

Building character in the classroom

By JESSICA POLLARD
STAFF WRITER

At Armand Larive Middle School, the eighth-graders in science teacher Katie Corral’s class are sure to know each other’s names. After all, they spent 30 minutes discussing them last week.

“How many of you have been in a class and felt that a teacher didn’t know your name?” Corral asked the group.

Several students raised their hands.

“It made me feel like a ghost,” one student said.

“It made me feel like I wasn’t actually there,” chimed another.

Their conversation was sparked by the CharacterStrong curriculum, which was introduced to Armand Larive this year.

The CharacterStrong website describes the program as providing curricula and training that teach character development and social emotional learning. Different versions of the program can be purchased by schools online. They range in price anywhere from \$249 to \$3,999.

The Aug. 28 lesson was all about the importance of knowing one another’s names. Corral went around the class, naming her students one by one. Kids designed dance moves to go with their names in order to help each other remember who’s who.



Armand Larive Middle School teacher Katie Corral, left, leads a CharacterStrong workshop involving the importance of remembering names Wednesday morning in Hermiston.

“If you know someone’s name, you can work with them. The point is to make people feel welcome,” Corral told her class.

The in-class lessons like last Wednesday’s are supplemented with videos, activities, and “Character Dares,” which encourage students to break out of their comfort zones by complimenting their peers or holding doors open for people. Staff are encouraged to participate as well.

Principal Stacie Rob-

erts said that Armand Larive introduced some of the CharacterStrong concepts toward the end of last school year.

“It wasn’t immature. There’s all kinds of things you can find for elementary, and it was great that (CharacterStrong) adhered to our secondary students,” she said.

Parts of CharacterStrong are being taught in Hermiston High School’s leadership classes as well. Roberts said Sandstone is using a similar program called Second Step.

Second Step and CharacterStrong are two of many social emotional learning — or SEL — development programs available for schools to purchase online.

According to The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, SEL is “the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make respon-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Armand Larive Middle School teacher Katie Corral organizes names during a CharacterStrong exercise Wednesday morning in Hermiston.

sible decisions.”

And it’s something that’s been on the forefront of many administrators’ minds over the past few years.

In 2018, growing emotional problems among students was the top concern for a sample of K-8 principals in the United States, according to a 10-year study released by the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

It’s something that didn’t even make the top three back in 2008, when principals expressed more worry over student assessment and institutional practices.

Also in 2018, the Aspen Institute’s National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development released a research

report that found that nine in 10 parents thought schools had a role in helping children develop “life skills.” The same study revealed four in five teachers who were surveyed wanted more support to address social and emotional development in classrooms.

For Roberts, the social emotional learning taking place at Armand Larive this year is part of a much bigger picture.

“In middle school, it’s a hormone explosion,” she said. “If we can help acclimate and adjust a student to everything going on in their life, that’s the ultimate goal. We found something that has fun activities, and hopefully we’re creating better people.”

Hermiston water tower nearing completion

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The new water tower in northeast Hermiston has almost reached its full height.

The 124-foot-tall water tank itself is expected to be completed Sept. 18. Painting will take place Sept. 19 to Oct. 2, and the city will begin using the tank for pressure in early November before completing the final punch list by the end of the year.

Premiere Excavation of Pasco is completing work on the roughly \$4 million project. This week and next week the company is also installing pipe under Punkin Center Road near the tower. During the installation process a section of the road has been reduced to one lane, with delays as flaggers direct traffic.

The water tower and new pipelines around the tower are being paid for using money from Lamb Weston. In lieu of property taxes, the french fry company agreed to pay \$1 million per year, split between the city of Hermiston and Umatilla County, for the first 15 years of their factory expansion completed earlier this year. The county agreed to give Hermiston the first \$2 million of its share to be used on the water tower, with Hermiston using its first \$2 million to cover the rest.

The 1-million-gallon tower will expand Hermiston’s water storage capac-



Staff photo by Jade McDowell
A new water tower on the corner of Northeast 10th Street and Punkin Center Road in Hermiston is in the final stages of construction.

ity in the event of an emergency and will open up hundreds of acres of residential property for development at a lower cost. It will also benefit a future elementary school Hermiston School District hopes to build on Theater Lane.

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said for now the tower will be painted the same beige as Hermiston’s south water tower, minus the watermelon logo.

“The tank is located off the beaten path, and due to the height and diameter, we really weren’t sure how visible any messaging painted on it would be from various locations in town,” Morgan wrote in an email. “Therefore, the plan has been to erect the tank first (and get it painted with the necessary protective coat), and then we’ll know for sure how visible any messaging will be and where it needs to be oriented.”

Local man on hook for attempted arson

By PHIL WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Timothy Allen Kelly of Irrigon faces attempted arson charges. Court records show the crime has roots going back to when Kelly avoided a murder rap in 2014.

Kelly, 28, pleaded not guilty on Aug. 1 in Umatilla County Circuit Court to six counts of first-degree attempted arson, one count of possessing an explosive device, one count of second-degree criminal mischief and two counts of recklessly endangering others.

The case began almost a year earlier, Aug. 14, 2018, when Umatilla County Fire District 1 received a call-out just before 5 a.m. for a fire at 1100 W. Sunland Ave., Hermiston. According to the search warrant affidavit by Hermiston Police Department Lt. Randy Studebaker, firefighters found a burning Molotov cocktail in broken glass in a rock bed directly beneath a bedroom window.

The incendiary device consisted of a glass soda bottle with duct tape securing a cloth rag for a wick with gasoline remaining in the bottle. The window was open to accommodate an air con-

ditioner on one side, and the bomb struck and broke the outer pane.

Seven people were in the house, including two children.

Hermiston police later that day received a tip, according to the affidavit, identifying Kelly as the person who threw the Molotov in retaliation for one person in the house stealing his guns.

Kelly has convictions in 2013 and 2014 in Umatilla County for delivery of methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin. The court documents do not reveal how he acquired the guns.

The Blue Mountain Narcotics Enforcement Team the following day raided the house and confiscated guns. Hermiston police returned to the home and questioned one of the occupants.

She was related to Daniel Dechand, the man Kelly shot and killed in 2014 outside Hermiston. A Umatilla County grand jury found Kelly acted in self defense. Still, the court record states, there was tension between Dechand’s relative and Kelly, and they knew that through mutual acquaintances.

They also saw each other not long before at storage units in Hermiston. She

admitted to police she and others stole guns from Kelly’s unit.

Police soon tracked down Kelly, who confirmed he was the victim of a storage unit burglary but denied having anything to do with the Molotov cocktail. Police watched video from the storage business that showed the burglary of Kelly’s unit, the affidavit states, and also showed Kelly and two others tried to break into the unit belonging to Dechand’s relative.

The affidavit noted Kelly claimed to be out of town at the time of the burglary, which was 32 minutes before the report of the fire.

The case had a pre-trial

proceeding Thursday morning in Pendleton, and Circuit Court Judge Christopher Brauer set a trial readiness hearing for Sept. 12 with the trial starting Sept. 23.

Kelly has three other cases open, all in Umatilla County.

He pleaded not guilty last September to burglary, theft and criminal mischief. That case goes to trial Sept. 25. He also pleaded not guilty in February to failure to appear in the burglary case.

And Kelly on Aug. 1 pleaded not guilty to menacing. The state has alleged he committed the misdemeanor against a man in February 2018. That case goes to trial Sept. 25.



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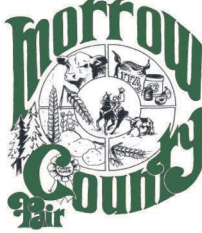
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The tournament was able to raise over \$6k to support our local athletes!

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LUNCHEON

Lunch sponsored by Tom Huxoll, owner of Cascade Automotive, & was served by The Knights of Columbus, & Special Olympics coach Doris Boatright. Hermiston Safeway & 7-Eleven also contributed to the luncheon.

Special Thank You to Randy Sperr for your help on behalf of Echo Hills Golf Course