

Perseverance : Covid Two Years In

True Love Endures

Summer love springs up between two staff members of the Salida school district! Haley and Jacob Hume were married on the 19th of June 2021. They first met in college when their rooms were across from each other, and became best friends. Jacob Hume was a year ahead of Haley Hume.

They were best friends for about a year, but then decided to give dating a try. Jacob Hume first asked Haley Hume to date him at a high mountain lake. They were together for eight years before getting married.

Jacob Hume proposed to Haley Hume when they were going to cut a Christmas tree over by Ohaver Lake. The proposal was only a little bit of a surprise. "I knew he had

a ring, but I had no idea when he would actually propose," Haley Hume said.

Their wedding was a country classic theme, and they all wore Cowboy boots, and hats. When it comes to them both having jobs at Salida Schools Haley Hume said it's great. She said that having the same work schedule makes it perfect to plan things. Not only that, but their relationship has an environmental buff, as they've started carpooling to school most days! The strongest relationships are built on trust, kindness, and friendship. Haley Hume explained that "he started out as my best friend, and a foundation built on that is what creates a stronger love connection!"



Story by Karli Bainbridge

Courtesy Photo

LOVE: Above Haley Hume and Jacob Hume stand together on their wedding day at Timber Creek Ranch in Salida, on June 19th 2021. The theme was classic cowboy complete with lush greenery and gorgeous mountains. We wish them all the best here at SHS!

Wedding bells ring for another teacher at SHS. Chelsea Carpenter and her husband Ryan Coulter got married Sep 18, 2021.

Carpenter met her husband while working as Raft guides on the Arkansas in the summer of 2013. They started dating a year later in the summer of 2014.

Since, Carpenter started working as a math teacher at Salida High School, teaching Algebra II and AP Physics.

They got engaged in October of 2020. Coulter proposed while they were mountain biking on the trail Cottonwood. The sun and weather were just perfect, and the moment was magical. "We had talked about getting married, but I had no idea he was proposing that week," Carpenter

commented, smiling. They had stopped on the top of the Rumba Ridge and Coulter set up his phone to take a photo. Instead, he got down on one knee, filming his proposal.

"It was perfect," Carpenter mused.

The theme of their wedding was whimsical woody. They held their ceremony on the river at RMOC, and the reception was at A Church.

They spend a lot of time outdoors together. They both love to snowboard or bike together, which is great for their relationship. They love spending time outdoors, and it provides them a healthy way to pass the time. Carpenter gushed over her new husband, and she is excited for this new chapter of her life.



Courtesy Photo

JOY: Above, Chelsea Carpenter and her husband Ryan Coulter, cozy together on their wedding day on September 18, 2021. In 2013 they met as rafting guides and the rest was history. The theme of their wedding was whimsical woody reflecting their love of the outdoors. We wish them a lifetime of love and happiness!

Teacher Shortages: Staff Steps In

These last couple of months have made one thing apparent: there is a serious staffing shortage at Salida High School. Last month SHS had to go online because there weren't enough staff due to Covid and personal events. This situation has been highlighting how unified the staff is. They have been assisting absent teachers by stepping into classes to substitute during their planning periods.

Staff absences can be categorized into two main groups: personal leave and sick leave. Principal Talmage Trujillo thinks both are equally important.

"The things that matter to us most- weddings, christenings, baptisms, life events, anniversaries, things that really matter don't always happen on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. Travel can't always happen on off-days. Being able to participate in these important aspects of life is critically important for all of us," Trujillo said.

Measures are being taken to try to better support teachers. The Collective Bargaining agreement is a group of staff representatives from every de-

partment. This also includes the transportation and janitorial staff. Kate Clark, the librarian here at SHS, is a leader within this agreement as she is the president of the teachers union. They are trying to find ways to incentivize teachers to keep teaching. Staff recognizes that sometimes teachers need a break.

"I think a lot of teachers need a mental health day, which is incredibly important. We all need those from time to time," Administrative Assistant Jennifer Campbell said.

As more teachers are absent, the lack of substitute teachers has also hurt the school system. According to Campbell, substitute wages are a huge reason why SHS is struggling to find enough substitute teachers.

"A lot of subs make 90 dollars a day to work here. We have a substitute that commutes all the way from Mofet. If you think about the cost of gas, by the time she pays for her gas going here and back there's really no incentive to sub."

Cory Sheffel has been trying to make sure that substi-

tute teachers are doing alright despite being overworked while performing a grueling job.

"I'm trying to check in with the substitutes in the building frequently to let them know that I'm there to support them. Being a substitute teacher is a hard job. You don't have a relationship built up with the students, you don't have the routine, the expectations, all of those things. I want the substitutes to know we're thankful for them and we're here to support them. You really feel like an island of one when you're a sub."

Campbell thinks there needs to be a substantial change in order to attract more substitutes

"I think if we were to offer subs more compounded pay that would attract more people, but until then I think this is going to be an ongoing issue. I think we either have to increase pay, or the cost of living needs to go down," she said.

With a shortage of substitutes, classes will often have block to block coverage by other teachers and staff members including superintendent

David Blackburn.

"It can create a strain on teachers. During the time that they usually have to get ready for classes, they're off teaching another class," Scheffel said.

Although taxing on many of the staff, Trujillo, however, has found this to be one benefit to the staff shortage.

"[The staffing shortage] has given me the opportunity to step into the classroom myself a few times and get to know a few students. I see this as a positive."

The SHS staff is invaluable to its functioning; teachers,

Story by Olive Ritchie

office staff, lunch staff, and janitorial staff are all equally important. Most staff feel that others have really stepped up to the challenges this shortage has brought.

Trujillo said, "I think teachers have done extremely well this year in terms of their resilience, adaptability, and professionalism. I'm proud of what the Salida High School staff has done this year in the face of hardship and uncertainty."



Photo By Olive Ritchie

SUBS: Former middle school teacher Leslie Garrity subs for Kate Clark in the library. Present and past teachers have been willing to step up to fill each other's positions when substitutes are difficult to come by.

SHS Welcomes Solvista Counselor Cassie Stauch

Story by Lucia Zettler

No matter the challenge, big or small, every student needs someone they trust that they can go to for support and help. Which is why for the past few years, students and staff at Salida High School have been pushing for a mental health position at the school, and now, thanks to Solvista, the school district has been able to make that happen.

Cassie Stauch, the school's new clinician, said,

"My only role is to be available to students and staff."

Stauch is available to students for three free therapy sessions. She can also give students the skills to help them deal with common problems like stress and anxiety, focusing, and emotional regulation. If therapy is something that a student finds helpful, Stauch can also help them fill out the required forms and either to go to a therapist at the Sol-

vista office, or to have ongoing appointments with her.

"I think that having access to someone to talk to [is important]," Stauch said. "Obviously we have Mrs. Tolsma [...] but she's just one person."

While Tolsma does a lot of scheduling and college application guidance along with helping students, Stauch's only role is to be available for students to talk to.

"It's still really busy," Tolsma said, "But it's helpful to have someone to support. [...] It's so much easier now because I can just, as someone comes to check in with me, I can be like, 'Hey, someone from Solvista works here now, let's go meet her.'"

Aside from meeting with students, Stauch also hopes to start groups where students can talk about things that are bothering them.

"I think that teens really learn from their peers, and knowing that we're not alone in whatever we're dealing with," Stauch said.

Groups would be created by finding where there is a need and creating a group around that to provide support for people who need it. For example, if a lot of seniors are stressed about college, Stauch can create a group to help with that.

"A lot of people are going through similar things," she said, "Groups can help take away the loneliness and isolation from some of those feelings."

Another thing that can be done in groups or individually is dialectical behavioral theory, or DBT, an evidence-based therapy which teaches stress tolerance and emotional regulation. Stauch also wants to work on normalizing mental health issues and seeking help, which can often be scary. She hopes to take away "the stigma of your classic therapist sitting there checking boxes while you're talking."

One of the big problems that Stauch has seen in the school is anxiety and depres-

sion. These things can also lead to suicidal thoughts.

"I think that it's really prominent and consistent," she said, "It's around us."

For people at medium to high risk, it's important to have a safety plan. Which means knowing that the student has a place they can go to where they feel safe. Having a good support system of people that they can trust and can go to when they're feeling low is really important.

"It takes a lot of people to kind of come around those people who are struggling," Stauch said.

Ultimately, Stauch hopes that her presence at SHS will help normalize mental health and help people feel more comfortable reaching out. Her door is always open to talk, and students can contact her through their school email.

"We all need help," Stauch said. "We just need to know how to ask for it and where to get it."



Courtesy Photo

DREAM TEAM: Meryl Tolsma stands next to new Solvista counselor Cassie Stauch.