



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Veronica Flores, right, and her wife Chacha Flores prepare food Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022, during a fundraiser at their restaurant, Vero's Kravingz in Hermiston. The fundraiser was for the funeral expenses of Chacha's mother, who died last week.

# 'Always with us'

## New restaurant owner honors mother-in-law

By ERICK PETERSON • Hermiston Herald

Anticipation was building for about a week. As a new Hermiston restaurant, Vero's Kravingz was closed, regular customers were eagerly waiting. When it opened on Saturday, Feb. 12, people flooded into it.

The tiny restaurant at 1725 N. First St., Hermiston, usually is busy. When it reopened this past weekend, however, people were gathered outside the door, waiting their turn to enter. And while they waited, many of them chatted about the reason the restaurant was closed in the first place.

Irene Flores Jr., the mother-in-law of the owner, Veronica Flores, had died.

In the days that followed her mother-in-law's death, the restaurant owner said she would reopen. Then, when the day came, it was too difficult. She put off opening until Feb. 12, when she and other loved ones could bear the grief.

As excited customers filed into Vero's Kravingz, following the reopening, they passed by a collage of photos of the well-loved Irene Flores. Then, as they approached the register, they offered condolences to family members at the counter as they purchased food that does not typically appear on the menu — gourmet hot dogs.

Feb. 12 was special, as it was a fund-



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Plates of fresh tacos line the table top Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022, at Vero's Kravingz.

raiser to bring in cash for funeral expenses and a burial in Toppenish, Washington. There was a jar for donations and raffle items for a drawing.

Chacha Flores, Veronica Flores' wife, was at the register for the reopening. It was Chacha's mother who died.

"My mom was wonderful," she said.

Rudy Flores, Chacha Flores' uncle and Irene Flores' brother, also expressed his sadness over the death. His sister, he said, was a special woman.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Chacha Flores, right, and Sosen Hernandez fill orders Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022, at Vero's Kravingz.

"Irene was a fun-loving person," he said. "She always brought everyone's spirits up. If you had a problem, you could talk to her. She could bring you out of a slump."

His sister always was ready to laugh.

"You could call her with a sad moment, and she'd turn it around and make it a joking moment," he said.

She also "was really good," he added, "about reminding you of God and that

God's there for us."

The family, Rudy Flores said, has had a string of deaths recently. COVID-19 caused the deaths of cousins and other family members, he said. Irene Flores had the disease, but he attributed her death to a busted vein.

"She was a big part of our lives," Veronica Flores said. "She was always with us."

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## Highland Manor residents host yard sale ahead of vacating

Apartment tenants discuss their disappointments and memories

By ERICK PETERSON  
Hermiston Herald

HERMISTON — February is not typically yard sale weather, but a few Hermiston residents may not be able to wait until warmer months to

host sales at their home.

The tenants of Highland Manor, a 46-unit complex are on notice to vacate their apartments. Clover Housing Group LLC, the new owner of Highland Manor, has offered tenants \$2,000 if they leave by the end of the month. Clover Housing reported it plans to start renovations as soon as the complex is empty.

So, a few residents Saturday, Feb. 12, braved

temperatures in the low 30s, set up tables in the apartment's parking lot and put out items for sale. Saying they were clearing out their homes and trying to make a few bucks before moving, they expressed disappointment about their situation.

**Parting with a well-loved home**

Jennifer Baros, Highland Manor resident, said

she has lived in her apartment for five years and she was happy with her home.

"I've loved it," she said.

She said that she appreciated her manager, the apartment amenities and the maintenance. Whenever she had problems with her apartment, it always was fixed quickly.

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Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Karen Dela Cruz, Highland Manor resident, shows the remains of her garden on Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022. She was selling garden items, household goods and paintings at a yard sale at the Hermiston apartment complex.