

Ministry aims to offer hope

House of Hope fundraiser features music, spaghetti

By TAMMY MALGESINI
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Taking a shower, getting warm, finding someplace to sleep and even eating a meal used to take a lot of energy and effort for Mark Leslie.

The Hermiston man survived homelessness for more than five years by finding isolated places to bed down. Reducing the risk of being noticed and kicked out, Leslie said it helped ensure that he would have a place to lay his head the next night.

As far as meals, Leslie ate wherever he could find food — sometimes going without. He began to crawl out of homelessness when he heard about Tacos and Testimonies through Desert Rose Ministries in Hermiston. Feeding him both physically and spiritually, Leslie now gives back to others through House of Hope Northeast.

“I was homeless and I was hungry,” he said. “They helped me get back on my feet.”

The ministry for the homeless initially began working out of Desert Rose — however, it is a separate nonprofit entity with many area churches involved, said Ken Yoder, who leads the ministry. House of Hope received its own 501(c)3 in July 2017.

“It’s the body of Christ with all the churches in the area,” Yoder said. “There are 13 right now.”

A fundraiser, featuring musical entertainment and a spaghetti meal, is Saturday starting at noon at the First United Methodist Church, 191 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. There is no set fee, but donations will be accepted. In addition, information about the ministry will be shared.

A foundation for hope

Still in its infancy, the ministry is hoping to secure its own building, said Yoder and Leslie, who is the board’s recording secretary. They want to offer a safe haven for the area’s homeless. In addition to feeding their souls, the ministry aims to meet physical and emotional needs by providing shelter, food, clothing and other basic needs to help people improve their lives.



FILE PHOTO

Mark Leslie organizes cups of soup before leaving the Hermiston Warming Station in December 2014. Previously homeless, the Hermiston man now gives back through the House of Hope ministry. The ministry for homeless people plans a fundraiser event starting at noon Saturday in Hermiston.

Drafting policies and getting their nonprofit status has been a time-consuming process, said Linda Durant, House of Hope’s secretary. There’s a tremendous need in the area to serve the homeless, she said, which is evidenced by the number of phone calls Leslie receives on the organization’s cellphone.

“People are having a hard time fathoming that there are that many people in need in our community,” Leslie said. “It’s kind of like ‘out of sight out of mind.’”

Yoder, referred to as Pastor Chief by friends and congregants, said House of Hope was initially a vision of Pastor Jason Estle of Desert Rose Ministries. The idea, Yoder said, was to have it be a collaborative effort between area churches and nonprofit organizations to reach out to the homeless.

“Chief helps out so many people,” said Lisa Pierce, wife of Rev. Jim Pierce of the United Methodist Church. “It’s important that we have someplace for people to go if they are wandering on the streets.”

Durant, who moved from a metropolitan area on the East Coast, agreed. Services for the homeless aren’t as readily available in Eastern Oregon, she observed.

Referring to a passage in the Bible’s Gospel of Matthew, Durant said Christians are directed to reach out to others. The efforts, she said, are even more vital in rural communities.

“There is just a huge need here,” she said. “There’s not a government agency here to do it, not that we expect the government to do everything ... but somebody, somehow needs to pick up the ball.”

To learn more about House of Hope, the public also is invited to board meetings. They are the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Hermiston Assembly of God Church, 730 E. Hurlburt Ave.

For more information, call Yoder at 541-990-9400, Leslie at 541-391-6435 or visit www.facebook.com/houseofhopeoregon.

BRIEFS

Raffle includes Star Wars Droid and a Barbie house

A hot dog dinner, games, a raffle and an auction are all featured during a fundraiser at Desert View Elementary School from 5-7 p.m. Thursday.

Coordinated by the Desert View Parent Club, the event is at 1225 S.W. Ninth St., Hermiston. A fully furnished Barbie Dream House and a Star Wars BB-8 Droid are among the raffle items.

Money raised helps fund field trips, new library books, classroom projects and other things designed to support and enhance student educational experiences. For more information, contact Amy Robinson at 541-571-9353 or shaneandamy01@yahoo.com.

Musicians seek young singers, instrumentalists

Applications are being accepted from instrumentalists and singers up to age 25 by Inland Northwest Musicians to participate in the Young Artists Competition.

In its 18th year, young musicians will vie for cash awards and possibly be selected to perform in concert with the Inland Northwest Orchestra. The deadline to apply is March 3.

The Young Artists Competition is Sunday, March 11 at Hermiston High School. Participants will perform within age divisions for adjudication.

For more information or an application, visit www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com. For questions, contact Alice Massey at amassey@wtechlink.us or 541-379-5564.

‘Annie’ opens Thursday night at BMCC

Endearing music, wonderful dancing, characters you’ll love and even a dog are featured during College Community Theatre’s performances of “Annie.”

The musical opens with a pay-what-you-can preview night Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in Bob Clapp Theatre at Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Regular performances are Friday, Saturday and March 1-3 at 7:30 p.m. and matinee shows Sunday and March 4 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students and early reservations are recommended. The Pioneer Hall box office is open Monday through Fridays

from noon to 2 p.m. and prior to performances. In addition, people can call 541-278-5953.

Meeting may provides insight to dyslexia

Parents, educators and friends are invited to get involved with a grassroots movement about dyslexia.

Decoding Dyslexia Oregon is driven by a need for conversations with school districts and policy-makers regarding dyslexia. The goal is to raise awareness, empower families and improve resources.

A meeting is Thursday from 5:30-7 p.m. at InterMountain Education Service District, 2001 S.W. Nye Ave., Pendleton. Scott Smith, a regional instructional coach with ESD, will facilitate the discussion.

For information, contact Smith at scott.smith@imesd.k12.or.us or 1-888-437-6892. For more about the group, visit www.decodingdyslexiaor.org.

What’s brewing at Zwickelmania?

Beer lovers can rejoice as Zwickelmania is being celebrated in Eastern Oregon.

The annual event kicked off in the Portland metro area last weekend and continues at select breweries across the state, including Ordinance Brewing in Boardman. The event is Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 405 N. Olson Road.

The pubic is invited to chat with the brewer, taproom staff and the rest of the Ordinance team and partake in some of the special brews and food pairings.

For more information, call 541-481-2231 or visit www.facebook.com/ordnancebrewing.

Breakfast benefits arts center project

A home-cooked breakfast will help support the Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center project. The meal is Saturday from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. The cost is \$4.50 per person.

Proceeds from the fundraiser will help the nonprofit group develop a regional arts center and preserve Irrigon’s 1921 school building. For more information, call Peggy Price at 541-567-3806.

Seed to Supper plants ideas to encourage healthy eating

By TAMMY MALGESINI
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Potential green thumbs are invited to learn more about low-cost vegetable gardening that will assist them in digging in the dirt and putting food on the table.

Chelle Hankinson, a member of the Healthy Communities Coalition and facilitator of Lovin’ Spadefuls — Hermiston’s community garden — is excited about the workshop offerings. The free Seed to Supper sessions, she said, walks people through the process of planning, planting and harvesting their garden. In addition, it helps participants understand the nutritional value of food they are growing.

The classes, Hankinson said, aren’t just relevant to people working with typical home gardens. Participants can gain information on how to utilize limited space, including container or apartment gardening.

Session facilitators include a handful of master gardeners. From green thumbs to greenhorns, a variety of participants can learn by sharing their experiences with others, Hankinson said.

The Seed to Supper classes begin Thursday, March 1 from 6-7:30 p.m. in Conference Room 1 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. The sessions run weekly through March 29. There is no fee for the gardening workshop. Participants will receive a free gardening booklet and free seeds and/or plant starts. To register, call 541-564-6878 or stop by Umatilla-Morrow Head Start, 110 N.E. Fourth St., Hermiston.

Also, Hankinson encour-



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Lorie Morrison looks on while Sarah English and Chelle Hankinson, facilitator of Lovin’ Spadefuls, connect a drip line in preparation for the 2017 Hermiston community garden. Seed to Supper workshops are available in preparation for this year’s garden.

ages people to start thinking about the Hermiston community garden.

A recent work day was canceled due to inclement weather. People interested in the rescheduled event should contact Hankinson or look for updates on the community garden’s Facebook page.

The community garden moved to a new location in 2017, which is accessed on the Elm Avenue entrance to the hospital. Hankinson is thrilled with the site and is looking forward to another successful season in 2018, which includes additional space that provides up to 60 plots.

Community gardens, Hankinson said, typically run their course after several years. In its seventh year, the support of area businesses, the commitment of master gardeners and the involvement from other groups truly makes Lovin’ Spadefuls a community garden, she said.

In addition to the space and support provided by

Good Shepherd, Hankinson said American Fencing, Elmer’s Irrigation & Supplies, Smitty’s Ace Hardware, Gordon’s Electric, all of Hermiston, and Toro of the Tri-Cities have been tremendous partners. Also, FFA students, Oregon Department of Corrections community service crews and clients from Lifeways participating in community support services have all contributed to the garden’s success.

“It’s really exciting,” she said. “People are learning and they are eating healthy and they are saving money — all the things that we wanted to happen.”

On-site registration for garden plots, which are \$10, will be held Friday, May 4 from 5-7 p.m. and Saturday, May 5 from 9 a.m. to noon. For those unable to attend, applications can be obtained following the registration dates at Head Start.

For more information, call Hankinson at 541-571-2435 or search “Lovin’ Spadefuls” on Facebook.

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