



Offender Victim Ministries Inc. Director Todd Lehman, right, and OVM facilitator Taryn Bergen hold card hands in front of their offices. OVM is having a fundraising poker run on Saturday, Oct. 2.

# Helping offenders, victims: Local organization having poker run Oct. 2

BY WENDY NUGENT  
HARVEY COUNTY NOW STAFF

NEWTON—Offender Victim Ministries Inc. Director Todd Lehman gets calls from offenders needing to set up their first appointments, for which they're rarely excited.

Lehman said it's interesting to see a person who initially wasn't happy about having to use their services get excited over time.

"It's interesting to see guys come in and say, 'I'm making my last payment,'" Lehman said. "Some say, 'I'm going to miss this.'"

OVM's purposes are several.

"Offender/Victim Ministries Inc. is a nonprofit organization that offers restorative services to those impacted by conflict, trauma, crime and incarceration in our local communities," according to their website. "Guided by restorative justice principles, OVM works to improve relational skills and support healthy communities. OVM provides support and services for both offenders and victims in the central Kansas area."

To help with that, OVM is having a fundraiser on Saturday, Oct. 2, at Dan's Cycle in Hesston. It's the Wheels Advocating Repairing Relationships Poker Run, the first they've done. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. with the first bike out by 9:30 a.m.

"We're hoping to have the last bike in by 1 p.m.," said Taryn Bergen, LMSW, facilitator

with OVM.

After that, there will be a raffle, prizes for the best and worst hands, and lunch of brats from Gillispie Meats in Newton, salsa and chips from El Cerrito in Hesston, and soft drinks. There also will be an area band, Hyway 14, playing. Salt City Scoops of Hutchinson also will be there to sell ice cream. People driving all kinds of vehicles are welcome.

The poker run begins and ends at Dan's Cycle with costs of \$20 for the first hand and \$10 for the second. Stops are at Prairie View in McPherson, Mirror in Hutchinson, Health Ministries in Halstead, OVM at 209 S. Pine in Newton and then back to Dan's Cycle. Altogether, the trip is about 100 to 110 miles.

"There will be activities and information at each location to get a card," Lehman said.

OVM has been around since 1973, although they've only been at their South Pine location since January.

"We do community-based restorative justice," Lehman said, adding their partners are SafeHope, city of Newton, area diversion and probation officers.

Bergen said they work with them but aren't associated with them.

"We work to try to improve relational skills and support healthy communities," she said.

One program OVM has that people might be familiar is M2, Lehman said.

"It takes a community member and matches that person with an in-

mate at the Hutchinson Correctional Facility for the purpose of monthly visitation," Lehman said.

Bergen said she does the batterer intervention program.

"We meet with men and women who have committed domestic violence," she said. "We work on them being accountable for the abuse."

They teach them relational skills for improving family relationships, and their goals are mainly to increase the safety of those who are victimized and their families, Bergen said. They encourage participants to name and evaluate their particular behaviors.

OVM defines cruelty as imposing one's will on another or the blatant disregard for another, Bergen said, adding violence is any behavior designed to create fear.

"We're certified by the Kansas Attorney General's Office," Bergen said.

They enjoy seeing growth in people they're helping.

"It's really good to see the change in the men and become peer mentors for other men in the group," Bergen said. "They come back and say the families have noticed the change. We always want to protect the victim first. Some of them just do so well."

OVM is concerned with helping people.

"The restorative justice approach is a mind shift from [our] court justice system," Lehman said.

They talk about the river of cruelty, Bergen

said. One time, she had a guy come in for an assessment, and he asked how she can look at him after all the things he told her he's done.

"Well, you're human," she said to him.

"A lot of our guys have suffered childhood trauma and we want them to heal, but they're not allowed to use that as an excuse [for their current behavior]," Bergen said.

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Come listen to local candidates discuss their vision for your city and school district.

★ **Newton** ★  
Wednesday, Oct. 6 and Thursday, Oct. 7  
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Oct. 7 - 6:30 p.m.: Newton Board of Education Forum  
Meridian Center, 1420 Broadway Court, Newton

★ **Halstead** ★  
Thursday, Oct. 7  
7 p.m. Mayor and City Council  
8:15 p.m. USD 440 BOE  
Halstead High School Auditorium

★ **Bentley** ★  
Monday, Oct. 18  
7:30 p.m. Mayor and City Council  
Bentley-Eagle Senior Center

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Thursday, Oct. 21  
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8:15 p.m. USD 439 BOE  
Sedgwick Senior Center

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HARVEY COUNTY NOW

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Free flu shots Friday in Hesston

HESSTON—Hesston Pharmacy and Harvey Drug will host a free flu vaccine clinic 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 1. The event takes place at King's Park Shelter.

#### KDHE encourages eligible Kansans to receive Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine booster shot

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment authorized all COVID-19 vaccine providers in Kansas on Sept. 24 to begin administering the booster-BioNTech booster shot to eligible Kansans following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) authorization.

Those eligible would be individuals who completed the Pfizer-

COVID-19 vaccine series at least six months ago and fall into certain categories, such as being older than 65, having an underlying

health condition or being at exposed risk to contracting COVID-19.

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## Dr. Paul Unruh Congratulations on your retirement!

Many comical skits exist about eye exams; people dread "which is better, one or two?" Hopefully the calm, collected voice of Dr. Paul Unruh assured residents it was not a trick question. Most know the history of a young doctor, his wife and son moving to Hillsboro to start his professional career partnering with Dr. Norm Abrahams the summer of 1982. Thirty-nine years saw a few name changes, new locations, renovations, and dynamic staff but Dr. Unruh was the steady hand at the helm always providing excellent eye care and incorporating advancements. He referred patients out of the country for LASIK before its approval in the US, he became certified to treat glaucoma before many area doctors, he purchased new instruments for accurately tracking ocular disease and he sought out the best surgeons willing to provide services right in Marion county all while keeping glasses and contact lens option readily available.

Patients valued and trusted his clinical expertise. Staff could depend on his honesty, fairness, and goodness. The community could count on his business savvy to keep the doors open through various economic challenges and the recent pandemic. While he wants to quietly retire without fanfare, the departure of a man of great character and integrity hardly goes unnoticed.

Join us in thanking Dr. Paul Unruh for his years of professionalism, hard work and self-sacrifice for the sake of his patients, staff, and community.

Dr. Paul Unruh joins practice of Dr. Abrahams

HILLSBORO -- Dr. Paul E. Unruh, O.D., has joined the practice of Dr. N.E. Abrahams, O.D., at 132 S. Main in Hillsboro.

Unruh is a graduate of Houston High School, Bethel College and the University of Houston College of Optometry.

He will specialize in contact lenses and will practice general optometry. Office hours are by appointment. Unruh can be reached at 941-

Enjoy retirement!

Dr. Unruh, Chris and grandkids

Features, News / October 1, 2021

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*Offender Victim Ministries Inc. Director Todd Lehman, left, and OVM facilitator Taryn Bergen talk to each other with their motorcycles on Monday, Sept. 27. Wendy Nugent/HC Now*

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