talents and

resources to many worthy causes throughout the year.

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Dr. Doug Flaiz recently retired after 42 years of service to the community at Family Health Associates and with privileges at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston.

Flaiz attended Loma Linda University School of Medicine in California and did his residency at Florida Hospital in Orlando. A family practice physician, Flaiz delivered about 1,500 babies in the area during the first three decades of his practice, which he discontinued due to the increasing costs of medical insurance to continue offering obstetrics.

A retirement gathering held last month hinted that Flaiz has plans to spend more time fishing and hunting in his retirement.

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Joseph Franell, CEO of the Hermiston-based Eastern Oregon Telecom, was re-appointed to the Oregon Broadband Advisory

Council by Governor Kate Brown. Franell has been a member of the statewide council, formed by the legislature in 2009, since its beginning, and has served as chair for all but the first year. Franell said in a written statement that it was an honor to serve, calling the council "one of the most effective organizations of its kind in the U.S. (that) continues to have a significant positive impact on the adoption and utilization of Broadband in Oregon."

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For a chance to remember loved ones and honor someone special, visit **Vance John Memorial Hospice's** annual Candlelight Memorial Service. The free event, in its 22nd year, is Tuesday, Jan. 9 from 6-9 p.m. at the Hermiston Christian Center, 1825 W Highland Ave. It will include recognition of veterans and other losses, time for reflection and a time of fellowship following the service. For more information, call 541-667-3543.

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