Meal

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"Oh, I've been all over," he said.

The pair met in Denver, Colorado, when Robert — originally from Kansas — would deliver equipment to the railroad company where Terri-Lynn worked at the time. Together, they moved back to Terri-Lynn's hometown of Hermiston to care for her aging parents.

For years, Terri-Lynn was working at the Union Pacific Railroad in Hermiston, but due to recent layoffs, she retired unexpectedly early last month after more than 27 years in the industry.

"But you have to look at it in a positive light," she said. "Now we have more time to do volunteering like this."

Their goal is to bring food and a little celebratory spirit to people who might not be able to make it out of the house to attend the free Community Fellowship Dinner, which is held at Hermiston High School each Thanksgiving afternoon and open to everyone in the community. Sometimes, they'll give rides to and from the high school for people hoping to get out of the house for the holiday.

The pair also volunteer to deliver meals on Christmas. One year, they remember delivering meals to a local motel. The woman who answered the door was grateful, and explained that the food was all her family had in the way of celebration that year.

"You don't know what someone's circumstance is. We're so blessed, it's nice to be able to bless others," said Terri-Lynn. "Put a smile on someone's face."

They always seem to be smiling too.

Before heading back to the high school to load their car up for round two of deliveries, the pair swung by a residence on Hermiston's west side.

Robert ran out to make the delivery. The woman inside used to volunteer at the Thanksgiving dinner and had two dogs — including a dachshund.

"That dog was a dog-and-a-half long," he joked.

Back at the high school, tables in the main commons were filled with families chowing down, a flower bouquet at every table.

According to Makayla Humphreys, who was checking in volunteers, there were some last minute no-shows Thursday morning due to illness.

"Flu season is here," she said. "But in the end, it always works out that we have enough people."

The nonprofit didn't have exact totals for how many people were served Thursday, but according to board chair Gary Humphreys, the Thanksgiving dinner fed over 700 people last year.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Volunteers dish up dinners to go during Thursday's Community Thanksgiving Dinner at Hermiston High School.

Giving

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District, the Stanfield Moose Lodge or Banner Bank in Stanfield.

The Hermiston Police Department is also teaming up with Walmart's transportation department for another toy drive, on Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6 p.m. at the Hermiston Walmart. Unwrapped toys donated during that time will be donated to children's hospitals in the region and the Ronald McDonald House, where families can stay during a child's treatment.

Other opportunities to give in Hermiston include:

HH file photo

Boxes full of Christmas presents collected and wrapped by the Hermiston Police Department sit ready to be distributed as part of last year's Christmas Express.

Good Shepherd 12 days of giving

What is it: Each year, Good Shepherd Health Care System's 12 Days of Giving plays on a "12 Days of Christmas" theme to collect donations for different causes before Christmas time.

How to help: As of Dec. 4, there are still three days left to donate items to Good Shepherd Health Care System's 12 Days of Giving. Each day presents a special "12 Days of Christmas" theme for donations. Wednesday, Dec. 4, Good Shepherd is asking for pet food supplies, Thursday for sweaters and coats, and Friday for school supplies.

Items can be dropped off at the main entrance of Good Shepherd Medical Center, the lobby of the Good Shepherd Medical Group Clinic or the lobby of the Medical Plaza.

"It Takes A Village"

What is it: People can help brighten the holiday season for area foster children. The Department of Human Services Child Welfare program's Hermiston office launched "It Takes A Village" to involve the community in providing for foster care kids in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

How to help: There are several ways to participate in the program, including drop-off locations:

•Coat drive: New coats, hats and jackets of all sizes (Harley Swain Subaru)

•Pajama drive: New pajamas in all sizes (Rogers Toyota of Hermiston)

•Toy drive: New toys for ages newborn to 12 (Walmart DC & Lamb Weston)

•Gift cards: With a suggested value of $25, donate gift cards for foster teens ages 13-18 for local stores and restaurants, or online shopping, such as Amazon or Visa. (Rogers Toyota, Harley Swain Subaru, New Hope Community Church, Victory Baptist Church, Columbia Bank, Banner Bank, Umatilla Morrow County Head Start and the Hermiston DHS office)

The donation deadline is Monday, Dec. 9. For questions, call 541-314-7614 or stop by the DHS office, 950 S.E. Columbia Drive, Suite C, Hermiston.

Community Fellowship Dinner

What is it: A free holiday dinner with all the trimmings. Open to anyone who wants to attend, the Community Fellowship Dinner has provided twice-yearly holiday meals for more than three decades. The Christmas meal is Wednesday, Dec. 25 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Hermiston High School.

How to help: The holiday meal ministry requires upwards of 150 volunteers. Typically working one-hour shifts, people are needed for tasks such as food preparation, packaging to-go meals, setting up the venue, greeting people, serving diners and meal delivery.

In addition, financial contributions are greatly appreciated. They can be sent to Community Fellowship Dinner, P.O. Box 1551, Hermiston, OR 97838. Also, CFD is now registered with the Amazon Smile Foundation. When logged into smile.amazon.com, select "Community Fellowship Dinners in Hermiston" and .5% of eligible purchases will be donated to the cause.

To volunteer or make a donation, contact cfdhermiston@gmail.com or 541-371-9772. For more information, search Facebook.

Eastern Oregon Mission

What is it: The Eastern Oregon Mission is a Hermiston-based nonprofit which runs two major programs to provide support for those in need in Umatilla County: Agape House, which assists people with food and other necessities and Martha's House, a family shelter.

How to help: Those interested in donating money can contribute a one-time or monthly donation to a program of their choice at agapehousehermiston.org. For every $1 donated, the Eastern Oregon Mission can provide $7 worth of service, according to their website. Eastern Oregon Mission also has a partnership with Amazon through AmazonSmile. Select "Eastern Oregon Mission" while shopping on the AmazonSmile website to donate .5% of the purchase price of eligible products to Agape House.

The organization is also always accepting shelf-stable and frozen food donations, cans and bottles for recycling, clothes and furniture as well. To donate, contact 541-567-8774.

Hermiston Warming Station

What is it: The station, located at 1075 S. Highway 395, provides a warm and secure place to sleep for anyone who needs it during the cold winter months, no questions asked.

How to help: The station is looking for essentials including cases of 16.9 ounce water bottles, cleaning supplies, hand warmers, extra thick wool socks and more. There is a donation list posted on the Hermiston Warming Station Facebook page. The station is also looking for stocking stuffers for an annual Dec. 23 Christmas celebration. Donation hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-6 p.m., Saturdays from 3-5 p.m., and Sundays from 12-2 p.m.

Fuzz Ball Animal Rescue

What is it: a small animal rescue in the Hermiston area. Fuzz Ball can assist with adopting out, rehoming and caring for stray pets.

How to help: According to their Facebook page, Fuzz Ball Animal Rescue currently has an anonymous donor willing to match all donations up to $1,000. Monetary donations can be sent through the rescue's Paypal account on the website (www.fuzzballrescue.com/donate.html) or by calling Oregon Trail Veterinary Clinic at 541-567-1138.

Fuzz Ball Rescue is currently seeking dry kitten food, cat litter, dry dog and puppy food as well as dog toys. The rescue is also looking for foster homes for strays, including kittens and puppies that need bottle-feeding. To donate or volunteer, email fuzzballrescue@gmail.com.

BTW

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The **Hermiston First United Methodist Church** is gearing up to share the reason behind the Christmas season. The biblical story about the birth of Jesus is featured during the **Living Nativity**.

In its 27th year, the free event is Dec. 14-15 at the church. For more information, call **Becky Hunt** at 541-314-5797 or the church at 541-567-3002. Also, see next week's **Hermiston Herald** for a full story and photos.

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Santa Claus (in this case also known as **John Perkins**) will be making several stops around town in the next couple of weeks.

On Thursday at noon he will hand out teddy bears to seniors at the **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center,** and on Dec. 11 he will be visiting Hermiston's nursing homes and assisted living facilities to hand out bears.

Perkins, dressed as Santa, will also be available at several local businesses, including **Rogers Toyota** on Friday and **Bellingers** from noon to 5 p.m. on Dec. 14. On Saturday he will land at 1 p.m. in a **Life Flight** helicopter behind the **Hermiston Public Library** and be available at the **Union Club** afterward from 1-3 p.m.

He will also be present at **Pancakes with Santa** on Dec. 14 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the **Hermiston Community Center.** Tickets ($8 for children ages 2-15, $10 for ages 16 and older, $30 for a family) are limited and must be purchased in advance at the community center.

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If the cold weather continues, **Rudolph** won't be the only one with a red nose. People are encouraged to bundle up for the third annual **Rudolph Fun Run**.

The event collects food for the **Umatilla Volunteer Firefighters Association**'s annual Christmas basket program. Participants are invited to have fun and dress up in costumes.

The Rudolph Fun Run starts Saturday at 9 a.m. at the **McNary Fire Station**, 305 Willamette Ave, Umatilla. The **Umatilla High School National Honor Society** is teaming up with the firefighters association to present the 5K event. To enter, adults need to bring five nonperishable food items (or cash equivalent) and for kids 10 and under, they can enter with two food items.

For more information, contact **Nancy Swarat** at swaratn@umatillasd.org, 541-922-6525, the fire district at 541-922-3718 or search Facebook.

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The menu for the **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** for Thursday is pork loin, rice pilaf, veggies and dessert. Friday is clam chowder, garlic bread, cole slaw and dessert. Monday is cheddar vegetable soup, fruit and dessert. Tuesday is spaghetti, garlic bread, tossed salad and dessert. Next Wednesday is chicken noodle soup, bread, crackers, 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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