



Staff photo by Jade McDowell/East Oregonian

Lifestyle Eye Center has opened a Hermiston office. From left to right are staff members Dr. Arthur Giebel, technician Tiffany McVey, technician Sue O'Mealey and Dr. Jonathan Haley pictured in an exam room.

Lifestyle Eye Center brings new options in eye care

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston-area residents with cataracts, glaucoma and other eye problems have a new option for treatment with the opening of Lifestyle Eye Center.

The Walla Walla-based business opened a Hermiston location at 1070 E Elm Avenue Suite A, formerly occupied by Inland Eye & Cosmetic Institute.

Lifestyle Eye Center offers treatments for glaucoma, cataracts, corneal conditions, dry eye and other eye problems. Office manager Benjamin Higgenbotham said they offer several new, state-of-the-art treatments including a minimally invasive glaucoma surgery that reduces the chance of complications. The providers have access to a surgery center in the suite next door.

"We're excited to bring

this to Hermiston," he said.

Hours are currently Monday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to noon, but Higgenbotham said they will likely expand their hours in the near future.

Providers are Dr. Arthur Giebel, MD; Dr. Tara Evangel, OD; and Dr. Jonathan Haley, OD.

Haley, who served in the Air Force and is currently a captain in the Air Force Reserves, said he has a contract to provide VA services and military entrance eye exams so that Hermiston veterans and prospective military recruits will no longer have to travel to Walla Walla.

Haley specializes in glaucoma care and said since Lifestyle Eye Center opened he has been seeing a lot of patients who have waited months longer than recommended to go in for a check-up.

Giebel, who specializes in cataract surgery and cornea repair, said he has "the best profession ever."

"I get to help people see better," he said.

Giebel said one of his focuses with patients is educating them to help improve their eye health and overall health. Things like diet and exercise have a big effect on the eyes, he said. For example, eating a lot of red meat increases the risk of developing cataracts.

"Ask your doctor, what can I do to make a difference in my life?" he said. "A doctor can only work with what you give them to work with. If you're saying, 'I'm going to eat what I want, I'm going to smoke anyway,' we will still love you anyway and we will do what we can, but you can make a difference."

For more information or to make an appointment, call 541-656-2211 or visit www.lifestyleeye.com.

Umatilla kids shop with a cop

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

The line of police cars outside of the Hermiston Walmart on Tuesday morning was causing a few shoppers to wonder if something had gone wrong, but the officers were there for a happy event.

Umatilla police officers had brought 10 students from Clara Brownell Middle School to shop for Christmas presents for their families.

Chief Darla Huxel said the money — \$150 per student — came from a Walmart grant, the police officers' association and an anonymous donor. The department has been partnering with Walmart on the event since at least 2005, and officers volunteer their time.

Students pulled up to the store as passengers in the front seat of the police cruisers and were greeted by Santa before heading into the store with an officer in tow.

Elijah Hagedorn had written out a list ahead of time with presents for his sister and her boyfriend, his parents and his cousin. He said it took him a while to come up with everything.

"When people say, 'I don't know, just get me something,' that stresses me out," he said. "I need to know exactly what you want."

Looking at his cart full of items, he said he was probably most excited about seeing his sister open her gift.

While some students had a list written out, others spent some time browsing, with suggestions and help from the officer assigned to be their shopping buddy. "What does your brother like?" was a common refrain, and an answer of "Transformers" or "Spider Man" would send them



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Umatilla Police Chief Darla Huxel gets a hand from officer Itzel Claustro while wrapping presents. More photos on A15.

down the next toy aisle. Nerf guns were one of the most popular gifts for siblings and cousins.

"Her mom doesn't usually buy for herself, she puts the kids first and tells them she can go without, so she (Kaydence Hansen) bought something thoughtful for her mom."

Sgt. Natalia Tovey

Kaydence Hansen said she was most excited about her mother's gift. She was one of the last students to finish up as she took her time picking out the perfect item for each family member.

"She got really thoughtful gifts," her shopping buddy Sgt. Natalia Tovey said. "Her mom doesn't usually buy for herself, she puts the kids first and tells them she can go without, so she bought something thoughtful for her mom."

Many of the students were frugal with their \$150 budget, constantly picking up items and then put-

ting them down again with a comment that it was probably too expensive, despite officers' reassurances they had plenty of money to shop with.

"You still have \$75 left to spend, and you still have \$90," Kassie Kennedy told her two shoppers as they wrapped up their lists. "Think about yourselves, too."

Students' names had been provided to Umatilla Police Department by Clara Brownell Middle School. Huxel said the department liked to treat middle school students because it seemed like there were more programs available for high school and elementary school students.

City manager David Stockdale, who is spending his first Christmas with the city of Umatilla, came along to check out the event and said he loved the idea.

"It's a fantastic tradition," he said. "It is truly a way to bring the community together and work with the kids and work with the officers."

After the shopping was all done and everyone had gotten a cookie and drink, the group headed back to the Umatilla police station for a wrapping party and lunch before police helped students drop off their gifts at home.



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