

Around The Town

News from My Hometown Northwest

Cold weather is not a deterrent for service at My Hometown. In fact, it is the perfect time to capitalize on new opportunities, like computer classes, pickleball, youth ice skating activities, CHILL events, piano lessons, and more. Here is a recap of what has been happening over these past winter months.

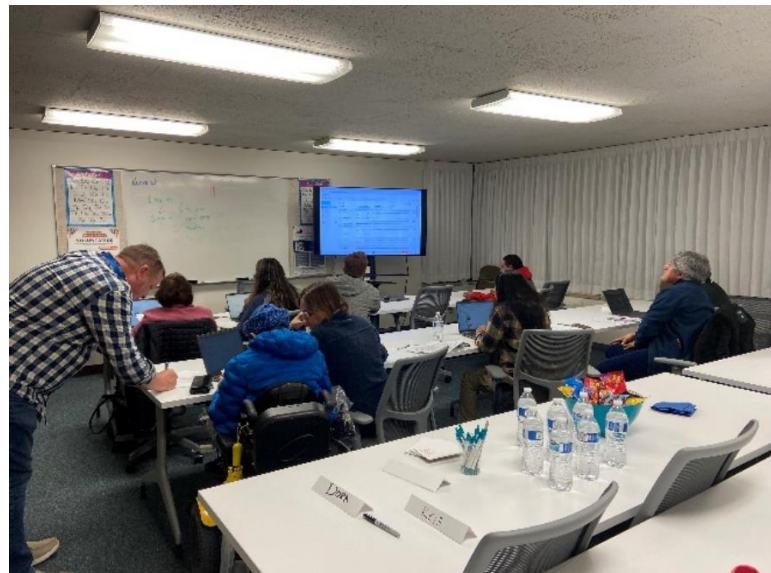
The MHT Reading Program is far from elementary.

Under the direction of Liz and Gaylen Zentner, My Hometown now has dozens of volunteers helping grade schoolers at Backman (with expanded hours) and Escalante schools. Next will be Meadowlark and Rose Park schools, scheduled to start sometime this year. Indeed, the Zentners have taken this program from ground zero to new heights against some rather challenging headwinds. But more help is needed. And, there are benefits from volunteering: “This is one of the most rewarding things I’ve ever done,” says Lisa Anjewierden, co-Executive Director of the CRC committee, who has recruited a group of her neighbors to jump into the program, too. “These kids really want to learn. They just need an opportunity. And, I have watched them make tremendous progress.” To volunteer, reach out to Liz (801-671-6968) or Gaylen Zentner (801-671-5394). They will be happy to hear from you.



Computer Classes prep the young at heart with new skills.

The main classroom at the CRC building was the ideal setting for learning basic computer skills during some rather cool nights in January and February. “Students” worked from provided keyboards and received a beginning tutorial from Kendrick and Kris Bytheway, who organized and promoted the course. Louis Vator and the Bytheway’s son, who both speak fluent Spanish, helped facilitate things. Students were so pleased they sent our organizers some very useful gift cards. Wow. “Fun to see how quickly they grasped things,” commented Kris. And, as a result, they are better prepared for today’s busy, high-tech world. The program ended on February 4th, but classes will begin again in May.



Bingo isn't just for a mature crowd, it turns out.

That's right. The Youth Activities committee thought it would be fun to "dress up" as "their favorite old person" to play Bingo on January 31 at the CRC Building. Over 50 youth turned up "dressed to the nines" – or at least dressed to win some fun prizes and enjoy some very tasty snacks. Doug and Becky Farley assisted and cheered on the players as they vied for prizes and bragging rights. Kris and Kendrick Bytheway provided additional support, too. This youth committee is very creative, don't you think? Wonder who dressed up as CRC committee youngsters Doug and Becky or Kris and Kendrick?



Now serving up Pickleball open play again this winter and spring.

One of the fastest growing sports in America is also growing at the CRC building every other Saturday from 9–11 am. All adults are welcome. All levels of experience welcome, too. And even though the play is competitive, there is a spirit of harmony as well as lots of laughter throughout the morning. Win or lose! Contact Tamie (801–913–0734) or Mike Snarr (known for losing) (801–580–2224) for more information. Look for another tournament to be scheduled soon. Come and join the fun. Paddles (and pickleballs) are available, just in case you need them.



PS: Futsal (a slightly different version of indoor soccer) continues at the CRC, too. Thursdays around 8pm. Everyone welcome. Just need one good “fut.”

How about a little ice skating party, just for fun?

The Youth Activity Committee changed things up again with an ice skating activity at the Millcreek Commons on February 21. Warmly dressed teenagers from ages 11-19 (along with supportive adults) laced up skates and had so much fun it was hard getting them off the ice. Hot Chocolate, anyone?



ESL classes speak to their growing enrollment.

English as a Second Language courses continue to have widespread appeal to our friends from around the world. Fifty enthusiastic area residents attended the first session on February 25, hosted at the CRC building. Extra credit is due to our very committed “headmasters” Joan and Craig Anderson, with assistance from Dave and Linda Harbertson, and English teachers Mauri Prince, (English 1), Luis Tovar and Tanya Martinez (English 2), Christy Cunningham, Nancy Day (Flex classes) and others. Classes are taught twice weekly through May with English 3 on the drawing board. “We really look forward to seeing these wonderful and interested students who have become like family,” explains Craig. Graduation will be a “day of mixed emotions” adds Joan, “but also a day of celebration.”



CHILL has new meaning to MHT youth snowboarders.

Doug Farley, our CRC youth warrior (along with Becky) have been committed to assisting our youth all year long via a national program called CHILL. They learn to skateboard, paddleboard, and snow snowboard. A couple of concussions, sore muscles and bruised hips later, Doug is still standing. The kids are, too. See them in action below. They look like real pros.



Piano Lessons play to a packed house

MHT coordinators Kendrick and Kris Bytheway weren't sure what to expect when they organized this weekly event. They had a wonderful instructor, Julie Olson, community mainstay, consummate volunteer, and gifted pianist. So, imagine their delight when a nearly full house (15 students for 18 keyboards) showed up. A local church also reached out about having Julie teach interested students to play hymns. Momentum continues to build. Now there is even a recital scheduled for May, and the program is being expanded to include youth this summer. Never underestimate the power of music or a community's willingness to respond. Lesson learned.



MHT has a “what’s next” plan for area high school students, and it’s a good one!

Joan and Craig Anderson, along with Craig’s sister Becky, spent hours upon hours readying this highly informative session at the CRC on Monday, March 10. Over 40 future college hopefuls, along with parents and organizers – more than 60 participants in all – attended. It helped that Becky and Joan enjoyed very productive careers as high school counselors and administrators in the public school system and could see the need, and the potential. As a result, they were able to enlist representatives from local colleges, including The University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College, Davis Tech College, Ensign College and Renaissance College of Massage. Key note speaker Danie Natter, 2024–25 Utah Counselor of the Year (with help from guest translator Hilda Bautista) outlined the positive lifetime benefits of obtaining a post high school education and included invaluable information about how one might receive additional financial assistance as well. Her personal journey as a first-generation college student inspired and uplifted all attendees who then visited with college representatives in the cultural hall. Refreshments were served to “cap” the evening.





Spotlight

Dirk and Lisa Anjewierden

It's all about the Long Run for these Two



Dirk and Lisa met at a Skyline High School State Football Championship. It was the biggest game of the year – in more ways than one. Lisa was still in high school; she was there to cheer on her team. Dirk was a couple years removed but still a fan of his school. Maybe he was also doing a little reconnaissance? The important thing is, they met. And never looked back. Dirk says, “I have just always loved being with Lisa, right from day one. We fell into it, and it stuck. We stuck.” The only thing in the way was that Dirk had just received a call from his church to serve a two-year mission in Taiwan. “I’ll wait,” she said. Now she admits “it’s easy to say you’ll wait when you’re just 17.” Still, that might be the best decision she ever made. It was a “no brainer” for Dirk.

The two were married shortly after he returned. Lisa postponed college (she was an English Literature major) and went to work while he studied. And graduated. They started a family: four boys and a daughter. Their daughter was sandwiched between the boys in age. The boys still complain she is the spoiled one. No wonder.

After he graduated with a BA in Business from the University of Utah, Dirk went to work in the healthcare industry and stayed there for 40 years! For twenty years, he owned a skilled nursing facility. Then he became the Executive Director of the Utah Health Care

Association, spending the back half of his illustrious career overseeing state healthcare institutions, which included managing their legal representation and working on national health care policy, among other duties.

Lisa managed the home front. Her day started at 6am when she got up to read the local and national sports pages so she could converse with the family, all serious sports enthusiasts. She started running, inspiring the rest of the family to take it up. Oh yes, and she went back to college, earning a BA in English. The long run started to take shape.

But years later the Anjewierden “long run” got interrupted when Dirk collapsed on the 7th tee box at Thanksgiving Point right after hitting his tee shot. His golf buddies rushed to his side. But he was unconscious. Had stopped breathing. Began turning blue. He was in heart failure. Technically, he was dead. Before 911 responders could arrive, a young woman who was driving a food cart and just happened to be CPR certified, administered to Dirk. EMT’s arrived and shocked his heart 11 times. At the hospital, the doctors said if he lived he “would never be the same.” The family gathered to say goodbye, but Dirk hung on. Everyone in Dirk and Lisa’s world, religious or not, started praying. A few days later, the cardiologist told Lisa that Dirk “had turned a corner.” He was still in heart, lung, and kidney failure. No one knew to what extent his brain was damaged, either. But he fought on. Got some help from above. And a ton of attention from doctors and staff (including his neighbor cardiologist).

He stayed in a coma for a week, spent three weeks in isolation in ICU. He came home with a feeding tube. He began walking and conversing but it took at least 6 months to regain his strength. And a year before he could say he had fully recovered. Ironically, that young woman who saved his life on a golf course knew one of their sons. He had served a mission in New Jersey, and her family frequently fed those missionaries when she was just 8 years old. Small world. “We’ve been reluctant to share this story, but we decided we needed to testify of miracles and God’s goodness,” says Lisa.

The long run continued. After Lisa inspired the family to start running, they embraced it. And then some. 5K, 10K, half and full marathons followed. They became avid golfers, too. Now retired, they travel some and find places to run and play golf in distant destinations. Lisa also served a humanitarian mission, traveling to places like Mozambique, Rwanda, and the Philippines to help newborns learn to breathe. (She had received some invaluable training from Dirk in that area).

Dirk, it turns out, has become a “Disney fanatic,” which comes in handy with their 14 grandkids. Recently he told his cardiologist he wants to run one more marathon, with the family at Disney World. How could the doc say no! Besides, he had already run a half marathon against his doctor’s orders.

The Anjewierdens believe in helping others. Wholeheartedly. For the past three years they have been serving as Co-Directors of the CRC committee in My Hometown, Northwest Division, spending hours and hours helping build and broaden the program. These Anjewierdens are all about the long run, after all. And a little more.

My Hometown Administrative Events

My Hometown Regional Conference brings great minds together (Saturday, March 1).

MHT volunteers from the Northwest, Central Community and Westside districts met Saturday morning, March 1 for some group discussions and additional instruction. The result? Inspiration. Direction. Renewed enthusiasm. A Reset if you will. Co-Executive Regional Directors, Carlton and Cathy Christensen kicked things off with some uplifting introductory remarks. Breakout sessions followed where new programs were discussed, existing programs re-presented.

MHT Potluck dinner goes green to celebrate St. Paddy’s Day, March 17

Jared and Marsha Parker conjured up a magical dinner for leprechauns and volunteers at the CRC on Monday Night, complete with Shephard’s Pie, potatoes, green (of course) salads and a wonderful array of appetizers and desserts. These dinners bring volunteers together, helping everyone see what is currently happening as well as what exciting projects are being planned for our community. It’s an ideal time to stop and take a breath. But only for a minute.
