

Breaking boards for bucks

Stanfield taekwondo studio holds fundraiser for Hermiston child's chemotherapy

By **BRYCE DOLE**
STAFF WRITER

Audrey Bailey was overwhelmed with emotion at the sight of the crowd.

Dozens of taekwondo students gathered with their families and friends at Eastern Oregon Family Taekwondo in downtown Stanfield on Saturday, May 22, for a "break-a-thon" meant to raise funds in support of Bailey's daughter, Maysie, a 2-year-old girl from Hermiston who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.

"I just feel really blessed," said Bailey, 23, holding her daughter outside the studio. "I just love knowing these people and it's inspiring to me and it's making me want to do more for others."

The event raised nearly \$15,000 for Maysie Bailey's upcoming chemotherapy treatment in Portland, according to Erwin Watson, the studio owner and lead instructor.

"We're just really thankful for the community coming together," said Drexlyn Bailey, Maysie's father, who is 24 and a plumber in Hermiston. "You just see that people have a good heart and that they want to help."

Students from the taekwondo studio over the past month were tasked with selling \$5 planks of wood, with the promise that they would break with their bare hands each board they sold.

That culminated in the streets of downtown Stanfield as the drizzly morning gave way to sun. Families snapped photos and cheered while their children chopped down hard on hundreds of planks set between cinder blocks, at times wincing with pain when the plank wouldn't budge.

Members of the Bailey family stood nearby. Each expressed gratitude and surprise at the size of the gathering. Several shed tears while reflecting on the kindness of the people that came out to support their family.

"It confirms that there's still some good in people," said Bill Bailey, Maysie's grandfather. "This shows there's good in the world that's worth fighting for."

Months-long process of chemotherapy

The fundraiser was the third the studio has held in recent years, and the second for a child with cancer, Watson said. It began when Watson's daughter, who raised money for the Baileys through haircuts, proposed the idea to her father, prompting Watson to organize the fundraiser.

"It's good not to feel alone and have community around you when you're going through something like this," Audrey Bailey said.

After having most of



Bryce Dole/Hermiston Herald

Samuel Vander Stelt chops down on the wooden boards he sold to raise money for Maysie Bailey, a 2-year-old Hermiston girl who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer. Dozens of students from Eastern Oregon Family Taekwondo like Vander Stelt broke hundreds of boards in the streets of Stanfield on Saturday, May 22, 2021.

her brain tumor removed through surgery in February, Maysie Bailey finished six weeks of radiation treatment in Seattle last week, the family said. Doctors told the family that the treatment went very well, with some remarking that she had been the best patient they had treated. She did not have to go through physical therapy and only lost a small patch of hair near the back of her head, the Baileys said.

"They said she would have no energy," Drexlyn Bailey said. "But she's been bouncing around."

But now begins a months-long process of chemotherapy and the costs that come with it. As a plumber in Hermiston, Drexlyn can't make any money when he misses work, and paying for the treatment became a major concern for the family.

That's why the Baileys were "blown away by how generous and loving and caring all these people are," Audrey Bailey said at the event.

"We stand behind the children of our community," said Jackie Lucas, a lifelong Stanfield resident, whose niece was in the taekwondo school. "There's a lot of caring people here."

'It's overwhelming'

The day began with demonstrations in the studio, where families packed in to watch their children thrust, jab and kick while Watson shouted commands. Many children stood nervously in front of the large crowd, making mistakes that prompted frequent corrections from Watson, who cracked jokes to ease the tension.

The studio is made up of roughly 100 students from

across Eastern Oregon, some from as far as Hepburn. Parents at the event said they bring their children long distances to have them learn self-control, discipline and determination.

Some children went above and beyond in the fundraiser, Watson said, raising extra money for Maysie Bailey through things like lemonade stands.

"It's overwhelming," Watson said as the event neared its end. "I couldn't talk. It was just so emotional. When it comes to little kids having cancer and raising money, and all the kids pull in together and they all broke open their piggy banks — it's just amazing that, even as young as they are, they understand."



Bryce Dole/Hermiston Herald

The Bailey family, from left: Maysie Bailey, 2; Audrey Bailey, 23; Drexlyn Bailey, 24; Joel Bailey, 4 months. Maysie Bailey finished up six weeks of radiation treatment in Seattle last week after she was diagnosed in February with a brain tumor. Now she begins a months-long process of chemotherapy in Portland. The event on Saturday, May 22, 2021, was meant to raise funds for her upcoming treatment.

Hermiston city budget looks at a 19.5% jump

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

The city of Hermiston's budget committee is recommending the city council pass a proposed 2021-22 budget that is \$11.2 million larger than the previous year.

City Manager Byron Smith told the committee the 19.5% increase was due to a number of large capital projects the city is undertaking in the coming year. Those include construction of a new city hall, an infrastructure project at the South Hermiston Industrial Park, resurfacing the apron at the Hermiston Municipal Airport and various water and sewer projects.

Some of the city's capital projects will be paid for at least in part by grants from the state or federal government. The \$2 million airport project, for example, will be covered by a combination of money from the Federal Aviation Administration and Oregon Department of Aviation.

Smith said the pandemic didn't affect some of the city's revenues, including the Transient Room Tax, as much as feared, but the city did lose about \$800,000 on the parks and recreation side.

The proposed budget includes a 1% cost of living increase for staff in July 2021 and a 1.5% increase that will take effect in 2022 if revenues come in as expected. The budget includes a one-person increase in staff, from 121.47 FTE to 122.47 FTE with the hiring of an extra water utility worker.

The budget committee meeting agenda with the proposed budget attached can be found at hermiston.or.us/meetings and a recording of the committee meeting can be found on the City of Hermiston YouTube channel.

NORMAL



THE CHOICE IS YOURS



SUN TERRACE

SUMMER SPECIAL

IN 4 EASY STEPS

- 1) Book a Tour
- 2) Choose Apartment
- 3) Place a Deposit
- 4) Move in/before June 15

GET ONE MONTH FREE RENT!*

For more information and book your tour call:
Call 541-561-0297!

Sun Terrace Hermiston
A Retirement and assisted Living Community
a Regency Pacific Community

Bringing independence to living and quality of life

1550 NW 11th, Hermiston, OR

*Must commit to 3 month stay to receive your choice of rent free month. Some restrictions may apply.