

Hermiston Education Foundation cancels two events due to COVID-19

Shores up hope for Beef & Beach Fundraiser

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
FOR THE HERMISTON HERALD

Guidelines imposed because of COVID-19 have altered how people work, socialize and participate in recreational activities. Stay home orders, social distancing and restrictions on group gatherings have also changed how people engage in service organizations and volunteer activities. This is the second article in a series highlighting how area service clubs and groups have responded to the pandemic.

The novel coronavirus has already forced the Hermiston Education Foundation to cancel a pair of events that help provide supplies for students and funds for projects and a scholarship program, said co-presidents George Clough and Carol Nevin.

The Hermiston Education Foundation is a local, grass-roots organization, directed by a board of trustees. It includes community volunteers, a member of the Hermiston School District board of education, the HSD superintendent, and faculty and staff of the school district. The foundation's mission is to encourage lifelong academic, artistic and cultural learning experiences and opportunities for the students and educators of the Hermiston School District.

The nonprofit organization's annual fun run/walk, Clough said, collects a significant quantity of school supplies for returning faculty, staff and students, which are distributed free of charge. Also, anticipating continued restrictions on gatherings lingering into the new year, Clough and Nevin said the 2021 Dancing with the Hermiston Stars also is falling victim to COVID-19.

In what would have been its ninth year, the event raises money for multiple Hermiston-area service clubs and nonprofit organizations, including the education foundation. HEF waltzed in to coordinate the popular event the past two years after the Desert Arts Council bowed out.

Also, Clough said the tides are uncertain regarding the education foundation's annual Beef & Beach Fundraiser. The organization hosted its 11th annual crab/beef dinner and auction in February, a month before Gov. Kate Brown first declared a state of emergency because of the pandemic.

"We are hopeful that we will be able to hold our Beef & Beach Crab Feed & Auction on Feb. 6, 2021, in some form, but we are investigating



HH file photo
Teacher Kendra Scott admires a student's mermaid drawing in January 2018 at Rocky Heights Elementary School. Students in the ABE Classroom worked on decorations for the Hermiston Education Foundation's Beach & Beef Fundraiser, which has an uncertain future for 2021 due to the pandemic.

other fundraising options," Clough said.

The shutdown forced the cancellation of some of the foundation's usual activities, Clough said, which reduced its normal amount of business. However, as a small board they were able to keep informed as well as conduct limited business by phone, email and texts. Recent board meetings with masks and social distancing is an improvement, he said.

Money to provide classroom grants and scholarships are primarily generated by the annual Beef & Beach event, Clough and Nevin said. Funds also are obtained by individual/corporate donations and the district's employees through voluntary payroll deductions.

"Due to the circumstances this year, grant requests have been delayed until fall classes have been in session for a while, and new needs and opportunities associated with 'comprehensive distance learning' are identified," Clough said.

HEF awarded eight \$2,500 scholarships this past spring, and plans for a similar number

in 2021. Although, Clough said depending on the length of COVID-19 restrictions and impact on fundraising, the number of future awards may be reduced.

Since 2003, HEF has funded more than 350 grants to HSD teachers and staff, totaling more than \$365,000. The money has been used for projects, activities or equipment that enhances the educational experience of students in the district, such as field trips or art supplies. Also, over the last four years, the foundation awarded \$72,500 in scholarships to graduating Hermiston High School seniors.

For more information about the Hermiston Education Foundation, visit www.hermistoneducationfoundation.org, call the Hermiston School District at 541-667-6000 or contact any member of the HEF Board of Trustees, who are listed on the foundation's website.

Hermiston library offers activities for kids, adults

HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston Public Library reopened on-site services for the public on Monday, Sept. 21, according to a news release, and is offering a new selection of activities for all ages.

The basement of the library is currently under construction to transform the space into a temporary city hall as the city finalizes plans for a new city hall. Due to the construction, the library is only accessible through the front entrance on Gladys Avenue.

Face coverings are required for all adults and school-aged children inside the building. Curbside pick-up will continue to be available for those who don't wish to enter the building, and Wi-Fi is available on the site 24 hours a day.

The library is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Fridays.

The library is adding new services to its fall lineup, including the Bookworms "Fall Harvest" Reading Challenge for children, which runs from Sept. 1 through Nov. 30. Kids who sign up can earn virtual tickets for prize drawings by logging their minutes spent reading. Sign up on the library's website

at hermistonlibrary.us, or by calling 541-567-2882.

They can also earn five extra virtual tickets for the challenge by participating in the library's pen pal program. Write a letter or draw a picture and let library staff know how much you miss them. Letters can be mailed to HPL Pen Pals Program, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston, OR 97838, or dropped in the special Pen Pals box at the library curbside pickup cart during regular pickup hours. Library staff will respond to each letter sent, as long as there is a return address provided and the date it was sent.

Families can participate in the QR Code Scavenger

Hunt, hosted by Bucky, the library beaver. The first QR code can be found at the front of the library. Solve the riddle to find the next QR code until Bucky is found. The hunt runs from Sept. 25 through Oct. 4.

And adults 18 and older can participate in make-and-take crafts on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Stop by during regular hours to pick up a free craft activity at the table in the library. Supplies are limited to one kit per adult.

In November, the library will also be displaying posters celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

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