

GRANTS PASS

Your Local Community Magazine

THE SOCIAL.

PUBLICATION

JULY 2023



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The Vargas Family

Photo by Kelcie Jean Photography

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Calendar Picks



Summer Market
 EVERY FRIDAY | 9 AM - 1 PM
Murphy Outdoor Market
 6890 Williams Hwy



Three Rivers Vendors Fair and Food Truck Festival
 FRI, JUL 21 - JUL 23 | STARTING AT 9 AM
JOCO Fairgrounds
 1451 Fairgrounds Rd



Phocus Soccer Summer Camp
 JULY 10 -14
Dutch Bros Soccer Complex
 926 Redwood Ave, Grants Pass



"Zoo Train" Kindermusik Playdate
 SAT, JUL 22 | 11 AM - 12 PM
Music4Kids
 141 NW C St



Jackson County Fair
 THU, JUL 13 - FRI, JUL 14
Jackson County Expo
 1 Peninger Rd, Central Point, OR



Car Swap Meet
 SUN, JUL 23, | 8 AM - 3 PM
Josephine County Fairgrounds
 1451 Fairgrounds Rd



Lavender Festival
 FRI, JUL 14 | 11 AM - SUN, JUL 16 | 7 PM
Hummingbird Creek Bistro Beer & Wine Gardens
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Lost and Found Theatre Camp
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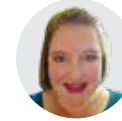
THE **SOCIAL** PUBLICATION Team



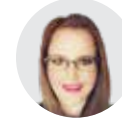
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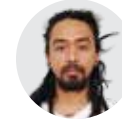
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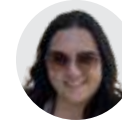
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 Photographer



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 Photographer



Krystal Creviston
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- Community Contributors
- Resident Contributors
- Resident Writers
- Junior Writers
- Photographers

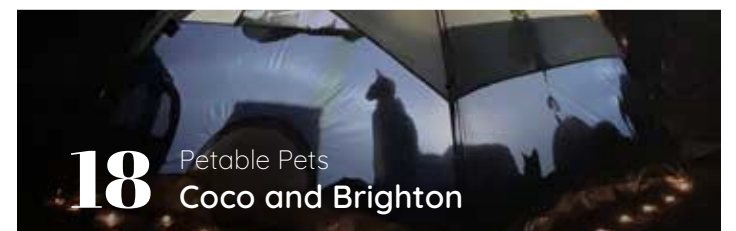
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Dr. Brent D. Erickson DMD, MS



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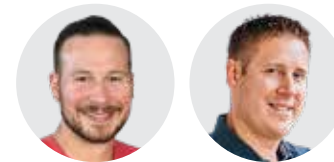


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GRANTS PASS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE THE SOCIAL PUBLICATION



Hello Readers,

It has been almost a year since we began the Grants Pass Publication and It has been so much fun to grow closer to the local community members, and businesses. We love to see you all thrive, make a difference and give back. We appreciate our businesses, who are the foundation that make our publication possible. We are also grateful for the involvement of the residents who give us nominations and ideas each month. We are so grateful to share your stories!

So far, we have gotten to meet some of the most incredible people and we look forward to building more relationships in the future months. We absolutely love to see the participation of the residents and business owners who care so much about making living in this community a privilege. In June, we had the opportunity to share a wonderful evening at RoxyAnn Winery and get to know each other just a little bit better. We got to share stories and celebrate what makes this partnership so special. When I think of community, I think of all the people who come together and invest in the lives of its individuals, families, kids, businesses.

As summer is at its height, we can only hope that we continue to do well, make a difference each day, and stay true to lifting one another up through positivity, and staying involved. We hope you all keep the spirit of freedom and thankfulness throughout this July and future months.

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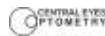
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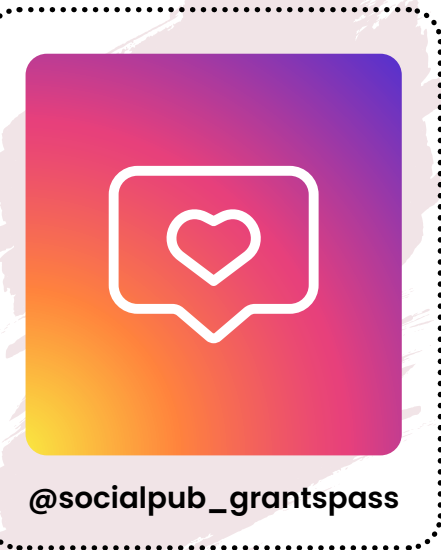
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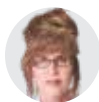


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Expert Contributors



MARLA QUINTANA Aesthetispa Laser & Wellness Center
Marla, a long time native of Southern Oregon, has raised four children in Grants Pass with her husband, Max. A nurse for over 38 years, she has practiced aesthetic nursing for the past 15 years. Marla is the owner of AesthetiSpa Laser and Wellness Center and believes in building an enduring and rewarding relationship with her clients and community, through knowledge and superior service.



DEVIN NELSON C Street Dental
Devin Nelson, his wife Lena, and 5 kids have lived in Grants Pass since 2016. Before becoming a dentist, Devin had a unique job in Arizona as a mascot for the Phoenix Suns. He received his undergraduate at BYU and his doctorate in dental medicine (DMD) from the Arizona School of Dental and Oral Health (ASDOH). His dental practice treats all areas of dentistry including cosmetic & aesthetics, oral surgery, crown & bridge restoration, preventive, and emergency dentistry.



SUSIE ATONDO Edward Jones
Born and raised in Grants Pass, Susie Atondo has been a financial advisor since 2006. She works with multi-generational families to develop unique strategies for wealth transfer, and with business owners in creating strategies for business succession, portfolio construction, and tax reduction. She married her husband, Paul, in 2001 and they have three children, Luci, Penny, and Finn. They enjoy hiking and going to the beach.



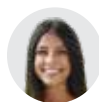
SHERYL ZIMMERER Logos Public Charter School
Since 2017, Sheryl Zimmerer has served as the Executive Director for Logos Public Charter School, the largest, non-virtual charter school in the state of Oregon. Under her leadership, the K-12 school that serves Jackson and Josephine County students has reported its highest graduation rate ever (95%) and has been voted one of the best non-profits to work for in Oregon 5 years in a row. Since her daughters have grown up, she now lives in Talent with her husband in the house they rebuilt after the 2020 Oregon Alameda wildfire with their two spoiled golden retrievers.



CHRISTINE LOWE Diversity Home Lending
Born and raised in the Southern Oregon area, Christine Lowe absolutely loves enjoying the outdoor beauty we have here. With 25 years in the mortgage industry, ensuring that you make the right choice for you and your family is her goal and she is committed to providing her customers with mortgage services that exceed their expectations.



BEKAH NUGENT Dwell House
Bekah is a licensed real estate broker, certified home stager and principal of Dwell House. Bekah loves houses, design and real estate. At 21 years old in between college classes her and her husband, Matt, worked hard to transform a 1960's house into their first investment property. After years in corporate marketing and branding she started Dwell House. In her free time you'll see her cheering on the sideline of a soccer field, boating, hiking Dollar Mountain, sponsoring local makers and hosting some kind of party or event somewhere.



NICOL ELSASSER Country Financial
Nicol Elsasser is a long-time resident of Grants Pass, Oregon and loves the beautiful valley we live in. This is why working in an industry that helps guide, support and protect people and their families in our community, is important to her. Being an agent with Country Financial Insurance for the last 5 years, she has been able to do just that and that is what makes her love what she does.



BRENT ERICKSON DMD, MS IN ORTHODONTICS
Grants Pass Orthodontics
Born and raised in Grants Pass, Dr. Brent D. Erickson has been practicing in the Grants Pass area since 2015. His goal as an orthodontist is to create long-lasting smiles in a comfortable environment and to give confidence with joy. When not at the office, he enjoys adventuring with his wife, Ashley, their four kids and dog, Timber, doing all things outdoors, playing soccer and golf, going snowboarding, and playing video games.



JENA HETH Diversity Home Lending
Jena Heth and her family have been Grants Pass residents for the past 19 years. Her husband is quite the fisherman, so this is a perfect place to live. She has been in lending for 30 years and has seen so much change in the industry. What she loves most about her profession is her clients, some of whom have become dear friends. It's a profession based on knowledge and trust and her clients know she is always there for them.



WADE SQUIRES The Venuti Group at Cascade Hasson Sotheby's International Realty
Wade Squires, owner of The Venuti Group, became a realtor in 2016 after spending over 10 years in construction as a lead carpenter, building new homes and performing extensive remodels. It was there he learned the value of communication, and as a realtor, he has continued to make this a top priority. Whatever your real estate needs are, Wade would be happy to help you achieve your goals!



DEANNA ELLIOT Centered Physical Therapy + Wellness
In 2018 Deanna started Centered Physical Therapy & Wellness, where physical therapy is integrated in a holistic manner to help heal the body at the root of its problem. Specializing in women's health, she has dedicated her time to helping mothers restore balance prenatally, during pregnancy and postpartum. Although her passion resides in pre-conception, where "all the magic" happens.



KEYNA MEIVES The Venuti Group at Cascade Hasson Sotheby's International Realty
A Licensed Realtor since 2000 and owner of The Venuti Group, Keyna Meives is a seasoned realty enthusiast. Her optimistic and joyful countenance makes her a delight to work with and has contributed to her being a consistent top producer in her market area. She loves spending time exploring the outdoors with her husband and three children.



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José and Kylee Vargas like to say they had “chemistry” when they first met. They met while attending chemistry class at Grants Pass High School when José was a junior and Kylee was a freshman, and they were assigned as lab partners. But sparks didn’t immediately fly for this pair. They had very different work ethics, so Kylee requested to switch lab partners their second semester. They lost connection and didn’t really interact until a few years later when they became close friends, and eventually real “chemistry” between the pair started to form and they began dating. In January of 2009, they got engaged in Mexico where Kylee was meeting some of José’s family for the first time. That June they were married at a friend’s house on the Rogue River. They split time between working and going to college to finish their degrees and had their son Silas (8) in 2014, one month after José finished his master’s degree in Education. Their daughter Abby (6) was born in spring of 2016, and they got their black double doodle “pup” in June of 2021, who has completed their family.



a small, rural community in Mexico near Guadalajara, and moved to Oregon when he was 15 with his dad and some of his siblings. Kylee has lived in Grants Pass her whole life. They both graduated from Grants Pass High School and Rogue Community College (RCC). José went on to get his masters from Southern Oregon University and Kylee got her bachelor’s from Oregon Health and Science University. José teaches Spanish at South Medford High School, including AP Spanish Literature and Spanish 4/5. When he’s not working, José loves playing soccer and basketball. Kylee works part-time as a registered nurse. She is also an adjunct instructor at RCC Table Rock campus for their nursing program. When not working as a nurse, Kylee enjoys homeschooling their kids, or having coffee with friends and spending time with family.

They speak lovingly about their two kids, Silas and Abby. Silas is extremely outgoing and loves people. He is smart, curious, silly, persistent, a storyteller and a great friend. He loves to be with friends and play sports, and really enjoys a good snowball fight. He played soccer at

Oregon Futbol Academy in the fall and will play basketball in the winter. Abby is more reserved in public spaces but is witty and playful when she’s with people she knows. She is smart, creative, kind, and thoughtful. She is funny and can really make the whole family laugh with a good play on words or a pun. She loves to draw, watch movies, and play with her brother. She is a dancer and wishes she could be in dance classes every day. They both like to read and draw and are taking music classes



at Music 4 Kids where they have been introduced to several instruments. Both kids are learning to be bilingual, and José only speaks to them in Spanish to cultivate their love of the language.

The Vargas family has many favorite restaurants they frequent for biweekly dates and family nights out, such as Wheelhouse Coffee, Haul, Horney Goat, Laughing Clam, Climate City, Matzukaze, Cultured Palate, the food trucks at Weekend Beer Company and are always up for desserts at House of Glory. They are an active and busy family, and love to go on “adventures” such as camping in the summer, trips to Bend and the Oregon Coast, visiting family in Mexico, and going on hikes and paddle boarding with family and friends. They love to watch sports as a family, including the Oregon Ducks and the South Medford matches, especially


when they play against Grants Pass to show support for José’s students. After the excitement of this past year, watching the World Cup will become a family tradition as well. They love weekends and you can usually find them picking out fresh fruits and vegetables at the Growers Market on Saturday mornings or having family dance parties in the living room and completing puzzles together. On Sundays they start out the day with German Pancakes for breakfast, head to church, and watch The Chosen together after. They have “snuggle time” as a family during their weekly movie nights, where they rotate taking turns picking the movie and the meal for the night, and try to ignore the messiness of the house to just be together for some intentional, distraction-free time, while enjoying the close bonds of their loving family.



The Vargas family has lived in their current family friendly neighborhood for the past eight years in a 1990’s subdivision within walking distance of a park. Before moving to Grants Pass, José grew up in




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Ted Jones, the firm's 2nd managing partner, at his farm.
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Rogue Pack Envirothon Team



Logos Public Charter School Team Wins 27th Annual Oregon Envirothon! Team Headed to North American Envirothon in New Brunswick, Canada this Summer, Seeking Support!

Medford, OR – In a solid victory, the ‘Rogue Pack’ Envirothon Team from Logos Public Charter School in Medford, won first place overall at the 27th annual Oregon State Envirothon held at The Oregon Garden in Silverton, on Friday, May 5th, 2023. The science team also had the highest scoring ‘Oral Presentation’ as well as the highest score in the ‘Soils-Land Use’, ‘Aquatic Ecology’, ‘Forestry’ and ‘Current Issue’ testing stations.

This big win earns the team the right to represent the State of Oregon in the largest North American Environmental Science Competition held this year in Tantramar, New Brunswick during the week of July 23rd, 2023.

The NCF International Envirothon is an annual competition that reaches over 500,000 students. The Regional, State and International events test students’ creative, critical-thinking, and team-building skills in environmental science and natural resource management. Students demonstrate mastery by rotating through five outdoor eco-testing-stations: Soils/Land Use, Aquatic Ecology, Forest Ecology, Wildlife Ecology, and a current environmental issue (the 2023 topic is Adapting to Climate Change). The teams also research, prepare and deliver oral presentations to panels of judges who evaluate each team on problem-solving abilities, presentation skills and realistic application of ecology concepts. The Logos Public Charter School Envirothon Team has been devoting the past year to study

Logos students dominate competition

Congratulations to the Logos Public Charter School Rogue Pack who dominated at the Oregon Sciences Envirothon Competition taking 1st place in the state! These students demonstrated incredible personal commitment this year and solid teamwork and leadership skills during our Regional and then State Competitions. You can help them get to the International Competition in Canada in July by donating to their GoFundMe (gofund.me/082c4ea6).





and practice while working collaboratively with local community experts to develop practical and theoretical knowledge of natural resource management and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The Logos Envirothon Team, or the ‘Rogue Pack’ is inviting corporate, nonprofit and individual sponsors to provide support for the next two months of training and travel to the competition. Monetary donations are most helpful, however the team is also looking to gather ‘Trade Items’ that represent Oregon and the Rogue Valley to offer other teams who will come from across the nation and Canada to participate in the competition.

Logos Public Charter School, Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District, Oregon Forest Resource Institute, and the Oregon Envirothon have been assisting throughout the school year with training expenses. However, to study, travel, and compete in the NCF International Envirothon Competition, the Logos Team is asking for community assistance.

The Logos Envirothon Team was the first southern Oregon team to win the state competition in 2015, winning again in 2017, 2019, 2022... and now this year’s team has done it again, demonstrating their passion and dedication to the study of our natural resources.

“Any contribution helps and all donations will support a group of dedicated students build their knowledge of Environmental Science and spread Ecological Awareness.” says Advisor of the Logos Rogue Pack, Chris Van Ness. “The Envirothon has strengthened each of our researching, communication and teamwork skills. This is an experience that can change lives!”

“Studying, competing and succeeding in the Envirothon competition, has given me a chance to develop my interests in the environment and nature through

a lens of understanding that I did not know that I had.” says returning Rogue Pack team member, Adam Hill. “It is an honor to have the opportunity to represent Oregon in the International Envirothon competition”

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Coco and Brighton

BASIC INFO

How did your pet get his/her name and does it have any significance? Coco and Brighton are named after places in Cornwall, England, which is the area this wavy-coated cat was first discovered in 1950. Their formal names are Furry Dance Colours Cove and Furry Dance Brighton Beach.

Does your pet have a nickname? Oh yes, I call them 'Terms of Endearment'. Some of Coco's nicknames are Coco Puff, Cokie, and Cocquette and Brighton's are Long Legs, Bright Man and B-Man.

How old is your pet? Coco will be 18 in September 2023 and Brighton turned 17 in April 2023.

What type of animal or breed is your pet? They are both Cornish Rex

cats, a wavy-coated mutation first discovered in a litter of barn cats in Cornwall, England in 1950.

What is your pet's gender? Coco is a spayed female and Brighton is a neutered male.

When and how did you get your pet? I was a Veterinary Healthcare Professional for 47 years and also bred and showed Cornish Rex from 1989 to 2011. Both Coco and Brighton were born in my cattery/home and are both retired show cats.

Who are the other family members, including you? Coco and Brighton are my only family members/pets currently, but I will always have a Cornish Rex in my life!

FAVORITES

What is your pet's favorite treat? Inaba Churu Puree Lickable Treat and Friskies Party Mix

What is your pet's favorite toy? Wand and fishing pole toys are a favorite and they also like food puzzles and foraging feeder toys, too.

What is your pet's favorite game? We both enjoy toys that have us interacting together, The Cat Dancer and Da Bird do that.

What is your favorite thing to do together? As former show cats, they are both used to socializing and being out in public in their customized pet strollers- parades, wineries and brew pubs and social events such as pet rescue fundraising galas. Since I retired, we have added new outdoor activities like hiking, camping and kayaking (no whitewater for them!).



Do you go outdoors? If yes, where is your favorite place to go together? I lived in Southern Oregon for 22 years and moved to Virginia for my husband's job and stayed there until I retired in 2019 and could move back to the PNW. I missed it the entire time I was away and as I was active outdoors and enjoyed hiking, camping and skiing, when I returned I slowly started including my cats in these activities and there is a growing online community of Adventure Cats groups. I have learned a lot on how to safely include my cats in some of these activities from these groups, as well as from podcasts, Zoom meetups and YouTube videos. Follow along on Coco and Brighton's adventures on Instagram, @adventuresome_cats




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Business Spotlight
Project Youth Plus

 by Alexandra Hruz

At Project Youth Plus, there are no smoke and mirrors—the program’s mission is clear, and the PY+ team executes without excuses.

PY+ serves more than 1,700 young people in Southern Oregon from Josephine, Jackson, and Douglas Counties. It started in 1998 with the goal of increasing various opportunities for youth. “At Project Youth Plus, we prepare low-income, first-generation, and under-represented youth to thrive in school, careers and life,” Executive Director Carl Thomas explains. “We use resiliency development strategies personalized to meet the strengths, preferences, and challenges of each individual.” The program’s goals include supporting youth in learning about themselves and applying this self-awareness to school and careers, helping the youth reach their full academic potential and preparing them for successful transitions from high school to college and into the workforce, connecting



participants to local partners to best meet their academic and job placement objectives, and providing financial training and support to help participants achieve their savings goals.

But it’s more than just GED instruction and academic success that PY+ offers—they have wrap-around services to help youth in a multitude of ways. For example, Carl explains that they help students get to their testing sites, and if a student has a flat tire, they’ll pay to

have the tire fixed or replaced. Students can also reach their advisors after typical school hours and receive assistance. But it doesn’t end there. “Some of our students face food insecurities, and we partner with food banks so their family has food,” Carl explains. “If our students face challenges with domestic violence at home, drug addiction, need housing, or face some other life challenge, we are advocates for them and work with community partners to ensure the students get the help they need. Specifically, we’re not just advisors and mentors. Often, we are a lifeline.”

Prior to taking on the role of executive director, Carl worked for Oregon Public Universities for nearly three decades as an administrator, recruiting students to college and running programs to inspire their growth. He joined the PY+ Board of Directors and became an active member. “The work this organization does on the behalf of young people aligns with my personal passion to always help those ‘coming behind me,’ just the same as those folks who helped me as a young man,” Carl says. Carl and his wife Deona are Medford residents. When he’s not busy at PY+, he enjoys running, dancing, and golfing.



As PY+ continues evolving to better meet the needs of the youth it serves, Carl and the PY+ team are eager to expand their services to more young people through school partnerships in Southern Oregon. “There’s no better use of your time than to help someone, and we get to do that everyday at Project Youth Plus,” Carl says. Through this meaningful work, they hope to continue going above and beyond to help their students be successful and making an impact on the community for many years to come.



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Business Spotlight
The Glass Forge

 by Alexandra Hruz

For 25 years, The Glass Forge's furnaces have been burning hotly, assisting in the creation of incredible works of art that have brought joy to thousands in the Grants Pass community and around the world.

Lee Wassink and Nathan Sheafor, founding partners of The Glass Forge, discovered their passion for glass making at their respective colleges and met in the Bay Area while working for different glass studios. It was during this time that the pair got to know each other and figured out their individual working habits, laying the foundation for their future business. Lee had spent some time in southern Oregon after his parents moved to the area, and in the late 1990s, Lee's dad found the building the studio is currently in and rented it. Just a few months later, in May 1998, their newly built furnaces were lit. The Glass Forge was officially in business.

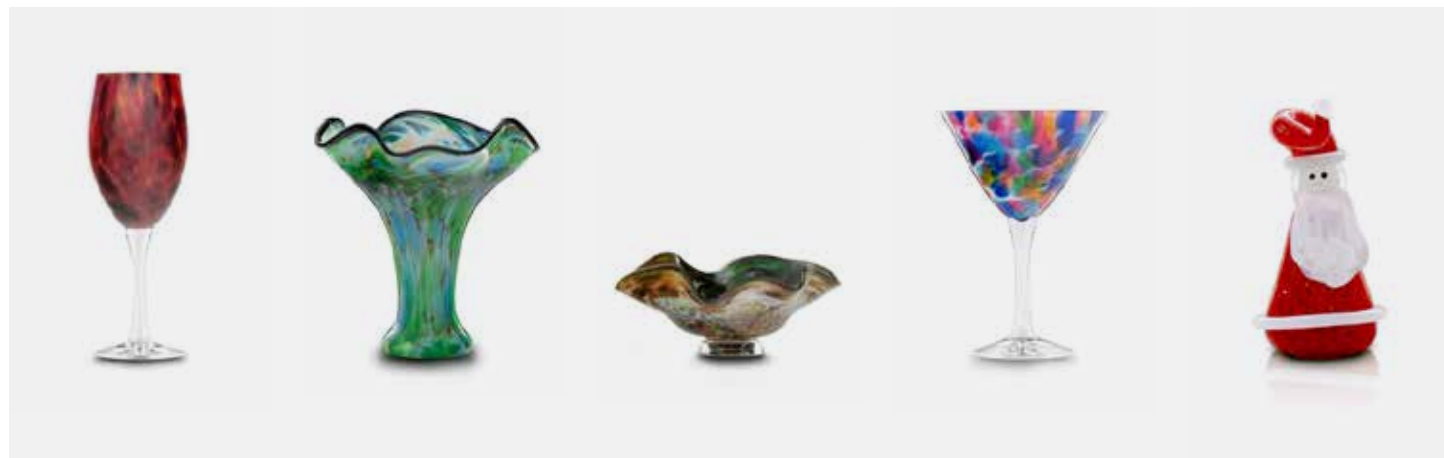
The Glass Forge is a glass studio



that specializes in the ancient art of glass blowing, a specialty that was primarily practiced in Venice, Italy. At the studio, they offer a wide range of colors and shapes, which speaks to Nathan and Lee's years of experience. The company's clients include many different groups, retail shops, and galleries. They sell to lighting companies and businesses that make corporate awards. The Glass Forge also has a line of cremation urns they sell retail and wholesale. The company offers shipping and has sent glass all over the world. In Grants Pass, the studio is open to walk-in traffic.

Nathan and Lee say they enjoy showing people the studio and teaching them about the amazing qualities of glass. One of their favorite glass projects was the creation of more than 130 glass fish that are displayed on the wall of the local hospital.

Founding partners Nathan and Lee were joined by the (now retired) Maurice "Butch" Kreuzer to start The Glass Forge. After more than two decades in operation, the business partners feel proud of both the company's longevity and the rapport they've developed with customers and previous employees. "We hope customers



feel secure in the knowledge that they will be able to walk out of our building with something that they can truly love and cherish, whether it is something they found in our gallery or something we custom made for them," they say. Lee and Nathan like the educational part of

the business as well, adding that many customers are intrigued with the glass blowing process and are often eager to try their hand at the craft.

Not many small businesses can boast of operating successfully for more than two decades, but The Glass Forge has

persevered over the years. Their longevity is one of the things they're most proud of—and it's something they don't plan to change anytime soon. "Our mission is to have fun making glass," they explain. "We hope our studio can be a fixture in Grants Pass for many years to come."




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Kool Kid
Rielynn Winslow

 by Bobette Sudweeks

This sweet young lady looks like she is poised for a day in the rain. Rielynn Winslow is an active twelve-year-old who loves singing and dancing. In fact, she has been blessed with a unique ability to entertain others and keep them laughing. She has been doing so for six years. The first time she performed on stage she performed a hip-hop dance. Thus, her love for performing began. Every summer, she looks forward to participating in the summer theatre camp. She admires the camp director, Bruce, and aspires to have as much stage presence as he has. One of her favorite acting roles has been as Manal, one of Jasmine's handmaidens from *Aladdin Jr.*, but Rielynn's favorite theater show is *Matilda*. This summer, she will be in the production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Acting is a way to help her come out of her shell.

Rielynn's other hobbies include reading longboarding, scrapbooking, swimming, and tumbling. This is the second year she has been involved with cheerleading, both sideline cheering as well as competitive.



She and her friends enjoy learning new stunts and pushing themselves to become their best. Her favorite thing to do is spend time improving her tumbling and stunting. Her biggest challenge has been mastering a round-off back handspring.

As a homeschooler, her favorite school subject is art. She also is part of the choir with Mr. Daggett's School of Music. She has only been involved for about a year, but she is able to sing with so many talented people. The best thing she has learned from



her amazing teacher is how to go into your head voice and also create harmonies.

Rielynn is lucky to have a little brother, Sawyere, who is eight. Their family has three pets: Alli is a five-year-old cat, Brynlee (age 3) is the family dog, and the newest pet is Elliot, a two-year-old bearded dragon. Rielynn loves to spend time with her family. They enjoy camping, paddleboarding, eating out, playing outdoor games, and shopping. Spending time on Kauai with her grandparents and cousins



has been her favorite vacation. Someday, she would like to visit London, try the tasty foods there, and just listen to the people's terrific British accents!

Mint Green is Rielynn's favorite color. Her favorite animal is a dog – all dogs! She loves to eat garlic salt-flavored air-fried chicken wings and when it is her turn to choose where the family gets to eat out, Rielynn chooses Tap Rock. She loves everything there, especially the cheesecake! She enjoys watching British baking shows on television or *A Week Away* on Netflix. This active young lady likes to also spend time at the ice-skating rink or watching the Top Gun Allstar Cheer team.

Planning for her future, Rielynn would like to become a tumbling coach for young children. It sounds like she is well on her way to becoming a great teacher doing something she really loves. Good luck, Rielynn, we hope to see more of you in the future.



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