

Special Olympians score at basketball competition

HERMISTON HERALD

Numerous coaches and 32 athletes representing Hermiston/Pendleton Special Olympics Local Program #510 competed in the first Special Olympics Regional Basketball Event to take place this year. The March 1 event was held at the University of Portland campus and featured competition with teams from the Portland-Metro area.

After a year's hiatus from state sponsored competitions, the athletes were highly motivated by two months of training at Sandstone Middle School to take on teams from the west side of the state, said Kristi Smalley, local Special Olympics communications manager. Thirteen athletes competed in the Individual Skills Competition, resulting in gold medals for Anna Danielson, Sheila Zick, Kelli Wiseman, Misty Larsen and Taylor McClure.



The Special Olympics Currents team.

Photo contributed by Kristi Smalley

Silver medals were earned by Shirley Fell and Lyall Arey. Bronze medals went to Jolynn Smutz, Kari Hall, Mary Ann Wright and Shona Bergo. Also, fourth place ribbons were earned by Mindyn Struntz and Jonathan Kinsel.

In the 3-on-3 division, the Thunder team — with athletes Christina Moore, Jilli Smalley, Jeremy Dickens, Daniel Tucker, Adolfo Zuniga and Joseph Olson-

Ruiz, who were coached by Kristi Smalley and Jeanette Goldie — earned gold with a 3-0 sweep of their division; and the Lightning team came away with silver medals. At the 5-on-5 level, the Shockers battled it out to earn bronze medals.

Keeping the team fed was a tremendous task for local program coordinator Angela Schneider and her volunteers. Thanks to generous donations from Pat

and Tams Beef of Stanfield, United Grocers of Pendleton, Hermiston Safeway and many individual donations, the athletes and coaches enjoyed delicious meals at no cost to the local program, Smalley said.

The regional event wraps up the basketball season. The powerlifting program planned this weekend in Eugene is now on hold for health concerns.

Special Olympics pro-



The Special Olympics Lightning team.

Photo contributed by Kristi Smalley

vides year-round training and athletic competitions for people of all ages with intellectual disabilities. There is no charge for athletes to participate.

Because of public health restrictions, all upcoming activities involving athletes are suspended until further notice. Organizers with the local program

will make an announcement when the local program's spring sports season, which includes bocce, athletics (track & field) and golf, will begin.

Athletes interested in participating can contact Schneider at 541-314-0166. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/hermistonpendleton.

United Way waltzes in for 16th annual Me and My Prince Ball

Organizers still planning May 16 event

By TAMMY MALGESINI
COMMUNITY EDITOR

The Me and My Prince Ball committee recently announced a new partnership with United Way of the Blue Mountains.

The event was created more than a decade ago to promote healthy role model relationships by helping to strengthen the bonds between girls of all ages and their fathers/father figures. For the past 15 years, the formal/semi-formal dance has been coordinated by the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Eastern Washington.

The 16th annual event is scheduled for Saturday, May 16 from 6-9 p.m. at

Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in Hermiston. The theme is "A Tale as Old as Time" from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast." Tickets, which are not on sale yet, will be \$20 per person. When available, they will be sold at 60 Minute Photo and the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce.

While organizers are preparing for the 16th annual event, Christy Lieuallen, United Way executive director, said plans could change if public gathering restrictions due to COVID-19 continue. The event committee, Lieuallen said, met Monday night to determine an immediate plan of action.

"The committee decided we're going to keep the date but we will be looking at it in the next couple of weeks," she said. "We're



Contributed photo

The Me and My Prince Ball committee recently announced a partnership with United Way of the Blue Mountains. Organizers continue planning for the 16th annual event, which is May 16 at EOTEC in Hermiston.

going to move forward for now and re-evaluate as time goes on."

Committee chairwoman

Michelle Kane, who has been involved with Me and My Prince Ball since its inception, said a new part-

nership was needed for the event to continue. When it started, many of the committee members were involved with Girl Scouts. As their daughters got older, the connection diminished.

"Since we no longer have a close affiliation with Girl Scouts, it just made sense that we should find a new nonprofit partner to keep the event going," Kane said.

The committee, Kane said, is grateful for groups that stepped up to provide help during a search for a new partner. United Way was chosen, she said, because it offered the most support and stability. Lieuallen said it's an honor to work with the committee and the efforts of those who care

deeply about the event. "United Way of the Blue Mountains truly values opportunities to enrich family relationships," Lieuallen said.

Sponsorship opportunities from \$100 to \$350 are available. Contributions, which are tax deductible, cover such expenses as venue rental, decorations, catering and assists in keeping ticket prices more affordable for participants.

For more information about becoming a sponsor or questions about the United Way, contact Lieuallen at 509-676-9099, christy@uwbluemt.org or visit www.uwbluemt.org. For questions about the ball, call Kane at 541-564-5985.

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