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Said Fakh makes a cream cheese spread at his Sesame Donuts store on Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: JAIME VALDEZ

An extended family

■ FAMILY WORKS AT, RUNS AND EATS AT SESAME DONUTS IN RALEIGH HILLS

By **KATE CHESTER**
For Pamplin Media Group

Said Fakh, one of the owners and founders of Sesame Donuts, leans toward defining the word “family” rather broadly. “I consider our customers an extension of my family,” he said. “Many of our long-time regulars have shared their life’s journeys with us. We know when their children are

graduating from college, when their mother is having surgery, or when they’ve lost a spouse.

“Our bond is tight.”

Such close-knit compassion mirrors that of Fakh’s own family, industrious Lebanese immigrants who came to the United States by way of Sierra Leone. Fakh arrived in Southern California in 1979 and put himself through college at California State University Dominguez Hills while working at his Uncle Mohammad’s Dunkin’ Donuts franchise.



Lama Fakh (left) and Lena Fakh are sisters who are married to Haidar and Said respectively.



TIMES PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ

The Sesame Donuts family consists of Habib Fakih (clockwise from front), sons Said and Haidar, wife Lama, and daughter-in-law Lena, who's married to Said.

Upon moving to Portland, the family bought the Raleigh Hills-based Dunkin' Donuts in 1987. Twelve years later, Fakih, his brother Haidar, and their father Habib, transformed the restaurant into Sesame Donuts, named after the recipe that came from Uncle "Mo."

"It's like 'Cheers' in here — everyone knows everyone," said Kirk Patrick, 86, a Raleigh Hills resident who visits the doughnut shop five or six days a week — and has for the past 26 years.

Patrick, who taught for 30 years at both Meadow Park Middle School and Aloha High School, became a Sesame Donuts regular when he and his wife, also a school teacher, retired.

"We were both adjusting to retirement and creating a new schedule for ourselves," he recalls. "My wife was excited to watch 'Good Morning America' — she'd never had that chance before because of her work schedule — so we thought it best that I get out of the way for a couple of hours each morning so she could watch

her show in peace," he said with a laugh.

Patrick and Fakih have become good friends over years; when Fakih traveled to California recently, he brought back unique stamps he came across to give to Patrick, an avid stamp collector.

"Our customers — it's more than just a friendship, really," said Fakih. "They're a delight. It's like — how do you say it — they're the 'frosting on the cake.'"

"When I need to take a break from the computer or the paperwork — the running of the business — it's visiting with our regulars that refreshes me and gives me energy," he said.

Such an inclusive philosophical approach to business and life has led to great success for the Fakihs. Along with sister Souad and nephew Moussa, the family now owns and runs six Sesame Donuts shops: their other locations are in Tigard, Beaverton, Hillsboro, Sherwood and Milwaukie, in addition to the original Raleigh Hills location and kiosks at the public libraries in Tigard and Hillsboro.

The family employs close to 60 non-family employees at their many restaurants. Additionally, their children — the next generation of Fakihs — help out at the shops after school and on weekends, along with aunts, uncles and in-laws.

Beyond Sesame Donuts, the Fakihs share their sense of family with the larger Arab-American community in Portland. Fakih is a longtime board member of the Arab American Cultural Center of Oregon, which in recent years has hosted its annual summer festival at Portland Community College's Sylvania Campus (12000 S.W. 49th Ave.). The event attracts nearly 1,200 attendees, both Arab and non-Arab Americans, and the Fakih brothers cater the festival with traditional Arab delights like fatoosh, kibbeh, beef and chicken shawarma, falafel, and of course, baklava.

The festival continues to expand each

year, serving as a reunion of sorts for Arab-Americans on both the east and west sides of Portland. Fakih sees this as yet another version of what family means.

"In my own way, I believe that we're all related, that we're part of something much larger," said Fakih.

"To this day, my father will say that 'America has been like a mother to us,' caring for us when we were newcomers to this country, as well as protecting us in turbulent times, like after 9/11," he said.

With gratitude in their hearts, the Fakihs see generosity as natural, to be given generously to family and friends. With that comes another pearl of wisdom from Habib.

"My father has many sayings," said Fakih, "and one of my favorites is 'If your plate is full, cut some of it and give it to others.' If you're kind from the heart, it will come back to you."

"It's like 'Cheers' in here — everyone knows everyone."

— Kirk Patrick, regular patron of Sesame Donut



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Family is and the Thomas family does at Valley Catholic



Valley Catholic's Claudia Thomas, her son Pat (left) and her husband Ross are key players in the family atmosphere at Valley Catholic High School. Claudia, a two-time gold-medal winning American swimmer, serves as the school's admissions director, Pat teaches English and Honors U.S. History and serves as head baseball coach, while Ross serves as the school's principal.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ

FROM ADMINISTRATION TO TEACHING TO COACHING, THE THOMASES ARE VC

By MILES VANCE
Pamplin Media Group

Most families grow up together. Some families learn together. Still others choose to work together.

The Thomas family, however — a mainstay at Valley Catholic High School for more than a decade now — has chosen all three.

And that's not all — they're all involved in sports, too.

Ross Thomas, 66, was hired as principal at Valley Catholic back in 2002, moving to the private high school in the center of Beaverton after serving a year as an adjunct professor at Gonzaga University, and before that, 21 years in a variety of administrative, teaching and coaching roles at St. George's School in Spokane, Wash.

Thomas' wife Claudia, 65 and a two-time gold-medal winning American swimmer, came to Valley Catholic a year later and has served since 2003 as Valley Catholic High School's admissions director. Along with her husband, she also worked for 10 years at St. George's — a small, private Episcopal school — as the school's athletic director.

And their son Pat — the youngest of the family's three boys at 32 — also works at Valley Catholic, teaching English and Honors U.S. History, serving as head baseball coach and assisting with the varsity girls basketball team.

But family at Valley Catholic is about far more than just the Thomas family. Indeed, the Thomases are merely the most obvious representation of the sense of family that Valley Catholic tries to project across its campus, through its classrooms and into the world beyond.

Looking back on the decision to pull up their longtime roots in the Spokane area, the Thomases decided at the time that they — as a family — were ready to try something new.

“Our last son had graduated (from St. George's), we were Catholic and we were young enough to take on a new challenge,” said Ross Thomas, who led St. George's teams to a total of seven state championships in cross country, girls basketball and baseball; he also led the Colfax High girls hoop team to a state title during the year he taught at Gonzaga.

“We had given so much to (St. George's), and it was scary because we'd been in Spokane so long,” Claudia Thomas said. “But (Valley Catholic) was beautiful — it has gorgeous trees and it's a unique campus with a lot green in a busy place — and it just fit. I don't think we'd have been happy in a really big place. People were so friendly. It just seemed like a good fit for Ross right away.”

For his part, it took Pat Thomas a little longer to get to VC. Following his high school graduation, Thomas took his baseball talents to Whitman College where he was a starting pitcher and two-year team captain. While he visited VC and his parents often, he didn't make his first official appearance at Valley until the 2007-08 school year when he student taught and coached at the school.

Then, after a year in his first professional position — he taught and coached at Archbishop Murphy in Everett, Wash., in 2008-09 — he came back to Valley Catholic for good. That move, in addition to providing a working relationship with his parents, also dovetailed with his wife Sarah's enrollment at Pacific University in Forest Grove in the School of Pharmacy.

“By then, I had already been on campus a ton and coached two sports so I was already much more familiar and comfortable here than I would have been anywhere else,” Pat Thomas said.

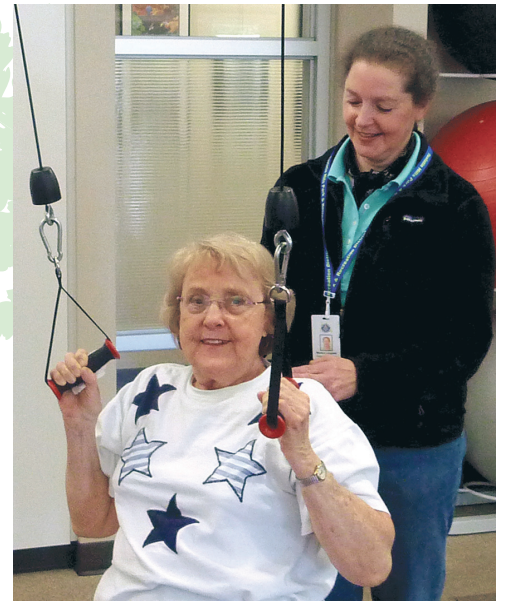
And to be fair, there was a little more to it than that.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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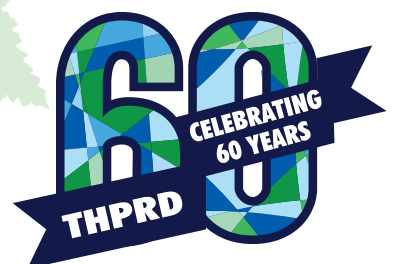
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“It wasn’t the deciding factor, but it was a place I’d become comfortable with and built up relationships with a lot of people,” Pat Thomas said. And “working at the same school as my parents — and my brother for a few years — was never a make or break deal for me by any means, but it has been really great.”

Beyond Ross (who served as head coach for the varsity girls basketball team for one year and now has assisted Pat with the baseball team since 2010), Claudia and Pat (who was Oregon Class 3A Coach of the Year in 2014 for baseball), there’s still more to the Thomas family legacy at VC.

In this case, the more is the Thomas’ middle son Mike.

Mike, another St. George’s graduate who’s now 37, also did his student teaching at Valley Catholic and coached at VC, spending five years assisting with both the baseball and girls basketball programs, some of that while working on his Masters’ Degree at Concordia. He left Valley to teach, first in Denver, and now as a PE teacher and coach at Westside School in Seattle.

But all that’s just the background behind the Thomas family association at Valley Catholic. Nearly as important to the Thomas clan, however, is the feeling of family, the family atmosphere that they — along with the rest of the staff at Valley Catholic — try to create at the school.

Part of that family atmosphere comes from the shared experience of Catholicism that most Valley Catholic staff and students share — “The classes are ambitious, plus you’re free to teach literature from a spiritual point of view,” Ross Thomas said — and part of it comes from the emphasis on inclusion and participation that permeates the school’s sports and arts programs.

“There are no cuts in sports and no cuts in drama or music either,” Claudia Thomas said. “Almost everyone takes part. That makes for a happier, healthier student body.”

“I’ve resisted occasional appeals to make certain sports ‘cut’ sports,” Ross Thomas added. “If you do that, it’s hard to be a family.”

That methodology seems to be working. Valley Catholic has won The Oregonian Cup — awarded each year to the top school in each enrollment classification based on its success in athletics, academics, sportsmanship and activities — in each of the past three seasons.

Needless to say, the Thomases hold a special place in their heart for athletics.

“A close-knit family feeling is really built into everything that Valley Catholic is and does,” Pat Thomas said.

“More than any other school I’ve been a part of, there really is a true family feeling that is embraced by everyone on campus.”

“A school’s got to feel like a home,” Ross Thomas added.



PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP
PHOTOS: JAIME VALDEZ

ABOVE: Katie Vames, a senior at Valley Catholic High School, stuffs admission envelopes with the school’s admission director, Claudia Thomas.

LEFT: Principal Ross Thomas fields a phone call in his office at Valley Catholic High School.

“More than any other school I’ve been a part of, there really is a true family feeling that is embraced by everyone on campus.”

— PAT THOMAS, Valley Catholic teacher and coach

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■ BEAVERTON SCHOOLS' YOUNG PARENTS PROGRAM HELPS MOMS, DADS GRADUATE, PREPARE FOR FUTURE



PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: JIM CLARK

CEYP student Jose Beltran, 17, is doing an internship in the day care center so he can learn as much as possible about parenthood — he's going to become a dad in April.

TEEN PARENTS STAY IN SCHOOL while day care minds the children



CIERRA DUMPPROPE

By **JANIE NAFSINGER**
Pamplin Media Group

Cierra Dumpprope's busy day starts at about 5 a.m. That's when the 18-year-old high school senior awakes and starts getting herself ready for school, and starts getting her 11-month-old daughter, Aria, ready for day care.

After Cierra packs Aria's duffel bag and her own school backpack, her parents drive them both to Merlo Station High School,

where Cierra attends classes and Aria goes to the school's day care center. Cierra is in the Beaverton School District's Continuing Education for Young Parents program, which operates a nursery for the infants and toddlers of teenage moms and dads enrolled in the district.

The 35-year-old program, CEYP for short, supports young parents and parents-to-be by allowing them to continue their education and prepare for the responsibilities of raising families of their own. At the day care center, program staff and volunteers look

after the children while the young parents are in class.

Cierra was determined to stay in school after learning she was pregnant and deciding to keep her baby. She's on track to graduate in June, and after that, she plans to attend college. She's interested in a career in social work.

CEYP helps make it possible. "I love the day care, and she (Aria) loves it here," Cierra says. "I know she's safe here."

Jose Beltran and his girlfriend, Adriana



CEYP staff member Vicki Lapato plays with preschoolers at the day care center.

Rosales — both 17-year-old juniors at Merlo Station — are about to become parents, and they began preparing themselves for the arrival of their child by taking a six-week internship at the day care center. Adriana, whose due date is April 29, completed the internship first; Jose then enrolled, spending part of his school day helping to care for the center's infants and toddlers, a group that will soon include his son.

When Jose learned he was going to become a father — a boy he and Adriana have named Alek — “I was all for it,” he said. “I’m not scared. I want to do this.”

The young couple have their eyes on the future — after graduating, Jose plans to be an automotive mechanic, while Adriana wants to study biology. She plans to care for their son during the day, while Jose will take the night shift.

With all the obstacles that teen parents face, CEYP aims to at least get them off to a good start. The program was one of the first school-based day care centers in Oregon when the Beaverton district established it in 1980 at C.E. Mason School (now Arts & Communication Magnet Academy), said Norma Maisonville, CEYP director for the past five or six years.

“The goal is to get them back into school, graduate from high school and get them into a program so they can get off assistance,” she says. “This is their second chance.”

CEYP began with no staff — just volunteers — caring for two children, Maisonville said. Now, it has 10 staff members, an estimated 60 volunteers and a current enrollment of about 30 infants and toddlers, ages six weeks to 4 years. CEYP is licensed to care for up to 69 children, Maisonville said.

The children get breakfast and lunch as part of their day care. Their parents

typically don't see them during the school day, though mothers who breast-feed carry pagers so they can be summoned from class when it's time to feed their baby. If need be, the parents also can take their children to Merlo Station's school-based health clinic, right next to the day care center.

Beyond the support that CEYP offers to teen parents, Maisonville sees the bigger picture: What becomes of these young families after they leave high school? Their living situations vary greatly — some teen parents live with their own parents or other relatives; others are homeless and “sofa surf,” Maisonville said.

HELP CARE FOR THE CHILDREN

Continuing Education for Young Parents always needs volunteers in its day care center. To learn more about the program, call Director Norma Maisonville at 503-259-5608.

“It's so hard to find homes for teen moms,” she said, adding that they're not old enough to live in women's shelters and cannot take their young children there.

“Our big goal is to get the community to understand we need a home for them,” Maisonville said. “It would be great to have a home for these young parents and day care after they graduate.”

She wants all teen parents to dream big, to have goals beyond landing minimum-wage jobs. At least two recent CEYP graduates are well on their way: both are attending Portland State

University, one planning to become a social worker and the other studying for a career in pediatric dentistry. Scholarships are available through St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, the Beaverton Rotary and CEYP volunteers, all aiming to help teen parents further their educations.

“Financially, it makes sense to help them now so they get off assistance,” Maisonville said. “They all want to be successful, not just in school, but as parents, too.”

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CREATIVITY TWINES

Beaverton's Berger family together

THE FAMILY CANE SHOP CONTINUES TO CREATE UNIQUE BEAUTY

By GAIL PARK
Pamplin Media Group

With nimble fingers and unwavering precision, Verna and Clarence Berger have long weaved hand-caned furniture and family ties as well.

Nine members of their family have learned the age-old craft and put it into practice over time at the Family Cane Shop, located on the eastern edge of Beaverton.

The Bergers bring customers' heirlooms and favorite pieces of caned furniture back to life, and also create their own originals. Indeed, their caning skills are increasingly in demand, despite the fact that their particular talent is known as a "lost art."

Clarence, 77, started the tradition when he opened the Family Cane Shop in Beaverton back in 1977. Dan Nauman taught Clarence — then an eager Parr Lumber employee (in all, Clarence worked at Parr for 35 years) — how to cane. To help his friend out, Clarence studied the craft, and before his lessons were through, he

had completed his first project, a child's small rocking chair. As Nauman's workload continued to grow, he began to pass off furniture projects to his newly skilled apprentice. After a day's work at Parr Lumber, Clarence would weave throughout the night, diligently trying to finish his own collection of mounting projects.

Fortunately for him, Verna came to his rescue.

Like her husband before her, Verna, too, learned the various techniques involved in caning, and the detail-oriented wife proved herself perfectly suited to creating the form's precise, graceful designs. Rewards followed as she completed one example after another of fine, elegant furniture.

While raising their children, Steven and Ann, and later helping with her

five grandchildren, Verna, now 75, filled her days with hand caning. As a supplement to her family's income, she said, "It's not a business for a bread winner," but admitted that it has helped send family members to nice schools.

Steven Berger, currently the director of Washington Coun-



PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTO: GAIL PARK

Demonstrating a standard caning pattern using a narrow strips of rattan, Hallie Shaw carefully establishes rows of cane. Her grandmother, Verna Berger, is there for instruction and encouragement.

ty's Department of Community Corrections, became an expert caner at a young age. The Family Cane Shop, inundated with furniture in need of repair, took advantage of his fine skills and his concurrent need for cash. He did all the rush caning for the shop, a form of caning that

creates four triangular patterns with woven lines meeting at the middle of the seat. A spool of fiber composed of tough twisted paper, known as rush, is used in the process.

"Steven is great weaving with rush," his mother said. "He did all of the rush work on the

chairs at the (old Organ Grinder restaurant in Southeast Portland)."

He also caned the chairs for EarthQuake Ethel's Roadhouse, a popular Beaverton disco in the late 70s and early 80s.

But it wasn't just Steven who followed his parents' vocation.



Family Cane Shop members are (left to right) Clarence Berger, granddaughter Rachel Shaw, wife Verna Berger and youngest granddaughter Hallie Shaw.

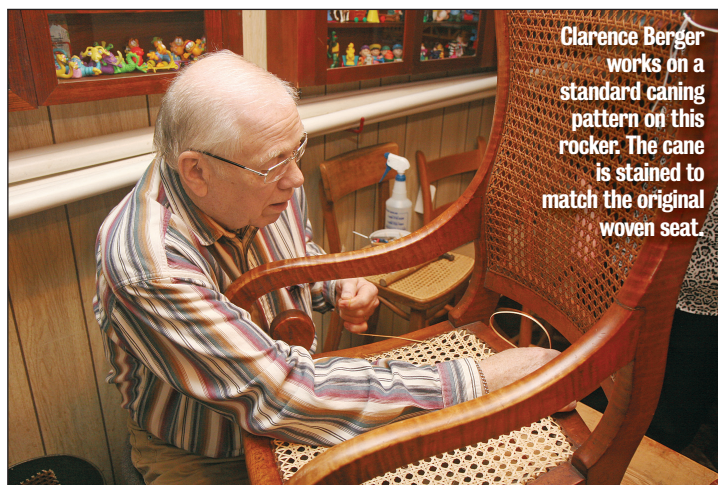
PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: GAIL PARK

“All of the kids have been involved at one time or another,” Verna Berger said.

Steven’s son, Kylan — a 22-year-old music major now completing his degree — hasn’t taken it on like his dad, but he has worked on a couple of chairs over the years. And Steven’s daughter Casey, 20, tried hand caning for a short period before deciding to follow a path toward nursing.

During Ann’s teenage years, she worked for the family business until finding that time demands became an issue. Her three daughters, however, are active, third-generation chair caners.

Her oldest, Nicole Shaw, 25, spent a good number of hours at the business during her teenage years. Her fast fingers and attention to detail helped her plow through the work, and she filled her days after high school with lots of hand



Clarence Berger works on a standard caning pattern on this rocker. The cane is stained to match the original woven seat.

caning and bookkeeping until she headed off to college at the University of Colorado.

Rachel Shaw, 20, caned while she was a Jesuit High School student. Asked about the demanding Danish lace weave, a lovely intricate pattern, she comments “I rock climb, so I

have pretty strong hands.” Now she attends the University of Washington.

That leaves only Hallie Shaw, 15, to help weave seats and cane furniture.

Anxious to weave as a youngster while watching her ambitious older sister Nicole,

Hallie started standard caning when she was about 11.

Demonstrating a pattern using a narrow strip of rattan that’s been softened in water to make it pliable, she carefully establishes rows of cane. Following a complex course, back and forth using dowels, she is focused and deliberate.

“I like to weave ... and spend time in the shop with my grandpa,” she says. “I like being around the tools — drills, saws and hammers.”

Clarence’s eyes have started to tire, but according to Rachel, he still works regularly in his Scholls Ferry shop. Planing, drilling and restoring woven furniture using a caning machine are his specialties.

Likewise, Verna stays busy, too, and enjoys the specialties she’s developed over the years.

“I am the only chair caner who weaves the Star of David, spider web and Danish lace

patterns,” she said.

Verna also fills her time as a mentor and overseer of the younger generation of caners.

“Hallie is learning. She’s understanding where to place the fisheyes,” she said, referring to the location where canes cross and form “X”s along the various styles and shapes of seat frames.

Hallie, a freshman, knows that track and field and driving lessons will soon consume some of her schedule, but for now, she proudly completes her assigned hand caned jobs. Finishing up a chair seat is rewarding, she said.

“A lot of satisfaction comes in seeing a chair done right,” quips Verna. “You know that chair will be around for a long time.”

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The right dog makes all the difference

■ FOR BILLY AND CINDY THOMAS, THAT 'RIGHT DOG' EXTENDS THEIR FAMILY

By **CAITLIN FELDMAN**
Pamplin Media Group

Billy and Cindy Thomas had stopped looking for a dog. But for some reason as they drove home to Beaverton one day, Cindy had a feeling that they hadn't visited all the shelters in the area, even though they'd been searching for the right dog over a year.

"We had given up, actually. We were going to stop looking," said Cindy, 38. "But one day, we were coming back from Clackamas (and) something told me to Google 'dog adoptions.'"

When Oregon Dog Rescue in Tualatin popped up on her screen on Feb. 6, they knew they at least had to stop by. After arriving, the first dog they saw snapped at Billy, and they knew it wasn't a good fit. Community Relations Director Nancy Truax found out more about the kind of dog they were looking for and provided some suggestions, eventually leading to Louie, a 4- or 5-year old Chihuahua Pomeranian mix.

"He was the only dog that we took on a walk," said Cindy. "And he was perfect."

The couple, who moved to Beaverton from California three years ago, doesn't have any children and had never owned a dog. One cat and some fish had already found a home in their apartment, but ultimately, something was missing from their little family, and that something was Louie — renamed by them as Louie Louie.

Even with a heart murmur, the little dog — who they now dress in puffy vests and 49ers jerseys — was the one who stole their hearts.

"Our cat is cool. Don't get me wrong — our kitty, we love her," said Billy, 39. "Our cat is so independent, she can go all day without needing anybody to pick her up or anything. But this guy? He needs love."

By the time the Thomases found Louie Louie, they'd visited more than seven animal shelters, both in Oregon and in their

"Our cat is so independent, she can go all day without needing anybody to pick her up or anything. But this guy? He needs love."

— **BILLY THOMAS**



PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: JONATHAN HOUSE

ABOVE: Billy and Cindy Thomas pose with their adopted pup, Louie Louie. **LEFT:** Louie Louie enjoys laying in the lap of his human, Billy.

said, however, the wait to find the right rescue dog was completely worth it in the end. And Cindy, who was less committed to finding a dog for herself — it was more for Billy's sake she admitted — knew that a dog would be just what their family needed.

"I'm more supportive," she said. "I wanted a little doggy, and that was for Billy, because I knew that it would bring a lot of joy to him, and it makes me happy to see him happy."

"How did you know a little dog was gonna make me happy?" Billy asked his wife of four years.

"Because I just knew," Cindy said. "And it has. That's his little best friend now."

Unlike some other small dogs, Louie Louie isn't yippy at all. He walks around the house, sometimes resting on Billy's shoulder or Cindy's pillow, and has claimed a stack of pillows as his make-shift bed. On the rare occasion that he does bark, Cindy said it's a "cute little bark."

"He's so happy all the time, and kind of uplifts the vibe in the house. Not that it was a bad vibe to begin with, but he brings a little extra something to the house," Billy said. "He makes it more alive."

native California. But no dog felt right. Billy said a friend had told him that when they met the right dog, they'd know. Yet, until that February day at Oregon Dog Rescue, all they'd known was that no other dog was the one. And the couple wasn't about to settle just for the sake of having a dog.

"It's always been something that we

talked about, but not anything that we were in such a rush to do, where we just were gonna settle for any one," said Billy. "I'm glad we weren't in a rush, because then we wouldn't have met this guy here."

Determined to find a dog from a shelter, the couple also knew that their options would be relatively limited, which played a factor in the length of their search. As Billy

Aloha's Tammy Grier holds a photo of herself and her father taken when she was less than a year old back in November of 1970 — for many years, it was the only connection Grier had to her long-estranged dad.

PAMPLIN MEDIA
GROUP PHOTO:
MILES VANCE

■ SHE RECONNECTS
WITH HER LONG-LOST DAD
AFTER 43 YEARS APART



ALOHA'S GRIER NEVER GAVE UP on finding her father

By **MILES VANCE**
Pamplin Media Group

Aloha's Tammy Grier always wanted to remember her father. She desperately wanted to remember him. But for the longest time,

the only image that Grier had of her father came from a 4-inch color photograph taken when she was less than a year old.

In it, Tammy Grier — now 45 — sits placidly in a stroller, her eyes half closed against the bright California sunshine. She's clad in a fuzzy pink jacket with fake fur ringing the hood that's pulled up over her head, her little hands gripping the alu-

minum bar in front of her, her tiny shoes unable to quite reach the platform below.

And at Grier's left, her dad, Richard Grier, kneels beside the stroller, wearing a natty gray shirt with the wide collar associated with 1970s fashion, dark slacks and tennis shoes, his auburn hair and neatly trimmed beard framing a face stretched into a smile and featuring reddish brown

sunglasses that almost match his hair.

The time stamp on the right-hand edge of the photo is marked "NOV 70," and for the longest time, that was the last that Tammy Grier had seen or heard of her dad.

Back then, the family (Tammy Grier, her mother Laura Allen and Richard Grier) lived together in Long Beach, Calif., each parent working on their second

marriage and Richard Grier employed — as he was throughout his adult life — as a barber.

But Allen — now a Beaverton resident and a retired Tri-Met bus driver — got tired of Richard Grier's drinking and the ugliness that came with it. Allen and Richard Grier separated before Tammy turned 3, Allen filed for divorce in August of 1972 and the split became official on March 23 of 1973. After that — for the next 43 years — Tammy Grier knew almost nothing of her father.

Indeed, the lone contact Tammy Grier had with her father while she was still a minor came during a short period when she was 12 years old. One day, while riding in a car with her mother, Grier and Allen coincidentally pulled up behind Richard Grier in traffic in Long Beach.

"My mom said 'Do you want to see what your father looks like?'" Grier recalled. Allen "pulled up next to him and I looked at him, but he didn't recognize me."

Still, spurred by the chance incident, Allen tried to reconnect with Richard Grier. She got in touch with her ex on the phone and spoke with him regularly — and allowed Tammy to speak with him, too — for a short period.

But what started on a promising note soon turned sour, fouled by drunken 3 a.m. phone calls from Richard Grier that led Allen to take her young daughter and get away for good.

Tammy Grier and Allen stayed in Long



Aloha's Tammy Grier poses with a stuffed monkey that she got from her dad before she and her mom left him behind back in the early 1970s.

Beach for another 10 years, but had no additional contact with Richard Grier, and Tammy's few memories of her father began to fade and blur as the years went by.

Indeed, she wasn't even sure that some of the memories she thought she had were real. Tammy Grier, now a waitress at The Village Inn in Beaverton, keeps a photo of herself holding a stuffed monkey that her

father gave to her before her parents' divorce. At the time that photo was taken, Tammy is probably around 5 years old, sitting on a concrete ledge with her arms wrapped around the monkey. She believes that she remembers her father giving the monkey to her, but admits that, over time, she may have attached memories to the picture that aren't actually real.

After finishing high school in Long

Beach, Tammy Grier and her mom moved to Las Vegas when Grier was in her early 20s. It was there, in Las Vegas, that Tammy Grier started her own family, getting married and eventually giving birth to her own kids, daughter Reina (now 15 and a sophomore at Century High School) and son Angel (now 18 and employed part-time locally).

Tammy Grier's marriage, to a Cuban immigrant of African and Italian descent, lasted just five years, and she believes that the broken relationship she had with her father played a big role in her own marriage's failure.

"The disappointment of a separation, of not having a father around — you just kind of settle for whoever's around," she said. "The attention of having a male around is a big deal."

While Tammy Grier's own marriage didn't last, that experience in no way lessened her desire for family, nor did it lessen her interest in finding her long-lost father.

Beginning even before her children were born, Tammy Grier took a renewed interest in finding her father and remembered searching for him four times over the past two decades.

"I've been looking for him for 20 years, but I was hesitant because I wasn't sure what I'd find," she said. "Was he dead? Was he still the same?"

For the most part, and for 19 of the past 20 years, Tammy Grier's searches

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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PHOTO COURTESY TAMMY GRIER

Aloha's Tammy Grier poses with her father Richard Grier in late February after ending the pair's 43-year separation.

for Richard Grier came up empty.

"I'd find the wrong phone number, the wrong address or his phone would be disconnected," Grier remembered.

Her failure in locating Richard Grier, however, did not slow Tammy Grier in her concurrent searches for extended family. Over the years, those searches first yielded a half sister — "I hired a detective to find her," Grier said — from one of her mom's previous marriages, then a half brother from one of her dad's previous marriages, and later, two other half sisters who live in Portland that she sees regularly.

Finding her father, however — at one point, he owned 15 hair salons in Lake Tahoe and worked with entertainment industry clients including Van Halen and the Beach Boys — proved more difficult.

"I thought I was close one time, but his phone number was disconnected and his business — it was called Hair 4U (located in Alturas in Northern California) — was closed," Tammy Grier said.

But something within her wouldn't allow her to quit. And finally, in January this year, Tammy Grier's long efforts were rewarded. She Googled her father's name back on Jan. 4 and came up with a long list of possibilities, but one of them showed her father's name, correct age and a connection to a former business in Alturas.

Grier followed the internet rabbit trail until it led her to a listing of properties in Medford. Richard Grier was the fifth or sixth name listed — it said "Richard and Lindsay Grier," she recalled — and his name was accompanied by a telephone number, the price he paid for his home, and a place to leave a comment.

Initially too nervous to call, Tammy Grier left a comment on the message board saying "My birthday is January 13.

I'm looking for my father. I just want him to say 'Happy Birthday' to me."

When she didn't hear back that day, Tammy Grier screwed up her courage and dialed the phone the following day at 5 p.m.

"He answered, but I didn't know it was him," Tammy Grier said. "I said 'I know this is kind of a strange phone call, but I'm searching for my father. His name is Richard Grier — do you know one?'"

"He said 'I'm Richard Grier.'"

"I said 'Do you have a daughter named Tammy who was 2 when you left?'"

"He said 'Yes I do.'"

"I asked him if he'd been married to Laura Ostrander, and he said 'Yes. I know I'm your dad.'"

"I had so many emotions, I almost passed out."

That phone call, and finally, the culmination of Tammy Grier's long search have been momentous, life-changing and filled with answers to questions long left untouched.

She and Richard Grier have now spoken on the phone every day since Tammy finally located him, and he has been able to — bit by bit and day by day — answer some of her many, many questions.

Richard Grier, it turns out, is now retired and living with his daughter Lindsay — another half-sister to Tammy Grier — in Medford, and has been clean and sober since 1983, just a year or two after Tammy and her mom left him. He moved to Medford after splitting with Lindsay's mother, and has had Lindsay, now 28, with him since she was 14.

"I haven't asked him, but maybe it was me, us, cutting him off that had something to do with him getting clean," Tammy Grier said. "At some point, he just threw up his hands and said 'I want to do good.'"

Apparently, Richard Grier has done that, caring for daughter Lindsay over time, working as a sponsor with Alcoholics Anonymous, and now, reconnecting with a part of his life he probably thought was gone forever.

"He said he was just tired of being an alcoholic," Tammy Grier said, adding that her mother, too, is excited to speak with Richard Grier and share the parts of their lives they lived separately.

Tammy Grier left Feb. 28 to travel to Medford to see her dad for the first time since she was 2. The long awaited reunion, it turns out, was worth the wait. Tammy and Richard Grier came together for the first time since 1972, and on the heels of their many phone calls over the preceding weeks, began to fill in the gaps of the separate portions of their lives.

"It was like a rush of excitement," Tammy Grier said. We have "so much in common not even knowing him. We bonded right away."

And while Tammy Grier has much more to learn about her father, she likes what she knows so far and she believes that he may indeed be the kind of man that she wants to call "dad."

"To everyone," Tammy Grier says, "don't give up."

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The musical MUNGAI family

By GAIL PARK
Pamplin Media Group

Two energetic young boys sit at side-by-side pianos. When they strike the keys, it's apparent they are skilled beyond their years.

Encouraged to master the piano by their parents, Segeni and Melissa Mungai, Benjamin and Njenga take piano playing seriously. Benjamin, 13, has achieved distinctions with his commanding competitive solo performances. For three consecutive years, he has earned a superior rating. This past April, he was awarded the Gold Cup by the National Federation of Music Clubs.

Njenga, 7, finds playing fun and enjoys the challenge of memorizing the notes and tunes. "Njenga is near a perfectionist, so he likes to play music to the exact standards," says his father. "He gets a little bothered when it doesn't work out."

"I'm on book three," quips the Ridgewood Elementary School student.

Nearly every day, the Cedar Hills family gingerly balances academics, competitive sports and piano, the boys honing their skills through lessons at Westside Music School in Beaverton. With guidance from Claudia Reinsch, the owner of the school, and teacher Aron Bernstein, these young pianists are mastering the black and white keys. Reinsch includes singing — "a natural way to learn a song" — dur-

ing her school's group piano experience. The lessons are preparing her students for a lifetime, and for competitions.

Developing a meaningful relationship with music and taking home trophies motivates Ben, who works hard at improving this performance ability.

"I love music. I've been playing the piano since kindergarten," he says.

Harnessing his emotions and exhilaration, Ben focuses on finger control when he touches the ivories. During a weekly group class, he evaluates his sheet music. He plays out a tune before striking the keys. He attentively listens for his instructor's command to "begin." The music came easily this evening.

As a family, some days are a challenge. While the peppy boys passionately strive to excel, there are still occasional bouts of frustration. Certain notes can be troublesome. When playing becomes work, it is difficult, but Segeni and Melissa push to help their sons stick with it.

Mom and dad are proud of their sons' diligence. They appreciate the soothing sounds the boys create, yet sometimes, the music is so loud that they can't carry on a conversation. Young energy is put to constructive use.

"We want the boys to learn a life skill," Melissa says. "They are very active in sports and we wanted to introduce them to music to counterbalance that activity. Something to use as a relaxation tool. We considered

"We want the boys to learn a life skill. They are very active in sports and we wanted to introduce them to music to counterbalance that activity."

— MELISSA MUNGAI



The Mungai family (left to right) are Benjamin, Melissa, Segeni and Njenga.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: GAIL PARK

violin lessons, but didn't want to listen to the practices.

"It has to do with talent. Just having the skills to entertain," explains the 18-year Nike employee, who played flute in her high school band. "We hope they will constantly play."

Memorization seems to come easily to the boys. Ben practices 10 minutes in the morning. Njenga takes his 10-minute turn in the evening. Relaxed and focused, they figure out the keyboard and how each key sounds.

"Ben is starting to explore,"

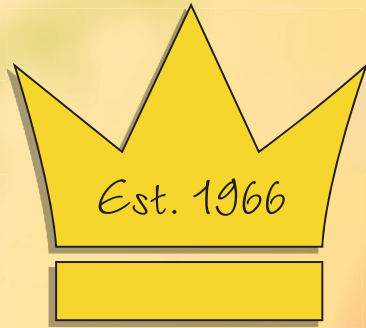
says his Kenyan-born father, who primarily listens to blues and jazz music. "Naturally, he makes up songs."

Segeni, who works for the City of Portland on sustainability and recycling matters, also listens to the boys' uncle. He is Dariush Dolat-Shahi, a professional musician and composer. The songwriter's combination of traditional and contemporary music is influenced by many different types of music. He gave Ben his first keyboard.

Next up, Ben, a Cedar Park

Middle School student, will compete at the local National Federation of Music Clubs competition. Njenga, though young, will compete there for the first time. Both of them will try to make an impression. The local event only considers pianists ages 8 to 19 unless recommended by a NFMC member.

While the boys may someday aspire to careers as pianists, Segeni and Melissa strive for balance in their family, like the balance between white keys and black on their boys' piano.



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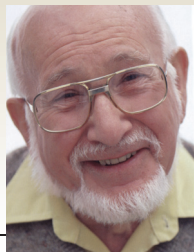
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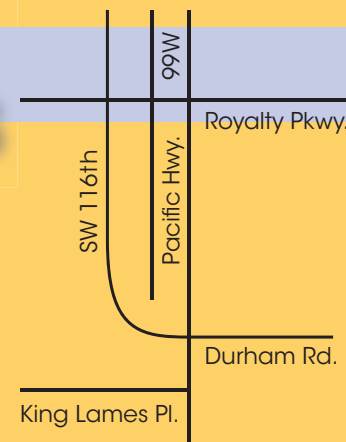
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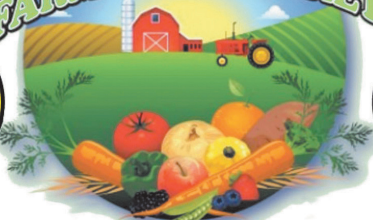


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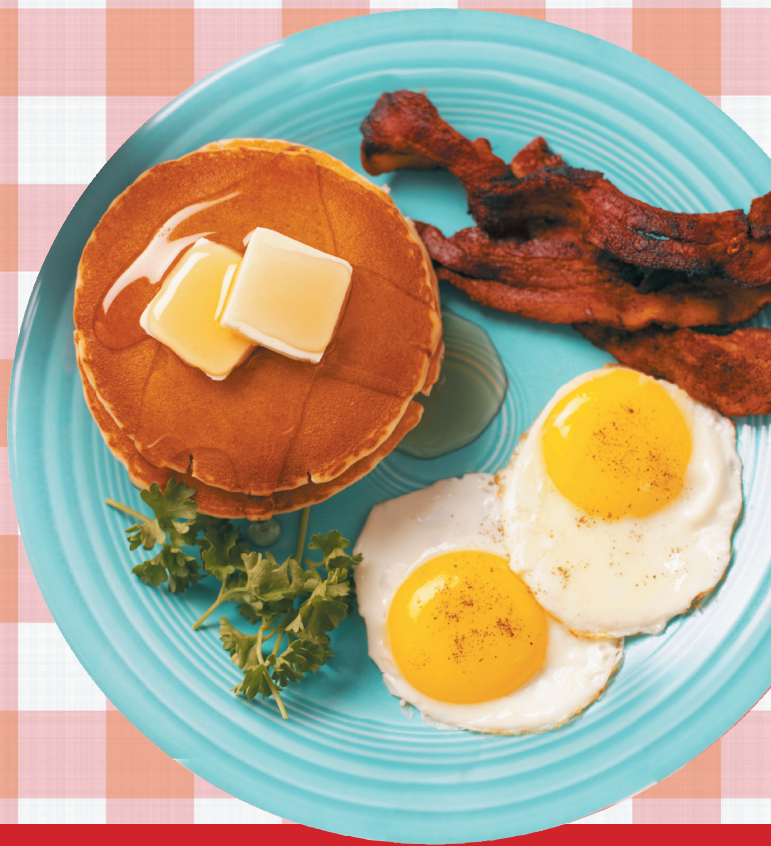
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■ THE SHERWOOD RESIDENT, A PORTLAND POLICE OFFICER, GETS A LIFE-SAVING TRANSPLANT



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sherwood's Todd Teats, a Portland Police officer, is glad to be back in uniform these days, here posing with a colleague, Margaret, who also had a liver transplant. They are holding the Donate Life Northwest foam finger.

Todd Teats celebrates receiving THE ULTIMATE GIFT

By **KATHY KWONG**
Pamplin Media Group

Sherwood's Todd Teats knows firsthand what it is like to go through a near-death experience, and he knows equally well just how much that kind of experience has made him appreciate life and family.

Just last summer, Teats was number

one on the waiting list for a transplant to replace his liver, which was rapidly deteriorating due to Primary Sclerosis Cholangitis. The disease damages the bile ducts of the liver and ultimately destroys the vital organ. Although the disease progresses slowly, there is no cure or specific treatment for PSC. In Teats' case, the disease left him in need of a liver transplant.

Coincidentally, Teats — a Portland Police detective — was quite familiar with

the condition. About 10 years ago, his brother went through the same ordeal and also had to receive a new liver from a donor. Throughout his brother's wait, Teats was by his side. In anticipation of a lifesaving liver for his brother, Teats underwent tests himself to determine if he could donate a portion of his own liver. When his liver enzymes came back abnormal, Teats was told that he had the same condition. Although Teats was un-

able to serve as a live donor for his brother, a cousin offered to donate a portion of his liver, and then — days before that option — a donor liver came through and saved his brother's life.

Meanwhile, Teats, a loving husband to wife Kristi and father to two young boys, contemplated his own fate. Because of the trauma his brother's condition caused his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

family, he opted to keep the news from his wife and sons. The early stages of PSC are almost symptom free aside from abnormal blood tests and liver enzymes. Kristi Teats found out about his condition a few years later in a letter from Todd's doctor explaining that, "the PSC is advancing."

Bandage option

In 2011, six years after receiving news of his condition, Todd started to experience symptoms of PSC. His bile ducts were getting blocked, he had to have blood tests, and doctors performed a procedure to drain the liver as a "bandaging option" to buy some time.

"It was just a little fix along the way until he could get a liver transplant," Kristi Teats said.

A year after the bandaging option, Todd Teats went through the evaluation process at Oregon Health Sciences University in order to be added to the donor wait list. The Teatses went through meeting after meeting and numerous counseling sessions, but Todd Teats was finally accepted and listed in 2012. They were optimistic and had a game plan in place for the day of the surgery.

"The big question," Todd Teats said with a laugh, was "Will you live long enough to receive a transplant?"

After six months on the waiting list, his health rapidly declined. Water retention prevented him from getting dressed and tying his shoes. He became so fatigued he could no longer work.

Good news, then bad

Then, after days of staying home from work, Todd Teats received a call that said a donor liver was available. The moment they'd been waiting for had come. The Teatses packed up and went to the hospital to get Todd prepped for surgery.

Just hours after their arrival, however, they found out the organ was not viable. At this point, they were informed by the hospital that Todd was at the top of the list awaiting a donor organ. He was now the sickest person in the region in vital need of a transplant.

"It's like a double-edged sword. You want him to be at the top of the list, but that also means he's very sick to be number one," Kristi said.

At the rate Todd Teats' health was declining, time was not on their side. They were sent home.

Back to square one and more waiting.



Todd Teats, his wife Kristi and their two sons have good reason to smile after the dramatic journey that led to Todd's liver transplant.

Three days passed and then they got another call from OHSU that said a liver was on its way. There was only one catch; there were complications with the organ. It was only strong enough to limp him along until a better organ came through. The Teatses had to determine whether Todd should go through with a transplant, then risk a second transplant operation when a more viable liver was available. Feeling optimistic about the frequency of donor organs coming through, they passed on that liver and continued to wait.

What people may not know about donor organs is that many factors determine viability. In order to be a match, a recipient must have the same blood type, a similar body size, and the organ must be in good condition.

"Unfortunately, in America, the obesity rate is so high that those livers are not always viable, or there's just too much damage from whatever trauma someone went through," Todd explained.

No goodbyes

Back at home, Todd tried to maintain as normal a life as possible given his declining health and lack of news on donor livers. One late evening in June of 2012, after a day of trimming bushes and hanging out, Todd felt overwhelmingly fatigued. Then came the bloody vomit. Kristi rushed him to the ER. He never got a chance to say goodbye to his two children

who were asleep.

Todd was experiencing mass bleeding from the veins in his throat, a result of the liver not working properly. He was transferred to the intensive care unit at OHSU where they sealed his veins to stop the bleeding. Then came kidney failure. Teats would not recall the next week of events. Life for the Teatses revolved around the ICU.

Friends and family from all around gathered at the hospital, unsure of what was to come.

Meanwhile, Kristi, who was by her husband's side from the beginning, was faced with the burden of telling their two children about the grim situation.

"I'm going to get all sad. He's out in the ICU and I have to come home and talk to our kids and let them know that their dad might not make it," Kristi recalled. "So, just a lot of hard emotions."

Hours shy of death

The same cousin that stepped up to be a liver donor for his brother 10 years earlier, stepped up once again and offered to donate a portion of his liver to Todd. However, at this point, Todd's health was so poor that doctors would not release him to fly to Denver for the surgery.

After a week, Todd recovered enough to be moved out of the ICU, but he remained at the hospital. His doctors visited often and reassured him that, any day now, a donor organ would be available. Days passed, then weeks with still

no word of a viable liver.

"It was like a perfect storm for how sick he was and no viable organs," Kristi said.

Adding insult to injury, Todd would suffer another episode of mass variceal bleeding and kidney failure. At this point, his liver was shot and he was moved back to the ICU. Doctors estimated that he would live just two days.

But another week passed at the ICU. Todd remained unconscious since his return and was moved onto a ventilator. His INR score was increasing, which meant that his body's blood-clotting ability was decreasing. Even if a viable liver did become available, surgery might prove fatal.

The miracle

Close friends and family gathered at the intensive care unit. Prayers and love filled the hospital space that was now known as "Camp Teats." Then came the miracle. A viable liver was located, and Kristi had minimal time to digest the news before Todd was prepped for transplant surgery. The operation started at 9 p.m. that evening and continued to the next morning.

"You always envision how it's going to go down. The trip to the hospital, giving your kids a hug, kissing your wife goodbye and seeing them on the other side, Todd said later, noting that none of that turned out to be true for him.

When the surgeon spoke with Kristi following the surgery, she informed her that Todd went through 37 units of blood, bleeding profusely throughout the procedure. They learned later that the transplant team had pushed the limits in order to perform the operation, the surgeon informing them that it was the hardest surgery she had ever done.

Within an hour after surgery, however, Todd woke to his wife telling him he'd had a transplant. Still groggy, he touched his abdomen to find staples, then proceeded to give a thumbs up, a fitting gesture from a mild-mannered and gracious individual who remains grateful and optimistic about his second chance at life.

Four months post transplant, Teats returned to work at the Police Bureau. He said he has more energy now than before the transplant. Both the Teatses say that they're so thankful for all the people that came together to support them throughout the process.

"It really restored my faith in humanity. I work with great peo-

ple, but we deal with a criminal element so it's hard sometimes to remind yourself how good people really are," Todd said.

Their community, friends and family made it a priority to get together to cook meals and take the Teats boys to activities.

They raised money through fundraising efforts and brought a check to the Teats' home. Todd's work staff made donations in the form of gift cards and donating time with the family. Someone even offered — anonymously — to provide free yard work.

"The giving was just endless," said Kristi, who is now a volunteer with Donate Life Northwest. She has also spoken at the Sherwood DMV personally, thanking the employees there for their efforts in saving her husband's life. Donate Life Northwest, formerly the Oregon Donor Program, has partnered with the Oregon DMV in signing up organ donors and saving lives for 40 years.

"It's always good to give back to something that has greatly influenced your life," she said.

These days, the Teatses are optimistic about the road ahead. They continue to reach out to their community and educate people on how to become organ donors and sharing the importance of organ donations.

But becoming a donor isn't always enough, Todd Teats said. Donors must also educate and inform family members and next of kin regarding their wishes.

"The hardest part for doctors and hospital staff is that, although a person is a registered donor, they may not have had the conversation with their family," Todd said.

When that happens, viable donor organs are sometimes buried with the deceased, leaving one less recipient saved.

"We've always known about organ donation since Todd's brother, and if we can help educate people about organ donation and what it can truly do, then people like Todd don't have to wait until they're hours away from death," Kristi said. "Maybe we can get more viable donors out there and people can get transplanted sooner."

"After going through this, we want to give back, volunteer and educate however we can," Todd said. "Now, I can continue be a good dad and husband. I can go back to work and give back to my community."

"The donors are the true heroes of everything and we were given the gift of being recipients."

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THE TIGARD GRANDMOTHER GIVES TIME AT HER GRANDDAUGHTER'S SCHOOL LIBRARY

Deer Creek Elementary volunteer Barbara Gornick visits with her granddaughter, first-grader Alina Mohr. Gornick volunteers in the library when Alina's class comes in for its weekly visit.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS:
BARBARA SHERMAN



A 'grand' version of volunteerism

By **BARBARA SHERMAN**
Pamplin Media Group

Barbara Gornick showed up early at Deer Creek Elementary in King City on Feb. 24 for her volunteer shift in the library, even before her granddaughter, first-grader

Alina Mohr, arrived on the bus.

"She walked by the library, saw me, and said, 'Grandma. What are you doing here?'" Gornick said. "I walked her to her classroom. Alina says Tuesdays are her favorite day because she sees her grandma in the library."

It is moments like this that make Gornick very glad she volunteers at Deer

Creek, where her normal gig is working in the library Tuesdays from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., which happens to be the same time that Alina's class comes in for its weekly library session. Usually, someone reads a book to Alina's class, and then students have time to find and check out their own books.

Gornick literally had to cross mountains to be able to volunteer at Deer Creek. She

was born in Eugene but grew up in Baker City, where she went on to become an English teacher at Baker High School.

"I've always been taught that if you could read, you could do anything," she said.

Four years ago, Gornick and her husband Lee, who was a guidance counselor at Baker High School, got a call from their daughter asking them to move to

the Tigard area to help with their grandchildren. In addition, to Alina, who will be 7 in May, the Mohrs have a daughter Ellie, who just turned 4 in February.

Daughter Kate Mohr, the Gornick's only child, is the director of the downtown Portland KinderCare, and her husband Adam is a chiropractor.

"Lee and I conveniently live halfway between their home and my son-in-law's office," Gornick explained.

Within a month of being asked to move, the Gornicks, who were retired, came to Tigard along with Barbara's now-93-year-old mom, with Gornick noting that Alina, who is a little shy, now feels extra special and loved when her grandma is in the library when her class arrives.

"The entire class greets Mrs. Gornick when they come in and says 'Thank you' when they leave," said Alina's teacher Ann Cox. "But Alina is the only one who gets to call her Grandma."

Gornick said that she thinks grandparents are special because parents work hard at their jobs and raising their kids, while "grandparents give unconditional love."

She added, "I'm just loving it, and for the kids in the class who don't have grandparents or they live far away, I'm a substitute grandma. The kids come to me for hugs. I go home feeling pretty darn good after getting all those little-kid hugs. When they put their little arms around me, there is nothing like it in the world."

Gornick also goes out of her way to help in Alina's class, such as when she planned



Alina's favorite day of the week is Tuesday when she gets to see her grandmother at the library.

a Valentine's Day party and brought in refreshments and an art project to do.

And she knows the value of a good education and good teachers.

"Alina came here last year as a kindergarten and just blossomed," said Gornick, who added that, as a teacher, she used some unconventional techniques in teaching her students.

"I used to take them outside to skip in rhythm to learn a poem," said Gornick who has been active in the Oregon Education Association for 20 years and served on the board of the National Education Association.

While Gornick has been active as a retired educator, she explained that she is

an accidental volunteer at Deer Creek.

"My daughter came home from a Deer Creek meeting when Alina was starting kindergarten and said, 'We signed you up to volunteer,'" said Gornick, who also volunteered in the library last year.

Even her husband Lee has gotten in on the act, with Gornick saying that Cox occasionally invites a "mystery reader" to come into her classroom. When Lee Gornick came as the mystery reader in December, Cox asked the kids before he was introduced, "How many of you know a bald man? How many of you know a man who plays golf? How many of you know a man who loves his cats?"

By then, the class had figured out that

Alina's granddad was the mystery reader, and he read "The Night Before Christmas."

Gornick said she loves volunteering because "it's a whole different way to participate." She added, "There's no lesson plans to do — you just show up. It's a wonderful thing to do. You are given a choice of volunteer job, and I chose the library even though I had never checked out a book.

"It was pretty exciting. I took a photo of the first kid I checked out a book for, and he thought that was weird. We do everything in the library — help kids find books, show them how to use the Dewey Decimal System on the computer, and show them how to put books back on shelves correctly. It's been fun to see these kids progress with their reading."

Gornick said that she sees her granddaughter "almost every day" during the week anyway and loves taking her granddaughters to visit their great grandmother, so four generations can get together. But Tuesday mornings are extra-special when Alina's class comes into the library.

Gornick encourages everyone to volunteer because they will find something to do that they enjoy, "and here at Deer Creek is a good place to start."

The Deer Creek library is run by mostly volunteers under the supervision of a librarian, according to Deer Creek head secretary Marie-Luise Shockless. "These retired, well-educated volunteers make it possible to provide library service for our students all week long," she said.

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Volunteerism makes the Marx family makes volunteerism

The Marx family volunteers at a father-daughter dance last month at the New Juanita Pohl Center. Pictured from left are; Scott, father; Evan, 15, son; Heidi, mom; and Allie, 12, daughter. Heidi is the special events coordinator for the city of Tualatin.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP
PHOTOS: JAIME VALDEZ



VOLUNTEERING TOGETHER IS JUST SOMETHING THEY DO

By **CAITLIN FELDMAN**
Pamplin Media Group

Heidi Marx grew up volunteering with her family and never thought much of it. Volunteering together was just something they did. So when she had her own children, it seemed natural that she'd instill volunteerism in them, too.

"I love volunteering!" said

12-year-old Allie Marx. "I love that it involves me with doing different things."

Allie, a sixth grader at Hazelbrook Middle School, has been helping her mom alongside her 15-year-old brother, Evan, for years. Heidi is the special events coordinator for the city of Tualatin, and her kids and husband Scott often work behind the scenes to help make sure everything runs smoothly. "Our volunteering world re-

volves around Heidi," Scott said, laughing.

But even so, the Marx family as a whole finds its niche within each event and the community organizations it spends time volunteering at. For several years, their most frequent stop has been the Tualatin School House Pantry. It started as a phone call on a whim to see if the nonprofit needed help, and it's turned into a monthly endeavor ever since for Heidi, Allie and Evan. A sophomore at Tualatin High School, Evan was even made a student board member because of his dedication and involvement. "I've learned a lot about some

of the different statistics and the fine print — how the food pantry works and things like that — things you don't normally see when you're in there volunteering," said Evan of his board member experience so far. "I love meeting the people; it's such a great community. All the people that volunteer are so nice, and I love hanging out with them and working with them."

Though Evan and Allie have grown up volunteering, their parents have been careful to make sure that they don't post or brag about their good deeds on social media. Doing so, said Heidi, often detracts from the

"I've learned a lot about some of the different statistics and the fine print — how the food pantry works and things like that — things you don't normally see when you're in there volunteering."

— **EVAN MARX, 15,**
Tualatin School House Pantry student board member

act itself, and turns it more into what people think about the good works you've done.

"When they volunteer, I want it to be about who they're helping, and maybe about how it makes them feel about themselves, and not necessarily about how it makes them look to others," Heidi said. "Sometimes, when you start posting things to Facebook and Instagram, all of a sudden, it becomes 'Look how amazing I am.' I really wanted it to be about just how it makes them feel to help other people."

For Evan and Allie, this means that their volunteering take-aways get to be centered around the interactions they have and the relationships they make; it means they can focus on why the work they're doing is important for the community and themselves; and it means that they want to continue volunteering in the future, because their passion for good works extends beyond the surface level.

"You think about volunteering and you just go and do your part, but how it really affects the people around you and how you make a difference — it's pretty cool to kind of see that



Evan Marx, 15, takes a photo during the father-daughter dance last month at the New Juanita Pohl Center.

aspect of it," said Evan.

Heidi said the reason she thinks some individuals and families opt out of volunteering is because they feel like they don't have the time. And if they

haven't volunteered before, they might be nervous about going to a new place and doing something unfamiliar. By instilling volunteerism in their kids at young ages, Scott and

Heidi have helped remove the wall that might have built between them and the community as they got older.

"You're always looking for opportunities to give your chil-

dren good lessons in life: how to be good citizens, good members of the community, and just grow up to be good people with balance and perspective," said Scott. "This is an opportunity."

But aside from just volunteering themselves, the Marx kids learn from their parents' example. They get to see firsthand how their parents balance family, jobs and the rest of their hectic lives while still taking time out to give back to the community.

"I just think that as you go through life, it's important to give back to whatever community you're in and find something that is important to you," said Heidi. "I just think it's good for them to know there's something outside their little world. I think a lot of times, you don't see outside your own little community and the neighborhood that you're in."

But for Evan and Allie, their little worlds include volunteering as a family, and it seems like they'll be doing it for years to come.

"I feel like we kind of connect more," said Allie. "It kind of brings us closer, not only as family members but as friends."

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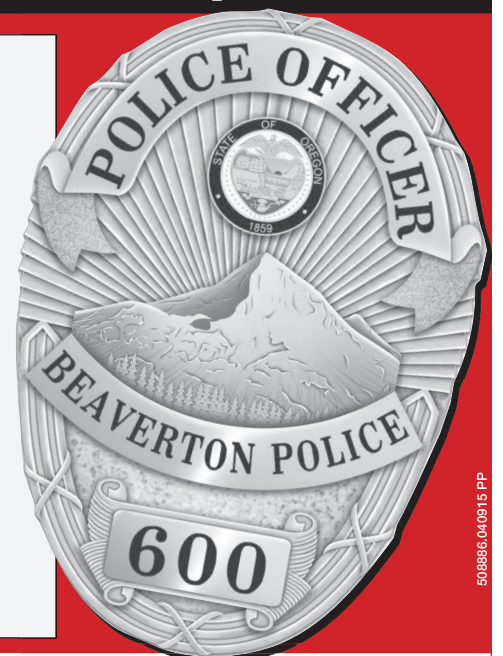
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Tigid Research Librarian Sean Garvey talks about the many resources for studying local genealogy.

TIGARD LIBRARY'S GENEALOGY WORKSHOPS AND LOCAL HISTORY ROOM GIVE PERSPECTIVE

By **GEOFF PURSINGER**
Pamplin Media Group

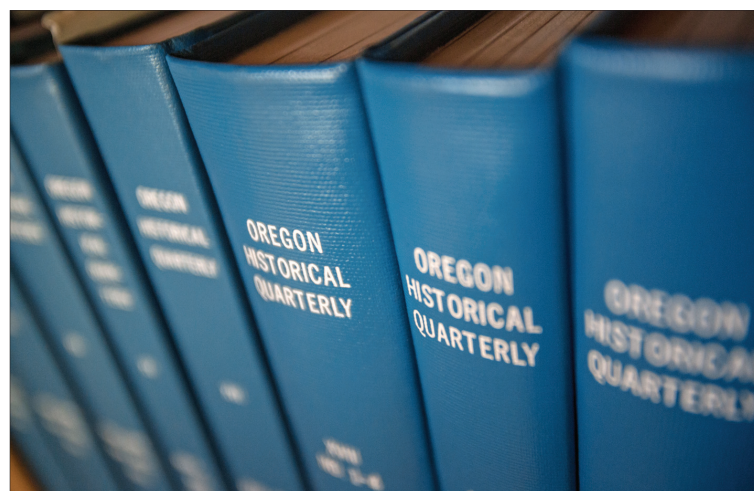
Your family tree is long, and Sean Garvey is here to help you make sense of it. Garvey, a librarian at the Tigid Public Library, is helping families across the city find out more about their family trees through genealogy classes and the library's Local History Room, which collects pieces of Tigid's history.

Genealogy is important, Garvey said, because it helps us understand ourselves.

"You learn so much about where you came from," Garvey said. "We know our parents, we probably know our grandparents, but before that, you probably don't. You're finding out what part of the world you came from. You're finding out stuff your contemporaries don't know about you and filling in the pieces from your family's history."

In May, the library is hosting genealogy workshops to help families learn more about their own family histories, with help from volunteers from the Tualatin Family History Center.

Garvey, an amateur genealogist, has



Tigid Library's Local History Room has many resources to research local genealogy.

been able to trace his family history back 200 years to Ireland and Germany.

"Once they got to America, they spread all over the place," Garvey said. "It's incredible. You're learning more knowledge about yourself and your family's history."

More than just genealogy, the library's collection of local historical documents can help people learn more about, not only their own history, but Tigid's as well.

"Local history and genealogy intersect in

most cases," Garvey said. "Our collection has biographies written by residents who were 70 in the 1930s and 40s, so they remember people here from the 1880s. They knew them personally. Volunteers have written about them from firsthand experience."

The library has Tigid High School yearbooks dating back to the 1920s, and has copies of local newspapers dating back a century.

"I found a Beaverton Times article talk-

ing about coming to Tigid in 1912 and what great roads we had," Garvey said. "They wrote about how what a thriving town Tigid seemed to be. Back in the day, Tigid was isolated before the trains came through."

The library also has information about former Tigid residents who went on to bigger things after moving away.

"One of the early developers of Main Street, Henry Francis Bonesteel, built one of the first brick buildings on Main Street. He went to Salem, where there are parks named after him. His son, who grew up in Tigid, was mayor of Salem in the 1950s. Another original pioneer in Tigid eventually moved to Astoria and became mayor there," Garvey said. "A lot of people got their start in Tigid and went on to better things and we've lost track of them, but they very well could be someone's ancestor here in town."

The Local History Room is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 4 p.m., and by appointment throughout the week, Garvey said.

"I can help with research and show you our resources," he said.

For more information about the Local History Room, call 503-718-2517.

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HOME IS WHERE YOU FIND IT for Winterhawks players

By **ERIC APALATEGUI**
Pamplin Media Group

Here's a tweak on an old joke — what if you were at a family dinner and a hockey game broke out?

Kendra Robin, now in her third year of hosting members of the Portland Winterhawks at her Cedar Mill home, can answer that question better than most.

"You've got to be a little crazy to do this," she said. "I'm a pretty tough cookie. I can keep them in line."

She and husband Phil aren't exactly newbies to the hockey world, having grown up around Edmonton in Alberta, Canada. As a girl, her own family also hosted out-of-town hockey players as a home away from home, known as a billet.

Plus, the Robins already had younger boys of their own who played hockey on junior-level teams, the same level as the Winterhawks.

"I thought they would be good role models for our kids," added Phil Robin, who also grew up playing the game.

The Robins started this season with two Winterhawks defensemen from Minnesota, Nick Heid, 17, and Blake Heinrich, 20. They then added a third in Evan Weinger, also 17, and a forward from suburban Los Angeles. Weinger started the season staying with an Aloha billet family but moved in with the Robins in part to be close to Sunset High School, where he attends classes with Heid and several other teammates.

Heinrich, a 2013 draft pick of the Washington Capitals, takes some college courses but largely focuses on hockey after missing his chance to play some pre-season games in the National Hockey League due to a concussion last year.

Adding those three young men doubled the number of "sons" in the Robins' large home. Their own boys are Kyle,



■ CEDAR MILL'S PHIL AND KENDRA ROBIN WELCOME WINTERHAWKS INTO THEIR HOME



PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ

15; Bryce, 12; and Chase, who wanted it known that he would turn 10 in April. Kyle plays for the Varsity Winterhawks in addition to the junior team.

All Winterhawks players live

in billets, and the high-school aged players are generally assigned to homes near Sunset and Milwaukie high schools where they attend classes.

Moving in with a billet family

takes some adjustment, but the players appreciate being part of a larger family, especially one like the Robin household that comes with built-in younger brothers.

"It's way better living with a family," said Heinrich, who said he feels like an older brother for the first time in his life after growing up with an older sister in Cambridge, Minn., north of Minneapolis. "It's good. I like it a lot. They definitely keep me busy."

"I don't miss home as much. I can easily distract myself with these guys," Heid agreed. "I pretty much do everything with them."

Even after hurting his shoulder and having season-ending surgery, Heid stuck it out in Beaverton rather than returning home to Fridley, Minn., outside Minneapolis.

"It makes things a lot more interesting," said Bryce Robin, whose friends "think it's pretty cool, the ones that know, but I don't go around telling people."

"It's pretty cool that we have more people to play knee hockey with," said his younger brother, Chase.

The Robins had two other players during their first two seasons as a billet family and grew close to them.

"I had a very hard time when the last two left," Kendra Robin said, sitting around the kitchen table with the players and her two youngest sons. "But you get over it because these guys moved in."

She's the mom figure who assigns chores and gave two of the players their first lessons in laundry. But, when their busy family schedule allows, she's also there cheering with Portland's famously supportive home crowd.

"They're trying so hard out there," she said. "I like that my kids get to see the focus and determination they have."

She celebrates the victories and mourns the injuries, just like the players' own moms, while the players themselves try to make the difficult leap to the National Hockey League.

"I always say," Kendra Robin said. "We don't have dogs or cats. We have hockey players."

ABOVE: Portland Winterhawks' Nick Heid, 17, Blake Heinrich, 20, and Evan Weinger, 17, play knee hockey with their host family. **LEFT:** Kendra Robin has a hockey team of her own to manage with her family and members of the Winterhawks team at her Cedar Mill home. **Pictured from left are Kyle Robin, 15, Phil Robin, Kendra Robin, Winterhawks defenseman Nick Heid, Chase Robin, 9, Winterhawks defenseman Blake Heinrich, 20, Bryce Robin, 12, and Winterhawks forward Evan Weinger.**

The ‘making’ of a high-tech family

■ PCC'S MAKER MOVEMENT IS SPAWNING A CLOSE-KNIT GROUP OF INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS WHO CREATE FUNCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY TOGETHER

By **JAMES HILL**
For Pamplin Media Group

In Portland Community College's MakerSpace lab, it takes a family of students, volunteers and faculty to create ingenious technology that bring ideas to life.

The focus of MakerSpace, a creative lab at PCC's Sylvania Campus (12000 S.W. 49th Ave.), is to break down stereotypes and boundaries by exposing students to topics and skills they might not have considered. Together, they have built a low-cost prosthetic limb, created an aerospace project for a high-altitude balloon launch that could lead to a world record, produced a chemistry project that will allow students to manufacture Aerogel (the lightest human-made substance), and have started to make a 3D BioPrinter.

"These projects are all about getting students out of their comfort zone, being part of a project that needs cross disciplinary skills to complete, and teaching them how to interact with each other in a fun and professional manner," said Reginald Holmes, an electronics engineering instructor and MakerSpace coordinator.

PCC's MakerSpace, thanks to funding by Intel Corp. and donations by other tech companies, offers an opportunity for budding scientists, technologists, engineers, artists and mathematicians to collaborate. PCC's primary lab is at the Sylvania Campus, but thanks to bond construction, MakerSpace labs at PCC's Rock Creek and Southeast campuses are in the works.

"Having a multitude of resources at the fingertips of students — that's exciting," said Janet Rash, Intel's Northwest Region Community Engagement Manager. "The Maker Movement has allowed companies like Intel to get more creative in how they try to attract interest in engineering and technology careers."

Students use the lab's donated 3D printers and scanners, CNC machines, lasers, vinyl cutters, sheet metal tools, plastic injection molder and lone sewing machine to create their projects.

"In just six months of operation, the MakerSpace has grown from an engineering prototyping lab to an innovation studio serving students, faculty and services all across campus," said Gregg Meyer, a member of the electronics engineering faculty. "I couldn't be happier with this progression. Students are getting cool jobs as a direct result of their newly acquired maker skills, faculty members spanning several departments have become friends outside of work, and design-for-good projects like hard drive crushers for e-cycling, and human-powered watering pumps for our community garden are starting to build steam."

The movement at the college has caught the attention of high-profile visitors. Last fall, Congressman Earl Blumenauer visited MakerSpace to witness the lab's innovation. He learned how computer science major Jordan Nickerson, who was born without a left hand, used MakerSpace to fabricate his own prosthetic limb that has moving fingers to better



ABOVE: Ariana Rivera, right, of Century High School shows off a wearable tech hoodie with friends. LEFT: Students Eric Thomas (left) and Jordan Nickerson work together in the Maker Space lab. PHOTOS COURTESY JORDAN NICKERSON

grip objects. Nickerson is now setting up a company to manufacture his model on 3D printing machines for customers at a fraction of what normal prosthetics cost.

Blumenauer also learned about how MakerSpace faculty have hosted workshops, including a Wearable Tech Summer

Camp for 14 westside Latinas. The camp explored the intersection of engineering, design and fashion to the high-schooled girls, showing them how STEM-related fields can be fun. One of the girls was Ariana Rivera, who said she didn't even know this type of technology and collaboration existed.

"To be able to see (the technology) here and how it actually works is really cool," said Rivera, who attends Hillsboro's Century High School. "I know I wanted to do something in the science field, but I wasn't completely sure exactly what it would be. Having this camp has definitely sparked my interest in this area."

That fits perfectly with what Holmes is aiming to have students get out of MakerSpace.

"The MakerSpace fills the role of the trusty, dusty family garage," Holmes added. "This is a magical space that does nothing until it has been transformed into a workshop. All of our friends at Intel, Autodesk and many other local companies come over because they get excited by the impact that this space has on the students."

To learn more about PCC's MakerSpace movement visit: pcc.edu/makerspace.

“In just six months of operation, the MakerSpace has grown from an engineering prototyping lab to an innovation studio serving students, faculty and services all across campus.”

— GREGG MEYER, electronics engineering faculty

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SUBMITTED PHOTO: CHRISTINA LENT

TVF&R Capt. Troy Spisla (left to right), Apparatus Operator John Sconce, Firefighter Galen Hunt and Firefighter Grant Slagle work out of Station 35 in King City.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE A FIRE HOUSE

■ TVF&R CREWS SHARE A TIGHT BOND WHILE ANSWERING THE CALL

By **CHRISTINA LENT**
For Pamplin Media Group

Their 24-hour shift begins at 7 a.m. Some firefighters arrive early to make sure they can fit in a morning workout while others take that time to catch up with the crew coming off the previous shift. Both teams are on

alert during this transition period and prepared to drop whatever they are doing at a moment's notice to answer a service call.

At every one of Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue's 21 career and volunteer fire stations, the first order of business for crews reporting for duty is to check their rigs and stage their gear to make sure they are ready to

roll when an emergency call comes through.

At Station 35 in King City, the four-member team sits down at the table where it shares its meals and morning briefing. Each of them has a usual seat at the table.

"It's exactly like any family," notes Capt. Troy Spisla, who has been assigned to the King City station for 10 of his 16 years with the fire district. "It's the place everyone sits down, and the normal dynamics play out."

As Spisla shuffles a deck of cards, he shares district announcements and outlines the

schedule for the day. Once a hand of cards is dealt and the rules of the game are agreed upon, the crew plays two lively rounds of Rummy to determine who will cook lunch and dinner for the station. The one with the most points left in his hand at the end of each game must decide what is on the menu and prepare the meal later in the shift.

"This is our first chance to sit and catch up with each other," says firefighter Grant Slagle, who has been with TVF&R since February 2014.

It's a chance to take the pulse

of the team and also talk about any district activities, training exercises or public education events they will participate in throughout the day. Of course, all those daily plans have to be flexible because this close-knit group is at the mercy of any bells that may sound in the station. They have to be ready to swiftly shift gears and respond to any emergency call.

In 2014, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue crews responded to 36,133 incident calls in the district's 210-square-mile service area. Of those, 65 percent were for medical concerns, 29 percent



SUBMITTED PHOTO: CHRISTINA LENT

TVF&R Firefighter Galen Hunt mixes up the ingredients for calzone dough as Capt. Troy Spisla and Firefighter Grant Slagle help prep vegetables for Station 35's evening meal. It's tradition for the crew to eat lunch and dinner together.

were public assistance calls, 3 percent were for fires and the remaining 3 percent involved hazardous materials.

In order to provide the high level of service the community has come to expect from TVF&R, crews continuously train and participate in a variety of drills to ensure they are prepared to carry out

whatever is required.

When the crew isn't responding to a call or participating in a training exercise, members of the team carve out time to exercise to meet the physical demands of the job.

Much like families in the communities they serve, they also have chores around

the station. Based on the day of the week, each shift is responsible for a list of tasks from checking, cleaning and maintaining all apparatus to deep cleaning different rooms within the fire house to scrubbing windows and bathrooms and tackling yard work.

"We try to be good neighbors and are always mindful that the station is part of the community," Spisla says. "Just like we try to shield neighbors from noise, we keep the station and grounds looking nice."

During each shift, the crew also makes a trip to the grocery store to purchase food for the day. Each person chips in to cover the cost and contribute to a house fund to buy supplies for the station. Depending on the day and the number of incidents they get called out on, it's not uncommon for their trip to the store to be cut short by dispatch, requiring them to make a second or third trip to complete their shopping.

"We do everything as a group," Spisla says. "Everything we do builds relationships and trust within the team."

"When we are on an emergency incident, we know we can count on one another to get the job done, do what is needed and make sure that everyone goes home at the end of the shift to their family. There's a purpose to everything we do."

It's all a form of team building, adds Apparatus Operator John Sconce, who has worked out of Station 35 for seven out of his 10 years as a career firefighter

with the district. Prior to that, he volunteered with TVF&R and served as a medic in the U.S. Army.

"Firefighters have a tight bond," Sconce says. "We care about each other. We're a family."

"A third of your life is spent in the fire house," adds Firefighter Galen Hunt, who has been with TVF&R since February 2014 and is a second-generation firefighter. "We spend a significant amount of time with each other and get to know each other more intimately than you would in other careers."

In addition to sharing meals, sleeping under the same roof and working under high-stress situations when lives hang in the balance, firefighters share a common bond.

"We all want to help people," Sconce says.

"That's why we all get into this career," adds Slagle. "We want to make a difference in our community. When you're young, you want to do something to make an impact in the world. This is the way we do that."

Around the table, every head nods in agreement.

"Every day is different," Spisla says. "Every call gives us a chance to help someone."

And when the crew is working in unison to save someone's life or property, firefighters can rely on one another, Hunt says.

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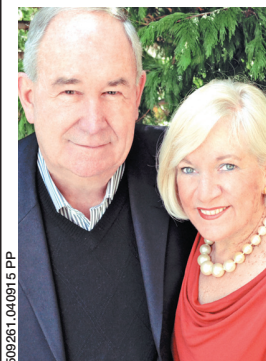
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Growing both family and produce

■ A FARMING FAMILY, THE BAGGENSTOS HAVE BEEN PART OF THE AREA FOR ALMOST 100 YEARS

By GAIL PARK
Pamplin Media Group

For most residents of Southeast Washington County, Baggenstos Farms has been a fixture among Sherwood's rolling hills for almost as long as the rolling hills themselves.

The Baggenstos family has been farming the area since 1919, and while other area farms have been swept away over time by housing developments, the Baggenstos family and its farm have persevered.

Indeed, with so many America's family farms subsumed by corporate farming, Baggenstos Farms has remained, and remained almost uniquely family focused over the long term.

Indeed, all members of the Baggenstos clan are essential in carrying out the demands of farming in today's market. Built upon the foundation set by the family's original settler — the late Joe Baggenstos — the family now includes Joe's son and his wife, their twin sons and their wives and four children.

That 10-member family remains what it has been for years, the backbone of locally grown produce. With 115 acres of its own property and some 85 additional acres of leased property, the family works the land day in and day out, performing many of farm's operations itself. Naturally, Baggenstos family members have cultivated more than just produce — they've also cultivated other families to help them, some that have been part of this business family for 30 years.

At 84, Edward Baggenstos is the family's most experienced farmer. As a youth, he worked the crops alongside his father and two brothers. He and his wife of 59 years, Carol, had twin boys back in 1964, and those twins — Gerry and Jim — have long contributed to farming the fertile landscape that is the family farm. Together, the twins learned from their pop how to sow seeds, work hard, rotate crops, watch weather patterns and keep up with the farm's daily demands.

Tigard natives Jacquie and Darla married the brothers, in 1989 and 1990 respectively, and each family has two children; they still live close to the farm's retail center that also serves as the center of their lives.



Pictured with the farm's tractor are Hailey (in the seat) and Tanna, while standing (left to right) are Darla, Jim, Carol, Edward, Gerry and Jacquie Baggenstos.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTO: GAIL PARK

Girls Tanna, Hailey and Alexa are young and still figuring out what career paths they will travel. Gerry and Jacquie's son Tyler is attending Oregon State University and learning new farming practices and business techniques he may eventually put into play at his family's farm. Tyler, now 20, is majoring in Agricultural Business Management/Crop with a Soil Sciences minor.

The OSU sophomore wants to work with and be with his family, driven by his desire to see the family farm remain a part of the community. It's not only a part of his past, but also where he sees his future.

"I'd hate to see no one continue it after all the hard work of my great grandparents, grandparents, dad and uncle Jim," he said. "I want to work with my dad."

Knowledge passed down through the generations has its advantages. Baggenstos Farms requires the participation of the entire family, and each member has particular duties. Farming is the glue that binds this tightly knit group, and their financial security depends 100 percent on the land.

"We all know our roles," Gerry said. "And we stay out of each others' way."

"We need everybody to work hard to be successful," added Jacquie. "The work comes naturally. The kids see how they can pitch in. It's a natural progres-

sion, rather than us making decisions. ... It takes every last one of us, June through October and December, to manage this farm."

Edward, the family patriarch, still works every day, weather permitting.

Over recent years, as the amount of customers has increased, so has the workload. Originally, Edward believed that adding a retail center was risky and that it took the business in the wrong direction. For decades, the family relied on wholesale demands for potatoes and wheat as the primary drivers of its business. That part of the business continues, but even Edward admits that he was proven wrong over time about the retail center.

"Inviting people onto the farm changed everything," Edward said. "U-pick really helped give the public access to farm-fresh produce."

People come to the farm on Roy Rogers Road as a family excursion. Its bright green fields, fresh air and hand-harvested fruit and vegetables lure crowds each spring and summer.

"Improved high-tech equipment, seeds and chemicals have made farming less labor intensive, increasing our abundance of produce," Jim said.

Jacquie and Darla pay attention to customer requests, resulting in a greater number of berry varieties being planted

and harvested throughout the growing season. And the introduction of fall harvest festivities has begun to include more and more U-pick crops. Acres of pumpkins dot the landscape in October, and hay rides and an elaborate corn maze have become annual affairs.

Despite the many steps forward that Baggenstos Farms has made over the years, there are still many outside pressures on the family. While Sherwood is not within the urban growth boundary, there are rows and rows of homes looming like a photo frame in the distance.

"In order to keep farming, with developments increasingly coming closer and closer to us, we need to be continually attentive to our growth and profits," Edward said. "Our future is measured by the farm store."

As with most business dreams, investing in planning and hard work fuels success.

"Sometimes it feels like we work 100 hours a day," states Jacquie. But "it's paying off for this family."

Times have greatly changed since Edward's parents immigrated through Ellis Island from their Switzerland cattle farm. The horse and buggy that brought them to Oregon are long gone. The hopes and dreams that lured them west, however, continue today among their descendants.

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JACKSONS LIVE 'FAMILY' EVERY DAY

THE FAMILY HAS ADOPTED THREE AND FOSTERED EVEN MORE

By MILES VANCE
Pamplin Media Group

What defines the word “family?” Oh sure. We can look in a dictionary to see stuff like this: “A basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, considered as a group, whether dwelling together or not.”

Beyond that follow a dozen or more variations on the word and its numerous meanings and intonations.

But for Beaverton’s Jackson family, all those definitions seem to fall short.

Charles and Royale Jackson, married now for 18 years, know that their definition of family is a bit bigger than just who gave birth to who and who lives with who.

For the Jacksons, family is about those things, yes, but it’s also about love, commitment, care and mission.

“Family brings you back to knowing that it’s not just about you, and it’s not just about blood,” Royale Jackson said. “For us, family is about who you choose to love in your life.”

And fortunately for a lot of people, the Jacksons have found a number of important people in their lives to love.

The Jackson family currently includes: Charles, 40, a husband and father who works as a financial case manager in the medical field; Royale, 40, a wife and mother who teaches at Emmaus Christian School in Cornelius; adopted son Nick, 17 and a junior at Beaverton High School; daughter Hope, 13 and an eighth grader at Emmaus; adopted son Marcus, 8 and a second grader at Emmaus; foster daughter Erin, 20, who now lives on her own with her own two kids, ages 6 and 9; and up until the end of March, Jun Ito, 20 and a foreign exchange student from Niigata City, located north-west of Tokyo on the Sea of Japan. Ito is working on his pre-veterinary studies as well as his English proficiency.

Japan, it turns out, plays a key role in the unique shape and workings of the Jackson family. Indeed, it turns out to



The Jackson family, including (from left) foreign exchange student Jun Ito, son Nick, father Charles, son Marcus, mother Royale and daughter Hope, make family in all its iterations important.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: MILES VANCE

be the place that Charles — who grew up in eastern New Jersey near Philadelphia — and his eventual wife, herself a native of West Linn, first lived together after getting married.

But getting there, both literally and figuratively, took a bit of doing for both Jacksons.

For Charles, the journey to Japan came about this way. Growing up in New Jersey, he initially planned on joining the Naval Academy, but as he grew up, he grew close to an older couple in his neighborhood who pastored a church in Tsukuba, Japan.

He made his first trip to Japan with that couple at age 16, loved his time there and decided he wanted to go back. Later, during his college career at Furman University — he graduated from

Furman with a degree in Japanese — he got his chance, returning to Japan when he went on a foreign study to Osaka.

Royale, meanwhile, dates her fascination with Japan to age 12, when she met a Japanese girl at summer camp. While

her summer camp friend spoke no English, the two still found ways to communicate and have fun together, and upon her return home, Royale told her mother “I’m going to go to Japan and my mom said ‘OK.’ That’s the way I am — when I make up my mind about something, look out.”

She finally made her long-anticipated journey east thanks to a Rotarian scholarship that she received during her college years at Pacific University. She was able to continue her education as the only American at a Catholic school in Niigata City (a bustling city of 800,000) where she became fluent in Japanese in just three months.

Charles and Royale met later in Osaka, eventually got engaged, flew back to Oregon for their wedding, then returned to Japan where Royale had been hired by the national department of education to teach English in Ojiya (population 40,000) at its 4-5 junior high schools.

Their family’s Japanese roots help explain part of the interesting extension they’ve built onto their family tree. Since both are fluent in Japanese, they have long hosted Japanese exchange students through Royale’s business NOES — the Niigata-Oregon Exchange Society. In to-

tal, the Jacksons have hosted some 20 students at their home over the course of their marriage, with stays usually measuring from three months to two years.

Her business offers Japanese students the chance to come to the United States and learn English more inexpensively than some other programs, and also helps expand the Jackson family tree a bit.

But the Jacksons’ commitment to family goes well beyond just home stays for foreign exchange students. Following up on a long-term commitment by Royale’s mother — she fostered some 400 children (many of them medically fragile) in her home as Royale grew up — the Jacksons have done their small part to make the world more family friendly, too.

First came Nick, who had lived as a foster child with Royale’s mom since the age of 3 months.

“We just loved him,” Royale said of Nick. “He was 10 months old when we met him and 14 months when the adoption was final.”

Daughter Erin followed soon after as a foster child in the Jackson household, beginning when she was 11, and even though she came and went a couple

“Family brings you back to knowing that it’s not just about you, and it’s not just about blood. For us, family is about who you choose to love in your life.”

— ROYALE JACKSON



Nick Jackson has a real love of basketball, a love he shares with both his younger brother Marcus and his father Charles.

times as a youngster, she's known as "the foster child who never left." While never formally adopted by the Jacksons, Erin is a member of the family in every way that can't be confirmed by a blood test or legal papers.

Daughter Hope — the Jacksons' lone biological child (she describes herself as

her parents' "good egg") — was born two years later on Erin's 13th birthday and sometimes babysits for Erin's two boys.

Son Marcus was the latest addition to the Jackson family, adopted back in January of 2013 after Charles and Royale were approached about him by a fellow

member of their church, Beaverton's Southwest Hills Baptist Church.

Each of their family additions have come from intentional, faith-based choices, with Marcus' arrival following right on the heels of a miscarriage by Royale.

"We've never gone to an adoption agency," Royale said. "Each time, God brought them to us,"

"We met them and we knew they were for us," added Charles, a former youth pastor who teams with Royale to teach adult education classes at Southwest Hills. "We always planned on adopting, and after we met both our sons, we decided to adopt them."

Beyond their commitment to family in its many iterations, the Jacksons have

extended their hands even further into the world, fostering greyhounds in their home to acclimate them to people, save them from destruction and set the table for them to find permanent homes.

While the dogs are more of a fun commitment, they shine a light on the giving nature of the Jackson family as a whole.

"What's kept us together is our like-mindedness," Royale said. "As human beings, we know that our lives aren't just about us."

"The purpose of the family — we talk about that a lot at church," Charles said. "I've heard it said that family matures men, nurtures children and protects women — family, marriage and kids mature people."

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■ A BEAVERTON COUPLE OPENS THEIR HOME TO A HOMELESS TEEN

By **KATHY KWONG**
For Pamplin Media Group

Mike Schlabach said his wife, Jodi Rathbun, asked a really smart question before they opened up their home to a homeless student from Beaverton.

At the time, 16-year-old “Manny” (he asked that his complete name not be used), a Beaverton high school student, had been living with a family friend, sleeping on the floor of the son’s bedroom and paying what he could with his part-time job at Burger King. When work coupled with school became too much, he quit. Manny couldn’t pay and had to leave.

Now, with no family or relatives nearby and on the brink of eviction, Manny turned to teachers and counselors at his high school who connected him to the Second Home program. The non-profit organization works with the Beaverton School District to place homeless youth with volunteer home-providers, giving students a place to live while they finish their high school education.

The program has a very structured background check and application process that requires both student and home-provider to meet with a facilitator and discuss contract agreements, guidelines, expectations, and any other questions or concerns before a student is placed with a family.

During their meeting with the facilitator, Rathbun asked Man-

ny “if he just wanted a room to stay in, or if he was wanting more of a family life.” He pondered the question for a minute, and then, to Rathbun’s relief, he responded that he needed more of a family life.

“That put us in a different position (besides) just being a roof. It was filling a need on both ends,” said Schlabach.

At Manny’s request, the school then contacted Rathbun to discuss grades, records and not his father who is currently living in another state.

“The program isn’t just advertised to all the kids at school,” said Rathbun. Teachers and counselors are informed about the program and refer those in need to organizations such as Second Home.

“With Mike being a teacher, you really get a different perspective. Teachers really get to know the kids in their class. They get to know who the good kids are.”

Armed with that information, the couple took a chance.

They allowed Manny into their home even before his background check cleared.

There were challenges, though. English was not Manny’s first language, and in the beginning, it was difficult for both the student and family. Since then, however it has worked out for Manny, Rathbun, Schlabach and the couple’s 8-year-old daughter Mary, who attends a Spanish immersion charter school.

It has been two years since that risk-taking day. Manny is

“We don’t have teens, so we had to turn to our friends with teens and ask them if some things were normal.”

— **JODI RATHBUN**



ABOVE: Host parent Mike Schlabach and his daughter Mary play the piano.

LEFT: Jodi Rathbun, daughter Mary and Mike Schlabach have opened their home through the Second Home program.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: JONATHAN HOUSE

now a high school senior leaning toward a career in teaching and politics. He works at the Oregon Zoo, and also plays football and rugby. He has tested out of ESL and volunteers at Rathbun’s and Schlabach’s daughter’s school.

“He works very well with children and she really looks at him as her big brother,” said Rathbun.

When Manny first arrived at the Beaverton couple’s home, he had dreams of being a cook. Asked if he had interest in attending culinary school, he couldn’t even distinguish the difference between a chef and a cook.

College was obviously not on Manny’s bucket list. Indeed, prior to living with Rathbun

and Schlabach, high school wasn’t even much of a priority. Teachers told the couple that Manny showed up when he wanted and his attendance was very inconsistent.

“Now, getting up and getting ready for school have become more important for him,” said Rathbun.

Rathbun said one of the challenges for them was getting “plopped into teenager status” as parents.

“We don’t have teens, so we had to turn to our friends with teens and ask them if some things were normal.”

For his part, Manny was used to living a very independent lifestyle.

“Even when he was in Mexico, he did what he wanted, when he

wanted,” said Schlabach.

Despite the bumps in the road they’ve traveled together, the couple is happy to have provided a safe and stable family environment for Manny. They talk to him about college and help him with taxes and finances.

“All these were things that nobody was going to care if he did or not ... (he) had to consistently worry about where food was coming from and whether there was a roof over his head,” said Rathbun.

“These are good kids. Kids who are put in a circumstance they have no control over and they just deserve a chance.”

For more information on the Second Home program, please visit emoregon.org/second-home.php.

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A student leader — and one family's 'GUARDIAN ANGEL'

■ THE PCC ROCK CREEK STUDENT IS FIRST IN HIS FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE

By JANIS NICHOLS AND KATE CHESTER
For Pamplin Media Group

In addition to being a student leader at Portland Community College, Angel Camacho, 20, leads by example for his family. "I'm the first in my family to attend college, and I'm on track to finish my business and accounting studies at PCC this spring," he said. "After that I'll go to Portland State University to get my bachelor's degree in business administration."

That kind of drive is what now motivates Camacho's younger brother, 15, and sister, 12, to think about their future college paths. It's what inspired his cousin's wife to enroll in English for Speakers of Other Languages courses at PCC. And it's what has moved Camacho's father to tears of pride.

Born in Mexico City, Camacho ran away from his mother's house when he was 7 years old. He was homeless for a year before his father took him in. Two years later, father and son moved to the United States, which would usher in transformational changes neither could have anticipated.

Camacho admits that initially he was indifferent to learning. However, the "light bulb" turned on when a friend tipped him off to the Early College High School Program, a partnership between PCC and the Beaverton School District. Camacho could take his high school coursework at PCC's Rock Creek Campus (17705 N.W. Springville Rd.), full time and earn his high school diploma and college credit at the same time. Camacho enrolled, and in 2013, he graduated from Sunset High School — with 55 college credits already tallied.

This was the first in a string of unexpected gifts Camacho received. The second came from the President of the United States, who announced a series of executive actions focused



SUBMITTED PHOTO: JAMES HILL

Angel Camacho, a PCC student and Sunset High grad, is working his way toward a degree in accounting.

on illegal immigration. One of President Obama's directives expanded eligibility for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The shift meant that people of any age who entered the U.S. prior to age 16 and had lived here continuously since Jan. 1, 2010, would have their authorization to work extended from two to three years.

For Camacho, the change means he is now documented with two years remaining on his current work permit. And after that, he can reapply, making him eligible for an additional three years.

"What the President did takes away a lot of stress, and I have more confidence in my future," said Camacho, whose dream has always been to support his father who has worked since the age of 13.

It was the launch of the family's painting and restoration business that led to Camacho's third gift — one of opportunity.

The plan was that Camacho's father and older brother would focus on construction, while Camacho would lend

his energy to running the business once he finished his studies. A business license was required, however, which meant that one of the three had to take a written test that was both challeng-

ing and expensive. Exam questions stemmed from an extensive, thick manual. Out of 800 possible questions, 80 would be selected for the exam but there was no way of knowing which 80 would be included. Proficiency in English was key, and since Camacho's father and brother were not prepared, it meant the accounting student had a manual to read and digest.

"I took the test on a Tuesday and failed," recalled Camacho. "My dad asked if I thought I could pass it, and I told him I would try again."

"Two days later, I took the test a second time, and this time I passed. I went to see my dad at his work site to give him the news. When I told him I'd passed, he cried," he said.

Since arriving at PCC, Camacho has been an inspiration to his classmates, faculty and staff. He is the 2014-2015 director of campus affairs for the Associated Students of PCC at the Rock Creek campus, and also serves as a presidential student ambassador, attending a variety of college-wide events.

When advising would-be PCC students, Camacho urges them to "take advantage of every opportunity, especially those focused on leadership. You'll have the support you need, and the experience will give you confidence that will help you long after graduation."

It is advice Camacho has taken to heart — for the benefit of both himself and his family.

Trailers, fun and family forge Curtis Trailers line

By ERIC APALATEGUI
Pamplin Media Group

In the wake of World War II, veteran Myron Curtis and his bride Betty Lou arrived in Portland and bought a 16-foot travel trailer as their first home.

They soon upgraded to a larger trailer and then bought and refurbished a few more used trailers to sell. Within a couple of years after arriving, a business was born. Now, nearly 70 years later, the late couple's children and grandchildren still run Curtis Trailers locations in Aloha and Portland. The dealership was recently recognized as one of the best on the continent.

Counting Myron's father, Edgar Curtis, who helped his son in the early years, four generations have worked for Curtis Trailers, with another set of youngsters currently growing up.

"None of this would've happened without" Myron and Betty Lou Curtis, said Sherwood resident Kory Goetz, a grandson who oversees the parts department at the Aloha location. "We spent a lot of time with our grandparents."

"We grew up working in the business at a young age," said Cammy Pierson, the founders' daughter and current company president. "Being a family business, our name is on the business. It's always been an important aspect of it. That was the way my parents approached it."

In all, eight of the 11 members of Myron and Betty Lou's second and third generations currently work in the family business. Among them are Carley Schriever, Pierson's sister who works in accounting, and Carley's husband Bob Schriever, the company's chief executive officer.

But Pierson, who lives in West Linn, and Goetz emphasize that the company's entire workforce — some 120 people depending on the season — are like members of an extended family. A good number have worked for the company for many years, including some who have spent decades there and several in key roles, including general managers at both the Aloha and Portland locations.

Many members of that "extended family" got together in February for a giant bowling party the company hosted to celebrate after RVBusiness magazine honored Curtis Trailers among its "Top 50" dealerships in

"I took the test a second time, and this time I passed. I went to see my dad at his work site, to give him the news. When I told him I'd passed, he cried."

— ANGEL CAMACHO



PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP: JAIME VALDEZ

Cammy Pierson, Curtis Trailers' company president, and Kory Goetz of Sherwood, stand inside a trailer on the grounds of the Aloha dealership.

North America for excellence. It's also one of the larger dealerships in the U.S., according to Goetz and Pierson.

The company has always specialized in non-motorized campers, including a wide assortment of trailers as well as pickup campers. They left the motor homes to others.

"We're travel trailer people," Pierson explained. "It's our little niche. That's what we're known for. That's what we're good at."

Early on, Myron Curtis, who stayed active in the business for many years, tried building his own trailer model but eventually settled on selling products from other manufacturers.

While Myron and Betty Lou started the business in Portland and the company has always had a location there, in the 1960s, they decided there was a bright future on the west side as well. They bought property that would become part of their current west-side dealership at 21525 S.W. Tualatin Valley Hwy.

Curtis Trailers grew slowly into its Aloha location, early on operating from the old house that came with the land before finally adding a large building during the economic boom of the 1990s.

And while the recent Great Recession thinned the ranks of RV makers and sellers, Curtis Trailers survived with some belt-tightening and its reliance on a full range of service that helps them win repeat customers and referrals, Pierson said.

Some dealers are largely in business to sell new RVs, but sales of new and used trailers and other campers makes up

slightly less than half (45 percent) of Curtis Trailers' income. Together, the company's service department (30 percent) and sales of parts (25 percent) comprise more than half of its total business.

Goetz said the lessons of his grandparents stick with today's generation of company leaders.

"If you're going to be in the business, it was very important that you work as hard as you can to support the business and take care of your customers," he said. "We're far from perfect, but we're always trying to do the right thing."

The company has rebounded to pre-recessionary levels, and Goetz said this January and February were the best winter months in company history, thanks both to an improving economy and a good dose of spring-like weather. Their early-season lot is packed with trailers in anticipation of the always-busy spring season.

"Everybody really starts getting the itch," said Goetz, who counts himself among them. "All of my best memories as a kid are camping trips."

The recession did leave a lasting mark, though, as many customers now choose less expensive trailers that are light enough to pull without a heavy-duty tow vehicle. The lean years also served as a reminder that they work in a business that is going to feel the bumps of a bad economy more than many others, and they must keep focused on serving customers to survive.

"We're selling fun," Pierson said. "This is discretionary income."

“We're travel trailer people. It's our little niche. That's what we're known for. That's what we're good at.”

— CAMMY PIERSON, company president



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PHOTOS, COMPUTERS AND MUSIC, OH MY!

It's the Windheims

THE SHERWOOD FAMILY GOES ALL IN FOR CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS

By **RAY PITZ**
Pamplin Media Group

“There are basically two types of people. People who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things. The first group is less crowded.” — Mark Twain

If Mark Twain's quote on creativity holds true, then Sherwood's Windheim family is in that first group, collectively sharing their talents in endeavors such as cooking, computer software, photography, engineering and music.

That family includes Angie Windheim, her husband Brian, and sons Ben, Joe and Sam, who all live on a rural farmette they share with an assortment of goats, a bunny, chickens, a dog and a cat.

The family's creative edge is displayed in Angie's booming photography business (and food blog), the fact that boys just cut their first album, and Brian's tech savvy.

A journalism major at the University of Oregon, Angie was editor of her high school newspaper and also worked for the Daily Emerald, the U of O's student newspaper. Her first job out of college was working in corporate public relations for Intel.

While she enjoyed that setting, it also created a stressful work environment. She fell in love with photography about six years ago after shooting senior graduation photos of a friend's daughter. The business — Angie Windheim Photography — steadily grew and later took off.

“I photographed over 50 clients for the Class of 2015,” she said. “It's been so much fun.”

In addition, Angie started her own food blog, eatingwithangie.com, four years ago.

A bona fide “foodie,” Angie said the blog not only allows her to create her own recipes but also allows her to share and show off her food photography.

Along the way, she's discovered she loves the feedback the blog provides.

“It's really fun when you hear someone say, ‘I made that pasta salad. It was really good,’” she said.

While Angie handles activities normally attributed to the right side of the



COURTESY OF ANGIE WINDHEIM

The Windheim family of Sherwood is into numerous creative endeavors, each family member possessing a variety of skills and talents. They are, from left, Ben Brian, Joe, Angie and Sam. That's the family's cat, Smokey at the end.

brain, her husband Brian seems to have cornered left brain endeavors.

A software architect with Fiserv, which provides technology for the financial world (in fact, he was away on a business trip during this interview), Brian configured the family's home using a computer-aided design program. In addition, he has designed and built some of the family's furniture.

Angie admits that the family's musical talent likely comes from Brian, who she says has the ability to pick up an instrument and play almost anything.

“He just has the ear,” she said.

Brian's sons seem to have picked up on that musical ability in a big way.

Ever since he picked up the guitar at a young age, 18-year-old Ben Windheim has been intrigued with music. He's continued that fascination, noting that during the Guitar Hero video game heyday, playing the guitar became “extremely cool.”

That excitement with music eventually led the Sherwood High School student to form a band, The Macks, a trio that includes himself, his 15-year-old brother Joe and friend Sam Fulwiler, another Sherwood High School student. The band recently released its freshman effort, the digital album “Nightcrawler.” The alternative blues/rock album contains eight songs.

“I'm very pleased with it,” said Ben,

who not only plays guitar on the record but also bass, keyboards and harmonica. He even throws in a sound effect involving a bowl of water and an empty cup.

Beyond all that, the album also displays Ben's technical knowledge and ability.

“I've gotten pretty close to a professional quality recording just with the equipment I have,” he noted.

Now, he plans on expanding his talent by taking voice lessons.

Creatively, both Ben and Fulwiler work well together, and Ben's brother Joe rounds out the band with his unique style of drumming, said Ben.

“Being in The Macks with Ben and Sam is great because I get to perform and record original songs,” said Joe.

Joe, too, has been into music for many years, previously playing in both his middle school and high school jazz bands. He recently picked up the ukulele, rapidly improving to the point where he can now belt out a solid rendition of Beck's “Blue Moon” on the instrument. His musical tastes lean toward The Strokes and Cage the Elephant.

“I love the rawness of the new album,” he said about Nightcrawler. “It's just gui-

tar, drums and bass. No crazy electronic effects.”

Last but not least, the youngest of the Windheim boys, Sam, 12, (not to be confused with band member Sam Fulwiler), pitched in on the album as well, playing drums on the album's 59-second interlude “Hummus.”

Ben said his friends were impressed when he told them that the drumming on the short song came from to Sam, who attends Laurel Ridge Middle School.

For his part, Ben readily admits that both of his brothers are “fantastic drummers.”

For the future, Ben hopes to attend Oregon State University or the University of Oregon. If he chooses the former, he's interested in environmental engineering. Either way, he hopes to continue his focus on music.

Ben's other activities include working with Sherwood High's 3D printer and laser cutter (he's currently helping design an electric guitar), and appearing as a contestant in the Mr. Bowman contest at Sherwood High. The popular annual contest raises money for Doernbecher Children's Hospital.

In addition to music, Ben plays varsity baseball and is team captain on the Sherwood High soccer team.

Meanwhile, Joe's sports activities include running track and playing on the junior varsity soccer team.

Like Ben, Joe is also interested in engineering and also wants to keep music in the forefront, though he pointed out, “music is obviously a harder career to get into.”

Sam's activities include soccer, baseball and basketball. He also frequently takes to Instagram to record trick ball and Frisbee shots. In

addition, he can often be found creating elaborate and complicated Rube Goldberg-type gadgets, which sometimes involve the intricate use of falling dominos to create a task.

“My Rube Goldberg contraptions are elaborate and really fun to watch. They keep me entertained when I can't be outside,” Sam said. “Sometimes I get an idea and can build it in 20 minutes, and other times it will take all afternoon.”

To hear or purchase The Macks' debut album, visit TheMacks.bandcamp.com.





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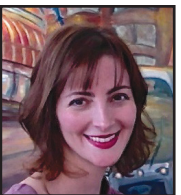
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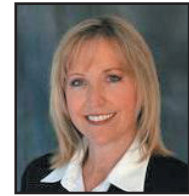
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e-PRO: Internet and Technical
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GRI: Graduate, Realtor Institute
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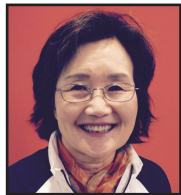
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The look of the ambulances at Metro West Ambulance may have changed over the years, but the family behind the company — led by current owner and President J.D. Fuiten — has remained the same.
COURTESY METRO WEST AMBULANCE

Metro West Ambulance saves lives, WORKS AS A FAMILY

HELPING OTHERS HAS LONG BEEN A MOTIVATOR, COMMITMENT

By **SCOTT KEITH**
For Pamplin Media Group

You see their slick emergency vehicles every day in the county. They may even make a cameo appearance, now and then, on the hit NBC television series “Grimm.”

Family-owned Metro West Ambulance has been serving Beaverton, western Oregon and Southwest Washington for decades, but what you may not know is the impressive family history behind the Hillsboro-based firm.

Metro West’s origins can be traced back to World War II veteran James B. Fuiten. According to his son, J.D., who is Metro West’s owner and president, his father graduated from mortuary college in 1947. James B. Fuiten moved to Lebanon, Oregon, from California to do his apprenticeship. He also served as deputy coroner for Linn County from 1947-1952.

Eventually, James and his wife, moved to Forest Grove and built their first mortuary. J.D. Fuiten recalled that the Lebanon mortuary, where his father had done his apprenticeship and was a part owner, also featured an ambulance service.

“He thought that was a good feature that he should do, since there was no other ambulance service in Forest Grove,” J.D. Fuiten said.

From 1963-1973, the company was called Fuiten’s Ambulance Service. In 1973, James B. Fuiten combined Fuiten’s and Butler’s ambulance service, giving birth to the company’s new name — Metro West Ambulance.

J.D. Fuiten came on board in 1978 “as the boss’s son,” but in his first couple of years at Metro West, had to learn the ropes and became an EMT when he was in high school.

“In order to get re-certified, I had to go through the EMT program again — during that period of time, it was pretty well a



Metro West Ambulance President J.D. Fuiten said that “Everybody deserves good service and good care.”

COURTESY METRO WEST AMBULANCE

major commitment 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” he said.

“The benefit you have from the family connection, in the business aspect, is you didn’t have to start from zero,” J.D. said. “There was something there to work with. It may not have been very substantial and it may not have been very polished, but you had something to work with.”

Erin Miller, vice president of business development at Metro West Ambulance, took note of the rich family history at Metro West.

“Nepotism is alive and well here, because there’s lots of family members,” Miller said.

able to do is keep that family feel,” Miller said. “Yet we’re very progressive. He sits on the National Ambulance Board. We’re nationally accredited. Our tag line is ‘Nationally accredited, locally owned.’”

The EMS Week barbecue in May is one way for the Metro West family to get together and enjoy fun times.

“It’s a family event,” Miller pointed out. “It has turned into kind of a carnival. We rent the big slides. Sometimes we’ll do a pie-eating contest. We do some kind of funky (old-fashioned) things like that. People love it.”

These days, Metro West has the 911 contract for emergency ambulance service in Washington County. Metro West also provides a large non-emergency ambulance business and wheel chair service for the metropolitan area. Metro West also owns Medix Ambulance, which serves Clatsop County.

At Metro West Ambulance, J.D. Fuiten’s goal is to serve families, both big and small.

He said, “Everybody deserves good service and good care. I just think that we’re privileged enough to be in a position to do that.”

“Many, many employees here have spouses work here, children work here, parents work here.”

In fact, you’ll find former employees sending their youngsters to work at Metro West Ambulance.

“They come up and they start at the very base position here,” Miller said. “They become EMTs and they work their way up through the company. We’ve seen that over and over again because family is really important.”

Miller said when she started working with J.D. Fuiten, almost 20 years ago, Metro West was more provincial.

“I think what J.D. has been

Fur, friends, family and fun — AND SOME MORE FUR

■ VOLUNTEERS AT OREGON DOG RESCUE COMMITTED TO THEIR MISSION

By **CAITLIN FELDMAN**
Pamplin Media Group

When strangers walk by the dog play rooms at Oregon Dog Rescue, the collective barking is incessant. When the dedicated staff and volunteers walk by — silence. Tails wag and love ensues as the dogs hurry to be the first for a snuggle. Before long, Community Relations Director Nancy Truax is surrounded by dogs, in her lap, by her side and vying for just a little more adoration.

“When you can combine your passion and serve the community, it’s amazing,” she said. “I mean, there’s nothing that could be more rewarding than doing community service tied into something that you really care about, and this is it for us.”

Oregon Dog Rescue was founded in 2007, and several years ago moved into its current home at 6700 S.W. Nyberg Street in Tualatin. While it’s already outgrowing its space, president and co-founder Debra Bowen said it’s still a lot better than in the beginning. Back then, all of ODR’s rescued dogs had to be fostered out of staff and volunteer homes. Today, the nonprofit can care for up to 50 grown dogs on site, and averages about 20 puppies in foster homes throughout the surrounding communities.

“We’re here as a resource for homeless dogs,” Bowen said. “We do whatever it takes to get the dogs ready, so that — of course — is a lot of time and hard work.”

The first step in getting the



dogs ready is simply getting them to the shelter. Many of Oregon Dog Rescue’s dogs come from California, a state that Truax said has a high euthanasia rate. By working with organizations such as Shelter Transport Animal Rescue Team, the dogs arrive in Tualatin, and from there are given whatever they need. Whether it’s getting shots, having surgery, being spayed or neutered, getting groomed or simply loved, Oregon Dog Rescue works hard to make sure the animals it takes in are adoption-ready.

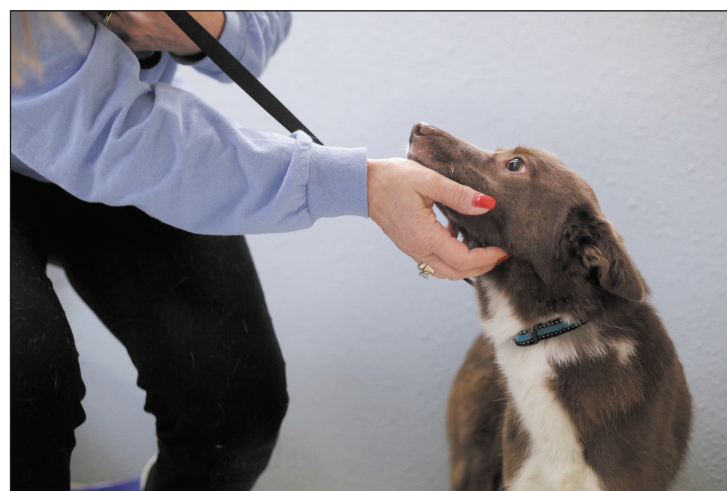
All of this work is done by five part-time employees, one full-time employee, about 20 dedicated volunteers and help

ABOVE: Oregon Dog Rescue’s Nancy Truax says hello to some of the dogs at Oregon Dog Rescue. **RIGHT:** Amber gets some love from Nancy Truax at Oregon Dog Rescue in Tualatin.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTO: JONATHAN HOUSE

from various partner organizations. For the staff and volunteers, it involves a lot of time together and coordination to ensure the dogs are cared for as well as they possibly can be.

“Over the last two years, there have been 1,000 adoptions. And since the beginning, over 3,000,” said Truax, who began volunteering with the shelter a couple months after it was founded. “To watch them grow from five dogs in



their own houses, to having hundreds and hundreds of adoptions a year and having

gotten thousands of dogs out, it’s just really exciting to watch.”

But, the only way any of it happens is through the tightly knit group of people who work day in and day out to keep the dogs healthy and happy. They share the same passion, and because of that, end up building relationships — not just with the dogs, but with each other.

“They’re friends. They’re not just volunteers,” said Bowen. “It’s really closer than a family sometimes, actually.”

One of these dedicated volunteers and friends is Kathryn Maas, who spends hours every week doing everything from cleaning out the kennels and mopping up the floors to just holding and petting the dogs.

“It’s not always easy to find people who are passionate, reliable and good at what we do,” said Truax. “(Kathryn) comes here and she does the hard work. ... Those are the people that we really rely on. And for them, there’s no glory in that. They do it because they love it. They love the dogs. They love what they’re doing, and they know they’re helping those dogs find homes.”

Bowen, who came into animal rescue from the real estate field, said that even though the organization has grown bigger than can be comprehend-

ed at times, it remains worth it through the long hours and late nights.

“I just think if you’re not doing what you love, you shouldn’t be doing it,” she said. “Ultimately, you look back and think, ‘Gee. How many real estate deals did I have in 1987?’ That, to me, is not that important. But if I think about how many dogs found a home in 2007, that’s different.”

Truax agreed, though she works her fair share of long days and late nights, too.

“We’re all really passionate about what we do, and when it’s something like that, you can’t stop,” she said. “It’s answering the phone as you’re walking out the door and there’s someone saying ‘I have to find a home for my dog.’ Whatever it is, there’s always that one last thing.”

Based on the passion and dedication of Truax and Bowen, it seems that even as the organization grows, it will probably always find “one last thing” to take care of and

make better before a new day begins. Going forward, they just hope they’ll encounter more like-minded people along the way.

“We need more family members,” said Truax. “We always want our family to grow.”

“They’re friends. They’re not just volunteers. It’s really closer than a family sometimes, actually.”

— **DEBRA BOWEN,**
Oregon Dog Rescue president and co-founder

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KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

THE TIGARD COUNSELOR HELPS STRUGGLING FAMILIES FIND THEIR FOOTING

By **GEOFF PURSINGER**
Pamplin Media Group

Julie Russell sits in a chair in her Tigard office, her legs crossed. On the table next to her is a board game.

“The Talking, Feeling & Doing Game” the box reads. “A psychotherapeutic game for Children.”

Russell is a family counselor, meeting with stressed couples and children battling anxiety, depression or other mental health issues.

Russell has worked in therapy for the better part of a decade, converting an abandoned dental office into a counseling center three years ago.

“There is still a stigma of going to counseling,” Russell said. “People are embarrassed by that, which I don’t understand. If you had diabetes or broke your arm, you would go to a doctor, but if you have mental health or relationship problems you don’t?”

Often, when families finally do make their way to a counselor, their problems have escalated out of control.

“If they had come in earlier, they could have been better a lot sooner,” she said.

Russell sees between one and two dozen people a week at her Tigard office.

“Every person has capacity to heal themselves and solve problems, even children,” Russell said. “I had one mother who was worried that her son was going to grow up to be like her dad, then realized, ‘Oh my gosh. This isn’t about him — it’s about me and my anxiety.’”

Russell works with children who have anxiety problems so severe that they pull off their own eyebrows as an



PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: JONATHAN HOUSE

Family Counselor Julie Russell talks about her approach to therapy sessions with children and families. Below is a picture of Russell’s own family.



act of stress relief.

“It’s so automatic for them that they don’t realize that they are doing it,” she said.

Russell said her own home life inspired her to take up counseling.

“My father was an alcoholic and I grew up in a dysfunctional system,” she said. “I didn’t want to create a family like that.”

She studied psychology at first, before taking graduate courses at George Fox

University’s Tigard campus.

“Sometimes, parents come in and say, ‘Fix my child.’ But often it’s not a broken child; it’s a problem with the family system. Usually, there is something in the family that’s not working and the child lashes out.”

Once a week, Russell drives to Corvallis to meet with patients there, and said she expects to start a similar practice in Vancouver, Wash., soon. She also works does equine therapy with patients in Newberg.

She helps couples that are struggling to keep their relationships together.

“Sometimes it’s because of infidelity, or the death of a loved one, or divorce,” she said. “We are our experiences. Sometimes people wonder, ‘Why are they acting like this?’ and it’s because it’s not just your stuff they are dealing with. It’s everything that has ever happened to them.”

According to reports from The New York Times, the divorce rate is falling after hitting record highs in the 1970s and 1980s.

But divorce rates are still too high, Russell said, and the main reason that she sees behind those numbers are that families just don’t know how to talk to one another.

“People say, ‘This doesn’t feel good. Let’s end it and try something else.’ I tell them that they can choose to end their relationships, but if they don’t work on their own stuff, their baggage will go with them to the next relationship.”

Sometimes people only need a little bit of help, such as better nutrition and more sleep, Russell said.

“Sleep is by far the most important thing,” she said. “We talk about what we need for our bodies, but not about what we need for our mental health.”

Others need medication or naturopathic medicine.

Often, Russell said, she’ll have families use a small sand box to express their feelings.

By placing toys and figurines into the sand, they’re able to display complex emotions they might not otherwise be able to express.

“It’s fascinating what comes out,” Russell said. “For instance, a kid with ADHD who just started medication, I asked what it feels like being on medication versus being off. One side was organized with police and firemen, very structured. The other side was a bunch of toys scattered around, because without medication, it feels like chaos.”

For married couples having troubles, she said, couples will often use fences and other barriers in their examples to indicate how they are feeling.

Working with families — especially children — can be challenging, but it’s also rewarding, Russell said.

“It’s amazing to see people start getting better. That is so rewarding and so exciting,” Russell said. When you see a kid that was feeling terrible, and then he starts to pass his classes, or see a relationship that gets so much better — that’s great.”

Family wants to make sure everyone has the hearing they deserve

By **RAY PITZ**
Pamplin Media Group

Having a small family business like Beaverton’s Sage Hearing Solutions, R. David King and his wife Jaimie constantly make it known that their clients’ needs are always their top priority. But more than that, they want to make sure they are adequately dealing with the issues found in people with hearing problems.

“I’m a company that will advocate for the hearing impaired,” said David King.

With that in mind, King said his goal is to improve the quality of his clients’ lives, providing a variety of different hearing aids to best fit a person’s budget and lifestyle.

For almost seven years, King and his brother Danny ran Cascade Hearing Aid Center in Gresham, a company that also had an office in Beaverton’s Cascade Square. He spent several years, too, with another audiology company and eventually was transferred to Scottsdale, Ariz.

Then, last August, the Kings opened Sage Hearing Solutions in Twin Oaks Executive Suites at 1865 N.W. 169th

Place in Beaverton.

One of many reasons the Kings started their own business was a concern that the hearing care industry was overpriced, David King said. He also wanted to share the importance of servicing hearing aids after they are purchased.

"This is an industry where you really need service on your hearing aids," he said. "That's what we're all about, the service portion of taking care of people's hearing."

King said he feels like he's on a mission when it comes to educating the community about hearing loss, noting that hearing loss is tied to such diseases as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and even dementia.

"The biggest cause of hearing loss is just age," King pointed out, adding that noise is a contributing factor as well.

For younger people, hearing loss is often tied to wearing headphones blaring music that's turned up too loud.

"A lot of people don't think about (hearing loss) until it happens," he said. "Hearing loss is isolating and an oftentimes frustrating experience."

King said there are even studies that show those with hearing loss have lower incomes. He said people often ignore hearing loss because it doesn't hurt physically.

Recently, the Beaverton School District started referring students to King if it discovers they could be suffering from hearing loss. King said he will provide additional testing and refer students to a pediatrician if it looks like they may have



David King of Sage Hearing Solutions checks in with Ted Conklin to make sure everything is running smooth with his hearing aid.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTO: RAY PITZ

a hearing problem.

What makes his business unique, says King, is that he does house calls as well. That's something most companies don't do, he pointed out.

"I've got all the mobile equipment to do tests in the home," he said. "Everything we can do in the office, we can do in the home."

King also has a soft spot for U.S. veterans, oftentimes referring them to the

Veteran's Administration because many are eligible for benefits that help them purchase hearing aids.

"A lot of them don't know that," he pointed out.

King said he's found the dwindling number of World War II vets who are still around have hearing issues related not only to their age, but also because of the loud noises and explosions they experienced during combat.

King, whose brother is a judge advocate general for the U.S. Navy, said he wants to honor the nation's veterans, especially those who served in World War II and "fought for our freedom."

Meanwhile, the technology involving hearing aids has improved by leaps and bounds over the years, King said.

"I've got hearing aids now that can be Bluetoothed into a cell phone," said King. "Hearing aids are getting a lot smaller. They're getting more sophisticated."

While King runs the business side of things, his wife Jaimie takes care of the human resources side with a background in dealing with senior citizens.

"I've worked with geriatric populations since I was 18," she said. In addition, Jaimie formerly worked for Kenneth C. Swan, the founder of the Casey Eye Institute in Portland. (The Kings met there at the Casey Eye Institute.)

"It's been a lot of fun," Jaimie said of her work with Sage. "We're trying to juggle having a young family with a business."

The Kings are the parents of two young children, Parker, 6, and Haley, 3.

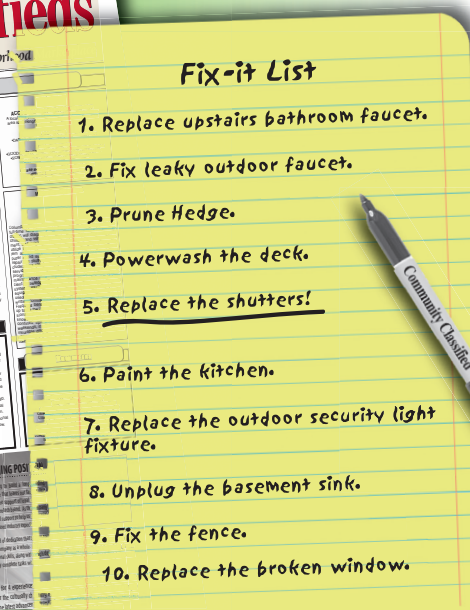
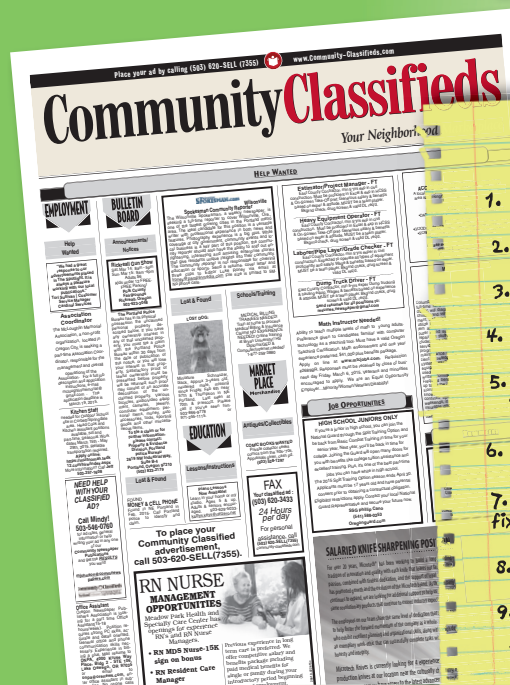
When David King is not working, he coaches his son's T-ball and flag football teams. He's also a member of Elders in Action, a Portland-based group that advocates for older adults.

So what's the greatest satisfaction King gets from his job?

"Seeing people get back the quality of life they had lost because of their hearing impairment," he said.

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Families, friends, food rule at Faith Café

MEALS BRING TOGETHER VOLUNTEERS AND THOSE IN NEED

By **SCOTT KEITH**
For Pamplin Media Group

During a period when much of the country is still digging slowly out of the Great Recession, it's comforting to know that families are still helping families in need.

A great example of just that can be found in the heart of Beaverton, at Bethel Congregational United Church of Christ.

Each Sunday, at 5 p.m., Faith Café, an independent, non-profit, volunteer-based organization, offers a warm meal and friendly company at the church on Watson Avenue.

Board member Arnie Leppert said Faith Café "is an attempt to serve a hot, nourishing meal to those who need it."

Faith Café serves about 85 to 90 guests on Sundays, and also serves a 5 p.m. dinner on the last Thursday of each month. About 10 tables are set up in a large activity room, and Bethel Congregational United Church of Christ provides the use of its fully functional kitchen.

Drop by Faith Café and you'll notice a table complete with a variety of groceries. Leppert said, "Not only do they get a meal, but they'll get groceries." To this point, about 85,000 meals have been served at Faith Café.

The Thursday meal serves a slightly smaller gathering of guests.

"Frankly, food stamps tend to run out about that time of the month, and if we do provide a meal, all the better," Leppert said.

Most guests arrive at Bethel from the Beaverton area.

"Beaverton-area demographics have changed radically in the last 10 years," Leppert said. "We have a lot of folks who are in need of a good meal. By providing one on Sunday, we hope to meet some of that need."

Faith Café, which celebrates



ABOVE: Betty Whitton enjoys a recent meal at Faith Café, located at Bethel Congregational United Church of Christ in Beaverton.

LEFT: Volunteers Christina Jackson and Bruce Jackson help serve visitors.

PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP PHOTOS: MILES VANCE

its 10th anniversary this spring, receives help from many sources in the community, with donations coming from private individuals and corporations.

According to Leppert, "We get most of our food from the Oregon Food Bank, supplemented by good neighbors like Safeway."

Financial assistance comes from Wards of the LDS Cedar

Mill Stake and several churches, including Holy Trinity, St. Pius X, St. Clare, St. John Fisher, St. Juan Diego, St. Cecilia, St. Matthew Lutheran, and Bethel Congregational United Church of Christ. Those churches also provide the cooks and servers on a rotating basis.

Leppert's wife, Claudia, also lends a helping hand. She collected 160 blankets so each

guest could have a blanket for Christmas, assisted in that effort by community businesses Fred Meyer and Rose City Textiles.

In addition to hot food, there's plenty of companionship at the church, which is located within walking distance of the Beaverton Library.

They recently added community time at the church, which

starts an hour before the Sunday meal.

"They (guests) like to talk to one another and visit. It's only natural," Leppert said. "We're social animals. We bring them in, we've got coffee and a few goodies for them, and they sit in a room where it's warm and dry."

Community fellowship between guests and volunteers is also part of the exchange at Faith Café, which received the Oregon Food Bank Excellence Award in 2011.

Leppert pointed out that for those in need of a hot meal who live closer to Canyon Road, Faith Café partners with St. Matthew Lutheran Church to serve a Saturday meal at St. Matthew between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. except on major holiday weekends.

At the end of the day, Leppert feels good about helping his neighbors.

"We (volunteers) get much more out of it than we ever, ever put into it," he said. "If you can put a hot meal in front of a person who needs it and wants it, it doesn't get much better than that. It is a solid feeling of seeing the need and trying to do something about it."

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