

## LIFE

Continued from Page A1

her in too. Her death hit the family hard.

Toelle-Jackson said the idea of donating Rylee's organs pulled at her and her husband.

"While we were suffering and there would be no miracle for us, perhaps Rylee could be a miracle for others," Toelle-Jackson said.

As she talked she glanced up at Rylee's quilt square. Each of the patches around her beautiful daughter held another tale of loss and hope.

"Each block is much more than pieces of fabric," said Aimee Adelman, director of education and outreach at Donate Life Northwest, which organized the event. "It is a way to continue to tell stories of how many people have been impacted by organ, eye and tissue donation."

Joining Toelle-Jackson on Saturday were two local heart recipients who had also made quilt squares.

Phil Weitz had a heart transplant in 2012 after a massive heart attack. The tall Umatilla resident with glasses and a goatee said he survived with the aid of a left ventricle assist device until the transplant.

Weitz moved temporarily to Spokane to be close in case a heart came available. He said he was grocery shopping one day when he got a call from the medical team.

"Are you ready to come to the hospital for a transplant?" the caller asked, and Weitz felt the ground fall from under him. He looked down at his full cart and said, "What do I do with all this food? I'm getting a heart trans-



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

**Heart recipient Cindy McIntyre, of Hermiston, stands in front of the Threads of Life quilt, unveiled Saturday at the Pendleton Center for the Arts.**

plant." An employee told him just to go and some of the shoppers clapped as he left the store.

After his transplant, he felt grateful to the donor, but no guilt.

"They told me I might have sorrow and grief because someone died and I had lived," Weitz said.

"I felt no guilt because I didn't end his life. I felt blessed and gifted because of this man."

Weitz later met his donor's

sister and brother, who came to Umatilla to meet him and listen to his heart. He learned the man died after falling off a curb and hitting his head.

"You never know when you get up each morning," Weitz said. "We take our days for granted."

Cindy McIntyre, of Hermiston, spoke after Weitz. McIntyre's odyssey started one day in the car with her husband Steve. Sudden

fatigue washed over her and she laid her head back.

"Steve looked over at me and I had a beet-red face, eyes rolled back and I was foaming at the mouth," she said. "He hit me in the chest, which apparently got my heart started again."

He ran red lights to get her to Good Shepherd Medical Center. She learned she was in congestive heart failure from previously

undiagnosed hypoplastic left heart syndrome, a congenital defect. She had 56 more episodes in the following months and believes she was only hours from death when a heart came available.

"A couple of hours later I would have been a goner," McIntyre said. "Then my doctor called and asked, 'How would you like a new heart tonight?'"

Five years later, she looks healthy. Both she and Weitz tell their stories as volunteers for Donate Life Northwest to motivate others to mark yes on the organ donation box on their driver's licenses.

Adelman said representatives from the organization spend time at Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles offices around the Northwest, informing employees about organ donation so they can answer the public's questions or refer them.

"Ninety-nine percent of registrations come from the DMV," she said. "They do a lot of really important work."

The organization also brings the quilt into various DMVs so customers can get a more personal look at organ donation and its aftermath.

Toelle-Jackson said she doesn't regret the decision to donate Rylee's organs.

"Driving home the three hours without her was the hardest thing we have ever done, but knowing she has given three other families some hope gives some purpose to our loss and pain," she said.

"Being able to donate has helped our family. Even in the darkest hour, there lives hope."

To learn more about organ donation, visit [www.donatelifenw.org](http://www.donatelifenw.org) or call toll-free 1-800-452-1369.

## Gun sanctuary proposal misses target

By PHIL WRIGHT  
STAFF WRITER

Gun rights activists are proposing a new ordinance to make Umatilla County the gun-toting land of the free. But county officials counter the proposal is unconstitutional.

County voters in November passed the Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance restricting the county from using resources to

enforce state or federal laws that infringe on the constitutional right to keep and bear arms. The ordinance also designates the sheriff as the authority to decide what is and what is not constitutional.

Jesse Bonifer of Athena wants the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners to refer a Second Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance to the voters to supersede the one they approved five months ago. He

said the proposal cuts out the language making the sheriff the arbiter of the law and puts the authority in the hands of the people. The new sanctuary ordinance asserts "all local, state, and federal acts, orders, rules or regulations regarding firearms, firearms accessories, and ammunition or a violation of the second amendment," local governments have the authority to refuse to work with state and federal gun

laws, and they can proclaim a "Second Amendment Sanctuary for law-abiding citizens and their cities and counties."

Murdock, the board chairman, said the county is not referring this to the voters.

"Our assessment is we cannot put it on the ballot because it's not constitutional," he said.

That is the recommendation of county counsel Doug Olsen,

who explained the law in Oregon requires measures to include the full text, but the proposal does not itemize all it would do. "So by doing that, you don't know what you're voting for," he said. "It's not sufficient to know what you are adopting."

That is the primary reason the Columbia County Clerk's Office in January rejected an initiative petition to put the sanctuary ordinance on the ballot there.



## We are Banner Bank.

We're a lot like you. We are farmers, ranchers, bakers, gardeners, grandparents, 4H, FFA, softball, and baseball parents. We are stewards of our local communities, helping to make them better places to work and live. We are involved in local organizations, both individually and as a bank.

We're proud to call this place our home, and are here to serve you.

Let's create tomorrow, together.



Proudly serving Eastern Oregon since 1948  
[bannerbank.com](http://bannerbank.com)

Member FDIC