



Heart tree promises happiness

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

Now in its third year, “Gifts From the Heart,” continues to help those less fortunate in having a happier holiday season, said Angie Jennings, one of the coordinators of the project.

The project was first started in December of 2002 as a way to remember Dr. Jeff Jennings, who always enjoyed this time of the year, she said.

“Christmas can be a stressful time for some, and as a community, this is a wonderful opportunity to either give or receive, she said.

The idea behind the “heart tree” is to choose a name and then buy a gift. The tags offer the age, gender and type of gift the child would like.

This year, Angie said her daughter, Abby, 4 1/2, has gotten more involved in the project. Abby said she looks forward to being able to help her mother and others get the presents ready for distribution.

Last year, said Jennifer Van Eaton, another committee member, there were 129 children’s names representing 65 families needing help.

This year, there are about 45 children and 30 families identified, which is a good thing since the number of those needing assistance is down.

There are still a few tags left on the tree located at the His Shop, 475 N. Franklin in Colby, Angie said, and all gifts need to be bought and returned to either that location or Sacred Heart Catholic Church by Wednesday, Dec. 15.

For questions about the project, call 462-2179 or the His Shop, 462-6361.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Abby Jennings, 4 1/2, and who is the daughter of Angie Jennings and the late Dr. Jeff Jennings, helped her Aunt Gina (Jennings) put name tags on the “Heart Tree” at the His Shop in downtown Colby on Thursday. The project is a way to help those less fortunate have a happier holiday season, Angie said.

Former Colby family adapts to life in China

By **TISHA COX**

Colby Free Press

A former Colby family is helping make life better for people in China. Peter and Brenda Burgos and their children spent the past seven years in Liaoning province, living in the city of Shenyang, helping with humanitarian efforts in the world’s most populous country.

The family lived in Colby from 1994-1996 and moved to China in 1997, and they’re now trying to raise awareness and support to return to China. The next two weeks will be spent in Kansas, talking about their work.

While in the states, they have more than 100 meetings planned to



P. Burgos



B. Burgos

tell people about their efforts in China.

They work with LIGHT, or Liaoning International General Health Trainers.

Mr. Burgos said the organization has three goals, to provide excellent patient care, doctor training and to

inspire others to continue similar work.

“It’s a way of making a relationship with the Chinese people by making them know they’re cared about,” he said.

Part of the efforts include working out of an orphanage, helping take care of more than 120 children and also putting on country clinics for people that can’t afford a doctor or for those who don’t regularly see a doctor, and also doing children’s surgeries.

Mr. Burgos said Liaoning alone has more than 44 million people, and because China considers people with different levels of medical training doctors, getting people the necessary medical care is a daunting task.

Mr. Burgos said the Chinese Ministry of Health wants family practice doctors trained at a very high level and the organization is able to make connections with people at medical schools and the ministry to get it done.

Right now, they’re training three family practice doctors in the province.

“We’re hoping to make an impact for the good in the Chinese health system,” he said, adding he himself

has the chance to make a greater impact in China than he did working with patients in the U.S.

Putting down roots in another country, adapting to a new culture and language were a challenge, but the family was up to the task.

“There are some major cultural adjustments,” he said.

He said it took nearly five years to learn Chinese, but the whole family picked up the language, including their children, Becca, 14; Stephen, 13; Rachel, 10, and Catherine, 2.

Catherine was born in China and their other children have taken to the country they called home for seven years. The three older children were 7, 6 and 2 when they moved to China.

“They consider it home,” Mrs. Burgos said, and Mr. Burgos added coming back to the U.S. was a bit of culture shock for their children.

Not only do their own children think of China as home, but the family also has opened their hearts to the children they work with. The couple had a Chinese foster son who was later adopted and now hopes to adopt a child when they return.

“We want to get back as soon as we can,” Mrs. Burgos said.

Under construction here No additional jobs seen for new building

By **TISHA COX**

Colby Free Press

Colby is the future home of a new regional state office for Social and Rehabilitation Services for north-west Kansas.

However, it won’t be bringing any new jobs to the community as originally stated.

Glenn Strait of Strait Associates Architects in Colby told the city council at its Nov. 16 meeting the facility could mean up to 35 new jobs in the community.

But Regional Director Robena Farrell of Hays clarified today no new jobs will be added to the social services office in Colby.

“I can tell you that we are not planning to add additional staff to the Colby office at this time,” Farrell said, adding the building will contain space to accommodate case files, a computer training site for current staff training, and “travel in” offices for administrative staff to visit for management purposes.

She said no new positions in her office will be opening up in Colby and only the 15 staff members from the current office will relocate to the new building. Farrell also doesn’t anticipate any jobs being created in the near future.

Because of the new regional office, the state is closing three sites for consolidation after the first of the year. Farrell said the Russell office is closing in January, followed by Norton in February and Hill City in March.

Staff from those offices will be moved to Phillipsburg and Hays.

She said the new building at Colby was originally going to house regional offices for several other agencies but they weren’t able to follow through with their plans.

Construction started last week on the 11,800-square-foot building with the pouring of the foundation, Strait said.

The building should be complete by July 1 at the latest, he said.

‘Christmas On Us’ has another winner

Another winner in the *Colby Free Press*/Colby merchants “Christmas on Us” retail promotion was announced today.

Richard and Alva Horn of Colby brought in a ticket containing a number that appeared in the “Christmas on Us” section in the *Free Press* and it matched a ticket they picked up at Great Western Tire. The ticket, worth \$50, was brought to the *Free Press* office for verification. Horn said he might go back and spend his money at Great Western Tire.

“Christmas on Us” ads carry several numbers and if anyone has a match to any number appearing in those ads (the next will be on Dec. 8) bring them to the *Free Press* for

verification and to claim your \$50.

The tickets are available only from the participating business, which are:

China Buffet, Colby Ag Center, Colby True Value, Office Works & Home Furnishings, Stan’s Automotive, Beringer Hardware, Dougherty Implement, Sundance Spas of Northwest Kansas, Golden Hardware, Colby Implement, Great Western Tire and the *Colby Free Press*.

Tickets can only be picked up at the participating businesses and winners can only spend their money at those places of business.

The promotion will give away a total of \$1,550: five \$50 instant winners, and then on Saturday, Dec. 18 in the Colby Community Building at 10 a.m. two big prizes will be awarded — \$300 second place and \$1,000 grand prize. Additionally, any unclaimed instant winners will also be given away on that morning.



R. Horn

Colby . . . this weekend

• Saturday

The Colby High School “Supporting Our Students” organization is holding an event to provide free toys to families in need from 9:30-11 a.m. at the high school.

Santa City open from 1-5 p.m. at Fike Park.

• Sunday

Santa City open from 1-4:30 p.m. at Fike Park and 6:30-8 p.m. Prairie Museum of Art and History hosting “Beary Merry Bears from 1-5 p.m., also paintings by Monument artist Don Denning and a presentation on Kansas archeology by Don Rowilson at 2 p.m.

Pride of the Prairie Orchestra performs at 3:30 p.m. at the Colby High School auditorium.

Christmas Parade, “Bringing the Holidays Home,” at 6 p.m. in downtown Colby. Parade starts in front of TNT Auction and ends at Santa City.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include discussing county attorney benefits with the Logan County Commissioners. The meeting is open to the public.

Lions hosting pancake feed Saturday

The High Plains Lions Club is hosting its annual pancake feed at the Colby Community Building on Saturday from 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Drop by and enjoy all the fixings of breakfast.

USDA program cutoff looming

The cutoff date for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications to be considered for fiscal year 2005 funding is Jan. 21, 2005. Stop by the local United States Department of Agriculture Service Center and visit with the Natural Resources Conservation Service

or local conservation district staff to get more information about helping address your resource concerns. In Colby, stop by 915 E. Walnut or call (785) 462-7671 Ext. 300.

Santa Helpers Shop to open soon

The Santa Helpers Shop will once again be open to give infants and young children through fifth grade the opportunity to buy wrapped gifts for their moms and dads, said Julie Harlow, one of the coordinators. The event is sponsored by the Blue Jean Ladies (formerly Mu Epsilon) and will be open from 9 to 11 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 11, at Pioneer Memorial Library. All gifts are \$3 and there will be a four-gift limit. For questions, call Harlow at (785) 460-8649.

Interagency coalition meeting

The Thomas County Interagency Coalition will hold its monthly meeting at 11:30 a.m. Thursday at Montana Mike’s.

Colby
Rexford
Brewster



Look for 40s and 20s

Tonight...Clear. Lows around 20. West winds 5 to 15 mph. **Saturday...**Mostly sunny. Highs around 50. Southwest winds 5 to 10 mph. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s. West winds 5 to 10 mph. **Sunday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 40s to around 50. West winds 5 to 10 mph. **Sunday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s. **Monday...**Partly cloudy. Colder. Highs in the upper 30s.

The numbers

Thursday’s high, 36
Low this morning, 16
Year ago today, 54 and 25
Records for this date, 68 in 1988 and -5 in 1919
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
December, 0.00
Snowfall, 0.00
Soil temperature, 34

The sources:

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

