

INTEGRITY

PROFESSIONALISM

ACCOUNTABILITY

RESPECT

DECEMBER
2011

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Hillcrest class blends poetry and photography

"I am learning not all poetry has to rhyme," said one Hillcrest YCF youth. "They teach you how to use the camera correctly," said another. "We're writing about a person we care about, so I'm writing about my mom," said a third.

They are among nine long-term youth in a Robert S. Farrell High School class whose final project melded photographs they had taken with poetry they had written. Using discretionary funds from Portland General Electric, the Salem Art Association engaged photographer Barry Shapiro and poet Dawn Diez Willis to lead the non-credit class.

Rod Martin, OYA's statewide recreation coordinator who worked with the class, said youth wrote a poem to support their photo or shot a photo to support their poem.



See 'Poetry and photography,' page 7

This month's masthead photo is by Ann Snyder. You may submit a photo for use as an *Inside OYA* masthead by e-mailing your photo to oya.communications@oya.state.or.us.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

SERVICE AWARDS

The service awards listed below are for the month of October.

15 YEARS

Christopher Bratton

Oak Creek YCF

James Covert

MacLaren YCF

Kurt Garman

MacLaren YCF

Nicholas Pearce

Oak Creek YCF

Karri Robinson

Hillcrest YCF

Ismael Salinas

MacLaren YCF

Tom Wells

MacLaren YCF

David Yonally

Hillcrest YCF

Thank you for an accomplishment-filled year



Colette S. Peters

As we near the end of this year and prepare for the start of a new one, it's a good time to take a few minutes to think about all we have accomplished during the past year.

And at OYA, you have accomplished a lot. We have used data and research to initiate new and better ways of serving youth and tracking outcomes. We have taken on several key projects to improve cost-effective use of resources. We also have begun rolling out a new performance management system that will help us find and fix inefficiencies and barriers to doing our jobs.

This next year, as we begin to fully implement OYA's new performance management system (OPMS), everyone in this agency will be able to help drive even more improvements and efficiencies. The work you do is important, and OPMS will make it easier for you to do that work.

We also developed a new training system this past year, that is just rolling out, called iLearn. iLearn is designed to make it easier for you to get the training you need at a time and place that works for you. And, we are in the process of expanding and enhancing other job-related courses, such as safety and security procedures.

The ultimate goal of these changes is for us to become more effective at achieving our mission. That means giving everyone in OYA the training and information we need to do our jobs, setting high standards, measuring outcomes, finding and fixing barriers to performance, and being accountable for results – just as we do for, and expect of, the youth we serve.

This agency is filled with some of the most dedicated and hard-working people I have ever met. The accomplishments of this past year are due to your good work and continued commitment to serving Oregon's most at-risk youth. I thank you.

Colette S. Peters
Director

Director Peters visits Camp Florence partner

Youth at Camp Florence YTF often can be found doing internships in the community. One of those internships takes place at the veterinary clinic of Gene Osburn, DVM, who sponsors training for Josh, a Camp Florence youth.

"It was such an inspiration to see Josh in action with Dr. Osburn," said OYA Director Colette S. Peters. "I so appreciate the doctor's willingness to take a chance with one of our youth."

Other internships in the community have been at sites such as the city's wastewater-treatment plant, golf course, newspaper, and radio station. ■



Veterinarian Gene Osburn (left) and Director Colette S. Peters watch as Josh, a Camp Florence YTF youth, explains what he is learning in his veterinary internship program.

Volunteers, staff, youth add to holiday cheer

It's that time of year again – when faithful volunteers show up with wrapped gifts, lead religious services, and offer other holiday activities for incarcerated youth; when staff enjoy potlucks, supervise holiday-related youth activities, and find ways to contribute to community needs; and when youth have special opportunities to show empathy for others by helping the less fortunate.

“Many of our youth have never known how to share with others,” said Hillcrest YCF Volunteer Coordinator Griselda Solano, “so volunteers play an important role by leading by example of how to care and share with others.” At Hillcrest alone, six churches and two Rotary clubs are contributing to the holiday cheer by adopting living units.

Camp Florence YTF youth again helped the local food share organization pack food baskets, joining Soroptomist Club members Dec. 17 to distribute the baskets to low-income families. At North Coast YCF, youth decorated Christmas trees, did holiday window painting (judged by staff), and those on Skamokawa Unit were assisted by GLC Linda Gardner with a holiday bookmark project. North Coast also will have a Kwanzaa celebration Dec. 27 with volunteers John Ashford and Majestik.

At Oak Creek YCF, volunteers photographed youth, who used the photos to make holiday cards as gifts for family members. Volunteers also made more than 50 Christmas stockings that youth personalized with paint and glitter. Among other holiday activities were youth making cards for a local retirement home, decorating cookies, playing Bunco, and competing in a sled race (think cardboard boxes on blankets being pulled on the gym floor).



Eastern Oregon YCF's volunteers provided the bulk of gifts, and joined staff not only in a “wrapping party” but also – for the first time – will be there when gifts are unwrapped. A holiday party is scheduled for volunteers and youth, who also can look forward to Christmas Day family visits and phone calls.

For a 15th Christmas Eve, volunteers will bring joy to Rogue Valley YCF youth with McDonald's burgers and fries (see *Inside OYA*, January 2011). Youth in the culinary arts program also are helping prepare food for “holiday family days” for individual living units – including making desserts such as white chocolate raspberry cheesecake and linzer torte cookies – and participated in a community project sending cards to residents of local nursing facilities.



RiverBend YTF high school students made nearly 60 wooden toys – puzzles, blocks, trains, VW bugs, whistles, and helicopters – and will be the elves (think elf caps) joining Superintendent Brian Blisard and Teacher Erin Creech in delivering them to a local shelter and Toys for Joy. Youth also made toys for family members (one made a wooden monster

10 YEARS

Charles Isom
MacLaren YCF

Daniel Sifuentez
Washington PPO

Steven Stonebreaker
RiverBend YTF

5 YEARS

Rhonda Cabalona
North Coast YCF

Douglas Durham
North Coast YCF

Brian Johnson
Eastern Oregon YCF

Danny McCarley
North Coast YCF

Lillian Ramge
Eastern Oregon YCF

Rodney Rice
MacLaren YCF

Jennice Roisum
North Coast YCF

Leroy Thissell
Eastern Oregon YCF

Walter Woolfolk
Tillamook YCF

DEPARTURES

Susan Bullock
MacLaren YCF

Robert Fredlund
Physical Plant
Operations

Irvin Hersha
MacLaren YCF

Deborah Hickey
MacLaren YCF

Kelly Wahl
Central Office

Justin Wallace
Eastern Oregon
YCF

Malheur staff support community's youth

Three professionals in the Malheur field office recently spent some exhausting days with youth. You might expect that, except they weren't on their usual jobs – they did it as community volunteers.

JPPA Pearre Bones, Foster Care Certifier Chris Jensen, and JPPO Alex Contreras volunteered to help out with Challenge

Day in Ontario schools, an annual event targeting adolescent challenges such as cliques, harassment, intolerance, racism, bullying, and homophobia.

"It was very impactful for the 100 students who participated – and also on us," Contreras said. "It was a pretty emotionally draining day, and a great, great day."

Field Supervisor Ed Pierson supports staff members in volunteering, which involves working with youth in small groups where they share what is happening in their lives (such as "If you really knew me, you would know this about me....").

Bones, who has participated in Challenge Day for three years, said he was cynical at first, thinking it was just another training. "But it's not a typical training, it changes your life," he said. "A low-income youth with a single parent can look at the athlete who appears to have the perfect life and see he's going through the same issues." He said adult volunteers share experiences from their own middle- and high-school years, as well. What is said in the small groups is to remain confidential except where reports of harm demand mandatory reporting.

"You can see the weight lift off these kids' shoulders," said Jensen, who has participated in four such days in the past two years. "At the end of the day you get a lot of apologies by kids to other kids for the way they have hurt them." She said two OYA youth participated at a school where she volunteered. Bones said he appreciates that people in the community help support the cost of Challenge Day, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that sends leaders into communities engaged in the program (www.challengeday.org).

John Dillon, publisher of the Ontario Argus-Observer, attended his first Challenge Day this year and subsequently wrote in a column, "These students have to deal with so much I am not sure how they do it while still being kids." ■



Malheur Probation and Parole Office members (from left) Alex Contreras, Chris Jensen, and Pearre Bones demonstrate the universal sign for "I love you," which was used often during local schools' Challenge Day activities for which the group volunteered.

Youth council advises, assists MacLaren staff

MacLaren YCF Treatment Manager Abe Rios was talking to a group of youth about the possibility of putting on a talent show during the winter school break. He said he could send a letter or e-mail to MacLaren youth to gauge their interest in the idea, but would rather youth carried the idea forward. "If it comes from you guys it's more meaningful and they know it's legit," he said.

What followed was a youth-led discussion about what a talent show might include – such as breakdancing, card tricks, riddles, and jokes. The setting was a meeting of MacLaren's Youth Advisory Council, composed of high-tag youth who have been meeting regularly since last spring.

Youth who serve on the council are recommended by staff from the cottages, interviewed by MacLaren Superintendent Sid Thompson, and expected to meet attendance, behavior, and other standards written into the council's bylaws. Council members also are expected to mentor other youth and to take on extracurricular assignments such as speaking to groups touring MacLaren.

"The Youth Advisory Council gives us an opportunity to present changes to the program, things that are going on that are of interest to the youth but that we may not be able to communicate to everyone in the facility at one time," Thompson said. "We want them to have a firm understanding behind what we do so it doesn't seem arbitrary."

The Council's meetings begin with lunch, and take place in the high-tag room in the administration building. The meetings proceed with a respectful informality, with youth hearing from the administration and asking questions. Today's questions include: What about college on cottage? Do you expect any more OYA budget cuts? Will there be a vocational living unit? Can you make changes to the food available during visiting hours?

Workgroups have been formed to tackle questions such as how to manage recreation after a therapist was laid off. Rios, who handles youth grievances at MacLaren, said the number of grievances has dropped slightly since the Council was formed.



MacLaren YCF Youth Advisory Council members meet every two weeks to discuss programs and issues affecting youth.

One council member, Alek, said council service has given him a window on how MacLaren's administration operates.

"They don't make snap decisions, there's more of a process than one guy thinking of it and bam," he said. "(There's) a lot we still don't agree with, but we understand it. Before, it was 'how could they possibly be doing this?'" ■

ARRIVALS

Kristina Baker
Eastern Oregon YCF

Keith Cokeley
MacLaren YCF

Corey Cronkrite
MacLaren YCF

Sean Deshaies
Central Office

Deborah Hickey
MacLaren YCF

John Paul Jones
Central Office

Kainan Jordan
Eastern Oregon YCF

Andrew King
Eastern Oregon YCF

Max Lewis
MacLaren YCF

James Moore
Central Office

Jill Petersen
Central Office

Alex Tucker
MacLaren YCF

Narciso Vasquez
Tillamook YCF

LETTER TO CAMP FLORENCE YTF

Three heros:

Today I had Shawn, Aaron and Ty working for me for seven hours cleaning up our acreage after the latest wind storms. They all did a great job and are excellent workers.

At about 3:30 p.m. when we were headed back to Camp Florence for the day we came upon a car on its side in the ditch with its wheel still spinning. One of the guys suggested we stop to help at this accident. Immediately all three guys jumped in to help the lady get out of the smashed vehicle. Because they all had gloves from doing yard work all day they were able to remove the balance of the windshield and remove the uninjured lady from her car. I consider Shawn, Aaron and Ty heros.

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iLearn delivers and tracks OYA staff training

OYA's first online training system – iLearn – is now available to all agency employees.

Successfully tested at MacLaren YCF during November, iLearn offers online training, shows staff members what training they need to take, manages training records more efficiently, and makes available OYA policy rollouts.

All OYA staff are required to take Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting training, which was released in early December. Staff members may sign up for OYA training sessions themselves, although supervisor approval still is required.

To access the iLearn homepage, log on to <https://ilearn.oregon.gov/Kview/CustomCode-Behind/Base/Login/Login.aspx>.

You will find instructions for logging on to iLearn. The default is your OR number for both username and password if you have not logged in before. Courses are as diverse as Excel and PowerPoint, Information Security, Ethics Law, Effective Communications, and LINUS bill tracking.

All OYA employees have received detailed e-mail information about iLearn from Lynn Oliver, OYA Training Director. The administrator for iLearn is Nelson Kline, E-Learning Training Specialist with the OYA Training Academy. He may be contacted at nelson.kline@oya.state.or.us or at 503-981-2551. ■

Holiday cheer

Continued from page 3

truck for his little brother). RiverBend staff adopted a La Grande family of four and, in lieu of the traditional white-elephant gift exchange, brought in gifts for the Salvation Army to distribute. A local pastor gave RiverBend 100 stamped Christmas cards that youth could use to send mail to family and friends.

Staff also are getting involved at Camp Tillamook YTF and Tillamook YCF, where they are participating in a community toy drive and adopted a family of six through the Salvation Army. Names of staff members who participated were put in a drawing for a holiday gift basket.

In OYA's Lane field office, meanwhile, staff members donated hats, scarves, gloves, socks, and coats to a local warming center. Multnomah field staff joined colleagues in the Multnomah County Juvenile Justice Center to fill barrels with food donations for the Portland Police Bureau's Sunshine Division, as well as contributing gifts to be divided among OYA and DHS youth.

All of this has an impact. Solano remembers a Hillcrest youth who, in a prior year, said after the holidays, "You helped make Christmas here a much more happy time for me and the others, especially those who do not have anyone." ■



Poetry and photography

Continued from page 1

"I have found these guys to be extremely engaged," said Shapiro, a graphic designer who has been photographing for 40 years. "The level of photography has really advanced. There's some interesting conceptual thinking going on."

He tells youth not to see the photo for what it is, but for what else it is. "My business is to engage them in something they've never done and view them as artists in the making," he said. On one recent day, youth joined Shapiro in reviewing photos they had taken of clouds, leaves, mushrooms, chairs, signs, and shadows.

Willis said most of the poetry will be about parents or grandparents, although one youth said he wrote about his children: "It's a way to express how we're feeling even though we're locked up. We can express remorse for what we've done or what we're going through."

Willis taught writing at the high school for five years and has her graduate degree in poetry. "There's a great sense of accomplishment when they can see what they created with their own sweat," she said, "not stopping with the first draft, but thinking, working, and wrestling with the material." Although they wrote in a variety of styles, their final project completed in mid-December was free verse.

"I am hoping they will start thinking about how they might use art to process what is happening in their lives, so they will be less likely to act out and can think about a different kind of future for themselves," Willis said.

The students' work will be part of a Salem Art Association exhibit in April and May 2012 in observance of April's National Poetry Month. Although the Hillcrest youth will not be able to attend, Willis said, she wants to use a DVD or photos "to convey to them how wonderful it is that their work will be displayed in a gallery with other artists' work." ■

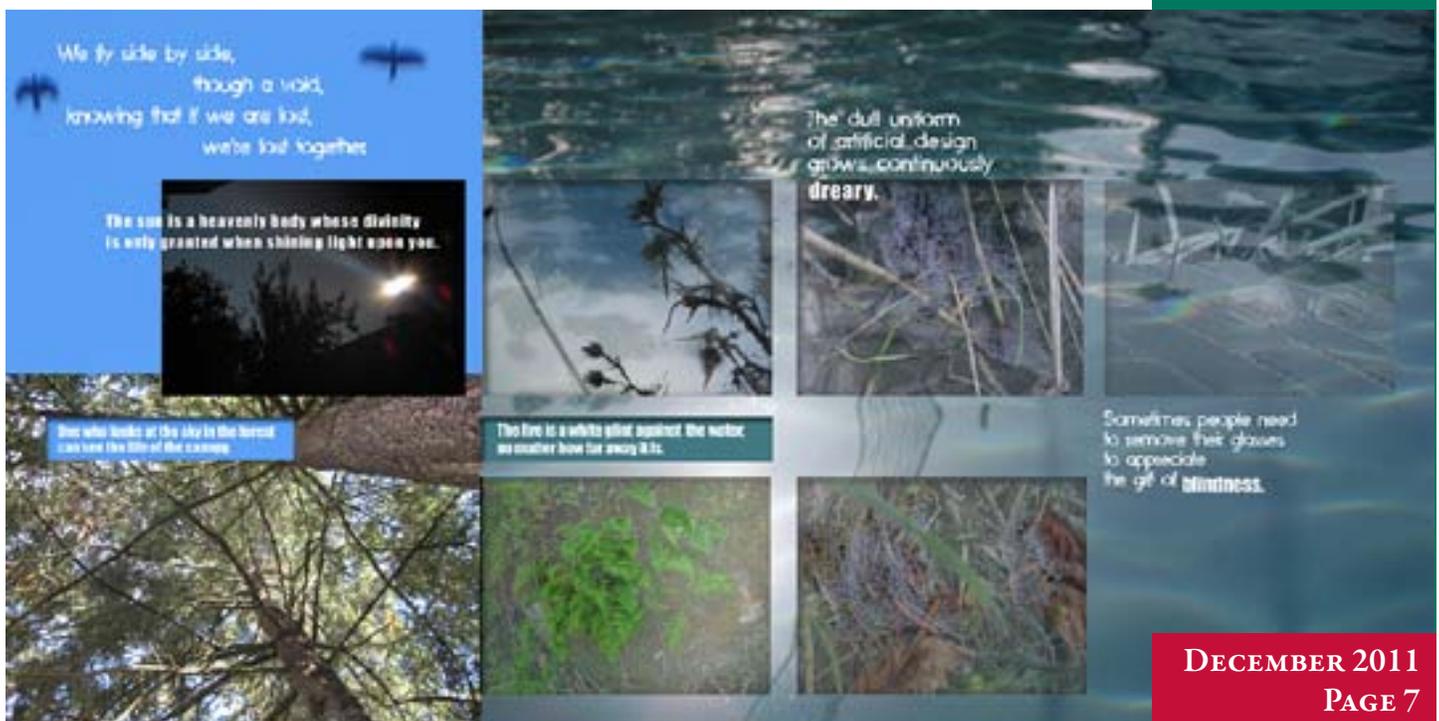
*Continued from
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My wife Sandy and I have used Camp Florence guys for about 15 years and have been very happy with all their work and attitude.

Sincerely,

Bill Connell
Florence

P.S. I hope I spelled their names correctly.



PEACE POETRY

A poetry anthology, "Speaking Peace," was published in connection with the Salem Peace Mosaic. These poems by two Hillcrest youth are included.

By Brandon

Choices

1
If I can't do
What I want to do
Then my job is
to not
Do what I want
to do.

2
If I can't have
What I want
Then my job is
to want
What I've got
And be satisfied
That at least there
Is something more
To want.

3
Since I can't go
Where I need
to go,
Then I must go
Where
the signs point
Though always
understanding
Parallel movement.

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Oak Creek youth cheer others' fitness feats

What happens when you introduce a climbing wall to youth – most of whom have never tried to climb one and some of whom are terrified of heights? At Oak Creek YCF, the challenge was met with every youth making the effort.

"Even the girls who didn't get along were saying to each other, 'Good job, you did awesome,'" said Lauren Sawyer, a teacher at Oak Creek's Three Lakes High School who invited the Oregon National Guard to offer an "Adventure Day" at the facility.

Ten Guard members set up not only the climbing wall but also an obstacle course, HALO jumper, two pedal carts, and two sports challenge units incorporating a football toss and timed basketball competition to challenge the girls. During the two-hour event, groups of approximately 15 youth took turns spending 30 minutes on each piece of equipment.

Sawyer saw a flier about the opportunity and thought it would "be the perfect way to keep them engaged, get their heart rate up, and have some fun." She said youth "became a team" during the event, expressed pride in their accomplishments, and, although they heard no formal recruiting presentation, had an opportunity to ask about Guard service if they had questions. A Guard representative said the youth were impressive, well-mannered, and among the best behaved they'd worked with.



The climbing wall at Oak Creek's Adventure Day was every bit as daunting as it looks, yet every youth made the effort.



Youth cheered encouragingly as they saw each other achieving new heights on the HALO jumper.

"The youth got plenty of physical activity and a sense of accomplishment," Sawyer said. "The Guard enjoyed the encouragement and teamwork of the youth, and I got the satisfaction of watching them work out harder than I've ever seen – without them even knowing it!" ■

Curiosity marks debut of OPMS at Rogue

A funny-looking chart, people disappearing for training, and rumblings of a new lingo (“QTRs,” “process owners,” “batches,” “7-step”) have OYA World abuzz about a new way of doing business.

And it’s true that a new way of doing business is in the works – the OYA Performance Management System (OPMS) that you’ve been hearing about is ready for prime time. The system was piloted during the past six weeks at MacLaren YCF and made its official debut this month to staff in facilities and offices across the state.

According to Deputy Director Fariborz Pakseresht, who is championing the project on behalf of the OYA Cabinet, the agency-wide introduction of the innovative system has been eagerly anticipated. “OPMS gives every staff member an opportunity to influence and improve the fundamental ways we do business,” he said. “It uses data to identify hot spots, structured problem-solving to overcome issues, and periodic progress reviews to stay on target.”



Rogue Valley YCF staff members (from left) TM Michelle Henry, QMHP Steve Mounce, and YCUC Lynn Tuttle participated in a recent rollout session for OYA’s new performance management system.

The basics of OPMS are being cascaded to facilities, field offices and Central Office staff between December and February. Every staff member will learn about the funny-looking chart (aka, the Fundamentals Map) and will come to understand the jargon.

OPMS in and of itself is not a project; it does not have a beginning or an end. However, OYA is using project management techniques to introduce and train all OYA staff about OPMS.

“Weaving a new system, a new way of doing business, into the OYA culture is a long-term, complex endeavor,” Pakseresht explained. “OPMS represents an essential change in the way we look at, evaluate, prioritize, perform, and improve our work.”

As staff hear and learn more about OPMS, opportunities will abound to become more involved and engaged. Every essential process the agency uses – that’s what is laid out on the Fundamentals Map – will be evaluated and, if necessary, adjusted. That can be accomplished only with the expertise of the people who perform the work.

“The choice of this particular management system represents a huge – and deserved – vote of confidence in our staff,” Pakseresht said. “No matter where you work, OPMS will help you and your team as you strive to improve services and outcomes for youth.” ■

PEACE POETRY

Continued from page 8

4
When I
can’t express
What I really feel,
I practice feeling
What I can,
And none of it
is equal
I know,
But that’s why
mankind,
Alone among the
mammals,
Learns to cry.

By Doug

Peace is...

Peace is calm,
always serene.

Always content
never supreme.

Peace is grace,
is given with love.

Peace is a keeper,
no pull or shove.

Peace is smooth,
lithe and svelte.

Peace is a feeling
that’s rarely felt.

Colette S. Peters
Director**Fariborz Pakseresht**
Deputy Director

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Send your stories for the January issue by Dec. 31. Articles received after that date will be held for the February newsletter.



North Coast youth earn boater education cards

Ten students at North Coast YCF's South Jetty High School have earned Oregon boater education cards, bringing to 18 the number who have done so this year.

"Out of the 10 students, only two had been familiar with boats," said David Phillips, Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla in Astoria. "However, the final exams of these young men reflected a very good understanding of boating safety."

The class met for four three-hour morning sessions. It was the second time it was offered at North Coast (see *Inside OYA*, March 2011). The course covered practical safety information, regional and local boating rules and regulations, and tips and techniques for making boating more enjoyable.

Teaching the class were instructors from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Astoria and Clatsop County Marine Deputies Matt Phillips and Willie Nieberg. The Oregon Marine Board provided instructional materials.

David Phillips said North Coast youth were able not only to interact with the instructors, but also discuss careers and how to make good safety and life decisions. The sheriff's office brought a small boat into the facility so youth could see it and share knowledge of what they had learned. With support from school Principal Robbie Porter and Superintendent Dan Berger, Phillips said, they plan to offer the course twice annually. ■

Youth invited to friendly chat in chambers

Every OYA youth has had courtroom experience, but a Marion County youth recently had one that few can match: She met in chambers this fall with Marion County Juvenile Court Judge Tracy Prall.

"I was pretty nervous when I met her," Jeanette, the youth, said of her conversation with Judge Prall, but "I like her, I like her a lot." Jeanette, whose gang involvement led to her OYA custody, completed the Pettygrove program and is on probation.

She and the judge talked about things they have in common – Judge Prall is a Western Oregon University alumna and Jeanette is a first-year criminal justice major at WOU. She said the judge talked about her own career path, and advised her to get to know her professors ("they can help you"). The judge gave her a business card and said she would be willing to speak to her classes.

The meeting was arranged by Marion Field Supervisor Mike Runyon, who knew the judge's WOU association. JPPO Al Rodriguez said his role in helping Jeanette – she graduated from Woodburn High School and won a college scholarship – was minimal: "It was her drive and her wanting to make a better life for herself that made this work." Jeanette also meets regularly with mentor Marlen Torres for guidance on many of the 'soft' skills needed to find and maintain a job.

Jeanette said she would like to work in an OYA facility, and would volunteer now if she weren't prohibited from having contact with OYA youth. "I really wanted to change," she said of her life's turnaround, "and I want to help the people who are going through what I went through." ■