

Community rallies behind hopeful couple

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

When one Pendleton couple could not have a child on their own, several people and a few organizations throughout Umatilla County began helping.

Sarah and Zach Gaulke, who are both 33 and teachers, want to adopt a child. They have been married 11 years, and have tried to have a child for the past five years.

Sarah dreams of motherhood

Sarah, a Pendleton High School special education teacher, remembered when she was a small girl, playing with dolls and someday becoming a mother. Born in California, her family moved to Indiana briefly and then to Hermiston, where she spent a childhood thinking of her future. She would become a mom, and maybe a stay-at-home mom, if that were possible.

"It's who I am," she said of her desire to be a mom. And while her career thoughts changed — when she went to college, she began wanting to be a teacher — her feelings about motherhood have not.

She does not care about whether the child is a boy or girl. Neither does she care if the child has a disability. In fact, the agency with which she and Zach are dealing, told her she and Zach are extremely accommodating. They have approved an unusually long list of disabilities they would accept.

Sarah reasons, if they were to birth a child, there would be a chance for the child to have any number of conditions. It would be up to God, she said. So, they will leave it up to God in the adoption. She said, they will love the child, regardless.

Her goal is to receive a child



Mary Adams/Contributed Photo

Zach and Sarah Gaulke of Pendleton pose for a recent photo to express their intent to adopt a child. The couple is raising money to make their desire a reality.

and impart her Christian faith. Also, they will raise the child to be productive members of society and to be good to other people.

The adoption process could take five years, which will be difficult. Still, she is happy to wait, as long as she can achieve her dream in the end.

Zach plans for fatherhood

Sarah's husband, Zach, shares her dream. Though a math teacher at Nixyaawii Community School in Pendleton, he grew up in Hermiston. He attended Northwest Nazarene University, then transferred to Concordia University to join Sarah. She was a student at Con-

cordia, and he wanted to be with her as they were dating.

Zach, who has only ever taught at Nixyaawii, is in his ninth year of teaching. He said he likes that his school is small and his town is small. He said he thinks it would be a good fit for any child he would have, adopted or otherwise.

He said the five years he and Sarah have been trying to have a child have been difficult. He said he feels frustrated because doctors have given him little explanation or solution. They have done tests and taken medications, but they seem no closer to their desired outcome. The doctors tell them they have fertility problems, but they

have no other diagnosis.

After five years, Zach and Sarah realized they could not go on the way they were doing things. Zach had always thought they would have a few kids and then adopt. Now they were having trouble with the first part of this plan, he figured it would be better to go straight to adopting.

This, however, was not as easy as he originally thought.

"It's been eye-opening," he said.

First, they planned to adopt within the United States, but that proved difficult. They went through the Oregon Department of Human Services, but the pro-

cess stalled. COVID-19 slowed the process even more than usual, Zach said.

The Gaulkes changed gears again, planning to adopt a child from a foreign country, which also is complicated. Adoption law varies by nation, but adoption agencies help people navigate these laws. Zach and Sarah chose an agency, which set them up with different countries. They have filled out paperwork, submitting their qualifications. After they are accepted, they will begin home study, choose a target country and submit country specific documents. Then they will wait for translations, more approvals and finally a match with their child.

The expense and the fundraising

This is an expensive process, costing \$30,000 to \$42,000, which the Gaulkes do not have.

Their first fundraiser was a large yard sale, with items donated by fellow church members, friends and strangers. It was a big hit, netting the pair \$4,500.

The next fundraiser is happening now, a drive to collect gently-used shoes, which the Gaulkes will hand over to Shoes with Heart, a charity organization that pay the Gaulkes and ship the shoes to third-world countries. There, the shoes will be given to shop owners for sale.

Laura Gaulke, Zach's mother, has been helping with organizing the fundraisers. She said people can donate their shoes at two locations in Hermiston — Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 515 S.W. Seventh St., and Sassafras Flowers by Shera, 611 E. Highland Ave.

She said she is excited to be a grandmother and is a big believer in the couple.

"They're going to be great parents," she said.

BRIEFS

Domestic Violence Services plans virtual fundraiser

A virtual silent auction and raffle will help support Domestic Violence Services in Umatilla and Morrow counties. The event is being held as part of 2021 National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

People can register via a link at www.dvs-or.org. The website also provides an opportunity for individuals and businesses to make a donation for the virtual auction. Raffle tickets are \$10 each or three for \$25 for a chance to win a 5-night stay at the Oasis Resort in Palm Springs, valued at \$1,285. Also, "Love Shouldn't Hurt" T-shirts are available for \$20.

Silent auction bidding will open Wednesday, Oct. 27, and closes Tuesday, Nov. 2, at 7 p.m. A Facebook Live drawing will be held for the vacation raffle Nov. 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Domestic Violence Services has served Umatilla and Morrow counties for more

than 40 years. It has shelters in Hermiston and Pendleton, as well as advocacy centers in Boardman, Ione and Milton-Freewater.

Its mission is to provide help to all victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. DVS provides safety planning, support groups, training workshops and classes. Services are available in English and Spanish.

In addition to the shelters and advocacy centers, the agency maintains a 24-hour crisis line at 800-833-1161. For more information, contact 541-276-3322, 541-567-0424, events@dvs-or.org or visit www.dvs-or.org.

Hermiston students make OSU honor roll

Names of students who have made the Scholastic Honor Roll for the summer 2021 term were announced by Oregon State University.

A total of 894 earned a B-plus (3.5) or better to make the list. To be on the honor

roll, students must carry at least 12 graded hours of coursework.

Students from Hermiston on the honor roll, including their year in school and field of study include, **Bibiana Corona** (junior, biology); **Kasia Robbins** (senior, public policy); and **Rachael Wilson** (senior, psychology).

Cale Moon to perform at The Bridge

Nashville recording artist Cale Moon is returning to the area for a show in Umatilla.

Moon, who always draws a crowd when he plays in the region, will perform Friday, Oct. 15, 8-10:30 p.m. at The Bridge Bistro & Brews, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla.

Several years ago, the musician from Benton City, Washington, hit the road with his family in a 40-foot recreational vehicle to pursue his dream. Moon continues to perform everywhere from small clubs, main stages and rodeo arenas to wineries, beer



Cale Moon/Contributed Photo

Musician Cale Moon will perform Friday, Oct. 15, 2021, at The Bridge Bistro & Brews, Umatilla.

gardens and cowboy churches.

For more information about the event, call 541-922-4112. For more about Moon, visit www.facebook.com/calemoonofficial.

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