

'We want students on campus'

Camas district's goal to reopen classrooms hinges on community virus transmission rates

By **KELLY MOYER**
 Post-Record editor

Local students will start the 2020-21 school year online due to the still-present dangers of COVID-19, but Camas School District leaders remain focused on bringing students back to the classroom as soon as it's safe to

do so. "Staff are working hard to figure out how to welcome families in this virtual world," Camas School District Superintendent Jeff Snell told Camas school board members Monday, Aug. 24, at the board's remote meeting. "A remote start to the year doesn't mean our goal has changed. We want (students) on

campus in a safe way. We want to protect students and staff but also not contribute to transmission rates in our community. We have a responsibility to do that." Camas school leaders have been working with regional school district administrators, the state's department of health and county public health experts to determine when and how to safely bring students back to the classroom. Washington's Department of Health has provided a frame-

work to help school district officials determine when to return to in-person learning. A number of factors must occur before Camas students can come back to the classroom, Snell said. Among those factors: a three-week period of low to moderate COVID-19 activity in Clark County with fewer than 75 cases per 100,000 people and a determination that bringing younger, elementary school students back



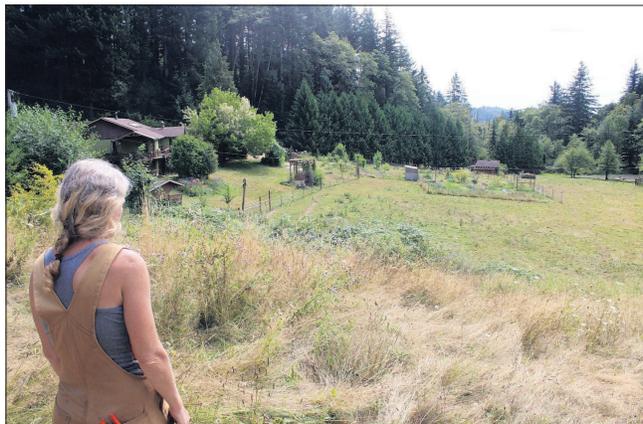
Camas School District Superintendent Jeff Snell speaks to the school board and community members in June 2019.

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FARMING POSSIBILITIES



Colibri Gardens owner Lara Scanlon pets a calf at her Washougal farm. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY OF LARA SCANLON



Colibri Gardens owner Lara Scanlon looks over her 40-acre property in Washougal on Aug. 20.

DOUG FLANAGAN/Post-Record

Their Skamania County farm 'on verge of dying,' couple reaches out to community

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
 Post-Record staff writer

It was springtime and COVID-19 had just shutdown weddings and other large, in-person gatherings for the foreseeable future. Derek and Lara Scanlon were terrified the dream they had worked so hard to achieve was on the verge of dying.

In 2017, the couple had purchased 40 acres of property in rural Skamania County, turned it into Colibri Gardens, an organic farm, home-

stead school and event venue, and began to generate a modest amount of money offering classes, tours, cabin rentals and weddings.

"For the past three years, we've thrown a lot against the wall to see what sticks," Derek said.

But after the COVID-19 pandemic forced them to cancel events this spring and summer, the Scanlons said they found themselves in a vulnerable financial position.

"We had been (worrying) about how we could hang on to this place," Lara said. "Our

economic margins were so high. We had to get a mortgage deferment for three months. And, quite frankly, we didn't know if we were going to be able to keep this farm. It was really scary. It was heartbreaking."

Desperate to make it work, the couple appealed to their community, emailing nearly every local resident they knew and asking if anyone was interested in buying their lamb, pork or beef.

"We got the most amazing response, that we were not expecting," Lara said. "We were

thinking a couple of people would say, 'Yeah, that would be interesting.' Literally everyone we sent the email to said, 'Yes, please. Tell me how much money to send you.' We were able to massively expand our animal operation this year."

Once they began to deposit the checks, the Scanlons said they felt like a huge weight had been lifted off of them.

"We felt that we were being supported to do what we

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High school sports pushed back

January 2021 now the earliest start date for fall athletic teams

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
 Post-Record staff writer

The ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis has, once again, thrown a wrench into the 2020-21 high school sports seasons.

In July, the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association, which dictates high school sports schedules in the state, postponed several fall sports, including football, girls soccer and volleyball until early spring 2021, and moved other fall sports — cross country, slowpitch softball, boys golf and boys tennis — to an alternative schedule that would have allowed some practice and competition during the fall.

Now, all local fall high school sports have been postponed until at least January 2021.

Camas High School athletic director Rory Oster and Washou-



The Camas High School football team celebrates its second 4A state championship title in December 2019. Fall sports will not begin until at least January 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

gal High School athletic director Gary McGarvie announced last week that all fall sports in the 2A, 3A and 4A Greater St. Helens leagues have been postponed until March and April of 2021 due to COVID-19.

"While league officials strongly believe in the growth that inter-

scholastic education-based athletics provides and want to return student-athletes to the field as soon as possible, we also believe this decision is best for the health and safety of the student athletes, coaches and communi-

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Mindful Renewal helps family find a sense of home
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North Shore vision heads to Camas City Council

Camas Planning Commission approves draft vision statements

By **KELLY MOYER**
 Post-Record editor

Planning for Camas' North Shore area took a giant leap forward last week after the Camas Planning Commission agreed to forward eight community-developed "vision statements," intended to guide development in the 800-acre swath of mixed-use land extending from Lacamas Lake to the northern city limits known as North Shore, to the Camas City Council.

The Commission's decision followed a nearly 90-minute virtual public hearing that had few public comments but much discussion among commissioners.

"It's always good to be proactive about infrastructure before development comes in," Camas Senior Planner Sarah Fox told the Planning Commission in July, adding that the city has already managed to acquire about 270 acres in the North Shore area. On Tuesday, Aug. 18, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to discuss the draft vision statement — the result of more than seven months' worth of community input collected by city staff during town halls, via online surveys, and at meetings held at local schools and tables set up at the weekly Camas Farmer's Market.

"We had seven months of outreach and conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders about their visions for the North Shore," Fox told the commissioners on Aug. 18. "We had great turnout throughout this entire project."

The result was a vision statement with eight major priorities. At the top of the list: the community's desire to preserve the North Shore's natural beauty; plan a network of green spaces and recreational opportunities; and combine residential, parks and commercial uses for a more walkable community.

Other priorities include providing a variety of housing options; locating industrial parks and commercial centers away from Lacamas Lake, toward the northern end of the North Shore; favoring businesses that serve local residents; planning for needed schools and infrastructure; and maintaining Camas' "small-town feel" in the North Shore.

The issue of subarea planning in the city's North Shore has popped up several times during recent Camas City Council meetings, with a small-but-vocal group urging the city to avoid any development in the area despite the fact that the city annexed the North Shore land more than 15 years ago and property owners there could develop their parcels under existing city code.

But the Aug. 18 public hearing before the Planning Commission drew few public comments.

Camas resident Lynn Johnston was the only community member to speak at the Aug. 18 hearing.

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BUSINESS

Helping families find 'sense of home'

Washougal entrepreneur launches Mindful Renewal

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
Post-Record staff writer

After Evan Turner moved into her parents' house in Washougal, she struggled with the fact that she no longer had a residence of her own, and felt guilty that her daughter was growing up in a "glorified attic."

"Here I am, almost 30, living with my parents, a divorced single mom, and I feel like a loser most of the time," she said.

One day, after her ex-husband stopped by and told Turner he admired the fact that she had made a home out of that attic, Turner reevaluated the meaning of the word "home."

"Even though I don't have my own home right now, I can make sure that my daughter doesn't lack a home-type feel," she said.

"Now I'm saying that to other people, too. Just because you're not in a perfect circumstance doesn't mean you can't make the best of it."

Now, Turner hopes her new business, Mindful Renewal, will help other families create that same sense of home in their own living spaces.

Turner describes her products, sold online at mindfulrenewalhome.com, as handmade, affordable, one-of-a-kind home decor. She uses recycled materials from Pendleton Woolen Mills the basis of other designs — remnant fabric for throw pillows, blanket edges for wall hangings.

"They sell (recycled fabric) by the pound. Instead of dumping it into a landfill, they let people like me use it for whatever," Turner said of Pendleton. "I do appreciate them as a company. The Pendleton brand speaks for itself. I like that they are socially and environmentally aware, and I like how they let people upcycle a lot of their stuff. The fact that they let me sell (my products) with their name on them is a cool thing, too. (My inspiration) depends on what's available when I go down to the mill and what I have to work with at the moment."

Jordan Stillinger, owner of the Washougal-based Found and Forged NW and a close friend of Turner's, said she believes Mindful Renewal "absolutely" has a chance to succeed.

"Evan's taste level is really high," Stillinger said of Turner. "She doesn't buy fabric just because it's there. She's very picky about what she chooses. She has a really good eye for knowing what looks good to-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY EVAN TURNER

Washougal resident Evan Turner recently launched her new, online home decor business, Mindful Renewal.

gether. She pays attention to quality and detail, and puts together complementary colors really well."

The business evolved out of Turner's previous venture, in which she offered second-hand name brand clothing at affordable prices through the online Poshmark marketplace.

"One day I re-upholstered a chair that (Stillinger) bought," Turner said. "After I did that, I made a pillow out of the leftover fabric, and I liked how it turned out, so I just kept on going. It kind of happened organically."

Earlier this year, Stillinger invited Turner to sell some of her items at Found and Forged NW's "Sip and Shop at the Barn" virtual event.

"One of the wall hangings sold in 10 seconds. I was like, 'You have something here,'" Stillinger said. "She said that it would be nice to have a landing spot for people, somewhere where she could sell from instead of waiting for the next event. I encouraged her to put herself out there and take the leap. It can be scary to put in time and work and money that you don't have, so the fact that she's doing this is huge. I'm very proud of her."

"I've kind of had to push myself out of my comfort zone, try new things and (ignore) my feelings of self-doubt," Turner added.

"The fact that I've gotten this far is amazing. To have this time to figure out who I am, try different things and not be afraid to fail is huge. I would look at other people's products and say, 'I can't compare to them.' But now I'm allowing myself to be proud of my work, put it out there, and whatever happens, happens. At least I tried. That's a big thing for me."

Farm:

From page A1

ways wanted to do," Lara said. "For the first time, we could actually see us making it as a farm."

From the beginning, the Scanlons said they knew they wanted to utilize their knowledge and resources to raise and sell pastured meat, but hadn't been able to fully commit to the process because they were spending so much of their time hosting weddings.

But with no nuptial events on their outdoor chalkboard calendar for the foreseeable future, they were free to embrace their original vision, which has helped them to get into a better financial position and plan for the future.

"We knew we were heading there, but COVID essentially forced us to just go for it," Lara said. "COVID really illuminated to us that using our farm as a teaching center or an event center is only sustainable when you don't have all these other mitigating factors — but people always need to eat."

"We're right at the precipice of becoming the place we want to be," she continued. "We had to go through a lot of growing pains. One of the things that I've learned is how important it is to stay true to your vision, and to not be ashamed to tell people that you need help."

Sparking a 'small farmer revolution'

Lara, a longtime organic farmer, and Derek, a former paraeducator and special education teacher, use their farm to



Derek and Lara Scanlon, with their 6-year-old son, Nate, gather outside their Washougal home on Aug. 20.

feed their family, which includes their 6-year-old son, Nate, and neighbors, and to teach visitors about gardening, farming, animal care, rural living and traditional skills.

"I've talked about a small-farmer revolution, and how we'd really like to see that in our country and around the world," Derek said. "Sometimes just having people come to the farm — Lara giving her spiel, talking to people about sustainable agriculture, what it really means, the day-to-day — and having the (interns) come, all this is part of our grand scheme, or whatever you want to call it, to get people interested in farming."

Lara wants to "spread a message that it's not that hard to actually create a functioning, sustainable food system, but people have to be willing to pay for it."

"We really want to help shift people's consciousness about supporting small family farms, because right now we have a food system that's not working for the land and not working for the people," Lara said.

The Scanlons periodically host interns from World Wide Opportunities

on Organic Farms, a network of national organizations that facilitate homestays on organic farms.

Ally Haas, of Gresham, Oregon, recently interned with the Scanlons.

"I was originally going to be here for a week, but I've stayed for two-and-a-half months," said Haas, a Mount Hood Community College student. "I've been able to be completely immersed in this experience, become part of the family and gain knowledge I never would've gotten otherwise."

The Scanlons own large parcels of undeveloped land they would like to put to good use, possibly for different types of events.

And Lara said she hopes to someday establish an organization or foundation to help young people purchase land to farm.

"We have been supported by this community, and we are so excited to continue to grow as a farm and continue to offer a wider variety of classes and workshops," Lara said. "We want to create the world we want to live in, and create a model for a way that little farms and communities could grow really healthy food and support one another."



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