

3. Even if I was a beacon of fear instillation, I couldn't do it because I hate upsetting people.

After all, that's what real journalists do, according to my all-knowing 16-year-old brain: strike down the evil of the world with a pen as their sword.

Satisfied, I put my pen down. There would be other jobs, other careers that involved stories and didn't involve fear.

Yet four years later, I found myself forgetting all these reasons as the greater fear of never finding a job strongly influenced my decision to try out the student newspaper.

It was one of the few times fear led me in

my pen paint the scene.

However, the victory I found in uniting my love of words with a tangible career doesn't always outshine the reasons I initially drafted about why I shouldn't be a journalist.

A few weeks ago, I had to make some tough phone calls. I knew my sources wouldn't want to answer my questions. I knew they were probably going to be irked I was calling to fact-check for the fourth time. I knew my story could make them upset. And I knew I'd have to listen to my fear emanate from the black box I held propped against my ear, my fingers poking nervously

better place if we saw laws, governments or corporations to exist unquestioned. We aren't going to live a wholesome life if we don't listen to an idea different from our own. And we aren't going to become better people if we don't believe our voices — regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or appearance — are important enough to be heard.

That's why I need journalism. And that's why you need it, too.

Kate Stringer, a 2014 University of Portland graduate, is working for the Hillsboro Tribune this summer as part of the University of Oregon's Snowden Internship Program.

Hunger still a big problem in county

Bursting with good economic news, Washington County may seem like an unlikely place for hunger. Yet it exists all around us.

The county has fared quite well in recovering from the Great Recession. Job growth, for example, is running at a strong pace, with the county adding 8,800 jobs from the end of the first quarter of 2013 to the end of the fourth quarter of 2014. But in the midst of plenty, too many still lack the basics.

A significant and growing number of Washington County residents are being left behind economically with low-paying jobs or no jobs at all. In fact, the number of residents living in poverty continues to grow significantly faster than the overall population. Thousands of our neighbors are unable to meet their basic needs for food, as well as for shelter, heat, utilities, clothing, transportation, health care and child care. Particularly hard hit are women, seniors, children and minority groups.

Community Action is making a difference, offering hope, help and change through a host of programs, including housing and homeless services, energy assistance, emergency rent assistance, school readiness programs and food aid.

We held two events to support the food pantry at our Hillsboro Family Shelter, part of a four-shelter network in Washington County helping residents achieve long-term

GUEST COMMENT

Ronald Sarazin



self-reliance and stability. Families seeking shelter services can call Community Action, which will assess their needs and direct them to available resources.

The pantry, a compact space in the basement of the Hillsboro Family Shelter, has refrigerators and shelves for non-perishable food that is provided by the Oregon Food Bank, donated by people who stop by or collected at community events.

According to Patrick Rogers, who manages all of Community Action's housing and homeless services, the pantry serves three to five households during its open hours of 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. every day. The pantry gives out boxes of food for the short term, enough to carry people over until they can get to a larger pantry or an Oregon Food Bank location for a longer-term supply.

At a June 24 event, generously sponsored by the Hillsboro Hops and Advantis Credit Union, a steady stream of Hops fans stopped at the Community Action tent at the stadium entrance to drop off food. Do-

nors were entered into a raffle to win a Hops VIP experience, including a ceremonial first pitch.

Community Action held another event to raise money for the food pantry June 29-30 at Orenco Station's New Seasons Market in Hillsboro. The market was kind enough to let Community Action set up an information table staffed by volunteers and matched contributions made by its customers at checkout.

Both of these events are part of an ongoing effort to cope with a changing food demand landscape. While the Hillsboro Family Shelter's food pantry was once principally used in dire emergencies, it has morphed into a regular resource for many people struggling to cope with economic insecurity. Now many families rely on access to food pantries as a regular part of their monthly food budget, especially at the end of the month when other support runs out.

If Washington County is to be truly prosperous, we need to eliminate conditions of poverty and create opportunities for people and communities to thrive. All of us working together to eliminate hunger would be a good first step.

Ronald Sarazin is president of Olympic Performance, Inc., and chairperson of the Community Action Board, a Hillsboro-based organization that assists residents of Washington County.



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