



Oregon

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NEWS RELEASE

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RiverBend youth brighten holidays with handmade toys



Wooden toys made by youth at OYA's RiverBend facility

At-risk youth at the RiverBend Youth Transition Facility (YTF) in La Grande are brightening the holidays for local kids with toys made in the facility's woodworking shop.

The wooden toys – puzzles, animals and blocks – will be distributed to youth in need with the help of the Salvation Army. Since November, approximately six youth at the facility have been making five sets of wooden blocks and 30 other wooden toys.

“This kind of project helps teach empathy and compassion to the youth in our care,” said Gary Lillard, acting superintendent of RiverBend YTF. “It also contributes to helping them lead productive, crime-free lives after they complete their OYA commitments. It’s gratifying to see them helping others and giving back to the community during this holiday season.”

RiverBend staff are also aiding disadvantaged families in the community by holding a toy and clothing drive at the facility. Employees “adopted” two families in the area and are collecting unwrapped gifts on their behalf to be delivered later this month.

Service projects by youth in close-custody facilities support OYA’s mission to protect the public by holding youth offenders accountable and providing reformation in safe environments. Youth also benefit from year-round support of volunteers, who during the holidays host parties, lead religious services and ensure youth receive gifts.

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The Oregon Youth Authority is the state's juvenile justice agency, reducing victimization by helping at-risk young people lead productive, crime-free lives. Learn more at www.oregon.gov/oja and follow us on Twitter @OregonYouth