

Love:

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lot of Smitty’s Ace Hardware, Claudia Meza said it was her first year participating in I Love My City, but she would definitely be back for future events. She said it was fun being able to help people without any expectation of something in return. “People have been grateful and happy and that’s been the biggest blessing, seeing people happy,” she said.

The group washed more than 50 vehicles during the allotted three-hour block of time, according to Hankel. Alejandro Ramirez was piling up bags of discarded weeds and clippings across from the Hermiston Community Center on Sept. 26, as volunteers trimmed and weeded the landscaping along the pedestrian path there. He said he and the other volunteers were there because they were Christians and believed “we’ve got to help one another.” “That’s what the church is based on, and we’ve got to show that by our actions,” he said.

On Sunday, Sept. 27, more than 200 people met up at Butte Park for a socially-distanced joint worship service led by the pastors of the churches involved in I Love My City. Hankel said at the event they sang together and prayed for the nation and for Hermiston. He said they hope to increase the frequency of I Love My City events in the future.

To get information about future events or to sign up to get involved, visit www.ilovehermiston.com.



A volunteer cleans up litter in downtown Hermiston during the I Love My City event on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020.



A volunteer picks up trash by the railroad tracks along Highway 395 in Hermiston during the I Love My City event on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020.



Hermiston Police Department officer Erica Sandoval visits with children holding signs to advertise the free car wash in the Ace Hardware parking lot in Hermiston during the I Love My City event on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020.



A volunteer washes a car for free in the Ace Hardware parking lot in Hermiston during the I Love My City event on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020

Teacher:

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Sullivan was her student at a school for international students in Bahrain. She arrived there as a refugee who had fled the Vietnam War, and then ran again from a coup d’état in Africa. “It was a lot for a 12-year-old girl, and Miss D understood that,” she said. Sullivan had Doherty as a teacher for History and Physical Education, and said what really made her stand out as a teacher was the great confidence she instilled in each student. She convinced “the shiest girl in school” to successfully try out for the lead in the school play, Sullivan said, and helped unathletic teens, such as herself, stop feeling deeply self-conscious about their skills in PE.

She also made her subjects come alive for students. “For history, she didn’t just teach from the book,” Sullivan said. “She made it real. She kind of put you in that place. It wasn’t just ‘On such and such a date was the Battle of Hastings.’” She described Doherty as “so short, but so feisty,” with a commanding presence and a witty sense of humor. “She was just such a force,” Sullivan remembered. Sheila Silvola, another former student from Doherty’s Bahrain years, described her former teacher as a “firebrand” but said she also acted as a mentor and mother figure, particularly for students, such as Silvola, who were boarding at the school.

Doherty coached tennis, and Silvola said Doherty could often be found sitting by the tennis courts talking late into the night with groups of students who had wandered down the courts to play or to watch after dinner. “She had so many nuggets of wisdom,” she said. Fahad Murad, Bahrain High School Class of 1977, said in an email that Doherty has left a lasting impact on hundreds of students. When she retired, her



Mary Doherty talks to her students at Bahrain School sometime around 1980.

former students pitched in on a new Volkswagon Beetle to replace the one she had been driving for years. Murad said she taught him about hard work and dedication. He had never even held a tennis racket before when she convinced him to try out for the tennis team, and by the end of the year he and his doubles partner were the top team in the school. “But as I noted, the lesson made was about life than it was about tennis and I applied those same principles till today for which I now try and pass

on to my children,” he said. Myrna Herrera O’Brien said it was Doherty’s influence in building her self-confidence as a teenager that made her decide to become a PE teacher. “My story is long but Ms. Doherty was the cornerstone on which I built myself,” she wrote in an email. “Married 56 years this December, raised three children and grandmother of three and I have never forgotten what Ms. Doherty did for me.” After her birthday party last week, Doherty waived off comments that people

were impressed by how well she remembered so many students, so many years later. “No two people are alike, and you have them in a classroom several hours a week for a year, plus I had them in extra-curriculars,” she said in a phone interview. She has kept in touch with many students over the years through emails and letters, but said it was “a fun blast from the past” to see so many of them over video chat. Doherty grew up at the same farm outside of Hermiston she still lives on today, after her parents immigrated to the United States from Ireland. From a young age, she worked hard with her parents to keep the farm running through the Great Depression. “You name it, I could do it — slop a hog, milk a cow, harness a team,” she said. Her parents placed a great deal of emphasis on letting their children have the education they never did, however, and Doherty grew up checking out books from Hermiston’s Carnegie Library that still stands today, and reading of far-away places in the family’s set of encyclopedias. That inspired her to go to college — a rarity for women at the time — and then to travel the world and teach.

She described herself as a “jack of all trades” at many of the small, international, Department of Defense-funded schools she taught at, but her passion was for social studies, particularly history. “If you don’t know history, you don’t know squat,” she said. “The past

is prologue to the future. If you don’t know history, you don’t know where you’re going.” In economics classes, she taught students to manage their money well within the economic structure. In government classes, she would have her students bring in their constitutions from their home countries and the class would discuss the differences. Her classes were incredibly diverse, she said, with students from all over the world representing a wide variety of demographics. And yet, both Doherty and her former students said she always found the common human threads running through all of them. Doherty said her years of traveling and living in dozens of different countries have taught her that humans have more commonalities than differences.

“What makes you laugh, makes them laugh. What makes you cry, makes them cry,” she said. Doherty’s nieces, Kara and Sarah Campbell, said they started out with a secret Facebook page asking former students to send birthday cards to Doherty, but everyone started asking why they couldn’t have a virtual party too. Sarah said her aunt is a “ball of energy” and a cheerleader for others who was always planting little seeds of confidence in her students that they could try out for an extracurricular activity or go for one of their dreams. She said to this day, Doherty has a great repartee with teenage relatives — and anyone else she talks to. “She’s not your typical 90-year-old,” she said. “She’s redefining what that age looks like.”

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