

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, December 17, 2020.

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Jefferson County now reports 198 cases of COVID-19, but if the past trend continues we'll hit 200 by the end of the day. Fifty three people are awaiting test results.

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And Jefferson Healthcare has the vaccine, and is now inoculating those at highest risk of exposure, including healthcare workers, first responders, and long-term care facilities. According to an email sent yesterday, the hospital sees vaccinating as many community members in as timely a manner as possible as a priority, and it is committed to ensuring equitable distribution of the vaccine, starting with those populations most vulnerable to COVID-19.

The hospital asks patients to be patient, asking them to not contact the hospital or primary care providers for status reports. According to the press release, eligibility status notices will be available through the hospital website, its social media, local newspapers, email and phone calls, in some cases. We are not sure why KPTZ is not on this list, but won't waste the hospital's time in order to ask them why. In any case, news of vaccine distribution will be available on our regular news programs, through public service announcements, and on our website, [kptz.org](http://kptz.org).

And as this is a two-stage vaccine that takes several weeks to gain full efficacy the hospital asks people to continue to follow all recommended public health measures even after you have been vaccinated so that Jefferson County continues to be as safe as possible for all its citizens.

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Local PUD customers whose income is negatively affected by COVID-19 qualify for assistance with their bills, with more than \$90,000 set aside for this purpose. Jefferson County PUD and OlyCAP have been granted CARES Act funding by Jefferson County to assist residents and businesses negatively affected by COVID-19 with their utility bills.

OlyCAP was awarded \$50,000 to help all Jefferson County residents negatively affected by COVID-19 with residential utility bills of any kind, including garbage or propane, and the PUD itself has \$40,000 available for business customers who have outstanding balances of 60 days or more and can attest to negative financial, health or other affects due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

OlyCAP asks that residents go to their website <https://olycap.org/> or call 360-385-2571 to begin the process of applying for utility bill help. OlyCAP may also be able to help eligible residents with additional services like rent relief, home heating funding, and housing services. Businesses seeking relief should call the PUD directly and talk to a customer service representative. Though residential customers with balances of 90 days or more are not currently having services disconnected for non-pay, they will be at risk of shutoff once the moratorium ends on April 30.

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A *Washington Post* feature story about a Port Townsend family's dynamics led to an unexpected windfall for a local service agency. After the article's Tuesday publication and several other media accounts, the Jumping Mouse Children's Center gathered more than \$11,000 that included donations from six different countries.

The article features Port Townsend resident Xep Campbell, who regularly picks up her 10-year-old daughter's errant laundry, but declined to do so for a single dirty sock. Instead she left it in place and after a week turned it into a display, positioning it as a mixed media display on loan from the artist. Her daughter upped the ante with a display platform and several plastic animals posing as spectators. It ended up on Facebook and took off from there, where it caught the attention of The Today Show and Good Morning America in addition to the *Post*. Campbell eventually had enough, and declined an interview from CNN.

In the *Post*, Campbell is quoted as follows: "This has been such a crazy year for everybody from every walk of life, and dirty laundry is something we can all identify with. We all desperately need something to laugh about, and somehow, the sock became that thing." Campbell told KPTZ that the situation is entertaining because it is all online. She can walk away her computer and life carries on as usual. Her daughter Kestrel is also nonplussed and doesn't understand why everyone is so excited by one of her dirty socks, but they both love the publicity it has given Jumping Mouse.

Jumping Mouse executive director called the windfall "amazing" and said that the money will be directly allocated to children's therapy services and provide a head start for their \$170,000 fundraising goal.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org).

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.