

SEPTEMBER
2012

INSIDE OYA

P2
Youth reformation

P3
Healthy youth

P4
Fire training

P5
Fair ribbons
Locks of Love

P6
Teamwork praised

P7
Internships
Oak Creek contest

P8
Powwows

P9
Luau
Youth government

P10
Mental health survey

P11
Contest winners
Network upgrades

P12
Volleyball in the mud

P13
Healthy youth, *cont.*

P14
Trauma-informed care

Youth finds, returns lost 1907 engraved ring

It was anything but a typical day for the Camp Florence work crew. And for Victor, a Camp Florence youth, the experience amounted to a definition of integrity.

The crew was cleaning up a homeowner's yard when Victor, raking the lawn, noticed something gleaming in the sunlight. "I looked down, picked it up, cleaned off the dirt and saw it was a ring," he said.

That, said Camp Director Clint McClellan, is when Victor "made his first good decision – he walked over to supervisor Darth Watkins and said, 'I found this ring.'" The couple who own the home – and the ring – were ecstatic, immediately offering a \$1,000 reward. They said they had planned to run an ad in *The Siuslaw News* inviting people with metal detectors to try to find the ring and collect the money.

But Victor declined it. "I didn't do it because there was a reward, I just knew I found a ring and I returned it," he said. "I didn't expect anything back, I thought it was the right thing to do."

The gold band was engraved in Dutch in 1907 and had belonged to the husband's father who wore it until his death in 1943.

He had worn it continuously until, after recently losing weight, he lost it while outside doing yard work.

McClellan ultimately accepted \$100 that will be available to Victor when he is paroled, expected to be Feb. 1. Victor also received an extravagantly appreciative letter from the couple beginning with the salutation, "Dearest Victor, our new BFF!"

"What you did today showed us what an honest, kind, humble human being you are," they wrote.



From left to right: Joseph Houben, Lyn Houben, youth Victor, and GLC Darth Watkins.

Continued on page 4

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

35 YEARS

Jill Petersen
Information Services

30 YEARS

Marion Knight
Marion PPO

25 YEARS

Richard Hayden
Lincoln PPO

Ron Hooper
MacLaren YCF

Chris Metcalf
MacLaren YCF

Ronald Moschkau
Union PPO

Brian Vorderlandwehr
Hillcrest YCF

Helping our staff support youth reformation



Fariborz Pakseresht

Last month I shared information with you about what it means to have an effective and efficient Youth Reformation System. I defined YRS as providing each youth with the right treatment in the right location

for the right amount of time. There is one more essential 'right' to ensure we achieve our mission of reforming youth, and that is matching youth with the right staff.

When our employees are well-trained and supported by consistent and appropriate policies and procedures, both our youth and our staff are more successful and safer. So how do we help match youth and staff in a manner that creates better outcomes for everyone involved?

It begins with identifying the types of youth entering our system and the kinds of qualities, skills, and training needed to productively work with those youth. We then encourage our employees to gain the skills and experience they need, provide training to existing staff, seek job applicants with these desired skills, and require our contracted community-based residential providers to meet these same standards.

An excellent example of matching youth needs with the right staff is our push to increase the number of employees who are certified alcohol and drug counselors (CADCs).

We know that more than two-thirds of the youth who enter OYA's custody have personal and/or family histories of alcohol and drug abuse. To help our youth address and overcome those addictive behaviors, we

support employees who are interested in pursuing CADC designations. This training not only benefits youth, it also gives our staff stronger professional credentials

Another example is the Zeta Unit at Hillcrest YCF. When we opened Zeta, we sought staff who were interested in and skilled at working with the specific population served there – youth with significant mental health and aggression issues. As needed, we continue to provide staff with ongoing advice and counsel to help improve their ability to work with this specific population of youth.

We also are providing staff with ongoing coaching to help them provide trauma-informed care and work with youth who exhibit suicidal and non-suicidal self-injurious behaviors. In addition, we continue to strengthen our new employee orientation training and the ongoing professional refresher courses we offer staff. When we provide better staff training and support, we not only help improve treatment for youth, we keep youth and staff safer.

These efforts will help us achieve a key goal of YRS – placing youth with the right staff, employees who specialize in the needs of the specific youth they serve. Once fully implemented, we expect this approach to improve outcomes for youth, and to result in safer staff, safer communities, and fewer new victims.

I'll continue to share more with you about YRS as we move forward. In the meantime, I thank you for your continued commitment to the youth we serve.

Sincerely,

Fariborz Pakseresht
Director

Making healthy habits a lifetime commitment

OYA is introducing a comprehensive health and fitness program that Medical Director Dr. Marcia Adams believes will help youth establish a lifetime of healthy habits.

The Healthy Youth Initiative is being driven by a committee recommended last December by former OYA Director Colette S. Peters and which continues to be enthusiastically embraced by Director Fariborz Pakseresht. The committee, led by Dr. Adams, is composed of Food Services Operations Manager Elaine Adams, GLC Corey Barton, Organizational Development Manager Perrin Damon, Education Administrator Frank Martin, and Recreation Coordinator Roderick Martin.

“Our goal is to have youth focus on healthy eating and exercise not only in the facilities but also after they return to the community,” Dr. Adams said. “Not only will youth be healthier, but they also will be more likely to engage during education and treatment.”

Promoting healthy habits begins at intake. The clinical intake assessment includes checking each youth’s weight and body mass index (BMI). Physicians and nurses encourage youth who are overweight or obese to eat better, exercise, and lose weight. Youth who come in at a healthy weight are encouraged to maintain that weight,” Dr. Adams said.

To support those efforts, the Healthy Youth Initiative committee is addressing several areas – healthier meal and canteen offerings, more accessible exercise equipment, youth growing vegetables on facility campuses, and classes teaching youth to cook more healthfully. Posters and other materials promoting the effort – sporting the slogan “Healthy Habits: A Lifetime Commitment,” are being made available for each living unit.

Among the changes being introduced are the following.

Food service: Due to the work of Elaine Adams in Food Services Operations, youth are eating more appropriate numbers of daily calories, fewer fried foods, and more grains. Unhealthy options, like foods containing high-fructose corn syrup and trans fats, are being removed. MacLaren YCF has replaced its canteen with healthier food in its new

Who wants to eat his veggies?

“Well, me!”

Busy lives can benefit from food that’s nutritious yet easy to eat on-the-go, like fresh fruits and vegetables. They are a natural source of energy.

And, they taste good!



This is one of several posters being distributed throughout OYA’s close-custody facilities to promote healthy lifestyle choices by youth.

Continued on page 13

Service awards,
cont.

20 YEARS

Lila Harris

Business Services

Frank Martin

Facility Services

Willard Thompson

Hillcrest YCF

15 YEARS

Dawn Brandon

Hillcrest YCF

James Paredes

MacLaren YCF

10 YEARS

Caleb Bronemann

MacLaren YCF

Marilyn Curths

MacLaren YCF

Michael Jordan

MacLaren YCF

SEPTEMBER 2012

PAGE 4

RiverBend youth putting fire training to work

RiverBend YTF youth who've participated in the facility's fire academy found out this summer that it wasn't just an academic exercise. They were called out to back up professional fire crews at blazes in Cove and Elgin.

Superintendent Brian Blisard said he got a Sunday-evening call with an Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) request that a fire crew be ready Monday morning at 6. The crew started working on a fire in Cove, then were transferred to a larger fire west of Elgin, returning to RiverBend about 10 p.m. Then they were called out again the next morning.

The Elgin fire was big enough to warrant the attention of ODF and six city and rural fire crews as well as a story in *The Observer*, La Grande's newspaper.

RiverBend's 10-member crew dug trenches, filled bladder bags for other fire companies,



performed grid checks looking for hot spots, and did related work, Blisard said. "The young men did a great job and received great evaluations from the Oregon Department of Forestry," said Brett Dunten, an Intermountain ESD employee who teaches at RiverBend High School and manages the RiverBend Fire Academy (*Inside OYA*, January 2012).

Youth were supervised by Dunten

and GLC Giles Darrow. "Both youth and staff represented the program with extreme respect, integrity and professionalism," Blisard said. "It was an opportunity to show the partner agencies in the community what they can do using the highly employable skills they learn here at RiverBend." ■



Ring returned to family

Continued from page 1

McClellan said Victor has a reputation as "kind of a big talker, always joking around, acting like a big wheel." But, he said, "When this was going on he was a different person. It was a glimpse of what he's really made of." ■

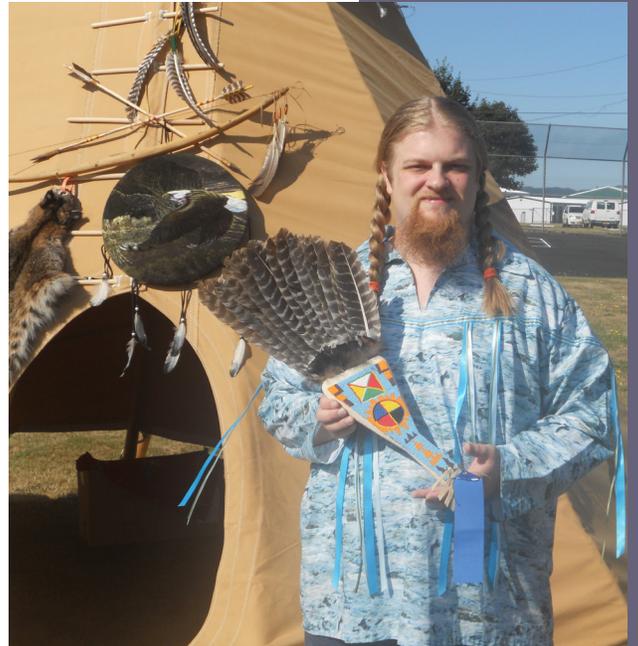
Tillamook YCF youth collect Fair ribbons

Thousands of Oregonians enter their prized creations in county fairs every summer, and Tillamook YCF youth are adding to those numbers.

For a second consecutive year, Tillamook YCF youth entered their work – this year in the poetry, photography, woodworking, and arts and crafts categories – and again they won ribbons. Twelve youth entered (compared with three last year). Six won ribbons: One received first- and third-place ribbons, and the others received second- and third-place ribbons.

The first-place winner, Lucas, had crafted a Native American fan with a beaded handle; he also received third place for a dream catcher. Winners received \$5 for first, \$3 for second and \$2 for third from the Fair. One Tillamook YCF youth also received a special award that included \$25 for his third-place poem in poetry's adult category.

"It builds self-esteem to have their work recognized," said Superintendent Tracie Hightower. "It's a county competition where their work is put up against everyone in the county." ■



Lucas received two awards for his Tillamook County Fair entries.

Youth cuts, donates hair 'to help someone'

Tillamook YCF youth Victor got clipped – for a good cause. While taking online college classes he learned about Locks of Love, which provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children experiencing long-term medical hair loss.

"He said it was time to cut his hair and he wanted to help someone," said Superintendent Tracie Hightower. The facility's contract barber cut his hair Sept. 8, and the hair was mailed to the Florida-based nonprofit. Hightower said



Victor, before and after he donated a length of hair to Locks of Love.



WHAT IS LOCKS OF LOVE?

Locks of Love is a public non-profit organization that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children in the United States and Canada under age 21 suffering from long-term medical hair loss from any diagnosis. Most of the children helped by Locks of Love have lost their hair due to a medical condition called alopecia areata, which has no known cause or cure. The hairpieces help restore their self-esteem and their confidence, enabling them to face the world and their peers.

Victor obtained all of Locks of Love's hair-donation specifications, including that hair must be at least 10 inches in length.

The organization says six to 10 donations are needed to make each hair-piece, valued at \$3,500 to \$6,000. ■

5 YEARS

Eric Hall
Douglas PPO

Linda Snow
Hillcrest YCF

Julie Summers
Business Services

Robert Sweitzer
Hillcrest YCF

Teamwork prompts grateful parent's praise

When an incarcerated youth is injured, it's reassuring when everyone knows what to do and responds quickly and appropriately. It's a welcome bonus when the youth's parent follows up with a note of appreciation, as well.

That's what happened recently at North Coast YCF: Playing basketball during recreation, a youth fractured his tibia and fibula when he came down from a rebound. The x-ray showed a half-inch gap between the bones.

Here's some of how the North Coast staff responded:

- Seeing the incident unfold from the control room, GLC KC Heckenberg called 911, explained the situation and prepared the paramedics with what they would need to know.
- Onsite conducting medication-administration training, staff RN April Johnson assisted the youth. "She was at her professional finest, making sure the youth didn't go into shock, talking him through it and nurturing him through a very painful and difficult situation," said Treatment Manager Jami Ayers.
- Waiting for the ambulance to arrive, GLC David Herrera stabilized the youth's leg while sitting with him on the gymnasium floor (so long, Ayers said, that his own leg went to sleep).
- GLC Rhonda Cabalona guided emergency responders through the right sallyport doors.
- Herrera accompanied the youth in the ambulance until the facility scheduled hospital watch duties. GLC Stephen Dyer was the first staff member to respond for hospital-watch duty.
- YCUC Doug Durham kept the youth's mother updated on her son's medical condition as well as ensuring North Coast staff knew when family were scheduled to visit.
- After the youth returned to the facility, Johnson provided continuing medical attention to ensure he didn't develop deep vein thrombosis, or DVT, a blood clot in a deep vein.

Ayers said staff members accepted shifts for round-the-clock observations, including Treatment Manager James Sapper, who took a 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. shift while family members were visiting. Superintendent Dan Berger, Ayers and others on North Coast's leadership team visited the youth and staff members at the hospital.

"I am sitting here a little teary eyed about the events that happened this past week," the youth's mother wrote in an e-mail. "Words can't express how much I appreciate everything your facility did to act quickly when (my son) hurt his leg. From staff keeping him calm after the injury, to getting him to the hospital for care, everyone did a great job. I'm sure that you all know how much (he) means to me and how much it breaks my heart to not be in control of his direct well being."

She said it was difficult not to be the one making the decisions. "I understand it, I get it, but it doesn't make it any easier for me. The staff that provided 24 hour care was very nice and pleasant. Also, the personal visit from Ms. Johnson and Mr. Berger was very much appreciated.... Thank you from the bottom of my heart!" ■

Internships put youth on career paths

Camp Florence YTF has developed unpaid community internships for two youth who say the opportunities align with their career objectives.

Youth David earned his state barbering license in 2010 after taking the vocational course at Hillcrest YCF. Camp Florence GLC Brandon Weisenbach mentioned this while he was getting his hair cut at Ninth Street Clippers, and the owner suggested David drop by.

After a conversation with the youth, she invited him back. "She showed me how the business is run, how they do payroll, and what she had to do to open the shop," David said. He also gets tips about barbering techniques. And he learned something



Shawn learns about bicycle maintenance from Sara Smith.

about how the shop pays its taxes. He's been invited to cut hair, Camp Director Clint McClellan said, although supervisory requirements may prevent that.

Youth Shawn, meanwhile, is doing an internship three days a week at Bicycles 101 in Florence. McClellan said they knew Shawn was interested in bicycles, so Vocational Coordinator Marc Barnum took him to the shop and introduced him. Shawn said he had experience changing bicycle tires and chains, and now is learning about elements such as brakes, spokes, and wheel alignment.

When he leaves Camp Florence, Shawn said, he will join the Sponsors program in Eugene ("a huge bicycle community") and would like to get a job at a bike shop there: "It would be fun, and I will have the skills to show I can do this." ■

Oak Creek 'loser' drops weight, earns cash

Borrowing from the long-running NBC reality show, Oak Creek YCF conducted its own six-week "biggest loser" competition during the summer.

The winner – she isn't seeking publicity – lost 13 percent of her body weight. "We started with 25 contestants," said the facility's Alice True. "Some dropped out right away and some more dropped out along the way." But six persevered and showed up for the final weigh-in.

GLC John Jones came up with the idea for the contest.

Each participant paid a \$10 fee, which was divided evenly between the winner and the Governor's State Employees Food Drive. ■



Shop owner Helene Combest demonstrates on Robert Allen, one of the shop's barbers, as David watches.

Rogue Valley youth, families enjoy powwow

A majority of Rogue Valley YCF youth enjoyed the facility's largest pow-wow yet in early September, an event that merited page one coverage in the local newspaper.

Two Native American youth participated in the grass dance, in which movements mimic grass flowing on the prairie. Three youth assisted Native American elders in preparing fry bread, Indian tacos and other food.

"The youth enjoy this annual event. It strengthens ties of Native American youth to their culture, and it teaches all our youth about a culture that is significant to Oregon," said Superintendent Ken Jerin.

The approximately 40 volunteers from the community were arranged by long-time Native American volunteer Nick Hall (*Inside OYA*, January 2012). ■



Tillamook youth participate in 2nd powwow

OYA's Tillamook facilities welcomed approximately 100 volunteers, family members and other visitors in late August for their second annual Native American pow-wow.

"They were all smiles all day," Tillamook YCF Superintendent Tracie Hightower said of the youth. Most TYCF youth and two-thirds of Camp Tillamook youth participated in the five-hour event, which featured drummers from NARA, dancers, and an honor guard.

Besides setting up for the event, youth made gifts, participated in the drumming and dancing, and assisted with food preparation. Food included wild Coho salmon, Indian tacos on fry bread, salads, and dessert.

Native American youth not only got to participate in a cultural event, Hightower said, but also had the pleasure of spending time with families who visited. ■



Luaus deliver Asian-Pacific Islander culture

Hillcrest and MacLaren YCF youth got a taste of Asian-Pacific Islander culture during OMS-organized luaus at the two facilities in August. The “taste” came in the form of pit-roasted pigs, which included youth learning about the traditional roasting method, as well as teriyaki chicken, rice, and macaroni salad.

Assisted by facility staff, the luaus were organized by Minority Youth Transition Specialist Funaki Letisi, Hillcrest Multicultural and Volunteer Services Coordinator Griselda Solano; MacLaren Native American Services Coordinator Steve Llanes; and the OYA Training Academy’s Alan Walker.

Besides enjoying meat from the 200-pound pigs, youth also were treated to Hawaiian dancing by volunteers from Milwaukie and other activities introducing them to Asian-Pacific Islander culture. ■



GLC Alma Toelupe leads Hillcrest youth in a haka dance.

Hillcrest youth weigh mock government idea

Oregon’s most recent Youth in Government governor introduced 10 Hillcrest youth to an intriguing idea – participation in the YMCA’s Youth in Government program.

“The whole point of the program is to provide an experience of what happens in the Legislature and make it accessible to people our age,” Saurabh Mahajan told a youth forum at the facility in late August. Mahajan, a 2012 graduate of Salem’s Sprague High School, was a Youth in Government participant for four years.

He fielded questions from youth, told how the program works and saw some raised hands when Superintendent Troy Gregg asked whether youth would be interested in learning more. Mahajan was invited to speak to Hillcrest youth by Director Fariborz Pakeresht after he heard Mahajan’s presentation to the board of the Family YMCA of Marion and Polk Counties about his participation in the national conference.

Mahajan asked youth about their primary concerns. Among the responses: “I’m focused on health care because I have kids.” “I’m a student, so education funding would be a big thing.” Another youth expressed interest in how a youth growing up in poverty, or kicked out of the home, can make money. Asked his priority, Mahajan – he’s now a Boston University student – cited education funding: “It’s like taking out a mortgage.”

He said any school can form a Youth in Government delegation, that Oregon’s youth legislature passes its ideas on to selected state legislators, and that Oregon’s program is “one of the few in the country that gets to use the State Capitol.” Pakeresht noted Hillcrest youths’ connection to the local YMCA through their contribution to the Salem Peace Mosaic, and said they have the advantage of time to devote to learning.

Mahajan encouraged Hillcrest youth to explore Youth in Government participation. “I think our program would benefit from your involvement,” he said. ■

DEPARTURES

Joyce Bechtold
Oak Creek YCF

Karen Cooper
Business Services

Dawn Horn
Oak Creek YCF

John Malone
MacLaren YCF

ARRIVALS

Rebecca Avila
Business Services

Reymundo Benavidez
Rogue Valley YCF

Sarah Bernard
Business Services

Dennis Ford
Rogue Valley YCF

Mark Hunt
Director's Office

Tera Michalson
Rogue Valley YCF

Susanna Ramus
Business Services

James Wilson
Rogue Valley YCF

Survey results deliver 'snapshot' of youth

Results of OYA's newly tabulated Mental Health Gap Survey provide a glimpse of the histories and mental health status of youth in OYA's care and custody, both in facilities and in community supervision.

Among the biennial survey's findings about youth:

- 29 percent are taking psychotropic medications for mental health.
- 17 percent have a documented history of sexual abuse, 23 percent have a documented history of physical abuse, and 25 percent have a documented history of emotional abuse.
- 60 percent have abused or been dependent on drugs, alcohol or both (30 percent with an Axis I diagnosis of substance abuse/dependence). Among youth who abused or were dependent on drugs, marijuana was the most popular drug of choice; alcohol was second. Fifteen percent reported methamphetamine was their drug of choice.
- 23 percent of youths' biological parents have psychiatric histories, and 59 percent of parents have histories of drug or alcohol abuse, or both.
- One in eight males in OYA facilities has a documented history of head injury, which may trigger persistent behavioral, emotional, or cognitive problems.
- Nearly all females and 57 percent of males in OYA facilities have had an Axis I diagnosis in the past 12 months.
- 7 percent of youth have made one or more suicide attempts in the past three years.

Rates of suicide, psychotropic medications, substance abuse/dependence and Axis I mood disorders were consistently higher for youth in facilities than for youth in community supervision. The survey found females had higher rates of suicide attempts, psychotropic-medication use, abuse victimization histories, and substance abuse. However, Dr. Whitney Vail, OYA's Treatment Services Director, noted the data may be skewed by the relatively few numbers of girls and young women in the survey.

Other survey findings:

- More than 60 percent of all OYA-supervised youth were age 17 or younger. In OYA facilities, 64 percent of youth are age 18 or older.
- 14 percent of youth in OYA's care and custody are themselves parents.
- A majority of youth under OYA supervision were attending school full time, with attendance rates somewhat higher in facilities than in the community.
- More than half of males in OYA facilities were engaged in vocational training.
- A majority of youth under OYA supervision were not employed.

The survey has been conducted biennially since 2000 to provide a "snapshot in time" of the needs of youth in OYA's care and custody. It helps the agency to give legislators, opinion leaders, and the general public a better understanding of OYA's work and the needs of the youth it serves.

The full survey is posted at http://cms.oregon.gov/oia/docs/2012_mentalhealthgap.pdf on the OYA Web site. ■

Youth win Florence feats-of-strength awards

For four Camp Florence youth, working out several evenings a week at the local fitness center led to participating in – and winning – a bigger community competition.

The youth work out regularly at Vic's Powerhouse in Florence. And when the gym's owner suggested they compete in the annual "feats of strength" strong man competition, they were game. Camp Director Clint McClellan said the gym owner paid their entry fees for the event, for which the youth were scheduled to help with set-up and clean-up.

Two of the youth entered in one amateur weight-lifting division, two in the other. The result: Among them, their feats of strength netted first and second places in both divisions.

Among the events, McClellan said, were a truck pull, a tractor tire flip, and lifting a 185-pound log (with handles) over their heads. "One youth lifted it 15 times over his head," McClellan said.

The annual event is co-sponsored by Vic's Powerhouse, Three Rivers Casino, and several other local businesses.

"It's an example of us trying to normalize life for these guys and get them into the community and expose them to different opportunities," McClellan said. "These kids are taking care of themselves, being healthy, and really gaining a lot of confidence in mind, body, and spirit." ■



From left to right: Ryan, Andrew, Josh and Loren display the awards they won at a community strong man competition.

Data users will notice OYA network upgrades

OYA has undertaken network upgrades that will noticeably improve data transmission as part of an Oregon Health Network (OHN) project underwritten by a federal grant.

Users at affected sites will see an improvement in accessing JJIS and the Internet, and in using video-conferencing capabilities. Bandwidth upgrades for the majority of affected sites should be completed by the end of September.

The federal grant pays the cost of the installation plus a recurring monthly subsidy that will result in a savings to OYA of \$954,901 between May 2012 and May 2014, said Kyriacos Kitsis, OYA's Chief Information Officer.

Continued on page 14

Muddy fun raises cash for local food bank



You might think playing volleyball in the mud sounds unappealing, but Superintendent Brian Blisard would disagree. "I haven't had that much fun in a long time," he said after RiverBend YTF's participation in the fundraising "Muddy for a Mission" tournament.

Attribute the fun to a day of playing volleyball in challenging conditions with community friends and acquaintances. And winning that trophy probably didn't hurt.

The RiverBend team was invited by Carmen Gentry of Community Connection, which manages the local food bank where RiverBend youth regularly volunteer. River-



Bend's RB Sharks was one of 13 Union County teams competing on three volleyball fields set up on the Elgin Stampede Grounds, where Blisard said topsoil was brought in and hosed down by the fire department.

"There was about 6-8 inches of mud, and some really sinky spots about a foot deep," Blisard said. "Getting off the ground was a task, indeed." Round-robin play in the "Muddy for a Mission" tournament began at 8 a.m. and continued until about 6:30 p.m.

Undefeated in its first five games, the RB Sharks made the championship bracket and took home fourth-place honors. Playing on the team were Blisard; Treatment Manager Bret Blanca; nurse Matt Grove; OSII Donnelle Clipfell; GLC Dino May and his wife, Amanda; RiverBend High School Program Manager Erin Creech; and GLC Giles Darrow and his wife, Rachel, and sister, Delia.

The \$250 entry fees and other proceeds went to food banks in Union, Wallowa, and Baker counties, Blisard said. ■

Healthy youth initiative

Continued from page 3

Silhouette café, and Hillcrest YCF also has made strides on healthful canteen options. The committee also would like to see healthier snack options in the vending machines such as granola bars instead of candy bars.

Exercise: Under the guidance of Rod Martin, a fitness company developed an exercise program specifically for OYA youth. This program can be used on the living units as well as in the gym. The Family YMCA of Marion and Polk Counties is developing an exercise curriculum for OYA's use. Martin also has secured donations of exercise equipment for OYA youth, which is being distributed to facilities around the state.

With the help of Corey Barton, the committee is reviewing time and staffing challenges that sometimes prevent youth from engaging in daily exercise. Recreation tracking has been added in JJIS.

"If we just fill youths' days with activities to get them moving," Dr. Adams said, "we can cut down on a lot of their unproductive energy" directed at assaults and altercations.

Horticulture: Due to the work of Frank Martin and others, most facilities have gardening programs, which Dr. Adams said also contribute to mitigating anxiety, stress, depression, and ADHD. More youth

have access to culinary classes that teach healthy cooking.

Besides strengthening current initiatives, the committee is considering encouraging competitive sports and exercise goals at the facilities; removing barriers to daily exercise by youth; promoting regular exercise by staff; delivering information about the initiative to parents; and putting scales on the living units so youth can regularly monitor their progress.

"We'll know we've achieved our goal when wherever we go we hear people talking about eating healthfully and exercising, our youth are excited about it, and our cafeterias, canteens and vending machines are offering healthy food options," said Dr. Adams. ■

Who wants to exercise an hour a day?

"Well, me!"

Exercise is the single best thing you can do for your brain. It will improve your mood, memory and learning.

And, it's fun!



Healthy Habits
...a lifetime commitment



Posters also have been developed for girls in OYA's close-custody facilities.

INSIDE OYA

Fariborz Pakseresht
Director

Joe O'Leary
Deputy Director

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

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

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

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



OYA emphasizing trauma-informed care

OYA's biennial Mental Health Gap survey (page 10) identifies youth who have been traumatized by abuse or neglect, but it doesn't measure trauma induced by the correctional system itself. OYA has begun to emphasize trauma-informed care to reduce the amount of trauma the system inadvertently introduces into the lives of the youth it serves.

"A high percentage of youth have a trauma history, especially females, and a lot of traditional correctional interventions exacerbate trauma and mental health symptoms related to trauma," said Dr. Whitney Vail, OYA's Treatment Services Director.

Not only are isolation and restraints significant factors in trauma, she said, but so can be loss of freedom, removal from family, limiting phone calls and visits, and staff voice tones in a crisis situation. "Those interventions can escalate a situation for youth with trauma responses," she said, "which results in more people getting hurt and the likelihood of recurrence."

She has delivered introductory Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) training to two-thirds of OYA's facilities and wants to take it to field staff, as well. She also would like to see it introduced at NEO trainings. She said the agency is looking at options for expanding training and consultation in trauma-informed care.

The state recognizes CPS as an evidence-based practice, and Dr. Vail said it would complement – not replace – existing intervention strategies. She said CPS has proved effective with individuals who are unresponsive to traditional behavioral interventions, and may be more effective with those who are responsive.

"There is promising data from youth correctional programs in other states demonstrating significant improvement in staff assaults, workers compensation claims for injuries, and use of restraints and isolation," she said. "It improves compliance, youth functioning, skill development, and safety for both staff and youth. And it decreases costs associated with all those things."

She said systemic factors that contribute to youth trauma "also negatively affect rapport with staff. Client rapport is the No. 1 determinant of treatment effectiveness." ■

Network upgrades

Continued from page 11

Faster data lines are being installed at 31 of OYA's 38 locations. Data speed will be increased from 1.5 megabit per second to 10 mbps at OYA field offices and 25 mbps at facilities. By being an OHN active member, OYA also will be able to implement an electronic medical record system at less cost.

For those sites that need faster data transmission but aren't part of the OHN project, Kitsis said, OYA is working with the State Data Center to perform upgrades.

"The upgraded Wide Area Network will provide adequate bandwidth to allow our business applications to run without delays," Kitsis said. "Every user will be able to access JJIS and OTIS quickly, hold uninterrupted video conferences, and have the network capacity to provide online educational programs to OYA youth."

OYA Technical Services began working with OHN on the project about a year ago. ■