

## SAYING THANK YOU



COURTESY PHOTO

During the Monday City Council noon meeting, Officers Cole and Ostrem were awarded the Vermillion Police Department Life Saving Award for their actions on April 23. The officers responded to an emergency situation at Wal-Mart for a man suffering cardiac arrest. Their quick action brought the man back to life and he is alive today.

## Opening On Board Announced

The Vermillion Housing Authority Board has one term expiring in June. The term of appointment is for five years. If interested, please complete an Expression of Interest form available on the City's website [www.vermillion.us](http://www.vermillion.us) or at City Hall.

Completed Expression of Interest forms are due in the City Manager's office by noon, Thursday, June 11, 2015. It is anticipated that City Council will make an appointment at their June 15, 2015 meeting.

## USD Part Early-Childhood Ed Initiative

South Dakota's two largest public universities are now part of a nine-university collaborative expanding an early-childhood education initiative initially funded by philanthropist T. Denny Sanford.

The University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University are among the schools that will train teachers on a program targeting the social and emotional development of children in preschool through sixth grade.

A \$20 million anonymous donation announced Tuesday to a San Diego university leading the collaborative will allow for the expansion of the Sanford Harmony and Sanford Inspire programs at school districts nationwide.

The Harmony Program is the only one being implemented in South Dakota. It encourages students to work together to foster empathy and cooperation.

The expansion is expected to reach more than 2,000 schools, including some in Sioux Falls and Vermillion.

## Cottage Ave. Closing To Begin Monday

On Monday, June 8, Cottage Avenue will be closed between West Cherry Street and Dartmouth Street for utility work. The road is anticipated to remain closed until Wednesday, June 10.

## Schroeder To Intern At USDA

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is pleased to announce that Joel Schroeder, a science education major at Wayne State College, Wayne, Neb., will serve agricultural producers throughout Clay County (Vermillion) and Union County (Elk Point), as a soil conservation intern this summer.

He and his wife, Hailey, live in Wayne, Nebraska, most of the year. Since they're both originally from Akron, IA, they return home to work in the summer in southeastern South Dakota and western Iowa.

Growing up Schroeder vaccinated hogs, bailed hay, and performed odd jobs around the farm. The past three summers he worked at Wells, Inc., LeMars, Iowa. His first summer he worked in the freezer, and the past two summers he worked in the lab as a quality assurance technician.

During the school year Schroeder is a substitute teacher at school districts that participate in the Wayne State College Nebraska Teacher Academy (NENTA) Program.

He said, "I'm excited to serve as a soil conservation intern and I feel blessed to be able to split time between the Vermillion and Elk-Point field offices. Producers in these two counties are some of the most passionate professionals on the planet and I look forward to learning from them this summer. Due to my background in science and education, professional experience, and on-the-job-training support with the NRCS team, I look forward to assisting these producers to preserve the natural resources on their farms for generations to come."

## Death

From Page 1

Assistance has been provided at the scene by the Attorney General's Office, the DCI, the Vermillion Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks, Clay County Emergency Management, as well as Codington and Yankton County Search and Rescue.

He added, it is premature to talk about the nature of Hummel's death at this time, but he hopes to be able to release more information soon.

"The autopsy was done today," he said. "I don't have that report yet, but I hope to be able to get it soon. The indications to us at the scene are that we are going to treat it as a homicide investigation until we find out otherwise. At this time we are following up on a lot of leads, but we do not have a suspect at this time."

The sheriff's office has asked for information about a dark colored sedan with tinted windows and a loud exhaust system seen at the scene near the time of Hummel's death. Howe noted that to his understanding loud meant in disrepair.

"Witnesses reported seeing the car in that

location," Howe said. "As to its involvement, we don't know. We just want to talk to everyone who was in the area whether or not they were involved."

Officials are asking that anyone who saw anything suspicious in the area Monday afternoon from 1-3 p.m. to contact their office. They would also like to speak to anyone who had any contact with Alicia Hummel on Sunday or Monday.

"Additionally, we would like to speak to anyone who may simply have been at the Highlines Boat Landing on Monday, even if they didn't notice anything out of the ordinary," Howe said.

Howe noted that Hummel's car has been located, but her cell phone has not.

"She was last seen on Monday," Howe said. "Her car was located at the scene. At this time we have released the scene."

Howe said anyone with information about Hummel's death should contact the Clay County Sheriff's Office at 605-677-7100.

"At this time we will be following up on leads," he said. "We are looking for any and all information we can from the public. At this time we have received some and we will continue to follow up on that. As far as back at the scene, we will certainly go back if needed."

# LIL' BITS

## VBS Builds The Church

BY SARAH WETZEL

For the Plain Talk

The United Church of Christ was alive with the sound of music and Minecraft last week as the annual Vacation Bible School (VBS) was held featuring activities geared around the theme 'On this rock I will build my Church.'

The program ran from Tuesday through Friday with a special VBS program at the church's worship service on Sunday.

Will, 13, assisted with the Minecraft activity.

"The idea of Minecraft was to build something for the community," he said. "The first day the kids figured out what they were going to do. We gave them a blank world. Some people built houses, some people built fountains. Then they deleted the world and we said, 'Now that you guys are familiar with Minecraft we're going to give you a new world and you are going to build a school.'"

The ideas didn't stop there.

"Then it turned out they wanted us to make it into a school/church kind of thing," Will said. "With all these different groups, one group would start something. The next group would come in and we'd tell them what they had been doing and they'd kind of do it but also add their own little special flares there."

Lucas, 10, was one of the participants and helped the younger children.

"With the preschoolers I had to help them," he said. "I helped build the walls of the school and the library. I built a pool but it got wrecked. In a different world I built this church and it's kind of the same but I didn't do every single detail. The room that looks mostly the same is the sanctuary."

Will enjoyed the teaching opportunity that came with helping out with the different age groups.

"The older kids already knew how to do it," he said. "For those groups we told them what we needed done and they would go and do it and then for the other groups Lucas and I supervised. What basically happened was we would give them one or two things to do. They would do them and



COURTESY PHOTO

Kids who attended the United Church of Christ's Vacation Bible School perform a song learned during the week along with presenting art, Lego and Minecraft projects under the theme 'On this rock I will build my Church.'

then along the way they would break a quarter of the world. So it would get done but we would have to spend our free times cleaning up and repatching everything. It took me two sessions to put that stupid carpet down."

Aside from Minecraft, the kids also participated in music, art and Lego activities.

Lucas especially enjoyed the music.

"We practiced songs and we played games," he said. "I don't remember what it's called. We played music games with rocks. We played this game that you would usually use a button and you put the button in someone's hand and they have to figure out who has the button. We were singing the song while we did it."

The rock was used for the game in keeping with the weekly theme according to Henry, 9.

"'Rock' really means Peter," he said. "I don't remember in which language. When you translate it it can mean people too because Peter is somebody. So 'I built my church upon this rock' and that rock is people, all the people who helped with it."

"We were told this story where Jesus supposedly said to Peter 'On this rock I will build my church,'" Will said.

"He said it was translated 'rock' to 'pet-ter' so he said 'I will build my church on you.' That kind of means the faith will be built on people not with big halls or big advertising like 'Hey! This is Christianity. It's going to be the people not just wealth and buildings.'"

Henry enjoyed the art activity.

"In art we worked on mostly things to put in the sanctuary," he said. "I don't quite how get how that was related to art. It was a little bit related since it said the words but they didn't really talk about the rock. But we made art to put in the sanctuary for this weekend. So we'll have that up for a while. Then the art was pretty cool because we got to paint whatever we want on that poster and we got to paint 'We are the church.'"

Members of the congregation enjoyed watercolor crosses, posters and Lego creations.

"We worked on Legos quite a bit," Henry said. "It was a super big thing to work on. We worked on it for four days. We had quite a bit of fun. The first day we made something and destroyed it kind of like a bomb dropping onto a Lego thing. That kind of stunk

VBS | PAGE 13

## Program Offers Free Lunches For Children

BY SARAH WETZEL

For the Plain Talk

For many children, summer months can mean less regular meals without the school lunch programs.

In an effort to combat childhood hunger, the Vermillion School District participates in a federal program offering free meals to the community's children at Jolley Elementary.

"It's a federal program run through the child and adult nutrition services out of Pierre," said Sheila Beerman, district business manager. "We do have to qualify based on a percentage of free and reduced lunch in a school. It basically serves lunch to anybody 18 years and under free of charge."

Beerman's position as an employee of the district places the Food Service program in her charge.

For the past three years she has seen a difference.

"We have had growth in the number served in the years we've done it," she said. "(The kids) don't have to be living here. As long as they're 18 and under they can come and eat free."

Lunch is served between the hours 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Monday through Friday except for the Friday before the Fourth of July according to Beerman.

The free lunch program also operates alongside the



SARAH WETZEL / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Anyone ages 18 and under may receive free lunches this summer at Jolley Elementary as part of a federally-run nutrition program. Hundreds of children are served daily.

weekend backpack program, which provides kids with food to take home over the weekend.

The first few days of the fourth year of this program seem to be a success.

According to Beerman, more than 200 children were served the first day.

The more the merrier according to Tony Graham, also a head of the program.

"Really we need them to participate or the program expires," he said.

Graham is in charge of

the menu which he tries to make kid-friendly though some parents choose to eat with their children at a cost of \$3.50 per meal (cash only).

"Just this morning a little boy came in and he was fresh from baseball practice," Graham said. "He was five or six. He was really excited just jumping up and down because of the tater tots. I don't think it's something that kids get at home a lot. They're not expensive. I just think it's

something that you don't think about. So they get something that otherwise they'd go the whole summer without. We have ovens here so everything is baked fresh and hot."

Parents can also be assured that the meal will be balanced, as well.

"There are federal regulations on every part of it," Beerman said. "The thing that we like a lot is they have the unlimited salad bar and they can come up as many times as they want to get more."

Regular attendees of the free lunch program include kids from the summer programs at St. Agnes and Jolley Elementary, several daycares and sports programs.

"The summer baseball is a big feeder for us," Graham said. "They're at the middle school practicing in the morning and they're done by the time we start so they just come over."

Though most of the kids are younger, Beerman said she hopes to see more older kids attend, a trend that seems to be starting.

"We didn't have a lot of middle schoolers the first year," she said. "Now that they've continued to come after Jolley we're getting some of the older kids which really is nice."

LUNCH | PAGE 13

### We're all different, but we all need a place to live.

## sdhousingsearch.com

SOUTH DAKOTA  
**HOUSING**  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

### Knutson FAMILY DENTISTRY

Dental Excellence for Children & Adults

## 605-624-6291

Dr. Richard Knutson, D.D.S. • Dr. Matthew Knutson, D.D.S.  
[www.KnutsonFamilyDentistry.com](http://www.KnutsonFamilyDentistry.com)