

# Fund set up to help local family recover from theft

**The Campuzanos had about \$30,000 worth of items stolen earlier this year**

By Erick Bengel  
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To help a local family recover from a recent theft that set them back about \$30,000, a Cannon Beach couple, Rex and Diane Amos, have created The Campuzano Family Fund. Donations can be made at any Columbia Bank branch on the coast from Astoria to Tillamook.

## Down in Delano

Carmen and Victor Campuzano, of Seaside, are still grappling, emotionally and financially, with the aftermath of an incident that occurred in early January when they, their children and other family members embarked on their annual road trip to visit relatives in Mexico.

At 3:31 a.m. on Jan. 4, while the family slept at an inn in Delano, Calif., someone stole the couples' 2003 Chevrolet Tahoe and the attached white trailer, according to the police investigator who reviewed the inn's security camera footage.

The culprit drove off and looted the vehicles, taking all of the family's personal belongings and gifts they had collected during the previous year to bring their relatives south of the border.

Police managed to recover the trailer, found abandoned on the highway, and a plasma TV the Campuzanos had purchased for their son-in-laws' family. But the thief, or thieves, still absconded with thousands of dollars worth of items.

These included two washers, one dryer, two microwaves, three laptops, two iPhones, an iPad, an exercise bicycle, two mattresses, boxes of new and



ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

Back row: Paola Campuzano, Judith Campuzano and Edmundo Martinez. Front row: Julio Campuzano, Marycarmen Campuzano, Carmen Campuzano and Victor Campuzano.

used clothing, their daughter Paola Campuzano's clarinet and school books, and Victor's custom-made carpenter tools worth about \$7,000.

They also stole an estimated \$4,000 in uncounted tips, which Victor had saved during 2014 from his job at the Lumberyard Rotisserie & Grill.

## Reunion delayed

On Jan. 6, the Tahoe was found burned, though investigators didn't officially identify the vehicle until mid-February.

"What we worked for throughout the whole year was gone in a second," said 15-year-old Paola Campuzano, Carmen and Victor's youngest child who attends Seaside High School. "We were like, 'How could this happen?'"

Carmen, Victor and Paola had taken the trip — in three vehicles — with four generations of the family: Carmen's mother, Lorenza Villa, and brother, Hector Tobar; Carmen and Victor's son, Julio Campuzano, of Cannon Beach; their daughters Judith Campuzano

and Marycarmen Campuzano, of Seaside; Judith's husband, Abel Sosa; and Marycarmen's 4-year-old son, Alan Martinez, whose scooter was stolen as well.

Waiting for them in Pátzcuaro — a centuries-old colonial and indigenous town in the state of Michoacán where Victor and Carmen first met and now own a home — were the couple's eldest daughter, Carla Campuzano, her family, and Victor's brothers and sisters.

The reunion would have to be delayed.

## Being strong

Shocked and bewildered, the family reached out to loved ones and close friends, letting them know what happened.

The next few weeks became a rush of coping, problem solving and lifting each others' spirits. "I tried to be strong for them, and they tried to be strong for me," Carmen said.

After filling out a police report, the family split up. Some drove to Laredo, Texas, to register a truck in Mexico. Others returned to

Seaside to retrieve another truck, which required about \$1,500 in repairs before it could take them to south. Recovering the trailer in Bixler, Calif., put them out another \$300 or so.

Marycarmen's husband and Alan's father, Edmundo Martinez — who didn't originally come on the trip — drove to Laredo to provide emotional support.

Julio, who also went Laredo, eventually chose to return to Cannon Beach by bus. But not before giving his mother the money that he would have spent in Pátzcuaro.

As she told this part of the story, Carmen began to cry, suddenly overcome with gratitude for her family. "I feel so lucky for that."

"We all believe in God, so that helps to not suffer for the material things," she said. "That helps to take it easy and let it go and thank God that we didn't get hurt."

"It could have been worse," Paola said.

## Uncertainty

Carmen and Victor, who have lived on the

Lumberyard Rotisserie & Grill, she as a server, he as a busser. Both U.S. citizens, she also works for Sleepy Monk Coffee Roasters, he for Haystack Lodgings.

It is still unclear at this point what they're insurance is going to cover. They have not retained a lawyer and are discussing whether they can afford one.

But, on the positive side of the ledger, the family reunion finally happened in Pátzcuaro, where the Campuzanos received "lots of hugs from the family," Carmen said.

"We always take lots of gifts for them, try to help them to have it easy the rest of the year," she said.

This time, instead of Carmen and Victor's family giving to their family in Pátzcuaro, the opposite happened, Victor said.

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