

## It takes a Village.....

by Heather Estrada

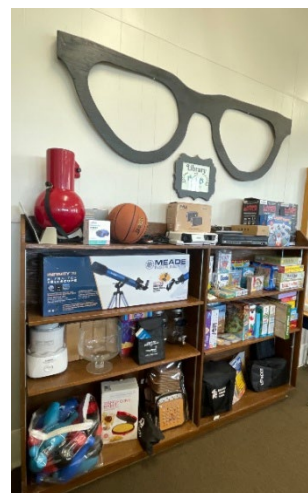
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“It takes a Village to raise a child” is a widely known African proverb. It refers to the idea that interaction, safety, and guidance from many people are necessary for a child to develop. This truth can be applied in broader areas of life as well, and it applies to the Helix Public Library.

Helix Public Library is one of the smallest libraries in Eastern Oregon. It is open for the least number of hours and yet has a large and lasting impact on the town, its inhabitants, and specifically its children. The library is one of the few public spaces in Helix and, as such, functions as the city’s hub or living room. The staff, led by library director Annette Kubishta, has recently grown to three members – another aspect of “it takes a village”. Annette brings creativity, endless ideas and many community connections to her library. She regularly partners with the school to bring students to her library for programs and book giveaways, as well as going to the school for educational programs (such as Smokey Bear last Spring) and book fairs.

To support and diversify the skill set of the library staff further, Helix has recently hired two new library assistants who bring a variety of strengths to strengthen the village, that is Helix. Jenny Porter is a Pendleton High School health center employee who will continue to do that while bringing her creative programming ideas and ability to connect with kids into the Helix Library. Caleb Vanderschuere is the second new hire and brings with him STEM ideas and deeper website knowledge to the team.

The team at the library is always looking for ways to serve their “village”. The library is partnering with St. Anthony Hospital to offer a food pantry that is easy to access and is restocked frequently. There is a seed library where patrons are welcome to come and take seeds and leave some for others as they please. A “Library of Things” offers unusual and useful items for the community to check out; and additionally, the library has a community room available for patrons to use for a variety of purposes.



On April 30 and May 1, the Friends of the Library will help the library staff host a book fair with *Next Chapter Bookstore* of Hermiston inside Helix School in conjunction with the FFA plant sale and track meet all running on those dates. On May 7, Helix Friends of the Library will join the library team to pass out a book to every elementary student through the RIF (Reading is Forever) program. And throughout

the summer the library will offer programs such as The Museum of Natural History's "Bee Program" alongside summer reading games and regularly scheduled preschool story times and adult books clubs.

Helix is far from the only library functioning as the glue that holds the "village" together. But in a town as small as Helix it takes an all-hands-on deck approach to keep the community vibrant, and the library team at the Helix Public Library is hitting the ball out of the park. OK, enough catch phrases. Visit your own local library and see how it is helping the "village" you are part of. To find out more about the Helix Library and all the libraries in Umatilla County visit [www.ucslid.org](http://www.ucslid.org).