

FOUNDATION

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wants to give some of it back. In his line of work he frequently speaks with people who feel the same but aren't quite sure where they want to donate or bequeath their money, and out of those conversations the idea for the foundation was born.

Barnett said while there are many ways Hermiston-area residents can give, they are frequently limited to a specific focus — the Hermiston Education Foundation gives school-related grants, for example, while the Good Shepherd Community Health zeroes in on wellness. The Greater Hermiston Community Foundation will be “wide open” in the grants it gives.

While someone can make a one-time donation to a nonprofit or service club of their choice, Barnett said the endowment format will allow donations to generate interest to be used in perpetuity.

“That’s really what we want to tap into, is people who understand that,” he said. “For people to know that the funds are going to be there forever. It’s not just ‘Here’s \$5,000, go party or build something,’ it’s ‘Here’s \$5,000, it’s going to be there forever and give and give.’”

Greg Juul, board president, said they named it the “Greater” Hermiston Community Foundation because they are open to giving to projects in surrounding communities such as Umatilla and Echo.

“Our employee base is fairly broad,” he said. “They’re hard-working, giving people and there is no reason we wouldn’t want to



From top left, clockwise: Bricks at the Hermiston Public Library display the names of donors. • A wall at Kennison Field in Hermiston shows donors. • A fence around the Funland playground at Butte Park lists donors. • Bricks at McKenzie Park in Hermiston show the names of donors.

give back to them too.”

The Greater Hermiston Community Foundation was established with a goal of having \$200,000 for at least a year before starting to give grants, and after just a few presentations to service clubs Barnett said they are already halfway to their goal. He estimated the foundation could be able to give its first grant in about 18 months.

Barnett said after a few initial presentations to get the word out and some talks with local attorneys and accountants, the foundation is not going to push for

donations with fundraising drives or solicitation calls.

“We’re never going to be aggressive,” he said. “Our style is going to be more ‘We’re here if you’re interested.’”

The foundation’s seven founding members aren’t worried about people being willing to donate. Barnett, Rivera and Juul described Hermiston as the most giving community they’ve ever encountered.

The evidence, they said, is everywhere. The community raised over \$2 million for the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

less than a year, and \$1.2 million for Kennison Field in six months. Names of donors can be found on the Funland playground at Butte Park, the Hermiston Public Library, the Hermiston Community Center and other places around town.

A search for “Hermiston” on guidestar.org, which compiles 990 tax forms from nonprofits, returns 134 nonprofits that together collected millions of dollars in 2017. There are also sponsorships of Little League teams, fundraiser banquets for community members in need, events like Festival of

the Trees and the half a million dollars raised in a single day for FFA and 4-H each year through the Umatilla County Fair’s livestock auction.

“When you look at this region, the people in this room probably go to a dozen fundraiser dinners per year,” Rivera said. “Almost every weekend there’s an opportunity to support someone in this town.”

Each organization can tell a different story of giving. Larry Fetter of the Desert Arts Council said the organization pulled in \$5,000 of donations during this year’s

Dancing With Your Hermiston Stars event. Over at the new senior center, which he is also involved in, the board has raised about \$70,000 for new equipment for the center.

Counselor Melody Bustillos said last year Hermiston High School seniors received \$237,400 in scholarships. This year so far she has counted \$139,050 in locally sourced scholarships, but said she doesn’t have numbers from the Hermiston-based Red and Gena Leonard Foundation yet and they usually contribute about \$100,000 in various scholarships. Classrooms around Hermiston also receive thousands of dollars each year from the Hermiston Education Foundation.

Paul Barnett said the Hermiston High School Sports Boosters netted over \$100,000 after expenses at their spring fundraiser and auction this year. They also end up with between \$25,000 and \$35,000 in membership dues every year, and act as an umbrella organization for groups like the Linebackers Club and Hermiston Lacrosse, which do their own fundraisers.

“People are just very generous,” he said.

As people consider turning that generosity toward the Greater Hermiston Community Foundation, they can find information online at www.greaterhermiston.com or call 541-567-5215 to receive help in setting up outright gifts of cash, land, stock options or other assets, or planned gifts such as making the foundation a life insurance beneficiary. Rivera said no amount of money is too small for foundation members to be willing to have a conversation about it.

HOZI

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it, he would try his luck and also apply to the prestigious Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.

“I got the news about George Fox first,” he said, and with an offer to attend the school on a full scholarship, it initially seemed like it would be an easy choice. But he soon learned that he had not only been accepted to Stanford, but had received a full-ride offer from the California school.

“It was hard for me to choose,” he said.

Hози said Palo Alto’s distance from his family was a deterrent, and he decided to stay in Oregon. But he wasn’t quite ready to give up Stanford.

“I asked if there was any way Stanford could retain that (full scholarship) for a Master’s Degree,” he said.

He said Stanford told him that if he signed a binding contract agreeing to attend the school in four years, they would allow him to use the full scholarship for a master’s program in computer science. He’ll start at Stanford immediately upon completion of his bachelor’s degree at George Fox.

Hози’s hobbies range from studying languages — he knows French, German, Arabic and English, and is now learning Croatian — to photography, soccer, and cryptography — solving puzzles and cracking codes.

That last one has fed into his broader interest of working in computers, and a potential career in cybersecurity.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Marvin Hози works in the Hermiston High School computer lab. On his finger is a ring his father, a jeweler, made for him after Hози earned his first 4-point at HHS.

He’s long shown an interest in computers, since his father brought one home when Hози was seven years old.

“I’d always mess with it and erase everything,” Hози recalls with a smile.

He’s parlayed his skills into part-time job with the Hermiston School District IT department, and will work this summer as a cybersecurity analyst at Amazon.

His teacher and IT colleague, Robert Theriault, recalls how they first met.

“I had to go through and figure out who was making themselves administrators on the (district) computer, and I found out he was making himself an admin,” Theriault said. “That led us to hire him as an intern.”

Theriault said he has been impressed by Hози’s self-motivation and inquis-

itive nature, both as a colleague and as a student in his web development classes.

“We can point him in a direction, and he’ll keep researching it, sometimes to a fault,” he said.

Theriault said Hози was one of three students who won the “Congressional App Challenge,” designing an app that helps students who couldn’t speak on their own.

“The app will speak phrases like ‘I need a pencil’ or ‘I want to go to the bathroom,’” Theriault said. “It’s called ‘Touch and Talk,’ and it has Marvin’s voice.”

Theriault and Hози have another connection, though they didn’t know it until years later.

“He and I were in Iraq at the same time,” Theriault said.

“He was four. I was deployed there.”

BTW

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lotte Latin School in Charlotte, North Carolina, he requested help for a class project to learn more about Oregon.

“Your response was overwhelming! I have tried my best to send a personal thank you to everyone, but if you sent something and have not received a personal letter, please know how much I appreciate the time, thought, effort and money that you took to help me with my project,” the youngster wrote back last month. “I learned so much, and I will never forget this experience!”

Ivy used the information and trinkets sent to him as part of a project for the state fair. “The people of the great state of Oregon will be well represented!” he said. “Thank you again.”

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A Hermiston teacher is moving over to Pendleton to become a principal.

Armand Larive Middle School math teacher Lorena Woods will serve as McKay Creek Elementary School principal next year, replacing Ronda Smith,

who is moving over to Sherwood Heights Elementary School.

In a press release, Pendleton School District Superintendent Chris Fritsch lauded Woods for her 27 years of educational experience, which includes stints as a coach, athletic director, and assistant principal. Woods has a bachelor’s degree from Western Oregon University and a master’s degree from the University of Phoenix.

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Hermiston Downtown District is continuing its First Thursday tradition into summer with refreshments, specials and a bonus drawing.

The next event is this Thursday from 4:30-7 p.m. in nearly 20 downtown businesses, coinciding with the Maxwell Market farmers market from 4-8 p.m. People are encouraged to come down and take a stroll, visit with friends and shop local. Also, be sure to get a drawing ticket and get it punched when visiting participating businesses. To enter the drawing, get four or more punches and drop it off at Nookie’s at Maxwell Market, this month’s host business.

For more information, call 541-667-5026 or search Facebook.

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Vacation Bible schools are ramping up for the summer, and all area children are invited to make crafts and create things, play games, listen to Bible stories, learn new songs and enjoy snacks at Trinity Lutheran Church.

The Fun Maker Factory vacation Bible school is Monday June 11 through Friday, June 15. It runs daily from 9 a.m. to noon at 485 W. Locust Ave., Hermiston. All children are invited to participate in the free event, regardless of religious affiliation.

Classes will be available for kids that are 4 years old through those who just completed fifth grade. In addition, teens are invited to come and help with the classes and activities.

For more information, call Nancy Carlson at 541-567-9660.

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