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Youth contribute skills to "Makeover" project

Five youth from Camp Florence's Ocean Dunes High School got two kinds of education in September – classroom and hands-on construction experience, and a lesson in how things don't always turn out as you expect.

The youth built a garden bench for the Oregon School for the Deaf in Salem as part of the week-long "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" television production, which built the first wing of a dormitory and upgraded the school's Halloween fundraiser Nightmare Factory haunted house.

Before building the bench, youth received classroom instruction in how to use construction tools, plan a job, work safely and meet expectations on the work site.

"Things moved quickly and the youth did a really good job of staying focused," said GLC2 Tom Schueneman, who accompanied the youth with GLC2 Darth Watkins and counselor Jeff Pickell. "I think they did a really good job of putting 2 and 2 together, realizing how they could use the information once they entered the workforce." That included the importance of being able to use math, he said.

And the disappointment? Because some of the youth from Ocean Dunes and two other participating high schools were younger than 18, they did the work at a Salem Home Depot rather than under the warmth of television lights. But, said Camp Florence director Clint McClellan, "they got to do something for somebody else, which was a bonus." The Willamette ESD, which provides education staff for Ocean Dunes High School, arranged for the Camp Florence youth to participate.



ANNIVERSARIES

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Doug Lawson

*Group Life Coordinator
RiverBend*

Mike Rau

*Security Manager
MacLaren YCF*

FIFTEEN YEARS

Karen Friesen

*Dental Assistant
Hillcrest YCF*

Carolyn Lemhouse

*Parole and Probation
Officer
Polk County*

Jill Reece

*Accountant
Accounting*

Stan Stegall

*Grounds Supervisor
MacLaren YCF*

Jeff Tegner

*Unit Coordinator
Oak Creek YCF*

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Director's Column



Earlier this month I had the pleasure of participating in Oregon's 2010 Juvenile Justice System Symposium in Eugene. It was an exciting event that drew nearly

250 participants from throughout the state's juvenile justice and public safety communities.

The event was both the culmination of nearly a year of planning, and the first step in a system-wide collaboration to develop an effective juvenile justice system that will be sustainable during an era of reduced resources.

For two intense days, participants learned about the many components and processes that make up our state's juvenile justice system, discussed issues facing the system, and collaborated on potential strategies for moving Oregon's juvenile justice system forward. You can see the complete list of strategies and proposed actions at www.oregon.gov/OYA/jjs/Symposium_framework.pdf.

Speaking at the event were Governor Ted Kulongoski, Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul De Muniz, and businessman and Chairman of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families Dick Withnell. Each of these speakers challenged the group to think of new ways of delivering services, engaging non-traditional partners, and crossing between "silos" to improve outcomes for youth and communities.

A truly inspiring event at the Symposium was a panel of four young adults who had gone through the juvenile justice system. Two are in college and

hope to one day work with youth as counselors and advocates. One already is working as an anti-gang counselor and is a motivational speaker. And the fourth is a business owner who already has expanded the size of his store twice and volunteers at one of our facilities.

These four individuals – three young men and one young woman – stand as models of the kind of positive outcomes we seek for the youth in our care and custody. They are more than crime-free; they are succeeding professionally, contributing to their communities, and serving as positive role models for others.

The next step will be to turn the ideas, enthusiasm and collaboration that grew out of the Symposium into actions. During the next few months the Symposium Steering Committee and event participants will begin to flesh out many of the proposed strategies to develop recommendations for change. There also will be opportunities for you to comment on these recommendations and add your ideas to the mix.

This is a challenging time. Oregon is facing serious budget shortfalls that require new ways of thinking, collaborating and delivering services. But after being a part of the Symposium, I know this state's juvenile justice system can step up, work to develop system-side solutions, and continue to contribute to this state's youth and communities.

Sincerely,

Colette S. Peters
Director, OYA

Eastern Oregon's Family Day a success



Above: Dan Haak

A record number of people participated in Eastern Oregon YCF's seventh annual Family Day, which featured a family meal, games, youth rock band, and youth performing country and western music.

In all, 138 family members attended the Sept. 25 event in 80-degree weather.

"Family Day is a time when parents and guardians get to meet with facility staff, managers, teachers and volunteers in a welcoming atmosphere to learn more about EOYCF's treatment program," said Superintendent Dan Robertson. "It allows us to showcase the facility and the good things experienced by youth in OYA custody, and it helps families gain a better understanding of the progress made by their youth."

Families also are engaged in discussion and planning about re-entry needs and issues, he said.

Spearheading the planning, Robertson said, were the energy, enthusiasm and organizing ability of GLC 2 Dan Haak. Cooks Tami Freed and Carmen Mix, supported by kitchen crew youth, prepared barbecued hamburgers, hot dogs, fruit, numerous salads, and deserts.

A number of youth collaborated to develop a slide show that illustrated for visitors their daily activities such as school, vocational education and treatment. Other youth set up a display of vocational woodshop projects they had made during the year, some of which visitors purchased.

All staff and youth participated, Robertson said, flexing schedules to get the facility painted, polished, welcoming and set up so the event could happen without incurring overtime costs.

Planning already is under way for Family Day 2011.

Project Safe Streets yielding positive results

After 18 months' experience, a Multnomah County collaboration aimed at preventing new violence by high-risk youth being supervised in the community – those who have been involved with guns, felony person crimes and often gang associations – is reporting positive results.

"If you talk with officers on the street they will tell you they believe they have prevented shootings, serious assaults and robberies because they could intervene before a situation got too far out of hand," said Michael Riedel, a Multnomah County deputy district attorney.

OYA is a partner with the DA's office, police agencies and the county Department of Community Justice on Project Safe Streets, which helps police obtain immediate information about a youth's conditions of parole or probation. "I am a phone call away," said Debbie Hansen, OYA probation and parole supervisor in Multnomah County.

ANNIVERSARIES

CONTINUED

TEN YEARS

Rex Emery

*Facilities Manager
MacLaren YCF*

Chris Jensen

*Social Service Specialist
Malheur County*

Hugh Johnson

*Group Life Coordinator
RiverBend*

Justin Thompson

*Group Life Coordinator
RiverBend*

FIVE YEARS

Chris Carsner

*Cook
Oak Creek YCF*

Connie Edwards

*Office Specialist
Hillcrest YCF*

Diane Sandwell-Mayer

*Office Specialist
Deschutes County*

NEW HIRES

OAK CREEK
Dawn Horn

RIVERBEND
Steven DeVore
Catherine Sandor

WASCO COUNTY
Molly Matherly

STAFF RECOGNITION

HILLCREST
Mike Powers
*Support Staff of the
Month*

Shane Thurston
GLC of the Month

MACLAREN
Sue Nanson
Employee of the Month

RIVERBEND
Troy "Bubba" Williams
Employee of the Quarter

Suppose a police officer sees rival gangs posturing against each other. If the officer finds a youth is in violation of conditions – such as being in an off-limits area, out after curfew or associating with gang members – the officer can give the youth a choice of going home or being taken to county detention. Hansen and Riedel agree most youth choose the less restrictive option, with only 12 youth being taken into custody since February 2009 when the interagency collaboration began.

In one case, Hansen said, a youth on parole wouldn't leave the scene of a nighttime shooting, so she activated a warrant so he could be taken into county detention for violating conditions of parole. The next day his parole officer told the youth he not only violated conditions but also could have been shot or been mistaken for the shooter.

"Previously, if an officer knew a youth was on probation, all he could do was contact the probation officer and in eight days this kid would have to come to court," said Riedel, who also is assigned to the DA's Project Safe Neighborhoods program targeting youth gun and gang violence. "This program gives us a tool to act immediately using OYA conditions of parole."

Youth remembers Grandma's advice

To select a youth speaker for the Sept. 15 dedication of the new Trask River High School building in Tillamook, language arts teacher Pam Miller had offenders write essays about what education means to them. Students presented their speeches to Miller and their peers, and five students were

selected to speak before a panel of judges.

This is the text of one of the two youth speeches delivered at the dedication ceremony:

"About a year ago I lost my great grandmother to fluid cancer. But before she died, she asked me to do one thing — get my diploma.

"Grandma said a lot of things before she died. One of those things was a quote on life. She said, 'life is a masterpiece of art. Only you can accept the opportunity to make it beautiful.'"

"Grandma said, 'always accept the chance to learn to make something of yourself.' This school is giving me that chance. The teachers are giving me that chance. And they are awarding our efforts and allowing us to show our pride with a high school diploma.

"Grandma said, 'always be grateful for what you get in life.' I am grateful. Grateful that people care enough to give us a new school, and give us a chance to show we can use this opportunity to get good paying jobs to provide for our families and ourselves.

"Grandma said, 'use your skills to your best abilities.' She also said 'work hard to open new doors and to fix the old ones, so you can be great.'

"This school has helped me in completing the main masterpiece of my life and helped me to move on and start a new life. It's a masterpiece my grandma can be proud of.

"What grandma said was always for the best. For me and others like me. When I walk out of this facility with my diploma, my head will be held up high. I will know that people care and what grandma said was right. Thank you."

New voc-ed opportunities for Hillcrest, Oak Creek



OYA education coordinator Frank Martin is passionate just talking about the educational opportunities. "We're seeing everybody problem-solve at once," he said. "In bad times people seem to come together to find solutions."

The solution he is talking about involves bringing new vocational opportunities to youth at Hillcrest and Oak Creek YCFs.

Camp Florence Director Clint McClellan is releasing a 48- by 30-foot greenhouse that will help Oak Creek meet its goal of raising plants for the City of Albany, and he is letting go of woodworking equipment that will become part of Hillcrest YCF's planned career technical education program in construction.

Martin said Camp Florence was no longer using the greenhouse and woodworking equipment after changing its program to give youth more transitional job opportunities in the community.

"This opens up another hands-on opportunity for youth to investigate careers in horticulture while also promoting our partnership with the City of Albany," said Oak Creek Superintendent Lory Humbert. Last spring the city delivered 240 trees to Oak Creek for youth to care for until the city plants the trees this autumn.

Not only did Camp Florence offer the equipment, Martin said, but the Oregon Department of Education also approved moving the woodworking equipment it owns. And the Willamette ESD, which provides education staff at both Hillcrest and Camp Florence, agreed to load and deliver the greenhouse and 17 pieces of woodworking equipment later this year.

Camp Florence youth will disassemble the greenhouse, photograph the parts and write instructions so Oak Creek youth can reassemble it. Bill Conlon, principal of Hillcrest's Robert S. Farrell High School, worked with Hillcrest YCF Superintendent Troy Gregg and said the woodworking equipment will be used in a later phase of an unfolding construction program.

The Hillcrest program's next component will permit Hillcrest youth to earn industry-recognized certificates in wood- and metalworking that will guarantee them interviews with participating employers in the mid-Willamette Valley.

New "green" school helps youth, boosts economy

Nearly 60 people attended the Sept. 15 dedication of the new Trask River High School building in Tillamook.

"The caring of staff is the hallmark of OYA," Senator Betsy Johnson, whose district includes Tillamook County, said at the event.

She noted that the Go Oregon! stimulus project invested \$1.25 million in education, "all of which was spent in Oregon and much of it spent locally." She said the project created 31 jobs, kept 21 other people working and did business with 20 Oregon vendors.

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STAFF CHANGES

DEPARTURES

- Dianna Brainard**
Minority Services
- Steven Bodine**
Tillamook YCF
- William Burdick**
Columbia County
- James Cadenhead**
Rogue Valley YCF
- Sherry Dallman**
MacLaren YCF
- Brett Dunten**
RiverBend
- Tammy Lalack**
Professional Standards
- Donna Larson**
Camp Tillamook
- Frazier Lellis**
Rogue Valley YCF
- Richard Plank**
MacLaren YCF
- Julie Yount**
Hillcrest YCF

YOUTH AND FAMILY FEEDBACK

"I think that **Miguel Herrera** is an excellent worker and caring. Thank you."

Below is a letter received by **Debbie Hansen**:

"I just want you to know that I met Mike Gregus yesterday and I appreciated his concern and honesty. He was able to set up the MDT meeting yesterday and we have communicated. I know that I bothered you often but I want to thank you for your understanding during a very difficult situation, and for your prompt attention to my concerns.

I was very disappointed and didn't feel hopeful, but things are much better. I already feel that even though this is a tough time for me and my family, we have someone who will walk with us through this process. Thanks again."

For the first time, the new building allows Tillamook YCF and Camp Tillamook offenders to have the "going to school" experience of walking to a separate building, to be issued individualized class schedules, and to enroll in online post-secondary classes.

Tillamook schools superintendent Randy Schild, whose district provides Trask River school staff, said the year-round school passed the state "adequate yearly progress" standard, considered especially difficult for alternative high schools, and conferred 37 diplomas in the past year. "With an education you have a chance," he said, "and without an education you have an uphill climb."

"Our vision is every youth who leaves the Oregon Youth Authority will be crime-free," said Director Colette S. Peters. "All of our youth have great potential, and often it is the Youth Authority that provides the chance to meet that potential."

The new building has six classrooms as well as restrooms, administrative offices, and central control and camera monitoring. Its environmental and energy efficiency elements include maximized day-lighting; site orientation that allows for solar shading and enables the building to operate without air-conditioning; protection from prevailing winds; low-flow fixtures and faucets; high-efficiency forced-air gas heating and ventilation; windows that open for ventilation; roof and wall insulation that exceed code; and a minimum of 20 percent materials containing recycled content.

Principal Jerry Dorland said staff took advantage of the stimulus funding to include lessons about the economy and Franklin Roosevelt and the Great Depression. "The whole project was educational," he said.

Youth tour wind farm and learn about jobs



It started small with DIY windmill kits you could carry under your arm. But the projects are producing eye-opening education for youth at the six facilities where youth are building them.

Six RiverBend youth who toured a Horizon Wind Energy wind farm in Union County Sept. 21 gained not only a new understanding of alternative energy but also information about careers with good pay and benefits.

"That really got their attention," said interim superintendent Brian Blisard. "A lot of young men were saying to me, 'Mr. Blisard, did you know ...?' I said the world is at your fingertips if you put your mind to it."

RiverBend High School teacher Erin Creech pulled from a variety of sources to write a science lesson plan on alternative energy. She said youth learned that with a high school diploma they could compete for entry-level apprentice technician jobs paying about \$20 an hour. "They learned they can do something where they enjoy the work, get paid well and have an opportunity for advancement," she said. "The jobs are very plentiful if they're willing to travel."

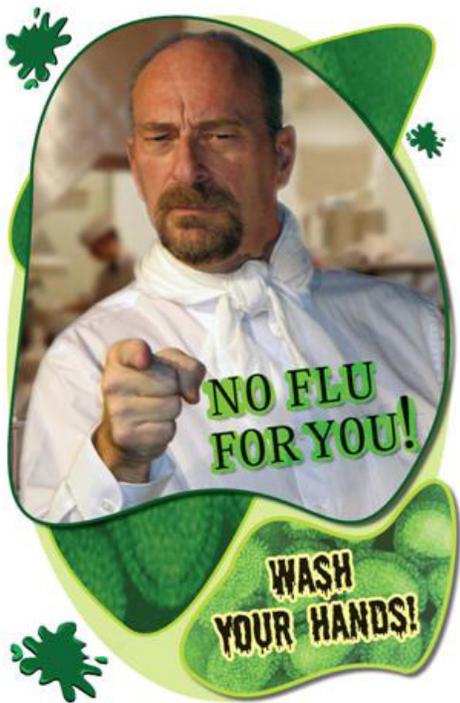
With the windmill kit, she said, youth are experimenting with blade designs to

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see which can generate the most electricity and looking at applications such as charging MP3 players. Students will be asked to write papers about the field trip, career opportunities, what they've learned and how they are applying it, she said. (Umatilla-Morrow ESD provides education staff to RiverBend.)

With a second Union County wind farm proposed, Blisard said he wants to do more to promote green energy at RiverBend. He wants to explore having youth build solar panels or household-size windmills or both, to produce more power for the transitional facility.

Who's best equipped to stop the flu? You.



As we approach a new flu season, public health officials are reminding us, "The flu ends with U."

Last flu season, vaccines were available for both the seasonal flu and H1N1.

"The strain of the H1N1 virus from last

season has been included in the flu vaccine for this season," said OYA Medical Director Dr. Marcia Adams. "So this year we will need to get only one flu vaccine." Dr. Adams also said that, according to public health officials, vaccine is expected to be plentiful this year, and everyone 6 months or older should be vaccinated.

An estimated 380,000 Oregonians contract the seasonal flu annually. Even healthy people can get the flu, and it can be serious.

Actions you can take to avoid getting and spreading the flu are:

- Get your flu vaccine.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your upper sleeve – not with your hands. The main way influenza viruses spread is from person-to-person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes.
- Lather your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds – about how long it takes to sing the "happy birthday" song twice – to send germs down the drain.
- If you think you have the flu, tell your supervisor and avoid spreading disease by staying home. You may have the flu if you have fever or chills and a cough or sore throat; you also may have a runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea or vomiting.

Printable flu-prevention posters are available by going to the Health Services document library on OYA Net.

"We want to practice prevention beginning now to make sure staff and youth do not get the flu this season," said Dr. Adams.

INSIDE OYA

Colette S. Peters
Director

Fariborz Pakseresht
Deputy Director

For more information, to submit ideas or to write an article, please contact the Communications Office:

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Send your stories for the November issue to Amanda Lowe-Davies by October 29. Articles received after that date will be held for the December newsletter.

