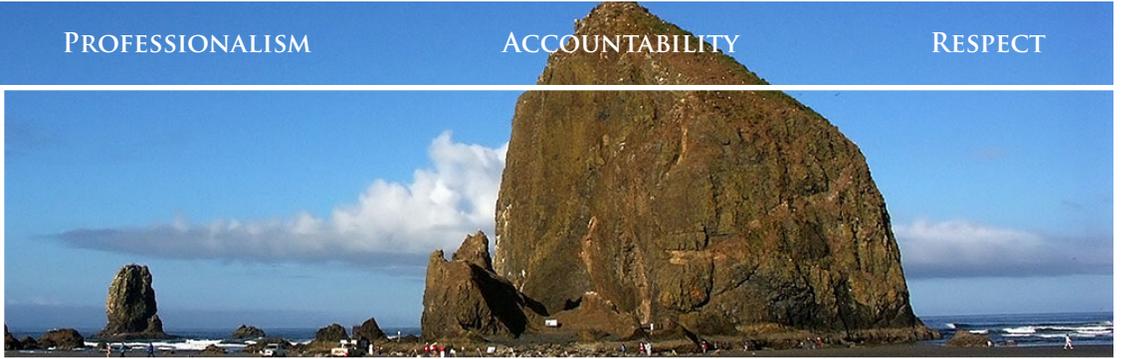


SEPTEMBER  
2010



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# INSIDE OYA

## Oak Creek pow-wow another plus for youth

The third annual pow-wow at Oak Creek YCF enjoyed robust tribal and community support and featured the first teepee constructed inside an OYA youth correctional facility.

Dancers and drummers from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and others from the Eugene area performed for the youth and their families. In all, 30 volunteers and local community partners supported the July 31 event.

The day forged new relationships and renewed friendships. One youth who'd had a tenuous relationship with the couple who'd adopted her son began to establish a positive relationship with them. The adoptive parents saw she was working to make better choices and committed to having her as part of their and her son's lives. Don Malarkey, who last fall gave his Band of Brothers presentation for Oak Creek youth, came with his daughter and celebrated his 89th birthday at the pow-wow.

Oak Creek's volunteer/activities manager, Robyn Eicks, loaned her teepee for the event. Salmon was donated by the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, and food was prepared and served by youth enrolled in Oak Creek's culinary arts program. Youth members of the Native American Culture Group wore hand-made Native American wing dresses and beaded feather hair ornaments, and served as official pow-wow greeters.

"In anticipation of the event all the youth managed to maintain behavior that would allow them to attend," said Superintendent Lory Humbert. "It really reflected their desire to take part and enjoy a cultural event that was new to most." As for the food, she said, "This was the first culinary arts event and they were quite proud of their accomplishment, as was I."

"This was truly a festive event," said Jack Lawson, Native American coordinator and tribal liaison in the Office of Minority Services. "The weather was beautiful, visitors and staff were excited about participating, everyone was in a great mood, and the food was excellent."



## ANNIVERSARIES

### THIRTY YEARS

**Lonnie Jackson**

*Manager  
Minority Services*

**Dean Lodmell**

*Unit Coordinator  
MaLaren YCF*

### TWENTY YEARS

**LuAnn Dallison**

*Parole/Probation Officer  
Yamhill County*

**Ty Trumbly**

*Treatment Manager  
MaLaren YCF*

### FIFTEEN YEARS

**Gerald Ruiz**

*Group Life Coordinator  
Hillcrest YCF*

### TEN YEARS

**Marcus Bigelow**

*Treatment Manager  
Hillcrest YCF*

**Joe Ferguson**

*Qualified Mental Health  
Professional  
MaLaren YCF*

**Cherri Herrman**

*Cook  
Rogue Valley YCF*

**Roger Miller**

*Group Life Coordinator  
Tillamook YCF*

**Kevin Nelson**

*Treatment Manager  
Oak Creek YCF*

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## Director's Column



As we move into fall and the budget and staffing uncertainties we will be facing, this newsletter serves as a good reminder of the important work we do and

the positive difference we make in the lives of the youth we serve.

One exciting initiative under way is the windmill-building projects that are teaching youth valuable job skills and preparing them for an economy that is moving toward a greater focus on wind and solar energy. And, building windmills is about more than learning carpentry skills.

Youth also are learning how to work in a team, how to problem-solve, and how to use math and science skills in real life. By drawing their interest through these projects we are helping give them the abilities they need to remain crime-free.

Youth also are learning the positive benefits of helping their communities through volunteer efforts such as the recent event at Rogue Valley YCF where youth helped a large group of rescued dogs become more adoptable.

Through that experience our youth learned how to work in a team and to take directions from outside professionals. And, they were able to see the results of their efforts by the number of dogs adopted.

Our work with youth also is strengthened by the many partners who want to help reform youth offenders. Those include participants in the recent Oak Creek YCF pow-wow; the bikers who

visited youth at North Coast YCF to promote a clean and sober lifestyle; and Oregon's superintendent of public instruction, Susan Castillo, who recently helped youth at Hillcrest YCF see that they could build a positive future for themselves. And there are more stories like that throughout this issue of Inside OYA.

These efforts on the part of our staff and our community partners are just some of the many ways we are helping youth learn positive attitudes and behaviors. I am proud of you and the work you do.

Sincerely,

Colette S. Peters

Director

## Boys & Girls Club expresses thanks for OYA youth volunteer

A representative of a nonprofit agency who had worked with youth at Hillcrest YCF recently sent a note to the OYA Central Office expressing appreciation for a former close-custody youth who had volunteered.

"He had lunch with the kids, shot hoops, played bumper pool and even read with some of our kids," wrote Amy Langdon, resource development director for the Boys & Girls Club of Albany. "They were shy at first because (the youth) was 'new' but by the time he left (only four hours later) they were high-fiving him and giving hugs."

Langdon had applied for and received a grant through Hillcrest's Community

*Continued on P3*

101 class (Inside OYA, June 2010) and also had helped the youth with his job-interviewing skills before he started DOC post-prison supervision.

She also observed how the Community 101 class taught by Gordon Kruse benefited youth. "I could tell the new kids from the kids who were at the end of the program," she wrote. "Their demeanor, respect for themselves and others, and goal-setting increased dramatically."

## Windmill projects offer career potential



Susan Lowe sees big potential in wind energy, but for now it isn't in creating electricity. A teacher at Eastern Oregon YCF's Monroe School, Lowe plans to tie a wind project to the local economy, personal finance and advanced math.

Youth in Lowe's class are among six groups who are building table-top windmills that Frank Martin, OYA education coordinator, brought back from a workshop sponsored by the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, Energy Trust of Oregon, KidWind and Solar 4R Schools.

"If we're going to promote employment, there's no better way than with something youth can see and touch,"

Martin said. "If they start now, youth can be serious about math and science and prepare for a career in wind energy." Several of Oregon's two- and four-year colleges offer one-year wind energy certificates, he said.

Lowe said it's possible Harney County will host a wind farm and that, according to an industry representative, hourly starting pay would be in the \$17-\$26 range. Lowe will use that pay range information to tie the windmill project to personal budgeting.

Martin said the project involves design decisions – how many blades and at what angle, for example – and will promote communication, teamwork, patience and problem-solving.

At RiverBend, facilities operations specialist Steve Waibel is working with three youth to build a small windmill. He said one youth figured out early that the balsa wood should be soaked in water so fan blades could be twisted to effectively catch the wind. After building the prototype, RiverBend will consider how to build a larger one as a woodshop project and how to involve the community, said acting superintendent Brian Blisard.

The six groups of youth building windmills between now and the end of the year are located at Eastern Oregon, Hillcrest, MacLaren, North Coast, Oak Creek and RiverBend. Awards in six categories will be presented next year. Martin said he would like to see youth involvement grow to include working with windmills and solar panels that produce significant energy at facilities.

Lowe said the youth she works with are enthusiastic about building the diminutive windmills. "These are boys getting to do a science experiment," she said. "They're loving it."

## ANNIVERSARIES

CONTINUED

### FIVE YEARS

#### **Tracie Hightower**

*Superintendent  
Tillamook YCF*

#### **Jeff Holloway**

*Group Life Coordinator  
Hillcrest YCF*

#### **Robert Mountain**

*Group Life Coordinator  
Rogue Valley YCF*

#### **Brian Nelson**

*Group Life Coordinator  
MacLaren YCF*

#### **Jeff Rogers**

*Group Life Coordinator  
Tillamook YCF*

#### **Carrie Wouda**

*Qualified Mental Health  
Professional  
MacLaren YCF*

#### **Rebecca Yazzie**

*Qualified Mental Health  
Professional  
MacLaren YCF*

## NEW HIRES

### CENTRAL OFFICE

Rem Nivens  
Erin West

### EASTERN OREGON

Jackie Allum

### HILLCREST

Johnny Padgett

## STAFF RECOGNITION

### HILLCREST

Terry Ferebee  
*GLC of the Month*

Joseph Mabonga  
*Support Staff of the  
Month*

### MACLAREN

Robert Pitt  
*Employee of the Month*

### ROGUE VALLEY

Timothy Reynolds  
*Safety Person of the  
Quarter*

## Hillcrest youth inspired by life story



When Susan Castillo spoke recently at Hillcrest YCF, some of the youth may have identified with her story. "I just wanted to thank you for sharing your story," one youth told her. "It was very inspiring."

Castillo, recently elected to a third term as state superintendent of public instruction, told about growing up in a Mexican-American family in Los Angeles, being an unexceptional student in school and dropping out of community college. "I had no idea what I wanted to do," she said.

She said it was while working as a secretary at Oregon State University that her supervisor encouraged her to enroll in classes, leading her to gain a college degree, a career in television news, a term as a state senator, and eventually become one of eight statewide elected officials.

"So you're looking at someone who didn't get great grades in school, who didn't even like school that much, and I'm in a position where I'm responsible

for the public education system of the entire state with over 500,000 students," she said. "So believe me when I tell you, anything is possible."

Castillo, invited to speak by Director Colette S. Peters, also took a tour of the school and campus led by two youth and answered questions from youth. She complimented Hillcrest's 17 June high school graduates and said she knew they wouldn't be surprised that education is the key to success: A high school diploma boosts income potential by 50 percent and a bachelor's degree will more than double lifetime earnings, she said.

"The more education you get, the better choice of jobs you will have, the more money you will earn, the more opportunities you will have for yourself and your loved ones," she said.

Acknowledging that the youth have endured tough times, faced challenges, been hurt and hurt others, she said, "You are not defined by what happens to you. You are defined by what you do and the choices you make."

She said Hillcrest is not a dead end, but rather is an opportunity "to make a plan for getting back on track."

"Remember," she said, "that the most important choice you make in your life is always your next choice. You're here to deal with the consequences of past mistakes, but it's never too late to start making smart choices. So start now, start today."

## Bikers bring clean, sober message to North Coast



When nearly 50 bikers rode into the North Coast YCF courtyard, they delivered more than gleaming metal, noisy engines and youth excitement. They also brought sobering messages about drug and alcohol use.

Solution Motorcycle Club members are Harley-Davidson enthusiasts recovering from their own addictions. At North Coast, besides showing off their machines, they conducted an AA/NA meeting where youth got to hear some of their stories.

"They got the message of sobriety from folks who have been around the block a few times with addictions," Jim Sapper, treatment manager on North Coast's Klaskanine living unit, said of the eighth annual Harley Bash held Aug. 7. "They said, 'We're the lucky ones. A majority of our friends are dead or doing life in prison.'"

From their living units, youth watched the bikes do laps around the courtyard, voted on best bikes in three categories and, after asking permission, got their pictures taken with a favorite bike. Lunch included hamburgers, fruit and brownies, plus salmon provided by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Sapper said North Coast's maintenance manager, Mike Innis, begins making arrangements for the yearly event

months ahead. "It's one more way we can tie our community in to working with our kids," Sapper said of the annual event.

## Rogue Valley youth help rescued dogs



When a Josephine County dog breeder surrendered approximately 60 small-breed dogs after her house was foreclosed, youth at Rogue Valley YCF took on a compassionate form of community service.

Jennifer Putnam, one of the staff members who helped organize a day of dog grooming at Rogue Valley, said it was "an assembly line" of five hours' bathing, grooming and nurturing the dogs. Rogue Valley also fostered four of the dogs – two Pomeranians, a Maltese and a Chihuahua – while adoptions were being arranged.

It all began after Josephine County Animal Control got the dogs in August and contacted acting treatment manager Angela Sabin-Veek, who with Karen Selthon runs the PAWS (for People and Animals Worth Saving) program at Rogue Valley. Facility staff members and volunteers transported the dogs and assisted the youth. A Rogue Valley youth who works with PAWS dogs set up the bathing and grooming stations.

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## STAFF CHANGES

### RETIREMENTS

**Joni Zimmerman**  
23 years

### DEPARTURES

**Erin Culley**  
Human Resources

**Amber Erne**  
Clackamas County

**Robert Herriott**  
Hillcrest YCF

**Matthew Howey**  
MacLaren YCF

**Daniel Krizan**  
Camp Tillamook

**Michaelene Larson**  
Central Office

**Denver Mayangitan**  
Hillcrest YCF

**Kippie Miller**  
Hillcrest YCF

**Brian Petersen**  
Oak Creek YCF

## YOUTH AND FAMILY FEEDBACK

"Throughout all the years that my son was with OYA, he had a really experienced parole officer, **Becky Halbirt**. I have never come across a parole officer like Becky. She knows her job well and does an excellent job. Thank you."

"I was greatly impressed by how professional your employees were, including foster parents and program employees. My son was given an opportunity like nothing I ever imagined possible. It saddens me that he was not receptive to all he was offered, yet those were his choices. Thank you for what you did to help him."

"I feel that my OYA programs and workers were helpful to me. I can use what I have learned in those programs to help me be very successful in life. I would like to thank OYA for being helpful."

Two local veterinarians handled vaccinations, dental work, and spaying and neutering. A pet spa boarded some of the dogs. Staff members fostered dogs in their homes. A call for adoptions brought a robust public response. And it made Page One news in the Grants Pass Daily Courier.

Although most of the dogs were in good condition, some needed special attention for matted fur and one for a broken leg. "This rescue effort brought a sense of compassion from both the staff and the youth," Sabin-Veek said. "One youth read a book out loud to a dog on a couch as the dog slept beside him."

## Hillcrest youth shine in national art contest



From 74 entries in a national youth correctional art competition, what are the odds that two of the four finalists would be youth at one close-custody facility? Apparently the odds are pretty good when an artist is teaching the youth.

Two youth at Hillcrest YCF were finalists in a competition sponsored by the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA), which received entries from 17 facilities and programs in 11 states. Art submitted by a youth

offender in Indiana will be featured on the cover of CJCA's 2010 yearbook, and finalists' and semifinalists' art will be displayed on inside pages.

"The youth really look forward to the art classes and learning something new," said Hillcrest's Amy Calahan-Early, acting records support supervisor who teaches the art classes. She said youth learn and practice various techniques such as those of artists Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol.

CJCA asked youth to create art supporting the theme, "For a safer tomorrow, invest in our youths today." One of the Hillcrest pieces, called "Success," shows a key being passed from one hand to another with various occupations' headgear depicting career opportunities in law enforcement, military, space and education. The other, called "Time to Change," shows a youth carrying a bag of tools up a brick stairway suggesting that investing time, following steps, and using the right tools can lead to success.

Calahan-Early, who has been painting and teaching art for 15 years or more, said one of the winning youths is quiet and learns quickly while the other enjoys learning and readily accepts feedback.

CJCA's Liz Mengers, who had not previously coordinated an art contest, said Calahan-Early provided "valuable tips and suggestions throughout the process." And Calahan-Early, who helps with OYA's youth art-on-loan program, said creating art gives youth pride, self-esteem and supports their formal treatment.

"We do check-ins at every group where I ask, "How is everybody's day?" she said. "They say, 'It's a great day. We're going to do art today.'"

## Former hit man impresses MacLaren youth with story

A number of speakers have talked to MacLaren YCF youth about gangs, but Art Blajos came from the major leagues.

Blajos, now an evangelist with Victory Outreach, spent more than eight hours during two days talking with MacLaren youth and staff about how he turned his life around after years as a hit man for the Mexican mafia, including 17 years in youth and adult corrections.

Regardless of what you believe in, he told them, believe in something so you don't fall back into the same old cycle. Blajos said his faith experience came in an adult prison when, preparing to kill an inmate in an adjacent cell, the inmate started talking to him about God and faith. Blajos said he never again found himself in police handcuffs, in court or starting a new term behind bars.

Blajos said it takes a really strong individual to make the right choices that can lead to a career, family, house, car and a life that doesn't hurt others. Youth asked Blajos if he was afraid of dying because he'd left his gang. "If I was willing to die for the devil, the gangs," he said, "why would I not be willing to die for God and you guys, the good?"

MacLaren's Hispanic services coordinator, Rolando Ramirez, said youth were still talking about Blajos's presentation days later. Victory Outreach offered Blajos to MacLaren because he was making other Salem-area appearances.

Besides speaking to approximately 90 youth at a Saturday assembly, Ramirez said Blajos also devoted a Friday evening to speaking to approximately 35 offenders on units who would not be permitted to attend the assembly. His book, "Blood In, Blood Out," meaning members give blood to get into the gang and get out only by dying, is being purchased for MacLaren living units and the school library.

"I think most kids walked away from his presentation saying, 'this guy's for real,'" Ramirez said.

### INSIDE OYA

Colette S. Peters  
Director

Fariborz Pakseresht  
Deputy Director

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

Amanda Lowe-Davies  
Editor  
503-378-6555  
amanda.lowedavies@  
oya.state.or.us

Jim Sellers  
Communications  
Office  
503-373-7425  
jim.sellers@  
oya.state.or.us

Ann Snyder  
Communications  
Office  
503-378-6023  
ann.snyder@  
oya.state.or.us

Send your stories for  
the October issue to  
Amanda Lowe-Davies  
by September 30.  
Articles received after  
that date will be held  
for the November  
newsletter.

