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# MIAMI News-Record

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Tuesday, November 23, 2021 | Vol. 120 No.92 | 50¢

## HOLIDAYS BUSY FOR MIAMI *Salvation Army*



Gloria Benton (red SA vest) helps with the distribution of food with two local volunteers last year.

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The Salvation Army Service Unit in Miami strives to help as many people as possible, despite the limitations it faces as a small-town organization.

In 2020, it served 4,328 individuals,

including 1,778 food boxes, 48 rental assists, 174 utility assists and 63 nights of shelter.

Debbie Hillestad, Service Unit Director at the Miami Salvation Army, said its rental assistance is usually a one-time thing and it provides shelter at times in local hotels, but there are some criteria for that.

Salvation Army volunteers took non-perishable food boxes to the Nine Tribes earlier this year. Pictured are (from left) volunteer Rick Hartley, Nine Tribes director Mark McDowell, Salvation Army president Mike Lillie, volunteer George Marshall and local Salvation Army director Debbie Hillestad.



“We try to get people out of the cold when we can,” she said. “We also currently have the food pantry open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon.”

Unlike other Salvation Army service units, the Miami location isn’t a retail store. Hillestad said a lot of people don’t know they’re not a retail store and people often come in who think there’s a store there.

“All our clothing and furniture is free,” said Hillestad. “Usually, if a client comes in and they need clothing, they get at least two sets of clothes and a pair of shoes and a coat. Whatever they need. If someone has had a fire or flood or they’re just coming out of homelessness and

they have a new home, then they can get furniture.”

While they could potentially add a retail store in the future, it’s not currently possible. Some reasons are lack of space and all their workers, besides Hillestad, are volunteers. These same constraints are also why they don’t currently operate a traditional Angel Tree like some of the Salvation Army units in bigger cities do.

“Miami doesn’t have any staff to coordinate such large projects,” Hillestad said. “Those bigger cities pay their coordinators. All our workers are volunteers. We have amazing volunteers

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### NEWS

#### Santa Claus is coming to Ottawa County



David Spillers (left), marketing director at High Winds Casino, helps Jerry Coach set up his toy donation boxes in preparation of the promotion the casino will be running to help the Ottawa County Santa Program.

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Jerry Coach will be giving Santa Claus a helping hand once more this Christmas to ensure Jolly Old Saint Nicholas has 1,000s of toys to give to needy boys and girls across Ottawa County. This is Coach’s 42nd year to collect and give away toys, which he’s been doing since he was 7

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#### No Nov. 26 paper

There will not be a Miami News-Record published on Friday, Nov. 26. The regular print schedule will resume Tuesday, Nov. 30.

### 7TH PICHER CHRISTMAS PARADE ON TAP



A huge crowd was on hand for the 2020 “Coming Home for Christmas parade at Picher. This year’s parade will be at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 4.

A pillar of the Picher and Cardin communities will be honored at the seventh annual “Coming Home for Christmas” parade at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 4.

The event will be the first of four on “Parade Saturday”: Quapaw will hold its parade at noon followed by Commerce at 2 p.m. The day will be capped by Miami’s “Music of Christmas” Rt. 66 Parade at 6 p.m.

The Picher parade — which has drawn as many as 75 units in the past — will line up at the sports complex starting at 9:15 a.m., start at the old D&D Drive Inn and then turn right at the fire station.

The parade route has been extended for those that would like to stay in their cars by the fire station.

Burly Grimes, an active community member who supported the Picher-Cardin school system, summer activities and all sports, will be the parade grand marshal.

Grimes coached girls softball for 33 years. He began coaching on the Senior League field behind Landis Steel, where he and other volunteers changed it into a girls’ softball park.

He coached there until 1997, when he and his son, Jimmy, built the new Lady Gorilla Softball Complex on A Street.

Over the course of his career, he was able to coach his daughters and granddaughters.

Grimes coached in the MKO League and assisted several coaches at Picher High School. He took great pride in the care and maintenance of the field.

His coaching career ended at the 2003 all-state game in Norman.

In the early 1970s, he, his wife, Rayma, and several other volunteers opened Teen Town in the Firemen’s Hall building for teenagers to

have a place to gather on weekends.

In 1972, Rayma and Burly purchased Gaut’s Market and changed the name to Grimes Grocery, then in 1987, they bought the Picher Nursing Home and changed the name to Leigh Manor in honor of their granddaughters.

They owned it until it closed in November 2006.

In 2004, the Lady Gorilla softball fields were renamed the Wayne “Burly” Grimes Softball Complex in honor of his volunteer services and dedication to the sport.

He continues to show his love for Picher by supporting the reunion committee in its efforts to keep the legacy of Picher alive.

There will be three community trees for anyone that would like to remember a loved one, certain class or just their name.

Two of the trees will be at the memorial park and the other in front of the Gary Building.

There will be a small box with twine and scissors at Gary’s to tie on ornaments.

Persons can also decorate a pole after Thanksgiving representing their family, class or others.

There will be a variety of Picher-themed items for sale on the day of the parade.

Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus will be at the Picher-Cardin Memorial Park after the parade for pictures with children.

There will be free coffee, cocoa and donuts.

The reunion committee is still in the process of adding to the memorial park. Donations can be made in front of the Gary Building during the parade or by contacting one of the committee members.

For more information, contact Sherri Mills on Facebook or 918-541-5805.

### EVENT

#### Park of Lights opens Thanksgiving night



Take a sneak peek at one of the displays being set up for the Park of Lights, which opens on Thursday at 6 p.m.

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The 18th annual Park of Lights kicks off Thanksgiving night at the Twin Bridges Area of Grand Lake State Park at 6 p.m. About 50,000 to 70,000 visitors drive through the Park of Lights each year, said Twin Bridges Park Partners President Melissa Davis.

Davis has been involved with the Park of Lights and Twin Bridges Park Partners Board for the past eight years. Previously, she served as the group’s treasurer but she’s served as the president for the past two years.

“I’ve lived in Wyandotte

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# Lights

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37 years,” Davis said. “I love being involved in our community. There are several community events I help with throughout the year.”

One of the biggest events she helps with is the Park of Lights, which had 28 participants sign up for display spots this year.

“We have 24 returning participants and 4 new participants this year,” she said. “Our display participants consist of school groups, church groups, community organizations and local businesses. We’re always excited to see what each group creates. We’ve had campers, boats, fire trucks and cars decorated in the Park of Lights.”

While there aren’t any hard and fast rules to creating a Park of Lights display, participants are encouraged to use LED lights and use electrical tape to help weatherproof plug-in connections.

“We also ask that participants use some form of signage to let the public know who created the display,” said Davis.

Identifying your display makes it easier for visitors driving through to vote for you when they exit the park. The top three displays with the most votes win prestige and prizes. The first place winner receives \$500, second place gets \$350 and third place receives \$250.

At the exit, visitors can also make a donation to Twin Bridges Park if they chose. Donations are put to good use for all types of projects.

“Donations are used to purchase items for the park,” Davis said. “In past years, Park of Lights’ donations have funded electrical projects and purchased fire rings, grills, flag poles, trees and playground equipment for the park. We also use donations to improve and add to the lights every year, and also to fund the annual Easter egg hunt.”

Besides the awe-inspiring display of twinkling Christmas lights, Park of Lights organizers usually schedule other events during the display period. In years past, Santa would take pictures with the kids and listen to their Christmas wishes inside the

Park office while everyone enjoyed hotdogs and drinks. Due to COVID, they couldn’t have their normal Santa nights in 2020.

“Last year, we created ‘Santa in the Park,’” explained Davis. “Santa and Mrs. Claus had their own display in the Park of Lights where they could wave, greet and accept letters. This year will be the same. We’ll announce Santa Nights on the Twin Bridges Park Partners Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/twinbridgesparkpartners2](http://www.facebook.com/twinbridgesparkpartners2)) during the week Santa visits.”

Santa’s first visit is scheduled for Dec. 4. He and Mrs. Claus will be located towards the end of the Park of Lights trail at the last curve. From inside the car, children can share their Christmas wishes with Santa and drop their letters in his mailbox.

“The Park of Lights is a place you can come to make memories with loved ones,” Davis said. “Parents and grandparents love bringing their kids to see the light displays and Santa. Christmas music and twinkling lights bring cheer for the holiday season. Many people drive thru several times. It’s almost a guarantee you’ll notice something you didn’t see on your first trip through.”

Davis said the event wouldn’t be possible without the volunteers, sponsors and display participants, and she wanted to say a special thanks to each of them

“I’d like to thank the park board for their involvement in the community and volunteering for the season,” she said. Park Partners board members include Norman Hildebrand, Trinda Crow, Rick Davis, Deanna Conness, Janette Arnold and park manager Sherri Burris. Also, thank you to our sponsors and display participants for their time this season.”

The Park of Lights will be open nightly from 6 to 9 p.m. for five weeks, from Thursday, Nov. 25 through Thursday, Dec. 30. There’s no fee, no matter how many times you drive through and enjoy the sparkling extravaganza of holiday magic. If you drive through on Wednesdays through Sundays, don’t forget to cast your vote for your favorite Christmas display of 2021.

# Wyandotte BOE approves updated Indian policies, procedures

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Wyandotte Board of Education members held a discussion with tribal leaders and the parents of Native American students to allow input into educational programs and activities during its regular session meeting held on Nov. 8. Board members approved the updated Indian Policies and Procedures followed by board action on the IPP and Title VII bylaws for the 2022 fiscal year.

School districts with children residing on Native American Lands must establish IPP to ensure the district meets specific Federal Rules and Regulations requirements. The minimum provisions of the IPP must ensure equal participation of American Indian children in programs and activities and strategies to improve communication and cooperation between the board of education and the American Indian community.

The board also discussed information received about House Bill 1775 and Senate Bill 783. HB 1775 deals with race and sex stereotyping or bias and SB 783 allows for open transfers of students between public school districts throughout the year. SB 783 also allows school districts to set capacity limits. It allows denial of transfers by the receiving district for various reasons, including absenteeism and discipline issues, but sending districts can no longer block transfers.

Concerning faculty matters, board

members accepted the resignations of Ricky McCullough and Brittany Brewster. They also approved Jack Kelley as a long-term substitute for the open high school science teacher position for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year.

In other business, board members approved fundraiser requests and several consent agenda items, including various expenditures. These included \$451,242.91 for General Fund Payroll/Warrants, \$4,311.90 for Five Star Fund Payroll/Warrants, \$5,831.29 for Child Nutrition Fund/ Payroll/Warrants, \$65,415.26 for General Fund Claims/Warrants, \$4,500.00 for Building Fund Claims/Warrants and \$30,574.28 for Child Nutrition Fund Claims/Warrants.

The board also approved the Wyandotte School Budget for 2021-2022 and the schedule of regular board meetings for 2022. All BOE meetings are held at Wyandotte Public Schools at 5 S. Street in Wyandotte and begin at 7 p.m.

Regular meetings will occur on the following Mondays in 2022:

- Jan. 10
- Feb. 14
- March 14
- April 11
- May 9
- June 13
- July 11
- Aug. 8
- Sept. 12
- Oct. 10
- Nov. 14
- Dec. 12

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