

A balanced approach as you raise your child

Parenting program at the Heights

By Katherine Lacaze
For Seaside Signal

When it comes to parenting a significant responsibility assumed by a majority of people in their lifetime — everyone could periodically use a little extra training and support.

“Nobody has all the answers,” said Lori Wilson Honl, of Northwest Parenting, an organization that is co-sponsoring a six-week parenting program at the Heights Elementary School in Seaside.

The free, group-based program, also sponsored by the Seaside School District, kicked off Jan. 11. Using a curriculum called Active Parenting Now, Wilson Honl is leading parents and guardians in learning new skills and ways to promote their children’s success in school and life. The classes take place Thursday evenings, with dinner served at 6 p.m. and the class running from 6:30 to 8. Dinner and child care is provided for free.

About a dozen families are registered for the program, but newcomers can join through the third week. The information tends to build on itself



KATHERINE LACAZE/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Lori Wilson Honl with Northwest Parenting leads a group of parents during the first session of the six-week Active Parenting Now program at the Heights Elementary School in Seaside on Jan. 11.

and participants benefit from being part of a consistent, cohesive group, said Wilson Honl, who currently is a teacher at Head Start in Warrenton and has instructed parenting classes for more than 20 years.

She believes participation as a group creates an advantageous setting for parents to gain insight and support not only from her instruction, but from one another, as well.

“Being able to hear from

other parents can be really valuable,” she said. Each person is “going to bring their own experiences and questions.”

The course features a mix of verbal instruction, educational videos and group discussion, geared toward the same philosophy: parenting, as with any job that’s rewarding and difficult, requires training and support. Parenting skills being addressed throughout the course in-

clude fostering strong relationships; using discipline to teach lessons; communication with children and co-parents; helping children express their feelings; developing self-care habits; and motivating children to build self-worth and personal power.

The end goal is to “protect and prepare our children to survive and thrive in the kind of society in which they live,” Wilson Honl said. As society changes, people have to

change how they parent. They can help their children learn to make wise choices at a young age, when those decisions are easy and the repercussions are small, as opposed to large and life-threatening.

She selected the Active Parenting Now curriculum for the Seaside class because it is targeted toward parents with children who are elementary age or younger. Many of the participants at the first session were raising children between 3 and 7 years old.

When asked what they hope to get out of the class, several parents talked about finding a balanced approach to discipline, resorting less to negative emotion, learning how to deescalate conflicts with children and, in general, gaining exposure to new ideas and insights.

Being open to having old beliefs challenged or hearing new information “is critical when we’re trying to change some of our parenting habits,” Wilson Honl said. “There are constantly new challenges, and they just help us to keep growing.”

She emphasized that not all information presented in the program would be applicable or appropriate for every family in attendance, but they should keep an open mind, respect the opinions and experiences of other participants,

and be patient with themselves and their co-parent.

A proponent of the idea that training is important for all parents, Wilson Honl said she works to dismantle the pervasive stigma that parenting classes are necessary only for parents of children struggling with serious behavioral issues or because there is a distinct “problem” in the family. She used the example of a violinist who was striving to become a virtuoso, explaining how there would be no negative perception if that person used education to improve technique and expand their skill set.

In the same way, taking a parenting course, she said, is a way for any parent to acknowledge, “I take this job so seriously, I’m willing to put in the time and effort to be even better.”

Also, many of the skills learned through the program — such as fostering mutual respect, developing patience, taking time for self-care and communicating clearly and consistently — are transferable to other areas of life.

“Some people don’t realize how universal many of the basic skills are,” Wilson Honl said.

For more information about joining, contact Northwest Parenting at 503-325-8673, ext. 1 or The Heights Elementary School at 503-738-5161.

Blue Heron Pointe back with changes

Owners revise plans for affordable housing

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Ten months ago, developers of the 15-acre plot of land on the corner of South Wahanna Road and Avenue S called Blue Heron Pointe walked away after the city issued a requirement for sidewalks for a proposed affordable housing project.

At the time, the owners decided the city’s call to have a section of sidewalk built along Avenue S in the first phase of their 46-lot project would not be feasible.

A revised 59-lot plan seeks to address past concerns with the number of housing units and a design for pedestrian and bike lanes within the subdivision.

But mapping, drainage and traffic remain at the top of the list of questions.

Seaside resident Ken Thysell said he feared accidents and delays, particularly driving west from Avenue S to U.S. Highway 101.

“You’re going to have some accidents you don’t have right now, or you’re going to have huge backups on Broadway,” Thysell said at a Planning Commission meeting Tuesday.

More lots, fewer units

The Planning Commission originally required a bike path and pedestrian side-



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

South entrance to Blue Heron Pointe on Avenue S. Residents fear traffic may create safety issues heading to the new school campus and U.S. Highway 101.

walk along Wahanna Road, City Planner Kevin Cupples said.

“In lieu of doing that, they’re looking at putting a bike lane through the development rather than coming around the outside,” Cupples said. “It would be in their development rather than on the outside of it.”

Developers Bruce Ritchie and Max Ritchie of Nordoff Pacific Capital LLC returned to the Planning Commission in December with revised plans reducing the number of lots and including a cross-section that would allow for a 5-foot wide bike path running from the intersection of Avenue S and Cooper all the way up to the intersection of Cooper and Wahanna.

The redesign is intended to provide an alternative route for pedestrians and bikes along the corner of Avenue S and Wahan-

na, according to a city staff report.

The prior 46-lot plan would have accommodated a duplex on every lot with the exception of one, Cupples said. The revised plan presents 59 lots. Only three of these would be large enough to permit the development of duplexes, reducing the maximum number of potential units.

Safety concerns

Neighbors said they anticipate a potential boost in cars and buses headed to the new Seaside School District campus, scheduled for a fall 2020 opening.

The development could create a “huge” traffic problem, Thysell said.

“I live over there, and on school days, it’s tough to get onto (Highway) 101,” he said. “In the summers, it’s almost impossible — and we’re adding 40 to 50 new houses plus what’s happening at the high school.”

Resident Maria Pincetich said she wants to make sure the plan is well-thought out and safe.

“I’m concerned that the kids in the neighborhood can arrive to school in one piece,” Pincetich said after the meeting. “You’re going to have a lot more cars on Avenue S and Wahanna. The concentration of kids and cars is not a good mix, without any mitigating factors, like a stop sign or speed bumps.”

The public hearing will be continued at the Planning Commission’s Feb. 6 meeting.



SEASIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A schematic design presentation delivered at Broadway Middle School in December.

Council seeks details

Campus from Page 1A

The property, rezoned as institutional-campus, would be withdrawn from the Seaside Rural Fire Protection District and included in the city of Seaside for fire protection. The campus would be included in the Seaside Road District and receive both police protection and water from the city.

Councilors had questions about traffic, infrastructure and the disposition of school-owned properties.

Councilor Tita Montero asked how the district will meet increased city infrastructure costs for roads, water, fire and public safety.

“The district anticipated system development costs,” Seaside School District Business Manager Justine Hill said. “We anticipated our share for increased water, increased sewer.”

The cost of a water tank to be installed on the property will be shared by the city and the school district, she said.

The tank will replace two outdated water pump stations, Public Works Director Dale McDowell added after the public hearing, including the 1940s station at Sunset Heights and the 1938 station at the bottom of Underhill Road.

“We are very excited about a new water tank,” McDowell said. “This is something that has been on the construction long-term for many, many years, before

the school district decided to move up there.”

Montero voiced additional concerns about potential traffic issues at the new campus site.

Hill said traffic and road improvements are under discussion with the public and among the construction team.

An open house for neighbors of the new campus, including residents of Spruce Drive and Cooper Street, was held in December, she said, and community meetings are scheduled in Seaside and Cannon Beach. “We’re hoping that community members come and talk about their concerns, so we can build a campus everybody is happy with,” Hill said.

A meeting is scheduled for Jan. 24 at 6:30 p.m. in Cannon Beach at the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce, 207 N. Spruce. A Spanish presentation takes place Feb. 6 at 6:30 p.m. at Broadway Middle School, 1120 Broadway.

After unanimous endorsement by the City Council in its first reading, the revised ordinance will come before the council for second and third readings in its next two meetings, Mayor Jay Barber said.

“There will still be a lot of issues regarding traffic and infrastructure, but this is a big step moving forward in that direction,” Barber said. “The voters voted for this and it is going to happen.”

Grant helps children’s theater take the stage

Theater from Page 1A

kids who help Sherlock ferret out clues. Older kids will play Sherlock, Mr. Watson and Mrs. Hudson.

Auditions will be this spring, and rehearsals will begin in May or June for performances in August. She is seeking kids “that have confidence in themselves; who can follow instructions; and be able to get outside themselves, who have the intrinsic ability to be silly and goofy,” she said.

Theater has long been a part of Lacaze’s life. She began teaching children’s theater as a high school student in Arizona and in college. Her productions included “Music Man,” “The Importance of Being Earnest” and “You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown.”

Although she works full time at the Seaside Convention Center, is a freelance writer and takes care of her 3-year-old daughter, Juliette, Lacaze is also active at the Coaster Theatre in Cannon Beach. Last year, she played the lead in “Barefoot in the Park” and will appear this year in “Noises Off” at the Coaster. She also plans to do the choreography for “Musical of Musicals” at the Coaster this summer.

In addition, Lacaze is directing “Peter Pan” this spring for the Astor Street Opry Company and a one-act health-re-



KATHERINE LACAZE

Katherine Lacaze accepts a grant from Charlene Larsen of the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition.

lated play sponsored by Providence Seaside Hospital.

Eventually, she said, she would like to establish a non-profit Clatsop Children’s Theatre Company.

“I love theater in general,” she said. “It allows me to explore the world around me. It gives me different perspectives. I can explore grief and difficult hardships in a safe place.”

Lacaze, who moved to Seaside four years ago to be a reporter for the Seaside Signal, said she wanted to help the community develop activities for children, something she felt was missing.

“I feel this community doesn’t have a lot of affordable outlets for children,” said Lacaze.

“This is such a tourist-oriented town. We work hard to provide activities for tourists.

But we also say we’re a family-oriented town, and we need to provide fun, enjoyable and educational activities for children, something they can take pride in.”

Lacaze’s idea of partnering with the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District fits well with the district’s goals, said Skyler Archibald, district director.

“Certain interests are well represented — such as athletics — but this one was not,” Archibald said. “We want to provide positive activities for children, and this was right up our alley.”

The recreation district offered rehearsal space and some business structure to support Lacaze. “It was a good partnership for both of us.”

Jeremy Mills State Farm Insurance also sponsored the play last summer.

While she had some assistance with “Alice in Wonderland” last year, thanks to friend Ellen Jensen, who also performs at the Coaster Theatre, and the Coaster’s costume designer, Judith Light, Lacaze did most of the production work herself, which presented some challenges.

“The plays might not have been the highest caliber, but we were giving the kids a chance they could get excited about,” Lacaze said. “When the kids were in their cos-

tumes, they had so much fun. I love providing that. And the kids are so forgiving when it comes to the production. I’m such a perfectionist, but the kids don’t see it that way.”

Lacaze also enjoyed introducing theater to the children, many who were on the stage for the first time.

“The kids came out of their shells,” she said. “They were proud of themselves and what they had accomplished.”

Archibald, whose daughter was in the play, called the performances “amazing.”

Lacaze, he said, “pulled it all together. She had some long days and long rehearsals, but I think the children will fondly remember it.”

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