

“The first day of forever”

Adoption day finds 13 foster children permanent homes

TODD GUILD
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

When she was 19, Lani Almand met the girl who would become her first daughter.

Almand, now 27, said she was coaching a fourth-grade chess team when she met 14-year-old Elizabeth, who was living in a group foster home. Elizabeth and her sister became Almand's foster children.

Her experience with the foster care system and with adoption did not end there. She would go on to exponentially grow her somewhat unconventional family twice more.

“There are so many kids in this community who need homes,” she said. “We’ve built such a beautiful family, and I don’t think we could have done it better any other way.”

Those girls, now adults, got two brothers six years later when Almand and her husband Scott adopted twin boys, who are now 6.

The already teeming Almand family got even bigger on Friday, when Santa Cruz County Superior Court Judge Rebecca Connolly signed the adoption papers of Winter, 4, and Weston, 6.

“With the stroke of a pen,” Connolly said in a courtroom packed with family, friends and Weston's entire second-grade class.



CITY
Man struck, killed on Main Street

By TODD GUILD
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

WATSONVILLE — A 70-year-old man was killed early Friday morning when a vehicle struck him as he crossed Main Street.

According to Watsonville Police Sgt. Donny Thul, the wheelchair-bound man was crossing near the intersection of Main Street and East Lakes Avenue at about 5:30 a.m.

The driver stayed on the scene and was cooperating with investigators. Drugs and alcohol do not appear to be a factor in the collision, Thul said.

Witnesses said the man, who

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COUNTY
Holiday food drive kicks off

By TARMO HANNULA
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

APTOS — Second Harvest Food Bank of Watsonville has now entered its most intense two months of the year, when it encourages the community to organize the dozens of local food and fund drives throughout the county, forming the Holiday Food and Fund Drive.

County businesses, civic, community leaders and activists gathered for a luncheon on Thursday at Twin Lakes Church in Aptos to launch the annual campaign.

The drive is Second Harvest's biggest event of the year, and 100 percent of the food and funds it raises supports food donations to its network of 200 pantries, soup kitchens, recovery centers, assisted-living homes, and food and nutrition programs throughout the county.

Dr. Nanette Mickiewicz, president of Dominican Hospital, told the gathering of about 250 people that about one in four children in America lack access to wholesome food.

“We’re excited to spread human kindness,” she said. “Are you prepared to help lives, including your own?”

Willy Elliott-McCrea, CEO of Second Harvest, said the event marks his “favorite day of year.”

“I love the compassion and

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Winter (left) and Weston Almand were officially adopted Friday in Watsonville at the Santa Cruz County Superior Court.

Tennis Watsonville Register-Pajaronian

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, Nov. 4

Fill-A-Sandbag day
The City of Watsonville Public Works & Utilities Department's Water Division is partnering with Home Depot, Grainger's and American Red Cross of Santa Cruz County for the “Fill-A-Sandbag Volunteer Workday” event in preparation for winter. The event will take place rain or shine from 8 a.m. to noon at Home Depot, 355 South Green Valley Road. Everyone in the community is invited to participate.

Capitola Plein Air
Dozens of professional artists will paint on-site art in varied mediums, outdoors, throughout Capitola, art locations including New Brighton Beach, Depot Hill, the Dayland and the Jewish Box. The public is invited to view these works in action. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 5

Sunday breakfast
The American Legion Post 121 invites all members and non-members to breakfast each Sunday morning from 8:15 a.m. to 11 a.m. at 2100 Western Ave., Capitola. More than 200 donated sandwiches will be on hand. Reservations are not necessary. Reservations for the People's Choice Award and enjoy the exhibition, live music by Mark Schwartz & The Blue Tails, and breakfast with meeting with Linda Cove of Watsonville Arts.

Capitola Plein Air
In New Brighton Middle School Performing Arts Center, 250 Western Ave., Capitola, more than 200 donated sandwiches will be on hand. Reservations are not necessary. Reservations for the People's Choice Award and enjoy the exhibition, live music by Mark Schwartz & The Blue Tails, and breakfast with meeting with Linda Cove of Watsonville Arts.

The power of words

Third annual reading day held at Starlight Elementary

By JOHANNA MILLER
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

WATSONVILLE — Around 10:30 in the morning Friday, the students of Starlight Elementary School gathered together on the school's blacktop to begin preparing for a day of reading.

The event, “Un Libro a Vez/One Book at a Time,” is now in its third year. Formerly known as “Read Across the Globe,” a worldwide event led by the Points of Light Foundation, the local community has attempted to make it their own, involving local volunteers and high school students.

“We’ve had a great turnout this year,” said Dawn Krenz,



Johanna Miller/Register-Pajaronian

“Un Libro a Vez/One Book at a Time” was held Friday at Starlight Elementary School. Watsonville High's ECHO Academy teamed up with Starlight teachers, staff and Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County for the annual event.

by the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County and Watsonville High School's ECHO Academy, teamed up to bring local teens to read out loud in Starlight Elementary students. In total, more than 800 people were involved in Friday's event.

Academy students told them about their experiences in school and why they think learning to read and write proficiency can help them in the future.

Krenz explained why she thought it was important for

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Torino Mancuso/Register-Pajaronian

Watsonville Police Sgt. Donny Thul investigates the scene of a crash where a man in a wheelchair died after allegedly being struck by the pickup (shown here) on Main Street at East Lake Avenue early Friday.

MAIN

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police have not named, was a resident of the Stag Hotel. Anyone with information is asked to call the Watsonville Police Department at 471-1151, the anonymous tip line at 768-3544, or the Watsonville Police Bureau's Investigations Bureau at 768-3352.

READING

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Johanna Miller/Register-Pajaronian

Students from Watsonville High's ECHO Academy read to groups of children at Starlight Elementary School on Friday.

the children to see teens from their own community promoting education. "They are being given a role model — someone who they can see themselves becoming," she said. "Every study says that if you have people from your own background modeling something, you'll be much more interested and engaged in it."

Some of the ECHO Academy students even attended Starlight Elementary when they were younger, adding to that familiarity, Krenz said. After the rally the Starlight students dispersed into their classrooms and then into smaller groups. Each group was paired with one of the teens before settling in for the first round of reading. Activities were planned to run till around 1 p.m. Krenz pointed out how this event can also help the high schoolers learn responsibility and to engage with other age

groups. "It gets them out of their comfort zone," she said, "while also showing them how rewarding working with children can be." Another individual on hand at the event was Starlight aide and after-school program teacher Mariah Gutierrez. A former member of ECHO Academy herself who went through the

academy's internship program, Gutierrez was inspired to work in education by experiencing similar events such as "Un Libro a Vez One Book at a Time." "I've met kids here who obviously weren't into school," Gutierrez said. "But then these teens from their community come in and promote it, which gets them interested. That connection is so important."



Torino Mancuso/Register-Pajaronian

Supporters of the annual Holiday Food & Fund Drive 2017 settle in for a hot lunch of speeches.

FOOD

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Torino Mancuso/Register-Pajaronian

Food drive co-chairs Jess Brown and Martina O'Sullivan take the stage at the "Be a Hunger Hero" kickoff off for Second Harvest Food Bank's Holiday Food & Fund Drive 2017.

caring in this room. This is a time to roll up our sleeves and get the community involved," he said.

At the event, the community heard from speakers such as Plantronics CEO Joe Burton and organizers of past community food drives, shared strategies and ideas, and more.

This year, the food bank has raised its goal for the drive from 4.5 million meals last year to 4.75 million meals, a target that the drive's co-chairs — Jess Brown, executive director of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, and Martina O'Sullivan, engaged citizen — stand to meet.

"With the stock market at record highs, you might think fewer people need food assistance these days," Elliott-McCrea said. "Unfortunately,

the economic recovery has not done as much for working families, and expensive housing continues to strain people's budgets. So high numbers of local individuals and families still rely on help from the food bank."

Watsonville Today
Rain Likely
Precip Chance: 60%
High 59 / Low 44

Extended Forecast

SUNDAY
Mostly Cloudy
Precip Chance: 20%
High 57 / Low 46

MONDAY
Partly Cloudy
Precip Chance: 20%
High 55 / Low 45

TUESDAY
Partly Cloudy
Precip Chance: 10%
High 53 / Low 46

WEDNESDAY
Mostly Cloudy
Precip Chance: 10%
High 56 / Low 48

THURSDAY
Scattered Rain
Precip Chance: 90%
High 60 / Low 52

FRIDAY
Mostly Sunny
Precip Chance: 0%
High 67 / Low 59

Monterey Bay Tides

| Tide | High | High +6 feet |
|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Tuesday | 10:20 am | 11:56 pm |
| Wednesday | 10:14 am | 11:54 pm |
| Thursday | 10:07 am | Low 6:01 AM |
| Friday | Low | Low 4:46 AM |
| Saturday | 8:21 am | 7:06 pm |
| Sunday | 4:01 am | 5:15 pm |
| Monday | 4:48 am | 6:07 pm |

Almanac

Temperature

Yesterday's High: 54
Yesterday's Low: 53
Normal High / Low: 68 / 45
Record High: 89 in 1945
Record Low: 28 in 1935

Precipitation

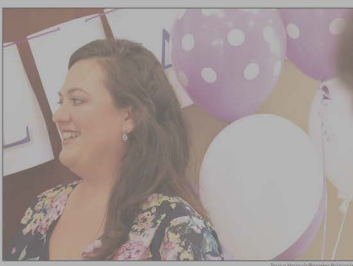
Yesterday's Precip: 0.06"
Month to date: 0.04"
Normal Month to date: 0.14"
Water Year to date: 0.12"
Normal Year to date: 1.89"
Water year runs Oct. 1st to Sept. 30th

Sunrise/Sunset

Sunrise: 6:05 a.m.
Sunset: 5:30 p.m.
Monday: 6:00 a.m./5:30 p.m.
Tuesday: 6:07 a.m./5:23 p.m.

Tomorrow's Regional Map

| | |
|---------------|---------|
| San Francisco | 55 / 47 |
| Oakland | 57 / 50 |
| San Jose | 59 / 45 |
| Pescadero | 55 / 48 |
| San Francisco | 55 / 47 |
| Pacificia | 55 / 48 |
| San Jose | 59 / 45 |
| Pescadero | 55 / 48 |
| Santa Cruz | 58 / 48 |
| Capitola | 58 / 43 |
| Watsonville | 57 / 44 |
| Hollister | 59 / 43 |
| Marina | 54 / 44 |
| Salinas | 58 / 45 |
| Monterey | 54 / 47 |
| Seaside | 55 / 46 |
| Gilroy | 59 / 42 |
| Modesto | 59 / 48 |



Torino Mancuso/Register-Pajaronian

Lani Almond talks about adopting kids into her family.

LANI ALMOND ADOPTION

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"You are now parents and children."

Cronley's signature put an official stamp on a process that began in May 2016, when Weston and Winter walked into the Almond home as foster kids and the boy declared, "I'm not leaving," Lani Almond said.

"They are beautiful and wonderful kids that were meant for me," she said. "This is the first day of forever," she added.

The Almond family was part of Santa Cruz County's eighteenth-annual Adoption Day, when 13 foster children became official members of their own families.

While adoptions take place every Friday, the "adoption central" was a way to mark National Adoption



Torino Mancuso/Register-Pajaronian

With the help of her mother Lani Almond, Winter Almond, 4, adds her signature to those of her new parents on the forms that made her adoption official Friday.

that begins when young people are thrust into the child welfare system to take care of their forever." *** There is still a need in