

Red Cross seeks volunteers in Umatilla, Morrow counties

By **ANDREW CUTLER**
EAST OREGONIAN EDITOR

Nadine McCrindle hasn't been with the American Red Cross for very long, but she's already facing a challenge.

The new executive director of the Red Cross region in Central and Eastern Oregon is in need of disaster response volunteers in Northeast Oregon.

"The people that we have that are specifically involved in these types of disaster responses, are really, really special human beings," she said. "On a larger scale, they are often the same people that will be deployed to natural disasters that happen across the country, like hurricanes, wildfires, those types of things. And when you meet them all in a large group, there's a specific type of person that does this type of volunteer work, and yeah, it's really special."

McCrindle, who joined the Red Cross in October, knows what being a volunteer is about. Just one month after being hired as executive director, she was deployed to the Kincade Fire, burning

north of San Francisco. The Kincade Fire forced about 190,000 evacuations and the Red Cross Cascade Region supported 10% of the residents, helping them relocate to the 15 shelters that were set up. McCrindle was deployed to Sonoma County for 10 days and served as a relief for the local Sonoma responders who needed rest, and gave them time to check on their own families and homes.

"I think one of the biggest things that really touched my heart that was there was the compassion and resiliency of the people who were affected by the fire," McCrindle told KTVZ in Bend after her deployment.

It's that compassion and resiliency that McCrindle and Kristen Heath, the disaster program manager, are looking for in the volunteers they recruit in rural Oregon.

"We send out volunteers to help those families on really the worst day of their life, and try to assist them with their immediate needs until some of the other com-



McCrindle

munity organizations have time to catch up and get going to assist them," Heath said. "That's the biggest thing that we're doing on a day-to-day basis. We also do smoke-detector installations, and so we're as much as possible getting out there to the neighborhoods that need us, and get in there and help people test or install new smoke alarms as needed, because that's what saves lives."

Disaster Action Team volunteers arrive immediately after a home fire or other disaster to provide compassionate care and comfort. They distribute relief supplies, and provide client assistance for temporary lodging and other disaster-caused needs. DAT volunteers then can help victims get in touch with another group of Red Cross volunteers who make up an emotional care team who are able to offer some health services, mental health services and spiritual care.

"When you see people facing the worst days of

HELPING OUT

The Red Cross of Central and Eastern Oregon has several volunteer opportunities for residents in Umatilla and Morrow counties, including:

Providing food, shelter and comfort for those affected by a disaster, including home fires. Teaching a class/training

Assisting members of the military and their families.

Working at local blood drives.

Helping with local volunteer recruitment, engagement and appreciation

Supporting public relations, marketing and government relations locally.

To volunteer or find out more, visit the Red Cross website at www.redcross.org/local/oregon.

their life, and you see the humanity that comes from people, complete strangers, wanting to help you or the community, it restores your faith in humanity, and there's nothing that makes your heart fuller than seeing that," McCrindle said. "And that has been my experience since I joined the Red Cross, is being with people like that."

Heath said an increase in the number of incidents requiring Red Cross response has put a strain on the limited resources available. Since July 2019,

Red Cross has responded to seven fires in Morrow County, above the four to five it usually responds to in a year. That number goes up to 19 responses in Umatilla County since July 2019. The average for an entire year in the county, Heath said, is 16.

"We would love to hear about every fire. A lot of times, people have family nearby that's going to take them in and help them out and stuff like that and that's great," Heath said. "It is so much better to be with loved ones in a disaster, then have to be on your own in a hotel.

But we do have those other teams — our health services team, our mental health team — that can assist, too. So even if you've got a place to stay that night, a call can make some of those other resources available to you."

McCrindle said volunteers go through a background check and extensive training to help them feel comfortable with situations before they are sent out to help families facing tragedy.

"We give them all of the training that they need to be able to perform the task that is required in terms of a disaster response," she said. "And then they'll go out on a few calls with (other volunteers). We don't just train them, and then you're sent off, 'Good luck.'"

Heath said there are some key skills volunteers should have to better equip them to deal with disaster response situations.

"Having that compassion, having the ability to sit down and have those conversations, active listening skills, those are really important for the DAT responders," she said.

Sheriff's office investigates fatal crash

HERMISTON HERALD

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office has taken the lead role in investigating the crash that took the life of a Hermiston teenager on New Year's Day.

Brett Jewett, 16, a sophomore at Hermiston High School, was killed in a two-vehicle car crash on Jan. 1 along Highway 207 outside of Echo.

Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan confirmed Monday the identities of the

drivers.

Brett's sister Madison Jewett, 18, of Hermiston, was driving the 2007 Gray Ford Escape in which he was a passenger, and Rene Romero-Briseno, 60, of Heppner, was driving a 1999 Ford Expedition.

Madison Jewett was transported to Good Shepherd Hospital and released that night.

The sheriff's office provided no other information, but a safety log entry from Jan. 2 referred to the crash

as a "head-on collision."

"I don't know if I can provide anything more at this point. There's a considerable amount of scientific data to gather to sort of put the pieces of the puzzle together. I'm hesitant to put anything else out at this time," Rowan said.

He added that no citations have been issued and that the cause of the crash has yet to be determined because the investigation is ongoing.

Because the crash

occurred on a state roadway, typically the Oregon State Police would take the reins in investigating. But law enforcement officials said that because Brett Jewett is the son of OSP Trooper Brian Jewett, the sheriff's office has been named the lead agency instead.

Rowan said that the office is working in cooperation with OSP, and that two accident reconstruction teams are currently working to determine what may have caused the fatal crash.

POLICE LOGS

Monday, December 30

9:39 a.m.— A woman on East Gladys Avenue believes her grandson has been repeatedly breaking into her home at night. She said her glasses were stolen.

10:12 a.m.— A woman told Hermiston police that she was putting her groceries in her car in the Walmart parking lot when her wallet was stolen. It's since been used at several locations, including a pizza restaurant.

12:21 p.m.— On South First Street, a woman was walking along an alleyway when a man yelled at her and gave her a scare. She said it wasn't the first time this had happened.

Tuesday, December 31

4:55 a.m.— Hermiston police took a report for an assault on West Hermiston Avenue.

7:38 p.m.— A domestic assault was reported on East Newport Avenue.

Wednesday, January 1

3:43 p.m.— A car accident involving two vehicles on North First Street is under investigation.

8:42 p.m.— On Northwest 11th Street, a domestic disturbance was reported.

Thursday, January 2

2:44 a.m.— Hermiston police responded to a fight on East Beech Avenue involving multiple intoxicated people.

11:57 a.m.— A domestic disturbance was reported on Southwest Ninth Street.

Friday, January 3

1:16 p.m.— On Norma Drive, an assault was reported.

4:12 p.m.— A juvenile was reported missing on Southwest 11th Street.

Saturday, January 4

1:21 p.m.— Hermiston police took a report for a burglary on East Pine Avenue.

Sunday, January 5

7:56 p.m.— A burglary was reported on Northeast Fourth Street.

Monday, January 6

8:13 a.m.— A runaway was reported on East Gladys Avenue.

9:07 a.m.— On Northeast Eighth Place, a man reported someone hit his fence with their car the night prior.

Hermiston police find a grenade during traffic stop

HERMISTON HERALD

Hermiston Police Department called out the Oregon State Police bomb squad early Monday morning after an officer located a grenade inside a vehicle during a traffic stop.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said that he did not know

yet whether the grenade was inert, but OSP will report back on its status after destroying it.

A few minutes after midnight, an officer stopped a 1992 Ford Explorer on West Beech Avenue. The driver fled on foot. After being unable to locate the driver, the officer checked the vehi-

cle, where drugs, scales, a cellphone and grenade were found.

Per police protocol, the grenade was treated as possibly live and the area was blocked off, while OSP retrieved it and took it away for disposal.

HPD is working to determine who may have been driving the vehicle.

ANNIVERSARY

Willard and Judy Fordice

EAST OREGONIAN

High school sweethearts Willard K. and Judy Fordice were married January 3, 1960, at the Methodist Church in North Powder, Oregon.

Willard enlisted in the Army and, after serving 13 months in Korea, the family settled in Hermiston in 1964.

They have two sons, Robert Fordice (Di) and Michael Fordice (deceased 2006). They enjoy the company of grandsons Dusty and Tyler, and great-granddaughter Haleigh Michael.

Willard and Judy are both retired, and volunteer five days a week at the Hermiston Senior Center.



At left, Willard and Judy Fordice in 1960. Above, the Fordices now.

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