

DHS

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Each year, staff at DHS makes a list and checks it twice while trying to provide for kids during the holiday season. Over the years, several community partners have assisted by hosting public giving trees, including Hamley Western Store in Pendleton and Les Schwab Tire Center in Heppner. People can pluck a tag from a tree and shop from the wish list. Also, employees at the Walmart Distribution Center in Hermiston participate in a giving tree program.

This holiday season, DHS workers have reached out further to increase its efforts to help ensure each foster child in Umatilla and Morrow counties have a merry Christmas. The organization launched "It Takes A Village" to further involve the community in giving to kids that may not have as many resources.

Among those driving the initiative is Rogers Toyota of Hermiston. Glenn Silaski, the dealership's general manager, said the company encourages a spirit of community and giving. "They're our kids too," Silaski said. "We just believe strongly in helping kids' programs to help them grow up to be a part of the community."

In addition to hosting a pajama drive for area foster kids of all ages, Silaski said Rogers Toyota is a drop-off



Photo contributed by Lukes Photos

Food was plentiful during a past holiday gathering to support local foster children and their families.

location for gift cards. DHS is collecting cards for online shopping, local restaurants and stores, and Visa gift cards for teens in foster care.

Meakins said youths 13-18 sometimes be difficult to shop for — by providing gift cards with a suggested value of \$25, they can choose what they want. It can be something as simple as a Dutch Bros. Coffee card to stores at the mall or even Amazon cards, she said.

"We need cards from anywhere," Meakins said. "We can match it up and make it work for a specific kid."

In addition to Rogers Toy-

ota, other drop-off locations for gift cards include Harley Swain Subaru, New Hope Community Church, Victory Baptist Church, Columbia Bank, Banner Bank, Umatilla Morrow County Head Start and the Hermiston DHS office.

Other businesses involved in the effort include Harley Swain Subaru, which is hosting a coat drive. New coats, hats and jackets are needed for all children and youth sizes. Lamb Weston and the Walmart DC are hosting toy drives to collect items for newborns up to age 12.

The "It Takes A Village" initiative runs through Mon-

day, Dec. 9. People are invited to make donations to help brighten the holiday season of foster children in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

"If any member of the public wants to donate we have a big, huge box right in the middle of the showroom," Silaski said. "We're proud to be a part of this great community and are thrilled with the work of DHS and others in helping kids."

For more information, contact Meakins at 541-314-7614, jaimel.meakins@dhsosha.state.or.us or stop by the Hermiston DHS office, 950 S.E. Columbia Drive, Suite C.

Hamlet

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plays Hamlet's close friend Rosencrantz.

Act I of the play is sponsored by Disney, and it shows, as Danish villagers prance around stage during a catchy musical number. Hamlet, played by sophomore Aurelio Marin, dances about happily while singing about how he must kill his uncle.

In a different scene, Hamlet's uncle, King Claudius and mother, Queen Gertrude, sit upon thrones in the spacious

Dr. Pepper Castle.

Carnival Cruise Lines sponsors another scene, and royal subjects can be seen tanning in lounge chairs.

"It's a complete perversion of both 'Hamlet' and the advertising business," Goucher said. "Sometimes it's about mental health, we're poking fun and also raising awareness."

"Hamlet Thrill-ma-geddon" shows Nov. 22 and 23 at 7 p.m. at the Hermiston High School Auditorium.

Ticket prices are \$2 for students, \$5 for adults, and \$4 for senior citizens 65 years and older with ID.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Students playing villagers interact on stage during a dress rehearsal for Hermiston High School's production of "The Hamlet Thrill-ma-geddon" Wednesday afternoon at the high school.



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BTW

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Get ready to get revved up for the **Echo Toy Run** as bikers hit the road to deliver toys to **Good Shepherd Medical Center**. In its 16th year, the Dec. 7 event is being held in memory of longtime organizer **Al Sells**. See next week's **Hermiston Herald** for a full story and photos about the event. For questions, call/text **Amanda Silvani** at 541-720-9304 or search Facebook.

If she could, **Robin Barker** likely would be wagging her tail and barking while expressing appreciation to **Marcia and Allan Lambert of Affordable Family Eyewear**. Barker said the Hermiston business has provided great support to **Fuzz Ball Animal Rescue**.

In addition to making financial donations, they have provided food and supplies. Also, they hold fundraisers, donate services to fundraisers and foster animals, Barker said.

Affordable Family Eyewear recently moved to a new, larger location at 298 East Gladys Avenue just down the street from the **Hermiston Public Library**.

Hermiston High School FFA students participated in the 92nd National FFA Convention, and Hermiston students brought home some banners. The **Agronomy Team** received the team bronze award, and individually, **Jayda Hoston, Thomas Wright, Grant Hills, and Jantzen Wrathall** also received bronze awards, according to a news release from the school district.

The **Food Science and Technology Team** also placed at nationals. Individually, **Marti Plum** earned bronze, **Jenna Wallace** and **Joseph Knight** earned silver and **Alexis Leathers** earned gold. The team walked away with a gold ranking, placing 7th in the nation out of 38 teams. The team also earned an all-expense-paid trip to a food processor convention in Atlanta, scheduled for January 2020.

2018 HHS graduate, **Dylan Westfall** received his American FFA Degree, which is one of the highest that can be bestowed upon a member. Less than one percent of FFA members earn the degree.

Thursday at the **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** is a special Thanksgiving dinner, including turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, yams, rolls and pie. The menu for Friday is a hot turkey sandwich, mashed potatoes and gravy and dessert. Monday is tater tot casserole, fruit and dessert. Tuesday is chili, corn bread, salad and dessert. Wednesday is cook's choice, and the senior center will be closed for Thanksgiving on Nov. 28-29.

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