

Hughes

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"I came from a business background, so I had the business side of it, but I didn't really know how nonprofits worked," Hughes said. "I didn't know how to fundraise."

But by the end of 2005, the move had been made, and Hughes was in full motion. Under his leadership, the nonprofit has operated a thrift store, conducted name-your-price rummage sales of household wares, sent thousands of bags full of food home with hungry children in the area through the Backpack Program, operated the local food bank and opened a shelter for families in 2011 known as Martha's House.

"By the time we started that project I had more community contacts, more fundraising expertise," Hughes said.

The idea for the shelter—which houses drug-free families for months at a time while they recuperate from financial stress and gain budgeting skills—came from the late Bob Severson, a former Hermiston mayor who saw a woman and her children on the street in Hermiston during one especially cold winter.

"This community did not have any safety net for

people in that condition," Hughes said.

He said the project is evidence that one person's ideas can change a community. For him, Martha's House is also a good example of how focusing on one element of an issue can bring tangible results.

"We saw the homeless population was made up of many factors," he said. "There's not one answer that's going to solve homelessness, there are five or six populations that need unique answers. We chose families and helping them move back into society."

Hughes said right now, the house is seeing at least an application a day. He said they probably won't be able to accept any more tenants unless they hire someone to be on-site full time.

"There is a large need for services, and there are many areas that are not being met yet. Whoever follows me will have an option to tackle some of those issues," Hughes said.

Namely, Hughes said, the Hermiston area lacks resources for those suffering from drug addiction and mental illness.

Cathy Putnam, who's been on the Agape House board of directors, will be the interim executive director while the nonprofit considers its next steps.

"What we're looking for is someone who can look at

the program from an outside perspective, and see what resources we have," said board president, Daniel Wattenburger, in August. "How can we continue to meet the needs we meet now, and what needs aren't we meeting that the Agape House can play a role in?"

It's somewhat of a tricky question. Agape House provides services like no other in the city of Hermiston, but the organization's budget has been slimming over the years, with a slight uptick in revenue during the 2018 tax year. Agape House is funded almost entirely by community donations, Hughes said. It means that the organization's ability to help can ebb and flow, which is something he's experienced himself.

"For pretty much the past 10 years, I have worked without a salary," Hughes said.

Hughes instead has received some payments as well as housing and transportation. But as Agape House searches for a new director, he said they're planning to make it a paid position.

Hughes knows it's going to take someone with fierce dedication to the community to take his place.

"They'll have to put God first, community second and ego last," he said. "Whoever follows me will bring a different look. We don't know all the areas where we lack

services, I hope that through this transition we shine some light in those areas."

Wattenburger said that one of the key changes that might affect Agape House's goals over time is growth within the city.

"The biggest thing is that Hermiston has grown. With the addition of Martha's House, not just food and clothing but housing as well. We're hoping for someone who has experience in that realm," Wattenburger said.

And while Agape House takes a moment to consider its next steps, Dave and Jodene have recently decided on theirs.

On Halloween night, they're moving to Arizona in an RV to help bring a local artist's dream of building an educational mini-golf course to life.

"We'd not planned to leave the area," Dave said. "But God opened up a unique opportunity for us."

Jodene will help advertise and create a website for the project, and Dave will be helping execute the construction of the plan.

"I'm not ready to just sit down and do nothing. This will bring some of the skills that I've learned here to use," he said.

When he looks back, Dave said he feels proud to have helped expand Agape House's scope of services.

"I think I've made a dent," he said.

Drill

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"This is always a learning experience," said Senior Meteorologist Vincent Papol, who is stationed in Pendleton.

He said in the case of a spill, weather can affect how chemicals spread and are released. He noted wind, for instance, could change the direction of a chemical leakage.

After emergency responders rescued the victims — who were played by volunteers from a local youth group and by hospital employees — from the crash, they were transported to Good Shepherd. There, the hospital simulated decontaminating the victims and addressing their medical needs.

Public information officers and dispatch participated as well, sending out simulated internal communications. Dispatch announced the simulation over the scanner.

Internally, different agencies hold their own drills frequently. But a big inter-agency simulation only happens once a year, and it's not cheap.

Marcum estimated the cost of last week's exercise at \$20,000. The exercise was made possi-

ble with grant funding from the Umatilla County Local Emergency Planning Committee, which develops an emergency preparedness plan and informs citizens about chemicals.

The LEPC also supplied the train car used for simulations at Station 23.

"It is hard to secure grant funding for drills like this," Marcum said. "It's hard to disrupt the day to day, and it's a big burden on budgets."

In 2011, the Umatilla Chemical Depot disposed of the last of the mustard gas on-site. That also faded the county's partnership with the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program, which funded two drills and other preparedness efforts each year.

Marcum said a spill like the one used in the simulation would take three or four days to contain and clean, and would have sparked evacuations for all people living within half a mile around the spill.

Prior to the drill, Marcum and other organizers worked to keep the scenario and the location a secret in order to keep the exercise authentic.

"Everything is hush hush until the time of the exercise," he said. "We don't want anyone pre-planning their approach."

BTW:

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Public Library, recently announced that \$1,700 was raised during the annual book sale. The **Friends of the Hermiston Public Library** organize the yearly event, which helps in supporting programs at the library.

Library friends and staff expressed appreciation to all those who attended the book sale. The public is

encouraged to check out the library's website at www.hermistonlibrary.us, where information about services and resources can be found. Also, scroll to the bottom to make a recommendation for a book to be purchased for the library's collection.

The library is located at 235 E. Gladys Ave. It's open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday/Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For questions, call 541-567-2882.

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The crisp fall nights are

bringing frost to the region — including at **Big River Golf Course** in Umatilla. For those still wanting to hit the links, don't fret — you'll just need to linger awhile to ensure the course is ready to play.

General manager **Megan Olsen** reminds golfers to be sure to check in with the pro shop before teeing off. For questions, contact her at 541-922-3006 or megan@golfbigriver.com.

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Hermiston's assistant city manager **Mark Morgan**

recently received the Credentialed Manager designation from the **International City/County Management Association**.

According to a news release, Morgan is one of 24 active city administrators in Oregon credentialed through the program. Hermiston city manager **Byron Smith** is another.

Morgan has a master's degree in public administration from **Eastern Washington University**, where he was named the **H. George Frederickson**

Honor's Graduate. He has more than eight years of executive local government experience, including time in Pullman and Cheney, Washington, and has been Hermiston's assistant city manager since 2012.

As part of Morgan's ICMA membership, he completed a two-year leadership program, was accepted into the ICMA Fellows program in 2011 and was awarded the Washington City/County Managers Association's Educational Fellowship in 2011.

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Thursday's menu for the **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** is beef stroganoff, vegetable, fruit and dessert. Friday is clam chowder, coleslaw, garlic bread and dessert. Monday is salad bar, dinner roll and dessert. Tuesday is beef hot dogs, sauerkraut, baked beans and dessert. Next Wednesday is tacos, fruit and dessert.

— You can submit items for our weekly *By The Way* column by emailing your tips to editor@hermistonherald.com.

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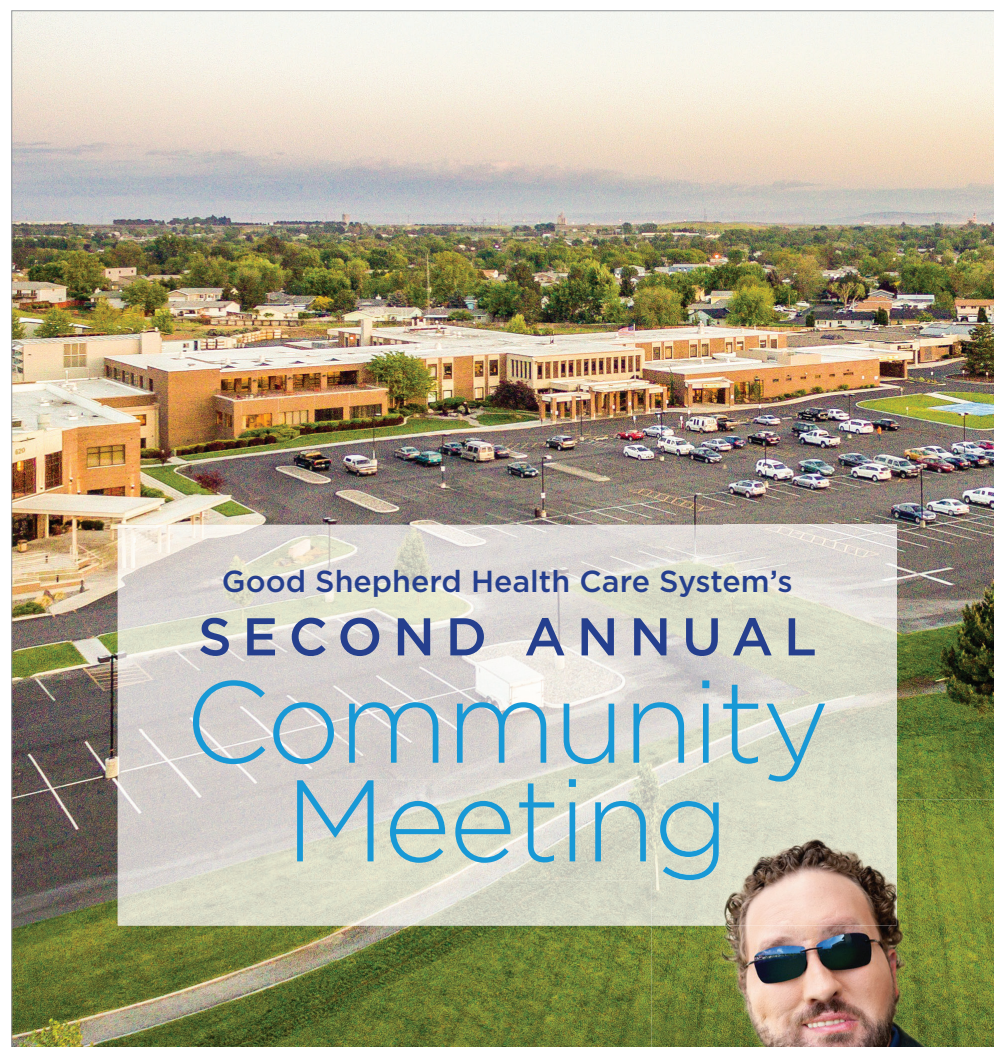
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With special guest speaker, **Marcus Engel**, author of five best-selling books, honorary doctorate awardee from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, and adjunct professor at the University of Notre Dame.

Good Shepherd Health Care System cordially invites you to our 2nd Annual Community Meeting and Health Fair.

Join us for an evening of fun, food, raffle prizes, and, most importantly, learn about the positive impact GSHCS is having on the communities we serve with President & CEO Dennis E. Burke.

Flu Shots available from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. Limited Supply, First-Come, First-Served

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

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RSVP 541.667.3509

Or register on Eventbrite at <https://gshcsannualcommunitymeeting.eventbrite.com>

