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(020220-PierzFoodShelf)

Staff photo by Terry Lehrke

The Pierz Food Shelf is currently located in an alley just south of the back side of the Pierz Fire Hall.

Pierz Food Shelf director proposes location change

New location would offer ability to accept and store more donated food, milk

By **TERRY LEHRKE**
Editor

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Pat Zimmermann, volunteer director of the Pierz Food Shelf, said she's been turning away free milk and donated produce because she doesn't have the space to keep it.

She told the Pierz City Council Monday, that 3 1/2 years ago, when she started the position, there was talk of getting a larger food shelf.

While the storage shed facing the Kapsner Street alley just south of the back of the fire hall has worked well for a long time, Zimmermann is finding it limited.

"I order most of our food from Second Harvest Heartland and we have been getting wonderful stuff. They have been improving our groceries that we get. A lot

of it is fresh fruit and vegetables, a lot of meat and I can get all the milk I need for nothing, but there's a problem," she told the Council. The problem is a lack of refrigeration.

Since the whole idea of a food shelf is to provide fresh, good food to people, Zimmermann said, "It's really, all of a sudden become, what I think, is an issue."

The Pierz Area Food Shelf serves not just the city of Pierz, but all of eastern Morrison County. Zimmermann said her clientele is increasing.

"They're talking now with the new SNAP program being cut, that we're going to be seeing a lot more people and I really do think we are," she said.

It's already starting, she said. "If we keep getting more people, it's going to be really tight," she said.

Last month, Zimmermann said she had 5,000 pounds of food delivered into the very small area she has for the food shelf.

One day as she was brainstorming ideas, she drove by the former office building. (Continued on Page 2A)

Community buffers help children in foster care thrive

By **SHEILA MCCOY**
Staff Writer

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This is the second article of a series on foster care and adoption. Next: What to think about before becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

Children who are placed in foster care or are adopted often carry trauma and other mental health issues with them. It is a natural response to their experiences.

While many receive counseling and other mental health services, there are several ways the community can help the children to build resiliency to their adverse childhood experiences. Examples of adverse childhood experiences are emotional, physical and sexual abuse, witnessing domestic violence, physical and emotional neglect, incarceration of a parent, substance abuse, homelessness and more.

Morrison County Social Services Supervisor Melanie Erickson said the Social Services and

the Child Protection team work together to help decrease the impact childhood experiences can have on children. A lot of their focus is on early prevention, discovering buffers and what can be done for each child. Left without, the child's ability to bounce back in the face of adversity decreases and leaves them with a greater risk of developing poor coping mechanisms that can result in lifelong chronic illnesses, such as depression, heart disease, obesity and substance abuse, Erickson said.

"Children who are in foster care often don't want to talk about it or want their friends to know. Many are embarrassed that they are in foster care because there is a stigma about it," she said. "Some may feel their parent did something wrong and may blame themselves even though they had nothing to do with getting placed."

Erickson encourages the community to consider the organizations they are involved in, whether



they are faith-based, hobby or community-oriented to go the extra mile to make children feel included and accepted.

"You may have kids there that you suspect may be struggling. Embrace those kids by being warm and friendly to them rather than push them away. Teach your children to do the same," she said. "The more connections kids have, the more they feel like they belong and the better they will do in the long run."

Other examples of community-level buffers are supportive peer relationships, non-family relationships and social support, community cohesions, civic engagements and economic developments.

Buffers can also be created at the family level, which includes providing various resources, supportive relationships, family co-

(Continued on Page 2A)

Camp Ripley rail improvements may impede ATV trail efforts

By **AMANDA RASINSKI**
Staff Writer

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General Lowell Kruse senior commander at Camp Ripley, told the County Board Tuesday, that they are working on a proposal with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to add to the current rail service between Camp Ripley and Little Falls.

The information, Kruse said, was a friendly courtesy to the Board but also a heads-up that the proposed location of this addition could possibly infringe on the long discussed Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail the county has been planning.

In recent years, there have been new expectations for Camp Ripley

to be able to pack up and move out quickly, if necessary. Also, Kruse said that every year there will likely be an equipment rotation involving a large rail movement that will require more than 600 train cars.

Currently, Camp Ripley's service line allows for 60 train cars at a time which Kruse said can be loaded in about four hours.

The problem is, he said, that they can only service about one train a day and after a test in 2016, found that it would take 10 days to load the approximately 10 trains needed for all of the equipment at the military base. Currently, a train has to back up for about seven miles to get from Little Falls to Camp Ripley. (Continued on Page 3A)



(020220-PierzKCbuffalofeed)

Staff photo by Terry Lehrke

Pierz KCs buffalo feed success; more than \$21,000 to be donated to ACS

The Pierz Knights of Columbus held the 23rd annual buffalo feed and raffle, Jan. 25, at the Pierz Ballroom. For the past 23 years, the KCs have been a "gold" sponsor of the Morrison County Relay for Life, donating half of the proceeds of the feed and raffle, which will benefit the American Cancer Society. This year's event will result in more than \$21,420 being donated to the Morrison County Relay for Life. The event is held in memory of Gen Boser, a victim of cancer. Many volunteers give of their time to make the event a success. Serving up the buffalo burgers and fixings are (from left): Lee Maus, Richard Kieffer, Ron Grittner, Art Stumpf and Ken Dahmen.



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(020220-apartmentbldg)

Staff photo by Terry Lehrke

The Pierz Food Shelf is looking at the possibility of moving its facility into the lower level of this apartment building on main street, donated to the city by the late Mel Schmidtbauer in 2017.

Pierz Food Shelf seeks new location

(Continued from Page 1A)

library building that had been converted to apartments. In 2017, the late Mel Schmidtbauer donated that property to the city. While the city decided to let the renters stay if they wanted to, some did not stay.

"I noticed it had not been rented out for a couple of years. And I thought that would be a temporary and good fix right now. I know that eventually it's doomed, it's going to be gone," she said.

Zimmermann first approached City Administrator Bob Otremba, who she said felt it was a good idea.

Not wanting to approach the Food Shelf Board about the idea until she was sure the Council would be on board, she asked if it were a possibility.

"We do have a rainy day fund, where we could do

some of the improvements. I don't want to stick a lot of money into an old building that's going to go down. But there's going to be some work and I don't want the city to pay a lot," she said.

The lower level she has her eye on will need a back door for moving groceries and for clientele to have access.

She's looking at taking out a couple of windows to install that door.

"As far as the costs, I don't think it would cost the city any more money. You still have to heat the building, but you're doing that now with the building you have," she said.

Any shelving or equipment brought into the apartment would move when the

food shelf did at some point. Zimmerman would like to add a couple of freezers and refrigerators.

The food shelf received a donation of 100 turkeys recently, but Zimmermann could only take 50 — even though there's some freezer space at the bus garage.

"We're getting so much more of that stuff and also Pierz Food has been giving us produce now, which they never did before. That's good for a week or two if it's in a refrigerator," she said. "It's just getting to be a kind of an issue."

Another plus would be a bathroom and running water.

However, Council Member Lynn Egan cautioned that a bathroom may have to be made handicapped-accessible if it were opened to the public. Even if it were used only for employees, the city may be responsible to ensure it's handicapped accessible, she said.

Now, since there is no bathroom in the current food shelf, Zimmerman has a key to the fire hall she can use to take someone to the bathroom there if needed. But in the three years she's been with the food shelf, she said only three people have needed that.

Another question was whether the electrical was in good enough shape to handle the appliances.

Plans for the apartment building haven't been settled on. It may be torn down at some point to be used as

parking, or the space used to add on to the fire hall, said Mayor Dave Fischer.

The city plans to keep the apartments until the renters no longer want to be there, he said.

"As far as I'm concerned I think it's a good idea. I think we could make it available to them," Fischer said.

"I think providing a public service is a lot more important right now, especially with the need with the SNAP benefits being decreased," said Council Member Jacque Ballou.

"It's really interesting, because I think Pierz has so many good things for everybody, for seniors, for the kids, and I think it's just one more entity that makes Pierz a better place to be. It's really a good thing," Zimmermann said. "Right now we are just lucky that we can get the food out the door."

Ballou suggested donations could help get the door done.

Zimmermann is hoping to make some requests and pursue the possibility of grants for milk coolers.

"For me personally, it's going to cost the city a little bit of money to look into it and get it taken care of, so we can provide a healthy safe community, then we do it — that's a no-brainer question for me," Ballou said.

"We do appreciate what you guys do. It's great what we have in the community, I know it's all volunteer time," Fischer said.

The Council agreed to have the city's building inspector look into the bathroom situation and to have an electrician look at the wiring to see if it could accommodate several refrigerators and freezers.

Community buffers help kids thrive

(Continued from Page 1A)

herence, a parental relationship, stable caregiving, spousal support and a stable environment.

All of those buffers can help the child build individual-level buffers, such as strengthening and developing personal characteristics, personal traits, intellect, self-efficacy, coping skills, appraisal of adversity or maltreatment and overall life satisfaction.

At this time, there are 50 foster care providers in Morrison County. Because children in foster care often struggle with mental health and other behavioral issues, some of that may be shown outwardly, in public.

Erickson encourages people to take that into consideration before jumping to conclusions when they witness it.

"Don't make assumptions that they don't know how to parent. If you're out in the community and you see a child misbehav-

ing, consider that child may be a foster child, may be adopted, may have some serious mental illness and their parent is coping with that. Be open to all of those second stories that are out there that you don't know," she said.

Ways to support parents who are dealing with misbehaving children include smiling and giving the parent an understanding look, acknowledging that children can sometimes be difficult and understanding that they often are doing the best they can.

"Saying and doing things like that doesn't take a lot of time. But things like that make a huge difference to those kids and parents who are suffering," she said.

Erickson said when people overhear or witness a parent react in a less than positive way to the child who is misbehaving to also consider that the parent may have been dealing with that behavior non-stop that day. After all, they, too, are human and have a breaking point.

"Understanding goes a long way," she said.

"The more connections kids have, the more they feel like they belong and the better they will do in the long run."
— Melanie Erickson

"I think providing a public service is a lot more important right now, especially with the need with the SNAP benefits being decreased."
— Jacque Ballou

This week's government meetings

The Little Falls City Council meets at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 3, in Council Chambers at City Hall.

The Upsala City Council meets Monday, Feb. 3, at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

The Morrison County Board meets at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 4, in the Board Room at the Morrison County Government Center.

The Royalton City Council meets at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 4, in Council Chambers at the Royalton City Complex.

The Swanville City Council meets Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m., at the Swanville Center.

Pierz City Council Briefs

Other business at Monday's Pierz City Council meeting included:

- Hearing Council Member Don Bujalski report that the Rich Prairie Snowmobile Club had posted new trail signs directing snowmobilers coming from the south to turn off of Centennial Drive and into town. A

landowner on Centennial Drive doesn't want snowmobilers using Centennial Drive. The new route gives snowmobilers access to town without using the entire length of Centennial Drive. The snowmobile club asked that the city not plow one side of the trail area down to the asphalt to accommodate

the snowmobilers in town. Signs are posted; and

- Being reminded that the Council will meet with the

Park Board Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 6 p.m. at the Senior Center.

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