

BULLYING

Continued from Page A1

and tailor lessons to problem areas.

The Hermiston School District also hired two additional social workers, to its previous one social worker, within the last year to help address bullying and other mental health issues.

“They are a support to students,” he said.

The pandemic, and students being kept at home for extended periods, have necessitated this addition, he said.

Greenough said when there is a report of bullying, school administrators investigate it. Then, he said, there are consequences.

The exact definition of bullying is difficult to pin down, he said, though he added it involves a power dynamic in which one or more people have power over others and are abusive. It can take place in person or over the internet, he said.

Dealing with it becomes complicated, he stated, as it only becomes a school issue when it involves students while at school. Also, he said, it can sometimes be difficult to know if a reported case is actual or perceived, which is why investigations are necessary.

In these cases, schools contact involved parties, including parents, to discuss bullying and how they can move forward more civilly. Sometimes, depending on the severity of the bullying, students are met with consequences, he said.

Resolution is important, Greenough said, because bullying can have terrible effects.

“We want to make sure that students are supported through their educational experience,” he said.

Lack of support, Greenough said, can lead to mental health issues.

He also said there have been deaths in Hermiston students, but he could not say whether instances



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Ryan Humphrey, dean of students at Clara Brownell Middle School, Umatilla, stands next to a poster Friday, April 22, 2022, at his school. The poster promotes good behavior, including showing respect to others. He agrees bullying is an important issue.

“STUDENTS, WHO FACE BULLYING, FREQUENTLY DON’T WANT TO COME TO SCHOOL.”

— Nayeli Guzman-Madrigril, counselor at Clara Brownell Middle School in Umatilla.

involved either suicide or could be tied to bullying.

School counselor sees the affects

Over at Clara Brownell Middle School in the Umatilla School District, school counselor Nayeli Guzman-Madrigril offered her own insights on bullying. She said she speaks to bullied students, as well as the bullies themselves.

“The way that I like to look at bullying is when the instigator seeks to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who they see as a vulnerable victim,” she said.

She added she has seen a wide

range of bullying. Sometimes, a bully will threaten harm, making students feel fearful. It has a significant mental health effect, she said.

“It affects their self-confidence,” she said. “Students, who face bullying, frequently don’t want to come to school. They kind of withdraw from participating in other activities, which students are normally engaged in.”

She said Clara Brownell tries to act quickly when there is a report of bullying. Then, she said, a clear message can be sent “that bullying is not accepted at our school.”

According to Guzman-Madri-

gal, potential punishment includes detention, in-school suspension, suspension from school or expulsion.

“It just depends on the severity of the incident,” she said.

The case of Marc Martinez

Martinez, who said he is a victim of bullying in Hermiston, said he is otherwise happy. He likes his school, his teachers and his friends. He loves basketball, idolizes NBA star Steph Curry and often practices basketball.

Unfortunately, he said, even his love of basketball is damaged as a result of bullying.

One classmate in particular makes fun of him for being thin and mocking his skills, he said. In addition, he said, Martinez’s bully has roughed him up as they have played against one another.

He said he has reported the bullying to a teacher, who brought the

case up to the school administration. His mother, Melissa Strong, has gotten involved, as have other parents and people at the school.

Strong described a cycle. Bullying is reported and addressed. Then, she said, it will stop for a while, while Martinez’s alleged bully moves on to other students. According to Strong, the bully returns after a while to pick on Martinez again, only for the cycle to repeat.

She described this problem as frustrating, a sentiment her son shared.

Martinez said the bullying has gotten worse, as it has begun to involve his sister. In one particularly hurtful instance of bullying, Martinez said, his bully told his sister she is the reason for her parents’ divorce. Martinez described feeling hopeless about this situation. He said the bullying has gotten to the point he does not even want to talk about it.

He does not think anything will change, he said, and his mother said she has similar feelings. The bullying increases mental instability, she said, and she worries for her son.

“The situation with him has been an ongoing thing, and I think it will eventually take a toll on his mentality,” she said.

Escalation is another worry for the pair. According to Martinez, his bully is trying to encourage other students to bully him.

“He shouldn’t have to come home from school, crying or upset,” Strong said. “And he shouldn’t have to go to school, afraid to be himself. He should be able to focus on other things.”

Instead, she added, it is bothering him, affecting his schoolwork and his well-being.

Meanwhile, Martinez said he is trying to keep a positive outlook. He said he thinks of his Golden State Warriors’ hero, Curry, and tries to follow his example. Curry, too, felt pressure from people who were not very nice to him growing up, Martinez said. “I’ll try to do that, too,” Martinez said.



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Susan Whelan takes notes at the League of Oregon Cities Spring Conference in Hermiston, Friday, April 22, 2022. Whelan was selected recently to serve as Stanfield’s mayor.

WHELAN

Continued from Page A1

cil meetings are not enough for people.

“I want to be available to people,” she said. To that end, she is planning regular community breakfasts where she and a city councilor can meet over a meal at the Stanfield Community Center, 225 Roosevelt St. There, she can hear from people, get their ideas and discuss issues.

The next breakfast meeting, she said, will be Saturday, May 7, 7-10 a.m.

She said she is looking forward to meeting people. She added that she hopes they will see her as she sees herself, a person who is not afraid to make tough decisions and “say things that need to be said.”

Further, she said she wants to live up to her image as a person who gets things done. Before retiring, she worked at Banner Bank for 20 years. She was a purchas-

ing manager, she said, and has experience with finances and teamwork.

In the coming months and years as mayor, she said she will look after continuing projects in town. Construction projects and cleaning up Main Street are two things, which she said are on her mind.

She said she feels “a bit embarrassed” about the limelight, but she is looking forward to the opportunity to help.

Also, she shied away from saying she was excited.

“I wouldn’t use that word,” she said. “I don’t get excited. I’ve looked forward to things, or I’ve dreaded them. At this point of my life, I don’t need to dread.”

This leaves the 70-year-old Whelan looking forward to her mayoral work.

At the upcoming swearing-in ceremony, she will step down as a city councilor and take on the mantle of mayor, serving out the remainder of McCann’s term.

HIV isn’t just a big city issue.

More than half of Oregonians with HIV live outside of Portland, often in suburbs and small towns like this one.

Good neighbors chip in to get the job done. And we’ve got work to do on HIV prevention. People in rural Oregon are more likely to get a late-stage diagnosis, and a lack of HIV treatment may harm your health, or your partner’s. Detected early, HIV is more easily managed and you can live a long, healthy life. Getting tested is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Learn more and find free testing at endhivoregon.org



CONCEALED CARRY PERMIT CLASS

SATURDAY MAY 21ST

Hermiston Ranch & Home

9AM CLASSES

Multi-State \$80
Oregon Included No Fee

Oregon Only \$45

MULTI-STATE

Valid 35-States, including Washington

Shaun Curtain 360-921-2071

or email: ShaunCurtain@gmail.com | www.ShaunCurtain.com

