

Inside OYA

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ACCOUNTABILITY

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WINTER

2013-14

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Facilities help communities during holidays



MacLaren youth display the holiday cards they designed (left); Gustavo weaves a hat (right).

From donating food to carving wooden toys to helping a child with a rare disease, staff and youth at OYA facilities pitched in to help communities across Oregon during the holidays.

"I'm deeply proud of all youth and staff who gave back in some way during the holidays," said Clint McClellan, assistant director for Facility Services. "Helping out not only kept youth busy, it taught them the importance of having empathy and compassion for those in need. These types of activities encourage youth to lead productive, crime-free lives after they leave OYA."

Youth at RiverBend YTF made wooden toys – puzzles, animals and blocks – for distribution by the Salvation Army to children in need. Staff also helped disadvantaged

families in the community by holding a toy and clothing drive at the facility.

On the coast, Camp Florence youth assisted the local Soroptimist International volunteer group by assembling and distributing more than 400 baskets of food and gifts to low-income residents. And staff and youth at Camp Tillamook filled several large boxes with clothing, food and gifts for a needy family with four young boys.

"Each family member was given an outfit, the boys were each given coats and hoodie sweatshirts as well as a ton of toys, candy and an entire dinner plus lots of extra food," said Amy Braden, the office specialist at Camp Tillamook who coordinated the donations. "The dinner included a ham,

"These types of activities encourage youth to lead productive, crime-free lives after they leave OYA."

Clint McClellan,
Assistant Director,
Facility Services

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This edition's masthead photo is by Ronald Sandler. 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 are for October, November and December 2013.

30 YEARS

Darwin Crabtree
MacLaren YCF

25 YEARS

Lily Caceres
Director's Office

Dennis Franklin
Oak Creek YCF

Jim Kramer
Community Services

Gregory Mattison
Business Services

Timothy Vandersteen
MacLaren YCF

Mentoring spirit alive and well over holidays



Fariborz Pakseresht, Director

This past holiday season allowed several Cabinet members and me the opportunity to visit facilities and meet with youth and staff. For many youth, the holidays can be difficult for obvious reasons. They also may be challenging for staff who worked to cover shifts so their colleagues could enjoy time off.

During my visits to MacLaren (Thanksgiving), Hillcrest (Christmas), and Oak Creek (New Year's Day), I found youth and staff to be cheerful and positive. I'm deeply grateful to employees who invested the extra effort to ensure youth enjoyed the holidays and felt valued. The holiday spirit – of generosity, compassion and encouragement – was alive and well wherever I went.

The spirit of mentorship – based on the premise that predictable, consistent relationships with stable, competent adults can help youth overcome challenges – also was evident during my visits.

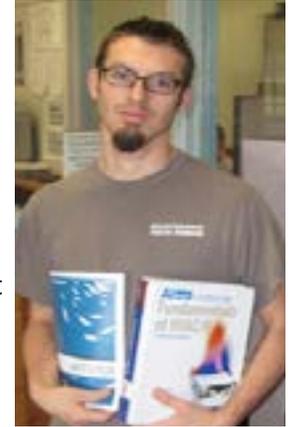
Thanksgiving morning at MacLaren I met Denton, who was learning about air conditioning maintenance. When his OYA commitment is completed later this year, he hopes to work as a repair technician. He's paying for his textbooks out of his own pocket, but he's also being taught and encouraged by Ron Schuchardt, an energy technician at the facility. Denton told me he appreciates Ron's mentorship.

Angie Weitman, a GLC at Oak Creek, spends many hours cultivating the creative spirit of the girls there. She organized art contests and other activities over the holidays that encouraged youth to engage their talents by decorating their living units. On New Year's Day, I was delighted to see how creative the girls could get. Angie, too, is a mentor.

Volunteers also act as mentors. Just before Thanksgiving, state Sen. Jackie Winters and Marion County business leader Dick Withnell visited MacLaren to engage youth in a discussion of how to make responsible choices. Both these people lead very busy lives, yet they made time to visit youth to share the experience and wisdom they've earned over the years.

We know that the more youth have dependable adults in their lives, the more likely they are to develop positive behaviors, strong relationships, values, skills, and beliefs that promote healthy development. This isn't just a feel-good theory; data support it. Research shows that mentoring can improve behavioral, social, emotional, and academic outcomes for at-risk youth. The evidence was all around me during my visits.

The holidays have a way of drawing out the very best in us. The results were reflected in everyone I met and everything I saw during my visits. Thank you for allowing me to experience first-hand the good work you're doing with our youth every day.



Youth Denton holds the textbooks he's using to study air conditioning maintenance.



Among other projects, GLC Angie Weitman organized a Halloween decorating contest for Oak Creek girls.

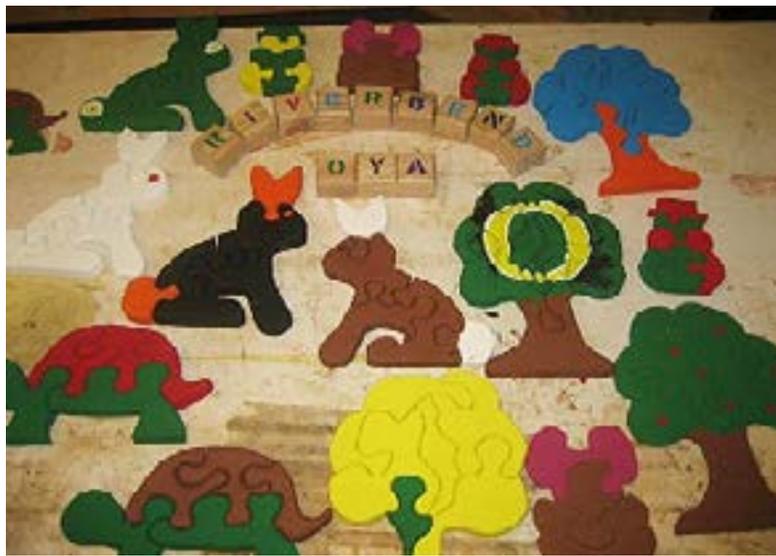
Fariborz Pakseresht

Facilities help communities during holidays

Continued from page 1

vegetables, potatoes, pies, fresh fruit, canned fruit, jello, rolls, and butter.”

About 20 youth at MacLaren YCF helped the homeless by weaving hats and scarves. The youth belong to the facility’s Hope Partnership Macramé Group. Forty of their handmade creations were delivered to St. Paul’s Place at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and The Father’s Heart Street Ministry. The organizations, based in Oregon City, serve the homeless and others in need in Clackamas County.



Some of the wooden toys made by youth at Camp Riverbend.

MacLaren youth – along with youth at Eastern Oregon YCF – also designed and created holiday cards for delivery to local retirement homes.

Staff and youth at Hillcrest YCF brightened the holidays for people in need with handmade hats and scarves.



Hillcrest youth Felipe with (left to right) YCUC Rod Green, QMHP Karol Rhoades, and SDC Terry Ferebee.

Staff donated material for use by nine youth in the Zeta Knitting Group, named after the facility’s living unit where they reside. The youth gave their creations to the ARCHES Project, a Salem group that helps the homeless.

Lana Heinen, housing education coordinator for the ARCHES Project, said the items were greatly appreciated. “The hats and scarves are very well made and were put to good use in the homeless community, especially this time of year,” she said. “We’re grateful to the youth and staff at Hillcrest for their generosity and support of those in need.”

Hillcrest also continued its holiday tradition of donating repaired bikes to members of the community. The bikes are rehabilitated by youth at the facility under the volunteer supervision of local bicycle mechanics Aaron Ryals and Cory Heintz.

The program is a partnership with the Salem YMCA, which coordinates distribution of the rebuilt bikes at low or no cost to people who can’t afford new ones.

Youth and staff at Rogue Valley YCF raised hope and money for a local child with a rare medical condition.

SERVICE AWARDS, cont.

20 YEARS

John Bearsto
Josephine PPO

Craig Childers
Camp Florence YTF

Perrin Damon
Director’s Office

Valerie Lynch
MacLaren YCF

Roger Meacham
Hillcrest YCF

Khris Ward
Community Services

Darth Watkins
Camp Florence YTF

SERVICE
AWARDS,
cont.

15 YEARS

Harry Bradshaw
Multnomah PPO

Michael Bunch
MacLaren YCF

Bruce Carson
MacLaren YCF

Charles Cates
Hillcrest YCF

Craig Contreras
Jackson PPO

Phongpun Fox
Eastern Oregon YCF

Larry Gilbertson
Rogue Valley YCF

Troy Gregg
Hillcrest YCF

Laurie Schmidt
Oak Creek YCF

Deborah Shook
MacLaren YCF

Julio Simental
MacLaren YCF

James Stinson
Hillcrest YCF

Donor makes sun shine for staff, youth at St. Mary's Home for Boys

By Jeff Pinelli, assistant director, St. Mary's Home for Boys

A generous donor treated staff and youth at St. Mary's Home for Boys in Beaverton to a University of Oregon football game. The outing was made possible by Dick Sorenson, an executive at the Royal Bank of Canada and supporter of St. Mary's, an OYA contract provider of residential services.

Twelve boys and six staff members departed St. Mary's on a chartered bus to Eugene for the Sept. 28 game. They were attired in University of Oregon hats and sweatshirts. They were treated to excellent seats for the game and provided with boxed dinners. Travel, tickets, and food all were donated by Sorenson.

Two boys were escorted on to the field during the first quarter to watch Sorenson present a financial contribution to St. Mary's. The Oregon Duck, posed for photos with the boys.

The driving rain did not keep the boys and staff from having a day they will never forget. The staff and youth of St. Mary's Home for Boys thank Dick Sorenson for his thoughtfulness, kindness, and generosity. ■



The Oregon Duck welcomes Tommy from St. Mary's Home for Boys to the Sept. 28 game.

Hillcrest helps American Heart Association

Hillcrest YCF recently became the first youth correctional facility in the nation to host an American Heart Association (AHA) fundraiser. A "Heart for Hoops" basketball tournament for youth, held in the facility's gym Nov. 21, raised \$250 from staff.

AHA Youth Market Director Susie Rice said the event was the first time the non-profit organization has partnered with a juvenile justice agency to raise funds to fight heart disease.



Left to right: Joey Webber of the Portland Timbers, Hillcrest youth Jose, Susie Rice of the American Heart Association, and OYA Recreation Coordinator Rod Martin.

Hillcrest youth Jose won top honors at the tournament, which was judged by a panel that included Joey Webber, mascot of the Portland Timbers soccer team. ■

OYA honors longtime foster parents for ‘positively impacting countless lives’



OYA foster parents (above) gathered at Central Office Nov. 5 for the second Foster Parent Forum held this year. The parents met with OYA Director Fariborz Pakseresht, who praised their work on behalf of at-risk youth.

Pakseresht presented an OYA Coin Award to Charlene Hall (right), who has served 31 years as a foster parent (she attended the forum by video). He commended Hall, who lives in Junction City and currently fosters three youth, for “positively impacting countless lives by investing time, energy, and caring into each youth to ensure his or her success.”

The Foster Parent Forum serves as a way to share information with foster parents, hear their concerns, and recognize them for their selflessness. ■



OYA foster parent Charlene Hall

Project POOCH unites father, daughter

By Dustin Boos, supervisor, Project POOCH, MacLaren YCF



Rafael's daughter plays with Parker during her birthday visit in November.

I work at Project POOCH at MacLaren YCF and I'm also on the Positive Youth Development Committee. I want to share a story that I think demonstrates some aspects of Positive Youth Development.

One of my youth workers, Rafael, was paired with an Af-fenpinscher out of the Marion County Dog Shelter. The youth was responsible for making a flyer for the dog, which showcases its qualities, and for training the dog for the Canine Good Citizen program so that it could be adopted out.

The youth did a great job and very shortly thereafter the dog, named Parker, was adopted by a local family.

The youth has a daughter who was having her birthday come up so he made a request to the adoptive family. He asked if they would bring the dog back for a special visit so he could show his daughter all of the training he put into it. The visit went great. The youth showed off all the dog's tricks and his daughter got to play with the first dog the youth had ever trained on his own. ■

SERVICE AWARDS, cont.

15 YEARS

James Thompson
MacLaren YCF

Laura Ward
Community Services

Leng Xiong
Hillcrest YCF

10 YEARS

Christina Brosmore
Rogue Valley YCF

Gunnar Browning
Multnomah PPO

Dante Lewis
Linn PPO

Matt Sorenson
Treatment Services

SERVICE
AWARDS,
cont.

5 YEARS

Margaret Braun
Information Services

Mark Burnett
Hillcrest YCF

Randy Bush
Tillamook YCF

Kelly Crain
Community Services

Angelina Druliner
Wasco PPO

Rolando Mata
MacLaren YCF

Jennifer Peterson
Oak Creek YCF

Joanna Sanders
Business Services

Marcus Williams
Hillcrest YCF

Two Spirits group offers youth ‘safe space’

“You’re not alone.”

That was the theme of the first-ever “Coming Out Day” for Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Questioning (LGBTQ) youth and their families at MacLaren YCF.

The Oct. 11 celebration was the culmination of years of discussions and planning about ways to support LGBTQ

youth as they searched for and occasionally struggled with their sexual identities. The group at MacLaren might be the only one of its kind in any juvenile justice system in the nation.

Steve Llanes, the facility’s Native American coordinator who helped organize the group, named it “Two Spirits.” He said Native Americans believe that people who identify as LGBTQ have “two spirits” and are held in high regard.

Llanes, who works in OYA’s Office of Minority Services, explains why the group was formed at MacLaren: “They’re a minority, but they weren’t getting any services.”

Deven Edgerton, a volunteer at MacLaren, attended the Coming Out celebration. He summarized the purpose of Two Spirits as a group that “helps youth have a safe space to learn more about themselves.”

The group is designed to provide a safe, supportive, and affirming space to youth who may be exploring their own sexual orientation and gender identity; create awareness and educate youth about ways to express their sexual identity; and encourage peers to be allies in accepting other youths’ sexual orientation and gender identity.



Youth Robert interviews state Rep. Jennifer Williamson for an educational video about the Two Spirits group at MacLaren YCF.

Continued on page 7

PSU students learn from MacLaren youth

The Kincaid Cottage at MacLaren YCF recently served as a human-relations laboratory for students at Portland State University. PSU seniors Kaytee Evans, Kelsey Imsland, Maci McDougall, and Kylie Goss visited the cottage Nov. 20 to observe youth reactions to social and racial and stereotyping.

The students are working on a research project for their final exams in children and family studies. They showed videos depicting stereotypes to youth and questioned them about their own experiences.

“I think the media plays a big role in promoting stereotypes,” Robert told Goss, who also is an intern for PPO Joyce Armstead. ■



Sang (left) and Robert listen to PSU student Kylie Goss.

Two Spirits group offers youth 'safe space'

Continued from page 6

GLC Missy Mintun, who has worked at MacLaren since 1996, spent several years trying to move the group from the drawing board to reality. She called Coming Out Day "a groundbreaking event for this agency" and said OYA has made much progress on the issue of youth sexual orientation.

"It was very, very frowned upon," Mintun said of past employee attitudes toward LGBTQ youth. "Staff weren't sensitive to it. There was a lot of closed-minded thinking."

Mintun embarked on a five-year research project with fellow GLC Kristina Ballow to study the feasibility of organizing a youth support group at MacLaren. "There's definitely a correlation between being depressed – including suicidal thoughts – and lack of support from families" of LGBTQ youth, she said after studying the issue. "That's when I decided we need services for these kids."

Mintun and Ballow worked with Llanes, OMS staff members Lily Caceres, Rev. Craig Cutting, and Rolando Ramirez, Treatment Services Supervisor Rebecca Yazzie, and others to develop a proposal to provide structured support and services for LGBTQ youth.

Doug Smith, then a treatment manager at MacLaren and now Eastern Oregon YCF superintendent, supported the concept and advocated for it with senior management, who ultimately approved. The first meeting of the Two Spirits group was held in June 2011. The group meets monthly, with about one or two youth joining or dropping out as they see fit.



Youth art on display at Coming Out Day.

The group currently has about a dozen participants including several "allies" – straight youth who support LGBTQ members. During and after the Coming Out celebration, several youth involved in the Two Spirits group discussed their experiences.

Michael, 19, said the group "makes you feel proud of who you are" and helps him understand and accept his identity.

Another member of the group, Zach, 20, said he was "gay bashed" for the first time at age 17. His mother attended the celebration and he said of her: "My mother taught me to love myself unconditionally when I was a little kid and I am still learning to live up to that expectation and that ideal."

Mintun said Two Spirits is fulfilling its purpose. "I see more stable behavior," she said. "I see more youth getting support from their families. I see less depression and less suicidal ideation."

State Rep. Jennifer Williamson, whose legislative district includes parts of Portland, was touring MacLaren the day of the Coming Out celebration. She was interviewed by youth for an educational video about the Two Spirits group being produced under the supervision of Llanes.

"I'm so proud of the youth here for the support they're showing each other," said Williamson.

What were her last words of advice to the LGBTQ youth and their parents at the meeting?

"You're not alone," she told them. "And it does get better." ■



GLC Missy Mintun speaks at MacLaren's Coming Out Day in October.

DEPARTURES

Marta Avalle-Arce
Business Services

Bev Baker
Hillcrest YCF

Dustin Boos
MacLaren YCF

Dianna Brainard
Director's Office

Gregory Budreau
Information Services

Kayla Callaham
Camp Riverbend YTF

Shirley Chrusoskie
Camp Riverbend YTF

Edith Deubert
Rogue Valley YCF

Brian Fahey
Information Services

Nickolas Herrera
MacLaren YCF

Lisa Hovden
Camp Tillamook YTF

Brandon Kellogg
Camp Riverbend YTF

Nelson Kline
Business Services

Rem Nivens
Director's Office

DEPARTURES, *cont.*

Heidi Ostitis
MacLaren YCF

Ryan Perez
Rogue Valley YCF

James Petrin
Hillcrest YCF

Jennifer Putnam
Rogue Valley YCF

Santiago Quintero
Washington PPO

Arden Schwartz
MacLaren YCF

Jessica Siniff
Camp Riverbend YTF

Anthony Smith
Hillcrest YCF

Joshua Smith
Rogue Valley YCF

Brandi Strong
Lane PPO

Steven Waibel
Camp Riverbend YTF

Eric Wall
MacLaren YCF

Southern Oregon staff recognized for service

Director Fariborz Pakseresht presented Ken Jerin, superintendent of Rogue Valley YCF, with a certificate honoring his 25 years of service to the agency at the Nov. 14 Joint Management Team meeting in Salem. Also at the meeting, Jerin presented PPO Supervisor Craig Contreras and the Southern Oregon Field Office team with an OYA Coin Award. Jerin commended field staff for going “above and beyond the call of duty by providing support to Rogue Valley YCF during a critical incident Oct. 6. Their support that night was welcomed and needed.” ■



Above left, Director Fariborz Pakseresht presents an award to Rogue Valley YCF Superintendent Ken Jerin. Above right, PPO Supervisor Craig Contreras thanks Jerin for his team's Coin Award.

Rogue Valley YCF fundraiser nets \$2,500

Rogue Valley YCF raised \$2,500 for youth programming at its second annual Culinary Celebration Dinner. The Nov. 14 event was organized by staff and youth to raise money for the facility's youth incentive fund. In addition to programming, the fund supports holiday celebrations and other special events recognizing positive youth behavior. Ten youth prepared and served dinner at the facility to members of the community for \$25 a plate. A silent auction with woodshop products made by the youth and other items also was held. GLC Jeff Hames, who retired from the facility in November, thanked the participants for their support. ■

Facilities help communities during holidays

Continued from page 3

The facility organized youth basketball games, bake sales, “jeans weeks” and other donation incentives to help Lilliana Maupin. The 2-year-old Grants Pass girl has hydrocephalus, a rare disorder requiring costly, ongoing medical treatment.

The facility adopted Lilliana as a holiday cause through Sparrow Clubs USA, a Pacific Northwest charity, and Hidden Valley High School in Grants Pass. By the end of December, the facility had raised more than \$2,200 for Lilliana.

“We are deeply proud of all youth and staff who supported Lilliana during her time of need,” said Superintendent Ken Jerin. “It’s gratifying to see them help a child they know only through photographs and videos.”

Facilities also benefited from the support of volunteers, who hosted holiday parties and made sure youth received gifts. ■



GLC Greg Geith organized basketball games at Rogue Valley to raise money for Lilliana Maupin.

Jody: From behind bars to whiter walls

Cathy Baird, PPO supervisor for Washington, Columbia, Clatsop and Tillamook counties, writes: "We have a young lady who has paroled from Oak Creek YCF and is doing fantastic work in her foster home, school, and community setting. She completed a composition for school that she shared with her JPPO, Guy Hamilton, who then shared it with me. We have asked this youth if she would give us permission to share it with you folks for the next newsletter."

We are pleased to present "Behind Bars" by Jody Warren, who allowed us to publish the work she submitted to her English teacher in October.

It's Nov. 28, 2012. I sit in the lobby of the juvenile justice center awaiting court.

I'm waiting to go before a hearings officer because I am now on parole. My heartbeat feels like a herd of elephants stomping through my chest. The look on my mother's face tells me the worst is bound to happen. Her eyes are narrow with disappointment.

I know at this point I am going to do time, but how much time, I don't know. All I can envision is the small units with twenty-six girls. I anticipate the cramped dorm full of bunks with no room to breathe, and my mouth puckers in anticipation of food that makes me want to starve myself.



Jody Warren

Continued on page 19

Oak Creek youth display artistic talent

Mention "art exhibit," and what often comes to mind is a gallery in New York or San Francisco hosting glamorous artists showing off their work to affluent patrons. But creativity is not limited by geography or circumstances.

In fact, artistic expression can flourish in the unlikeliest of places – like a youth correctional facility.

For proof, look no farther than Silverton, where nine girls at Oak Creek YCF exhibited their art in October.

The girls worked with Barry Shapiro, a veteran photographer and graphic artist in Silverton, and Cheryl Creel, a writer and poet in Salem, to combine poetry and photography into art reflecting their lives and dreams.

The girls took the photographs inside the facility and paired them with words that told their stories, the paths that led to them to OYA, and their dreams and hopes of better lives after they are released.



Artwork by Oak Creek girls on display at the Lunaria Gallery in Silverton.

Continued on page 19

ARRIVALS

Brandy Anderson
Camp Tillamook YTF

Drew Cebular
Rogue Valley YCF

Phillip Getty
Information Services

Mary Hunter
Community Services

Jose Garcia-Gomez
Rogue Valley YCF

Broch Inghram
Rogue Valley YCF

Suzan Nelson
Camp Florence YTF

Shane Pallesen
Community Services

Jolie Penrose
Community Services

Ryan Perez
Rogue Valley YCF

Trevor Pittman
Oak Creek YCF

Kristina Racer
Information Services

Eric Wall
Hillcrest YCF

Carl Ward
Eastern Oregon YCF

ARRIVALS,
cont.

Patricia Wilber
Rogue Valley YCF

Kathleen Wright
Camp Riverbend YTF

Cox honored for juvenile justice leadership

Philip Cox, OYA assistant director for Community Services, has been honored for his work to promote collaboration between local juvenile justice agencies and the state.

Cox received the Jim Mosier Award from the Central and Eastern Oregon Juvenile Justice Consortium (CEOJJC), an intergovernmental network dedicated to reducing juvenile delinquency among the 18 mostly rural counties it represents. The award is named for CEOJJC's founder.

"Phil has been an invaluable partner at the state level as we work together to build a better juvenile justice system at the local level," said CEOJJC Coordinator Jeff Milligan, who presented the award at a ceremony Oct. 23. "On behalf of the counties in CEOJJC, we thank him for forging a strong working relationship between the state and its local partners." ■



Cox with the Jim Mosier Award.

Youth, staff celebrate Oregon's tribal heritage



President Obama proclaimed November as Native American Heritage Month and OYA youth and staff did their part to honor tribal culture and traditions, supported by the agency's Office of Minority Services (OMS).



In the photo above, youth prepare for a Nov. 9 sweat lodge at MacLaren YCF organized by Native American Coordinator Steve Llanes. Sweat lodges and pow wows are held at MacLaren and other facilities and camps throughout the year to educate staff and youth on the significance of tribal culture.

Katie Staton (left) displays a plaque of appreciation she received from the Federal Correctional Institution in Sheridan. Staton, the Native American coordinator based at Central Office, traveled to the prison Nov. 13 to brief staff on the importance of tribal spiritual practices in correctional facilities.

OMS organized other events throughout the agency during November to honor Native American Heritage Month. In addition, OMS, with the help of volunteers, offers sweat lodge ceremonies year round at OYA facilities. ■

One at-risk population helps another

Botanists work with Oak Creek girls to boost butterflies

Youth at Oak Creek YCF are doing their part to help at-risk butterflies with support from Corvallis-based botanists, the Audubon Society, and Toyota.

These apparently unrelated players came together recently in the greenhouse at Oak Creek, where the botanists and the girls worked together to help the insects recover from decline due to loss of habitat and other factors. Besides being pretty, butterflies aid the environment by pollinating flowers and providing food for a wide range of predators, such as birds.

“Reversing this decline requires a dual approach,” said Stacy Moore, director of ecological education at the Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE). “We must restore habitats that have already been degraded as well as educate the public about the importance of conservation. Oak Creek is a great place to start doing that.”



Oak Creek youth listen as botanist Stacy Moore (right) explains how the blue violet is a food source for the Oregon Silverspot butterfly.



Ariana (left) prepares to plant violet seeds under the supervision of botanist Larkin Guenther.

vegetation that feeds butterflies, so Moore and Guenther taught the girls about the early blue violet, a flowering plant that the Silverspot find delicious.

The botanists gave the girls thousands of violet seeds to plant in containers filled with fertilized dirt. The youth will care for the dormant seeds in the greenhouse through winter until the flowering plants are ready to be moved to the Silverspot’s habitat along the Oregon coast.

Moore and fellow IAE botanist Larkin Guenther visited Oak Creek Nov. 25 to help 36 girls learn the value of butterfly preservation, in particular the Oregon Silverspot butterfly. The insect is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. In addition to habitat loss, the pervasive use of pesticides is another leading cause of butterfly decline.

The first step toward recovery is to plant

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

The following foster parents were honored for their longtime service:

Donna and Arnold Brubaker, Sweet Home, 37 years

Lolah Yoshikawa, Halfway, 30 years

Virginia and Bob Bowman, Sheridan, 22 years

Sandy and Carl Cochran, Carlton, 18 years

Maria and David Mihm, McMinnville, 13 years

Teresa and Mike Shults, Klamath Falls, 12 years

Jana Kohler and Sam Bigby, Salem, 11 years

Debbie and Woody Kellogg, Baker City, 10 years

Celia and Edward Kaleta, McMinnville, 7 years

Kay and Allen Woolsey, Aumsville, 7 years

**VOLUNTEER
RECOGNITION,
cont.**

Constance Cleg-
horn, Clatskanie,
6 years

Mary and Pat
O’Keeffe, Bandon,
6 years

Kathy and Duane
Scott, Bandon,
6 years

Wendy and Craig
Spencer, Coos Bay,
6 years

MacLaren youth weld their way to success



Youth at MacLaren YCF proudly show off the results of their welding skills.

Director Fariborz Pakseresht visited MacLaren YCF Oct. 31 to commend the work of Mike Orias, who leads the instruction for welding certifications at MacLaren YCF. Along with Gerald Pfeifer, Orias teaches welding skills to youth and helps them prepare for taking rigorous trade certification exams.

Pakseresht applauded the announcement that the youth had passed 21 of 25 certification tests. He told them that such vocational skills “are like money in the bank” when they seek jobs after completing their OYA commitments. Nearly 250 certifications have been awarded since the welding program started in 2008, according to Diane Hass, an education specialist at the facility.

“I had to go to Chemeketa Community College night school for nine months to get my certification,” said Orias. “They are in high school which doubles as a correctional facility and they did it here.”

A welded pumpkin on the table in front of Orias reminded everyone that the day was Halloween. ■



Above, Director Fariborz Pakseresht (right) leads applause for welding instructors Mike Orias (left) and Gerald Pfeifer (center).

Below, Elijah shows off a sea turtle he welded.



Energy efficiency pays off for facilities

OYA recently partnered with Energy Trust of Oregon to save on power usage at Hillcrest and Rogue Valley youth correctional facilities.

OYA installed new, energy efficient heating and cooling units at the facilities, saving money on electric bills.

Construction Project Manager Mark Connors supervised the installation of the replacement units and made sure they were eligible for rebates from Energy Trust of Oregon, a utility customer-funded group that promotes conservation. Dec. 17, an Energy Trust representative presented OYA with an \$8,049 rebate check reflecting the improvements made at both facilities.



(Left to right): Physical Plant Operations Manager Rex Emery, Lyn Schmidt with Energy Trust of Oregon, Hillcrest Maintenance Manager Dan Deder, Assistant Director for Business Services Jan Dean, and Construction Project Manager Mark Connors celebrate a rebate check delivered to Dean and Connors from Schmidt for the installation of new air conditioning units at Hillcrest and Rogue Valley.

“We are making progress to help OYA become as energy efficient as possible,” said Rex Emery, manager of Physical Plant Operations. “We have a long way to go, but we are actively identifying the energy needs of our facilities and are making improvements where they will be most practical and beneficial.”

Emery recently led a detailed sustainability analysis of OYA facilities that included participants from the Oregon Department of Energy (DOE) and Energy Trust. The review identified facility needs and generated data to build a comprehensive plan to enhance the agency’s energy efficiency efforts. ■

Special guests motivate youth at MacLaren

State Sen. Jackie Winters (at head of table) and Marion County civic leader Dick Withnell (left) visited MacLaren YCF Nov. 26 to encourage and share life lessons with a group of at-risk boys. The two periodically visit the facility.

Copies of “Lifer,” a memoir by Ted Winters, the late husband of Sen. Winters who was committed to MacLaren as a teenager, were circulated for the youth to read and discuss. ■



Youth talent recognized in national contest

More than 200 youth nationwide entered the competition

Six youth in OYA's care were among recent winners in a national writing and art contest for troubled kids.

Josif, 19, took top honors for his essay "Untold War" and Nathan, 21, won for his photograph captioned "Dreamcatcher." Both are at Tillamook YCF. Four girls from Oak Creek also placed in the contest. Amity, 17, Charlotte, 18, and Sara, 17, took top honors for essay writing. Breanna, 16, won for her drawing.

Their works were submitted for judging in the Untold Stories Essay and Visual Art Competition sponsored by the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings (CEEAS). More than 200 youth held in juvenile facilities nationwide competed in the contest.



"Dreamcatcher," a photo by Nathan (Tillamook YCF).

"Our youth have again proved that incarceration need not stifle creativity," said Director Fariborz Pakseresht. "We are deeply proud of their accomplishments and thank CEEAS and the committed educators who nurture the creativity of their students. Untold Stories represents the innovative education partnerships that help at-risk youth lead productive, crime-free lives after completing their OYA commitments."

This is not the first time youth in OYA's care have received national recognition for their artistry. In May, a youth at Oak Creek took first place in the Words Unlocked poetry contest sponsored by CEEAS, and three others finished third.

"Many of the youth who competed in Untold Stories wrote about universal themes, such as love, belonging, redemption, overcoming obstacles, taking control of your life and saying you're sorry," said David Domenici, executive director of CEEAS.

"But often their stories were haunted by violence and tragedy, reminding us of the traumatic experiences so many young people in the juvenile justice system have confronted."

To encourage entries for Untold Stories, CEEAS developed a 10-day curriculum to inspire writing that was contextualized, personal and real. The curriculum included materials that encouraged creativity and originality, but also helped students address their academic weaknesses and build on their strengths.

The winners received cash prizes ranging from \$25-\$100. A number of the winning essays and artwork already have appeared in the CEEAS online publication, "Untold Stories." ■



Untitled drawing by Breanna (Oak Creek YCF).

Safety first: Employee teaches readiness

By Vikki Whitmore
Clackamas County field supervisor

John Cummings (right) is the safety coordinator for the Clackamas Field office and is on the statewide safety committee for OYA. John provides safety training at our monthly unit meeting.

John's training for December was winter driving. He provided the unit with an example of each inclement weather item that is located in each field office vehicle. These include blankets, gloves, roadside hazard cones, a safety vest, and anti-slip traction aids for shoes.

He also provided a demonstration of how to put on chains for our state vehicles. He demonstrated administering the chains for the two types of vehicles we have in our office. After the demonstration he gave employees the opportunity to practice putting on and taking off the chains.

John is a valuable member of our unit. He takes a proactive, hands-on approach to safety and we all appreciate his commitment to our team. ■



Youth learn lessons on race and diversity



Left to right: Multicultural Services Coordinator Roderick Edwards, Brian, Stephen, Sang, Deputy Director Joe O'Leary, OMS Director Maria Chavez-Haroldson, and Robert observed an Oregon State Bar webcast on race and diversity.

Several youth at MacLaren YCF recently watched a webcast presentation by the Oregon State Bar on race relations in the United States. Deputy Director Joe O'Leary, an attorney, observed the presentation at MacLaren as a requirement of his bar membership and invited youth to watch, too. The Dec. 31 webcast was produced in the bar's headquarters in Tigard and featured a documentary film tracing the American racial experience from colonial times to the Civil Rights era. A panel discussion followed among the attorneys participating in the webcast. OMS Director Maria Chavez-Haroldson also attended the presentation. Afterward, she and O'Leary led an informal question-and-answer session on racial issues with the youth. ■

Advocacy organization visits Oak Creek

Representatives from the non-profit advocacy group Liberty in North Korea (LINK) visited Oak Creek YCF Nov. 25 to discuss the challenges facing that country. They showed a film to youth in the facility's gym and answered questions.



Brian Tassey, Allison Zhou and J.J. Kim are LINK interns known as “nomads” who travel

(Left to right): Brian Tassey, Allison Zhou, teacher Scott Ryan, and J.J. Kim.

around North America educating people about the advocacy group's mission. “It was inspiring,” said youth McKayla after the presentation. “I was informed about a lot of things I didn't know.”

LINK was invited to Oak Creek by Three Lakes High School. ■

Youth expresses appreciation through art

Youth Rafael at MacLaren YCF created the picture below to thank the Portland Timbers soccer team for its support of the facility's youth. Timbers players make occasional guest appearances at MacLaren.

“I was utterly astonished when I visited Rafael and was expecting just a thank you card, and he went to another room and brought out and showed us this magnificent art work,” said Lily E. Cáceres, statewide Latina co-



ordinator. “When I took it to the Timbers, they were totally moved. Rafael is a great artist and he learned everything, from scratch, at MacLaren.”

The picture hangs in the team's headquarters in Portland. ■

Youth serve vets as part of restorative justice

Oak Creek YCF youth served meals at a Veterans Day banquet held by American Legion Post 10 in Albany.

The Nov. 10 event helped Samantha, Sophia, Hailey and several other youth fulfill their restorative justice requirements.



(Left to right): Samantha, Sophia, and Hailey demonstrate their barista skills at the Veterans Day banquet.

The girls are members of the facility's Young Women in Transition program.

About 260 people, including Oregon's U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, attended the banquet. ■

Sportsmanship on display at tournament



Rogue Valley YCF took home the Sportsmanship Award from the annual holiday basketball tournament held at Hillcrest YCF Dec. 20-21.

Eight facilities fielded teams totaling 62 youth who were treated to a special meal of Hawaiian pork and rice at the end of the tournament.

The event was organized by Recreation Coordinator Rod Martin. ■

Rogue Valley GLC and coach Greg Geith (left) holds the Sportsmanship Award.



Three basketball standouts were honored at the tournament. From left: DeShawn (MacLaren YCF) was named Most Valuable Player; Marquaveon (Rogue Valley YCF) received the Defensive Award; and Shannon (MacLaren YCF) was recognized with the Hustle Award.

OYA researcher by day, soprano by night

OYA researcher Margaret Braun sang soprano in the Oregon Symphony's performance of Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem" Nov. 2-3. Braun has been singing since childhood and joined the Portland Symphonic Choir in 2007.

Braun's choir joined two other choirs, three soloists and the Oregon Symphony for the evening performances at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland. Britten, one of the leading composers of the 20th century, wrote the "War Requiem" for the 1962 consecration of England's Coventry Cathedral after the original structure was destroyed in World War II.

Braun participated in 17 rehearsals over three months prior to the November concerts. She had to remain on her feet for each 90-minute performance.

Braun was a researcher at the Oregon Department of Corrections before joining OYA in March. Her work includes research on behalf of the Youth Reformation System. She holds a doctorate in Applied Social Psychology from Portland State University. ■



Margaret Braun before the concert.

Oak Creek girls aid endangered butterflies

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The plants will also provide food for captive butterfly larvae at the Oregon Zoo in Portland.

During a break in teaching the girls how to nurture the seeds, Moore explained the project's three key benefits:

- First, participating in growing and caring for plants has therapeutic value for the youth, resulting in a safer facility and a greater sense of well-being.
- Second, producing plants for habitat restoration offers youth the opportunity to make restorative justice contributions to society.
- Third, the girls learn valuable work skills, such as greenhouse techniques, as well as the importance of habitat conservation.

"I really learned a lot about how butterflies are endangered," said Ariana. "I'm glad we could do something to help them."

Moore said similar sustainability work with prison inmates in Washington state has helped them appreciate the challenges facing the environment.

"This project will be successful if we can stabilize or increase populations of rare butterflies," said Moore. "It will also be successful if we help the girls understand and appreciate the value of butterflies and teach them about change and hope."

IAE's butterfly recovery program is funded by a grant from Toyota TogetherGreen, a joint initiative of the Audubon Society and Toyota that supports conservation projects nationwide. IAE, in turn, is a partner in the Oregon Sustainability in Prisons Project, which brings together the Oregon Zoo, Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC), OYA and others. IAE is also teaching female inmates at DOC's Coffee Creek Correctional Facility about butterfly recovery.

To learn more about the Institute for Applied Ecology, visit www.appliedeco.org. For more about Toyota TogetherGreen, visit www.togethergreen.org. ■

Jody: From behind bars to whiter walls

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I don't want to go back for a third time. All of me wants to go home with my mom. I close my eyes and try to imagine that this moment is a dream. Unreal.

My name is called for court. My mind goes blank. Total blankness.

The next thing I remember is shackles around my ankles and handcuffs on my wrists as I am put into the back of a transport van. The sharp metal of the handcuffs dig into my wrists. The van seats have no padding. I feel the cold metal of the solid steel against my skin.

There is a long drive ahead of me. I know I have at least two hours to think about and ponder what I could have done differently. But the bars on the windows that frame the world going by remind me to not even think about getting out.

Pulling into Oak Creek YCF, my stomach starts to churn; knots are forming in my gut. Tears begin to fall from my eyes. I know that I have put myself in this position. I made the choice to relapse on methamphetamines, to run from my program, to falsify my urine analysis test. Those were my choices and I am the only one to blame.

I am escorted to the intake hall where I am dehumanized and forced to do a strip search. I feel a stranger's eyes staring at my body and a shiver runs through me – a feeling I will never forget. I have lost all my rights as a person.

The OYA staffer proceeds to hand me the state-issued clothes that I will wear for my stay: thin-as-paper navy blue sweats, a maroon t-shirt that reeks of body odor and black rubber slippers with no support. After I am handed my clothes, I am escorted to the Cedar Unit.

This is my third time here so I am familiar with the routine. Stepping in the unit I look around and realize nothing has changed. The once white walls are still tinged with dirt and grime.

The grimy walls remind me of my past; so much hurt and pain. They are like the person I had become, torn and broken. At one time, I had a clean slate, no marks or damages. But over time, I have been through so much, my walls were now dirty. Now, I am looking for a way to

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Oak Creek youth display artistic talent

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"Raw, authentic, moving, unconditional, honest and beautiful," wrote one member of the public who saw the exhibit at the Lunaria Gallery in Silverton. "Thank you for sharing such intimate and personal thoughts."

"Thank you for sharing your images and poetry with us," wrote another. "Your show is both thoughtful and provocative."

The exhibit was part of the art+poetry program, aimed at drawing out the talents of at-risk youth in correctional facilities, drug and alcohol programs, and elsewhere. The art+poetry program was sponsored by The Arts Center of Corvallis, which has been working with Oak Creek youth for several years.

"These are beautiful and powerful images and words that tell us about these young women who are struggling to change their lives," said Cheryl French, coordinator of the Arts Center's At-Risk Youth Art Education Program.

The program provides art education during school breaks, as well as more intense small group programs, such as art+poetry, during school sessions.

The girls' art was first exhibited at the Albany main library last April. ■

INSIDE OYA

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MacLaren youth and staff observe Kwanzaa

MacLaren staff and youth observed Kwanzaa Dec. 27 with a visit from several cultural diversity advocates.

Antoine Stoudemire, known as "Madgesdiq," discussed the significance of Kwanzaa with youth. He and other Portland-based advocates performed songs and encouraged youth to retain their cultural identities while committed to OYA.



Antoine Stoudemire discusses Kwanzaa with MacLaren youth.

Kwanzaa is a celebration of African-American and Pan-African culture observed in the United States and other countries from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1. The Kwanzaa celebration was organized by the Office of Minority Services. ■

Jody: From behind bars to whiter walls

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clean them. I don't want them to be sparkling white and perfect, just cleaner than they were.

Looking back at Oak Creek, I was determined to use my time there to change positively. I went to the weekly church service, attending the Narcotics Anonymous meetings that were offered, and I wrote in my journal. I planned my future. You name it, I tried it. In my mind, the more I focused on keeping busy, the easier it would be to succeed on the outside.

I wanted to use the time there, surrounded by those dingy walls, to better myself. Coming back to Oak Creek, where many of the detained girls knew who I was and what I had done, was hard. I knew that they would be expecting the old me to come into the facility and be the same person.

But I had a change of heart. My mentality had changed. Seeing the way my mom looked at me in court, her expression filled with shame and disappointment, made me want to change. That look alone gave me the motivation and courage to change.

I was there 7 months, got the help I needed, and was released. Coming out of Oak Creek and going home has been a hard transition. However, this time I have the motivation and the desire to do something with my life. I came out a strong young woman who wants to succeed and accomplish big things with whiter walls.

On June 26, 2013, when I was released through open doors, into fresh air, I got into a car without bars on the windows. My mom welcomed me with loving arms. Embracing me and holding me close, she said these words, "I am so proud of you." I had never heard those words from her before, which gave them an even bigger meaning to me.

As we were driving down the highway, I realized that Oak Creek had helped me transform, and for that, it would always have special meaning to me. The building and the staff members who helped encourage me would always remind me of why I want to work hard and why I want to become a better person that will always live without bars in my life. ■