

Ellwood returns for homecoming festivities during cancer treatment

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

For the last six months, Jasmine Ellwood has faced some challenges bigger than term papers and state tests.

The Hermiston High School junior has been out of school since April battling Ewing sarcoma, a type of bone cancer. As daily events like sporting events and dance practice were replaced by trips to Portland and chemotherapy, a group of her friends and classmates got together and nominated her for a high school tradition: the homecoming court. Ellwood, 16, was elected homecoming princess for the junior class, and was in Hermiston last week attending events such as mud wars, the homecoming assembly Thursday and the football game Friday night.

Ellwood said she was pleasantly surprised by the nomination. Her sister, Alysha, started a social media campaign, which encouraged others to vote for Ellwood.

"I was thinking about everything she's been through, and how her life has changed," Alysha said. "I went on Twitter, and started posting about electing her. And it really took off."

Ellwood's mother, Cindy, said the family was grateful for the support they've received from the community.

"I thought it was pretty special this happened," Cindy said. "Her whole world got turned upside down. To have this going on — it is a big deal. It lets her know she's still a part of the high school, the community. Just letting her know, we're



Junior prince Kelson Robertson opens the door for junior princess Jasmine Ellwood during the halftime ceremony of the Homecoming game on Friday in Hermiston. Ellwood has been out of school since April battling Ewing sarcoma, a type of bone cancer.

STAFF PHOTOS BY E.J. HARRIS



Junior prince Kelson Robertson and junior princess Jasmine Ellwood watch the Homecoming ceremony on Friday at Kennison Field in Hermiston.

still thinking about you, we love you."

Ellwood has continued to take classes online, but her schooling has been interrupted as she spends days at a time in Portland. Right now, her mother said, she is doing fairly well, and should

be finished with chemotherapy in December or January. But, with fluctuating blood cell counts making her susceptible to infection, she will likely not return to school full-time for a while. Since her diagnosis, she and her family have spent

most of their time in Portland, where Ellwood has received chemotherapy and radiation therapy at Doernbecher Children's Hospital. Over the course of 31 sessions of radiation treatment, she and her family had to stay in Portland at the Ronald McDonald House, a program that provides housing for families and children battling illnesses who have to travel out of town for care.

Ellwood said she has stayed positive, going to school events when she can. But she said what's helped her most has been the familiarity of coming back to Hermiston.

"I think the thing that's helped me the most is being able to be at home with my friends and family," she said. "I'm in the best mood because it feels normal again."

New Good Shepherd records system to provide patient tools

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

full access to their health records.

Patients of Good Shepherd Health Care System will have easier access to their health care information as the hospital and its clinics switch to a new medical records system.

The new system, known as Epic, goes live on Nov. 3. While it represents a massive change for employees who are currently training for the switch, it will also represent new tools for patients.

Jim Schlenker, chief operating officer of Good Shepherd, said the new system comes with a "My Health" patient portal that can be accessed online 24 hours a day. Through that portal, patients will be able to see open time slots for their doctor and schedule their own appointments. They will also be able to access test results and billing information, request prescription refills and message their provider follow-up questions about their visits.

"The portal will definitely add some tools that more and more people are coming to expect," Schlenker said.

The main advantage of Epic, however, has to do with seamless transfer of records between medical facilities, both within the Good Shepherd family and with other hospitals. CEO Dennis Burke said that most of the hospitals in the Pacific Northwest, including Kadlec Regional Medical Center in the Tri-Cities, are on the Epic system.

That means if a Hermiston resident gets referred to a specialist in Portland, or has a medical emergency while vacationing on the coast, the provider they are seeing will be able to have

"It's a huge deal to be able to see the big picture and not have to rely on, 'Can you fax this to me?' and maybe you'll get it in an hour," Schlenker said.

He said privacy laws will still apply — someone would have to be a patient at one of those other clinics or hospitals for a provider to look up their information.

Burke said Good Shepherd's current medical records system has been a good hospital system but does not scale as well to clinics. A steering committee of physicians spent months researching different systems and favored Epic, but Good Shepherd was too small to join Epic on its own. In the end, the hospital was able to transition to Epic because Legacy Health, which owns Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland and several other hospitals around the state, agreed to let Good Shepherd join its "instance" of Epic.

"We're deeply appreciate of Legacy for allowing us to partner with them," Burke said.

He said people have been approaching him saying they heard a rumor that Legacy was acquiring Good Shepherd, but that is not the case. The hospital is merely contracting with Legacy on medical records and will remain independently owned and operated.

Schlenker said the hospital has invested more than \$3.2 million into Epic, but it is expected to be a significant benefit to the hospital and patients. He asked that people be patient with any hiccups that happen as the system goes online.

BMCC provides vets with a space of their own

By ANTONIO SIERRA
STAFF WRITER

Without looking at the name, the Blue Mountain Community College Veterans Resource Center would look like a lot of study spaces at the college's Pendleton campus.

The room includes some desktop computers, a pair of couches, a mini-fridge, and a couple of offices. But a key signifier of the veterans center's intent is represented by a picture hung on the wall — a painting made by Jacob Gunnels, a BMCC alum and a veteran.

The painting features a man in a red mask and an Army jacket holding a large gun, comforted by a woman in a white mask.

In a caption that accompanies the painting, Gunnels said he's the man in the red mask, which represents

"blood," "anger," and "pain."

"She wears a white one representing purity and light in the darkness," the caption reads. "I am facing the darkness, but she is there to pull me back, the light, the strength. But in the end she leaves, the burden is too much. All the weight falls back on me."

The title of the painting is "22 is 22 Too Many," a reference to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs study that found that 22 veterans die of suicide per day.

Roman Olivera, the director of BMCC's student support services program, said a veterans advisory committee worked on the resource center for the past five years. Olivera said he visited other veterans centers and figure out their best practices.

Thanks to a \$50,500 grant from the state, BMCC was able to open the center this year, which features mentoring and tutoring resources in addition to being a space where veterans can meet and socialize.

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