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September 2013

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Family days show support for youth at OYA

Family Day events and other celebrations at OYA facilities offer youth the opportunity to engage with family and community members, and to know they are valued and supported. The events offer youth the opportunity to spend time with their loved ones in a festive atmosphere that includes games and refreshments.

Two recent Family Day events have taken place at Eastern Oregon YCF in Burns and at RiverBend YCF in La Grande. Combined, the two events drew approximately 150 family members and friends from throughout Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. Some family members traveled 10 or more hours to show their support for the youth in these facilities. ■

Chris DeLacruz (left) poses with son Zach at Eastern Oregon YCF. The two had not seen each other in 14 years until they were reunited at Family Day. DeLacruz, who lives in Sutherlin, decided to visit Zach after his mother died this year. DeLacruz vowed to return.

Josh (above) proudly shows off a tractor engine he refurbished. He's learning mechanical repair skills at Eastern Oregon YCF to help him find a job after he leaves OYA.

Youth Gary (center in the photo at left, in the gray shirt) is surrounded by family at RiverBend YCF.

This month'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 July 2013.

35 YEARS

James Cox
Hillcrest YCF

30 YEARS

Laura Hince
Business Services

20 YEARS

Richard McKague
Deschutes PPO

15 YEARS

Leann Barry
Rogue Valley YCF

Paula Bauer
Treatment Services

Henry Crawford
MacLaren YCF

Frank Dawson
Hillcrest YCF

Learning to solve problems collaboratively

Fariborz Pakseresht

The four key components of successful youth reformation are treatment, education, job-readiness, and community engagement. When we do well at helping youth succeed in these areas, we make a significant and positive difference in the lives of the youth, their families, and their communities. As you can see from many of the articles in this month's issue of Inside OYA, our focus is on ensuring youth have access to these four essential reformation tools.

Equally as important is how we interact with youth and in front of youth. Our jobs are not only to provide youth with the tools they need to live productive, crime-free lives, but also to model the behaviors we encourage in them. One such tool is Collaborative Problem Solving, or CPS.

Collaborative Problem Solving, as its name implies, encourages youth to learn how to be part of the solution. It's a process that teaches youth how to talk through problems and make informed decisions that will improve their pro-social behaviors both within our close-custody facilities and in the community.

Youth correctional programs in other states where this approach is being used are seeing significant reductions in problem behaviors. For example, at the Mountain View Youth Development Center in Maine, implementation of CPS decreased the rates of assault and use of force by more than 50 percent. Hours per year in seclusion dropped by 89 percent. And worker compensation claims due to injury also declined. Youth and staff are safer.

CPS is an evidence-based tool that can help staff and youth address problems proactively and during times of crisis. Using CPS builds rapport and skill development so that youth can learn to solve problems in socially appropriate and effective ways. It is a practice consistent with our philosophy of positive youth development.

CPS also has the benefit of being a tool we can use in all of the settings where our youth live. It provides continuity for our youth and gives them useful skills as they move through close-custody and community placements, and eventually into the greater community. CPS is an effective way to link treatment with behavior change, and to do so in a manner that respects youth, teaches them new skills, and improves everyone's safety.

We are in the process of developing a series of training programs to help staff begin to use CPS in daily interactions with youth. We already have introduced some components of CPS at MacLaren YCF, and will begin providing additional opportunities for learning about CPS at all of our facilities during the next several months.

One of OYA's five key goals, which appear on the OYA Performance Management System Fundamentals Map, is to have engaged, healthy and productive youth. Creating a culture that supports positive youth development through working collaboratively to solve problems will help us achieve that goal.

CPS also will lead to better outcomes for youth, and safer staff and youth. All of us will benefit by using this tool.

Sincerely,

Fariborz Pakseresht
Director

Bike recycling program reaches 50

Aaron Ryals works at Santiam Bicycle in Salem. Born and raised there, he has been riding bikes since he was a kid and repairing them for the past 10 years. In June 2012, he and Superintendent Troy Gregg started a bicycle recycling program for youth at Hillcrest YCF.

Ryals and a friend who also is a bike enthusiast, Cory Heintz, take bicycles that have been discarded or donated and teach the kids at Hillcrest to repair them using donated tools and parts. Ryals and Heintz are two members of Hillcrest's volunteer corps who contribute time and talent at the facility.

"I love feeling like a kid, and I love giving back to the community," said Ryals of his work at Hillcrest. He calls bicycles "the greatest mass transportation in the world."

Ryals and Heintz work out of a vacant wing at Hillcrest, where the bikes are stored and repaired, and they also maintain a workshop full of donated tools and spare parts. This summer, about 100 bikes were in various stages of repair and disrepair, waiting to be refurbished. The Salem YMCA receives and reviews requests for donated bikes, and delivers them to recipients.

Ryals estimates a dozen youth have repaired 50 donated bikes since the program started in 2012. "The program teaches kids useful skills, which builds their confidence and self-esteem," he said. "Not just the actual mechanical work, it also teaches things like life skills, critical thinking, and troubleshooting."

Juan, a Hillcrest youth, repaired a bike he recently gave to his young niece in Hillsboro. He was very proud of his work. "It gave me a really good feeling that I can still do something for my family."

Gregg said the program is one of the ways his facility remains connected to the world outside the fence. "It's important for residents and taxpayers to know that we are part of this community and that we directly contribute to making it a better, safer place to live," he said. ■

Cory Heintz (right) instructs a youth on the finer points of bicycle repair.

A row of bicycles at Hillcrest await repair for new owners.

Aaron Ryals shows off a toolbox and workbench, complete with donated tools.

15 YEARS, cont.

Rodney Green
Hillcrest YCF

Robert Howes
Business Services

Chris Jacquard
Eastern Oregon YCF

Ernie Kohl
Eastern Oregon YCF

David Lavier
Hillcrest YCF

Peggy Robertson
Hillcrest YCF

10 YEARS

Sarah Caskey
Community Services

5 YEARS

Coraline Buffington
Klamath PPO

Anthony Dela Cruz
Oak Creek YCF

Jeffrey Hamor
Hillcrest YCF

Kerry Haverty
Business Services

Matthew McLin
Oak Creek YCF

Christy Van Do
Hillcrest YCF

Brandon Weisenbach
Camp Florence YTF

Angela Weitman
Oak Creek YCF

Shannon Wilhelm
MacLaren YCF

Volunteers honored for service to OYA youth

During National Volunteer Week earlier this year, OYA honored its many dedicated volunteers at facilities statewide with certificates, Coin awards, luncheons and other special events. Facilities singled out volunteers who went above and beyond in donating their time and talent to help youth and staff. Each facility named a volunteer of the year, identified below. Thank you, volunteers, for your dedication and selflessness. ■

Eastern Oregon YCF: Charmarie Bradach (left), treatment manager at Eastern Oregon, poses with Volunteer of the Year Cliff Asmussen.

Hillcrest YCF: Hillcrest Superintendent Troy Gregg (left) honored Dr. Larry Griggs as Volunteer of the Year.

Camp Florence YTF: Ina Castillo was named Camp Florence Volunteer of the Year.

North Coast YCF: Darrell Holthusen and Mark Kenny were honored as Volunteers of the Year at North Coast. (No photo available.)

MacLaren YCF: Ron Taylor was honored as Volunteer of the Year at MacLaren.

Tillamook YCF: Crisanne Roberts (left) is congratulated by Tillamook Superintendent Traci Hightower.

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Oak Creek YCF hosts pow-wow

Oak Creek YCF held a pow-wow this summer to celebrate Native American culture. More than 100 employees, youth, volunteers, and guests enjoyed dancing, music, food and exhibits. ■

Volunteers honored for service to OYA youth

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RiverBend YTF: Former RiverBend Superintendent Brian Blisard (left) presents Linda Elegant with Volunteer of the Year honors.

Rogue Valley YCF: Willis Whitefeather (left) displays his Coin award as Rogue Valley Superintendent Ken Jerin Looks on.

Camp Tillamook YTF: Bill Rickert (left) is congratulated by Camp Tillamook's Gary Westoby.

Oak Creek YCF: Victoria Wills (left) and Cheryl French were honored for their work with Oak Creek and The Arts Center in Corvallis.

DEPARTURES

Brian Blisard
RiverBend YTF

Sophia Heide
Information Services

Joseph Keller
Tillamook YCF

Michaelen Larson
Business Services

Terry McLaren
Camp Florence YTF

Charles Muilenburg
Eastern Oregon YCF

Michelle Osterman
Oak Creek YCF

Jim Sellers
Director's Office

ARRIVALS

Selena Bellas
MacLaren YCF

Terry Doane
Eastern Oregon YCF

Nichol Halbert
Rogue Valley YCF

Jennifer Hansen
Business Services

Broch Inghram
Rogue Valley YCF

Burnett Krauger
Director's Office

Where there's smoke, Rogue Valley prepares

Southwest Oregon was plagued by wildfires this summer, disrupting activities throughout the region, from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland to whitewater rafting on the Rogue River. Smoke from the fires covered the area and forced many indoors.

But Rogue Valley YCF, located in the middle of the action in Grants Pass, was ready for the fallout. Superintendent Ken Jerin and his staff made sure that plenty of protective masks were available if needed and that air conditioning filters were changed frequently. He was in constant communication with employees, passing along air-quality bulletins from Josephine County public health officials.

Smoke lingers over Rogue Valley YCF in this photo taken July 31.

The smoke affected air quality the most in late July and early August, with officials frequently encouraging residents to remain indoors or wear masks. Jerin instructed his staff to limit outdoor activities as long as the smoke threat persisted. But one staff member was obligated to venture into harm's way.

Rogue Valley GLC Tyler Gordon, a staff sergeant in the Oregon National Guard, was deployed July 30 to help keep civilian traffic and looters out of fire-affected and evacuated areas. An OYA employee since 2011, Tyler is one of 150 soldiers from a National Guard unit based in Grants Pass activated for fire-fighting duty. A veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2009-10, Tyler expects to remain on fire-fighting duty until mid-September. He said he's looking forward to returning to his work at OYA.

Rogue Valley GLC Tyler Gordon is on fire-fighting duty in Southern Oregon.

"I really appreciate the support from Rogue Valley," he said. "The mission to support the wildfires and local residents could not have happened without support from employers. I witnessed a multitude of employers backing the soldiers assigned to me, alleviating a lot of stress in their lives."

In mid-August, Jerin reported: "The air is clearing up and we can see some blue sky. The fires are being contained. The staff at the facility have done a great job supporting the youth and each other. They made good decisions in changing youth activities and took the time to listen and support the youth who were unfamiliar with the situation."

Parole and probation operations were largely unaffected, although one JPPO in Josephine County temporarily worked from home due to the smoke's impairment of his office building's ventilation system. ■

OYA youth gets the welding bite

James, at MacLaren YCF, has created an impressive alligator during a welding class taught by Mike Orias, a volunteer and professional welder.

James poses with the alligator he created in welding class.

"James has developed solid industrial welding skills as well as exercising his creativity, as he demonstrated with this project," said Brian VorderLandwehr, a MacLaren treatment manager.

Certifications from MacLaren's welding program are industry recognized and have been instrumental in helping youth acquire good-paying jobs in the community after release. ■

Day at the beach also serves a good purpose

By GLC Chris Bratton, Oak Creek YCF

So I enter the dorm and ask five young women: "Who wants to shovel sand today, and who wants to stay behind and sleep?"

Many of the half-awake young women's arms rise in favor of the sleep in option. "All right, those who opted for shoveling sand get up and get ready because we are going to the beach." An explosion of joyous screams and young women jumping out of bed begins a terrific summer day of fun and social service.

I am the work crew supervisor for the Young Women's Transition Program at Oak Creek YCF, and the day at the beach was payback for all the hard work the young women in this program provide. My wife, Sherri, volunteered to go with me. One of the youth had never seen the ocean, and others had been to the coast just a few times. I let the youth know that we were going to play and have fun as well as go to lunch and provide a little community service by taking large garbage bags with us to leave the beach a little bit cleaner than we found it.

We loaded the van and headed out to Lincoln City with the young women giggling and laughing and excited about the trip to come. As we entered the coastal mountains a deer ran in front of our van and I was glad not to have hit it. As it made it to the side of the road it turned around and ran in front of us again. The young women loved it. I was wiping my brow.

We arrived in Lincoln City and headed down 51st Street to park in front of Mo's Restaurant

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ARRIVALS, cont.

Ryan Perez
Rogue Valley YCF

Thomas Prefontaine
Rogue Valley YCF

Justin Rigaud
Camp Florence YTF

Bonni Rose
Business Services

Joshua Smith
Rogue Valley YCF

Timothy Woolsey
Eastern Oregon YCF

YOUTH CONTRIBUTIONS

My Beauty

by Bethany, age 18, Salem, Oregon

My beauty is not
in my facial features,
It's not in my eyes
or lips.
My beauty is not
in my arms
or shoulders,
It's not in my belly
or hips.

My beauty is not in
my thighs or ankles,
It's not in my calves
or knees.
My beauty is not in
my heels or toes,
It's not even
in my feet.

My beauty is not in
my bones or blood,
It's not in my lungs
or brain.
My beauty is not in
my stomach or liver,
It's not in my cells
or my veins.

My beauty is in
my very core,
It's in my caring soul.
My beauty is me, it's
who I am,
And my beauty is me
as a whole.

Three Lakes High School receives award

Three Lakes High School at Oak Creek YCF has received a grant for health and physical activity from the Oregon Dairy Council.

The school will receive $1,250 from a "Fuel Up to Play 60" grant, a program founded by the National Dairy Council and the National Football League in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The grant is meant to empower students to make small, everyday changes at school that lead to greater health and wellness.

Three Lakes Principal Kevin Hunking said the money will be used for seeds and gardening equipment for the school's greenhouse project. The youth at Oak Creek practice a "seed-to-plate" cycle, in which they learn about gardening and grow their own vegetables and fruits, then learn to cook them in the school's cafeteria.

Oak Creek's greenouse provides education and nutrition.

Part of the grant also will be used for additional nutrition curriculum and for new exercise equipment, "probably something they don't already have, maybe badminton sets," Hunking said. "We try to make it so they don't realize they're exercising. They just think they're having fun." ■

OYA youth create art that bears watching

Eastern Oregon YCF youth painted this mural in a dormitory of a polar bear catching a seal.

Staff honored with Coin awards

Coin Awards and recognition from the U.S. Department of Justice were announced at the Joint Management Team meeting August 15. Director Fariborz Pakseresht and members of the OYA Cabinet congratulated the recipients. ■

Clockwise from top left, OYA Training Academy Manager Lynn Oliver, standing with Director Fariborz Pakseresht, receives a certificate of recognition from the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Corrections; Assistant Director for Treatment Services Whitney Vail presents a Coin award to MacLaren Treatment Services Manager Rebecca Yazzie; Facility Services Chief of Operations Dan Robertson presents a Coin award to Ann Butte; and Human Resources Office members Erin West, Kerry Haverty, Glenn Smith and Belinda Teague receive Coin awards from Assistant Director for Business Services Jan Dean.

MacLaren's garden gets a fresh look

MacLaren YCF youth designed and painted a new sign for the facility's garden this summer. A salad preparation class for staff and volunteers was held there August 5, after youth harvested nearly 160 pounds of vegetables.

Eight youth tend the garden under the supervision of facility groundskeeper Jeff Gifford. The young men learn horticultural skills, and much of the produce ends up in the facility's kitchen, feeding youth and staff. ■

Inside OYA

Fariborz Pakseresht
Director

Joe O'Leary
Deputy Director

For more information, to submit ideas, or to write an article, please call or e-mail the Communications Office:

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

Emergency alarm empties Central Office

Central Office staff members spent a few minutes outside late in August when an emergency alert sounded to clear the building.

Fortunately, it turned out to be a false alarm, but it did provide the opportunity for everyone to get some exercise on a nice, sunny day. ■

A day at the beach also serves a good purpose

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and then walk to the beach. The first thing the girls saw was a bald eagle sitting on a stump across the river fishing for his breakfast. Another youth pointed out that all the rocks across the river were moving. But those were not rocks; they were well camouflaged seals and sea lions basking in the sun.

Oak Creek GLC Chris Bratton and his clean-up show some of their gleanings on the beach at Lincoln City.

The ladies began searching for driftwood on the beach and all the treasures that can be found at the water's edge. Two of our brave youth ventured into the ice-cold water for a dip. Several youth spent time with Sherri, who talked with them about sobriety, sharing her message and wisdom with them.

Then, without direction, the youth began to take the large trash bags we brought and started cleaning the trash off the beach to leave it better than they found it. It was nice that they had to search hard to find trash because those who came before us did a good job of taking their trash with them. We had some pictures taken of us by Sherri and then we packed it all up and went to have lunch to end our great day at the beach.

Oak Creek YCF youth search for trash on the beach at Lincoln City.

Who says you can't have fun and provide service too? ■