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1 in 7 youth in facilities, field honored as graduates

When a local reporter asked a parent what he thought about his son earning his high school diploma at Rogue Valley YCF's commencement, the dad said, "We have our Tony back. This is what it took to get him straightened out. He's so much further ahead now than where he would have been."

The dad was among scores of proud parents who turned out for commencements this spring at Eastern Oregon, Hillcrest, MacLaren, North Coast, Oak Creek, Rogue Valley, and Tillamook YCF high schools. A Camp Florence youth walked with the Hillcrest graduates, and RiverBend delayed its commencement because graduates had left the facility.



The Rogue Valley YCF commencement celebrated 12 high school graduates and 14 GED recipients.

The events netted progress for youth, pride for parents, and several positive news stories for the public. "Coming to MacLaren was the best thing that happened to me," a youth told a Woodburn Independent reporter. An Albany Democrat-Herald story focused on two Oak Creek youth who earned office specialist certificates from Linn-Benton Community College, whose instructor visited the Oak Creek campus four times a week to lead two-hour classes.

In all, commencement ceremonies recognized one in seven youth in OYA facilities and the field.

In facilities, high school diplomas were conferred on 106 youth. Another 25 close-custody youth received GED certificates, three earned online associate's degrees, and seven received vocational certificates. In the field, JPPOs reported 75 youth earned high school diplomas, 69 earned GED certificates, one earned an associate's degree, and another earned a certificate as a Certified Nursing Assistant (and now has a job).

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STAFF

ANNIVERSARIES

The anniversaries listed are for May.

25 years

Thomas Morawski
Information Systems

15 years

Silbestre Ceballos
Multnomah Parole and Probation

Annette Hilton
Professional Standards Office

10 years

Joy Atilano
Tillamook YCF

Douglas Charles
Hillcrest YCF

Tracy Hall
MacLaren YCF

5 years

Kirsten Kolb
Information Systems

Tracy Merriam
Oak Creek YCF

Director's column



Colette S. Peters
Director

As we enter the new biennium, we are undergoing layoffs that will test our ability to stay focused on our mission and the needs of the youth we serve. I know you will rise to the occasion. Time and again

I hear from you how much you care about helping the youth we manage turn their lives around.

And in this issue of *Inside OYA* you'll see many moving examples of the good work you do — from statements by a former youth offender talking about how much MacLaren helped him, to comments from a proud dad watching his son graduate at Rogue Valley YCF, to all of the stories about the many educational and vocational opportunities we provide youth at OYA.

In concert with everything we are undergoing — staff layoffs and moves, youth relocations, and restructuring service delivery by adding more community treatment beds, I know we will come out stronger and more focused, and we will continue to preserve public safety and positively change the lives of the youth in our care.

During the weeks and months ahead, I encourage you to support each other, be understanding of others' concerns, and take advantage of the resources available to you through your colleagues, your managers and Human Resources.

I will continue to stay in touch as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Colette S. Peters
Director

Oregon's First Lady and Director present awards

First Lady Cylvia Hayes joined Director Colette S. Peters at Hillcrest and Oak Creek YCFs last month to present certificates and oversized checks to youth who received American Leadership Forum of Oregon grant awards.

Hayes told youth about the modest circumstances of her upbringing: "As a teenager I was on a path to be in a facility like this," she said. The family home had neither electricity nor running water, she skipped a lot of school, and, by age 16, Hayes was living with family friends because of her father's alcoholism. She said she held jobs such as asphalt raker and chicken catcher on a poultry farm.

"There were a handful of times in my life if I hadn't had someone there to catch me I wouldn't have been successful," she said. She told Oak Creek youth she changed her life's direction when "I realized I didn't want to spend the rest of my adult life doing things I didn't care about." Her advice: "Be good to people and work your tail off."

Youth wrote grants to purchase new exercise equipment at Hillcrest and gardening, fitness, and nutritional supplies at Oak Creek (*Inside OYA*, May 2011). "I think everyone here is pretty happy with the new activity to improve our health," said Jacob, a Hillcrest youth who spoke about the new exercise equipment.

Hayes, founder and CEO of the clean-energy consulting firm 3Estrategies, and OYA

Continued from page 1

OYA speakers at commencement exercises were Director Colette S. Peters; Deputy Director Fariborz Pakseresht; Phil Cox, Assistant Director for Community Services; and Jean Straight, Assistant Director for Business Services. Volunteer Peggy Asmussen of Burns spoke at EOYCF's commencement (related story, page 4).

"You have accomplished something many of you might not have thought possible, and all of you have done this through your own efforts," Straight told North Coast graduates. "We want you to grow and learn from past mistakes, to make good choices, and to go forward and lead positive and productive lives." Graduates thanked supportive family members and friends, and one MacLaren youth thanked Eugene businessman Dick Withnell for paying his tuition.

With studies showing a correlation between increased education and reduced recidivism, this spring's commencements were milestones. And one MacLaren YCF youth put it into perspective: "This diploma is nothing but a piece of paper if you don't use it," he said. "And your graduation is nothing but a memory unless you apply it." ■

Eighth Hillcrest YCF staff member earns CADC 1

GLC Steve Kimbrell has earned his CADC 1 designation, becoming the eighth Hillcrest YCF staff member to become an ACCBO-certified alcohol and drug counselor. Ten to 15 other Hillcrest staff members are in various stages of working toward the designation.

"Hillcrest has been the oldest, most consistent program to receive AMH licensure and to certify ATOD staff with their CADCs," said Lee Lederer, OYA Treatment Services Coordinator. "Eight CADCs is the most at any facility in the agency."

John M. Day, Hillcrest's Alcohol and Drug Treatment Coordinator and Clinical Supervisor, said the certifications benefit youth. "It makes a difference because all ATOD treatment is delivered by CADCs and CADC candidates," he said. "These staff have specialty training in ATOD treatment and are required to continue to earn training hours to maintain their certification."

He said the training helps staff stay current with best practices and keeps them attuned



Steve Kimbrell

to relapse symptoms and other issues youth may encounter in recovery.

Hillcrest has provided state-certified alcohol and drug treatment since the late 1980s. It recently received a two-year Oregon Health Authority AMH license renewal (*Inside OYA*, June 2011), which Day said set Hillcrest's alcohol and drug treatment beds to 60. Hillcrest has two ATOD-specific units, Gamma and Sigma, and also delivers treatment on Zeta and units for violent offenders as the population dictates. MacLaren and North Coast YCFs also have AMH-certified residential treatment facilities. ■

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MacLaren YCF

Paul Egbert
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Tim Hall
MacLaren YCF

Mark Hansen
Central Office

Jernaline Lacsina
Oak Creek YCF

Julie Puett
Central Office

Lois Wilder
Tillamook YCF

STAFF

ARRIVALS

Richard Check

Rogue Valley YCF

Brandy Davis

Rogue Valley YCF

Tyler Gordon

Rogue Valley YCF

Arnulfo Rosas

Rogue Valley YCF

Daryl Shepard

Rogue Valley YCF

STAFF

RECOGNITION

Leticia Gonzalez

Hillcrest YCF

Employee of the Month

Kerstine Munger

Hillcrest YCF

Employee of the Month

Burns church volunteers paint the town — and Eastern Oregon YCF

When 140 members of a Burns church recently fanned out across the community to undertake volunteer projects, nine of them donned their painting clothes and headed to Eastern Oregon YCF. As a result, walls of the facility's two dormitories are now painted Dyed Denim – the color youth chose.

Eighteen EOYCF youth joined Faith Baptist Church of Harney County volunteers in re-painting the walls, which GLC Kim Brinson said had been a dingy off-white. She said she got paint swatches from a local paint store and youth voted on the colors.

This was the fourth year church volunteers have worked at EOYCF, supported by their philosophy, "Don't go to church, be the church."

Faith Baptist members were already well known to EOYCF youth. Church members visit Thursday nights to chat, play games, and encourage. On Sundays they lead Bible study. Six times a year they celebrate birthdays with youth and give them \$5 canteen cards. One church member has been teaching interested youth to play the piano, cello, fiddle, and mandolin. At

Christmastime the church delivers up to \$50 worth of gifts for each youth. And they are there on family day. "If they don't have family," said Peggy Asmussen, a church member who coordinates the volunteers at EOYCF, "we're their family."

Asmussen said youth aren't the only ones benefiting: "You think you're going in there to help them. And they encourage you." ■



Newly painted walls at Eastern Oregon YCF improve the looks of the facility. The color was selected by the youth.

Continued from page 2

Deputy Director Fariborz Pakseresht were members of the American Leadership Forum of Oregon class that selected the two facilities' high schools and six others to receive the grants.

Hayes said her own exercise program started when, knowing she would need scholarships to help pay for college, she began playing soccer. "The exercise helps me stay grounded and gives me an energy level to help me get things done," she said.

Peters pointed out that youth at the two OYA high schools were in an elite group. Twenty-six schools applied for the grants, she said, and two of the eight grant recipients were OYA high schools. "I believe we can and should have the healthiest kids in Oregon – right here in our facilities," Peters told youth. She and Hayes both encouraged youth to stay in touch with American Leadership Forum of Oregon about the progress they are making with their projects. ■

Multnomah employees winning support for idea

State safety committees usually work hard doing things to keep employees safe around the office. But the safety committee in the Multnomah County Juvenile Justice Center, of which JPPA Steve Huffman is a member, has taken on an even bigger challenge.

And they're winning support for it.

The committee's members represent the building's workers – such as county juvenile department employees, OYA, judges, sheriff, district attorney, CASA, and cafeteria. Its concern is the Northeast 68th Avenue exit ramp off Interstate 84, where traffic puts youth and other pedestrians at potential risk.



They're asking for three crosswalks at an intersection and a stop sign to replace the "stop ahead" sign that now greets motorists coming off I-84.

"There's already a pole where we want the stop sign," Huffman said. "The only cost would be to stripe three different corners and put one sign on an existing post." He said the proposal has letters of support from Tri-Met, which has a stop near the building, and from the Columbia Regional Program school a few blocks away, as well as signatures from the building's employees and neighbors.



Youth in juvenile detention made posters that appear throughout the building.

Huffman said among those who would benefit from crosswalks and a stop sign are numerous youth who visit the juvenile justice center daily to attend GED classes, pay restitution, or join work crews. A county risk management officer is going to take up the issue with traffic engineers, he said.

Based on the committee's past successes in winning safety improvements, Huffman is optimistic. "I've been on state safety committees for 16 years," he said, "and they were good, but this is the best one I've seen." ■

STAFF

ACHIEVEMENTS

Renee Hernandez
Central Office

Associate of Arts in
Criminal Justice
from Chemeketa
Community College

Youth receive introduction to fire-fighting skills

Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue has partnered with Camp Florence to bring youth interested in training to be a firefighter to weekly drills. On one recent day, two youth served as victims in a mock fire. They hid in a back bedroom and waited for firemen to discover and extract them, then participated in a critique after the drill to learn where the mistakes were made and how to improve procedures. After the review session they helped reload the fire truck in preparation for active status. ■



Above: Firefighters “rescue” two Camp Florence youth from a house during a fire training exercise.

Left: Firefighters and youth debrief after the drill.

Below: Youth learn how to reload a fire truck.



MacLaren YCF staff preparing poster for fall Oregon Counseling conference

Two MacLaren YCF staff members have been approved to prepare a poster presentation about alcohol and drug services for incarcerated youth offenders for the fall conference of the Oregon Counseling Association.

Treatment Services Supervisor Rebecca Yazzie and QMHP Carrie Wouda will deliver the presentation for the Nov. 3-5 conference in Bend. The poster will emphasize three elements of A&D residential services: how to overcome barriers to instituting A&D services in a youth correctional setting; how to plan and implement a program that will comply with AMH requirements; and how to empower correctional line staff to deliver alcohol and drug treatment.

MacLaren's Grover Unit recently became AMH-certified as a residential A&D provider. Wouda, who earned a CACD 1 designation earlier this year, is among OYA staff members who prepared for ACCBO certifications.

"I think it's a great opportunity to educate counseling professionals about how we work with this special population," said OYA Treatment Services Coordinator Lee Lederer. "It's a way for the agency to reach out to counselors to promote professional recruitment." He noted that OYA intermittently has QMHP openings for which those professionals attending the OCA conference could become qualified. ■

Barbecuing for safety

If any day is a good day for hamburgers and hotdogs, it's even better under a sunny summer sky in Southern Oregon. Rogue Valley YCF's safety committee members hosted their annual safety-focused barbecue in June for staff, teachers, volunteers, and family members. Kitchen staff prepared the food, which safety committee members served. It was a fun way to be reminded that safety of staff and youth offenders is top priority. ■



Rogue Valley YCF delivers Stephen Covey's '7 Habits' to 14 youth

A three-day Steven Covey seminar can cost as much as \$2,095. Fourteen Rogue Valley YCF youth recently completed training in the basics of the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" taught by GLC Mark Adams, at no cost to OYA.

The youth are members of Rogue Valley's "Leading the Change" (LTC) class, led by Adams and Acting Program Director Noel Hoback. Youth are getting the benefit of a new leadership program beginning this month.

"The idea is to teach leadership, similar to what you would find in a student body leadership group where they plan activities for the facility," Hoback said. For example, LTC youth worked with staff to conduct a Father's Day lunch in June and a Mother's Day brunch in May, and they plan activities for winter and spring school breaks.

Hoback said LTC youth mentored impulsive younger youth on one unit. "Eight of the youth lived there for approximately four months to help stabilize the unit and did an excellent job," he said. "It's an incentive for youth to do well and continue to have a mentor," said Superintendent Ken Jerin. "The mentor also learns a lot about helping other people, and by helping other youth he learns a lot about himself." When Director Colette S. Peters visited Rogue Valley in May, one youth told her being a mentor did more to develop him than anything else he had experienced.

Among other projects LTC youth have undertaken were a May barbecue, Veterans Day commemoration, Halloween party, and working with vocational instructor Warren Helgeson to craft wooden pens for overseas troops (*Inside OYA*, December 2010).

To participate in Leading the Change, youth must meet a dozen criteria that include meeting behavioral, education, treatment, and attitude benchmarks. Youth adopted values whose initial letters spell CHANGE: Courage, Honesty, Accountability, Non-Violent, Guidance, and Excellence.

The leadership group at Rogue Valley dates back to a leadership club started a decade ago, and has become more sophisticated over time. "This teaches higher-level youth leadership skills they can use in the Rogue Valley community and that will help them be positive leaders when they work in groups of people in the community," Hoback said. ■

OYA youth prepare to shadow jobs they've studied



Eric Hermes displays the certificate he received for passing the DEQ test for Level 1 Wastewater Operator certification.

Two Camp Florence youth who recently earned professional certifications may have a chance this fall to shadow professionals in the community.

One youth passed a DEQ test this spring that earned him a level 1 wastewater operator certificate. He had worked in RiverBend's wastewater operation, and passed the DEQ test while at RiverBend, before transferring to Camp Florence.

416-hour online course to be certified as a veterinary assistant. He had worked with Project POOCH at MacLaren YCF before transferring to Camp Florence, and received a Project POOCH scholarship to pursue his studies. He said his goal is to work for a 24-hour animal hospital in the Portland area.

The other youth recently completed a U.S. Career Institute

Marc Barnum, Camp Florence's vocational contractor, said both youth are qualified for jobs recently advertised in the Florence community, although they aren't eligible to apply because OYA staff supervision would be required. But he said he is working with Florence veterinarian Gene Osburn and with the operator of the City of Florence's wastewater plant to obtain job-shadow opportunities for the two youth.



Josh Pierce (right), who studied to be a veterinary assistant, presents a certificate of appreciation to Florence veterinarian Gene Osburn.

At RiverBend, Facility Operations Specialist Scott Robarge said five youth now are working in the wastewater plant at the request of Assistant Director Karen Daniels. He said textbooks were being purchased for the youth, who spend several hours a week at the wastewater operation, are given mathematical problems to work on during the week, and are encouraged to study at least an hour a day. ■

Former offender tells how MacLaren YCF turned his life around

This is how Donald Hill recalls his attitude during his first days at MacLaren YCF. "I was one of those kids who thought, screw it, I want to go to prison. I sat in those groups and thought, 'Seriously, how is this going to apply to me?'"

Serving a 90-month sentence, Hill said, the biggest influences on him were Treatment Manager Darwin Crabtree and Dr. Orin Bolstad, who were patient and told him it would tear his family apart if he went to DOC. "I gave it a shot and they really changed my life," he said. "It's amazing how much MacLaren changed who I am."

At MacLaren, he said, he went from denial to accountability for his crime, earned his diploma from William P. Lord High School, learned sign language, and received an associate's degree online as a paralegal from Blackstone Career Institute. He said he now works as a corporate accounts specialist for a Sprint franchisee in southeast Washington. "I think the biggest lesson I learned is there's life after being incarcerated," he said.

When he applied for the job, Hill said, he talked to the franchise owner. "I said I'm here, I have a criminal history, if you don't want to hire me I understand – but I would really like a chance. I said let me prove the stats wrong. And I have."

He is in his third year on that job. "They hire felons," he said. "They're just looking for people to be honest." He and his fiancée, who is a nurse, have an autistic son, and Hill said his parenting is aided by the fact he mentored special-needs youth on MacLaren's Geer 5 cottage. As for anger issues, he said, "When I encounter a difficult situation I sit there and think about it and think there's no reason at all to get mad about this."

He said OYA staff are the cornerstone: "Everyone thinks that treatment is that one-hour or 30-minute session. But what people don't understand is that treatment groups go on all day long and never end."

As he was about to turn 25 in January 2009, he moved from MacLaren and spent the last six weeks of his sentence with DOC. "At OYA they connect with you on a personal level," he said. "In adult corrections you're just another number, they don't know you."

But the kicker? "My fiancée asked me, 'If you could take back that time (at MacLaren), would you?' I said no. She said, 'You would rather be locked up for 90 months?' No, it's not so much being locked up. It's having the time to learn about myself." ■

Youth-designed database tracks Hillcrest YCF property

Hillcrest YCF work-experience youth have an opportunity to earn a warehouse competence certificate, an element of which is to learn and use Excel. Last year, two youth supervised by Supply Specialist 2 Dailey Ray used Excel to develop a database to track youth property.

"We were losing track of property," Ray said. "Since we started using the database, we have a whole lot fewer problems." Usual property includes clothes, shoes, letters, and books, he said.



Hillcrest YCF, which was involved in nearly two-thirds of OYA's youth transfers last year, uses a youth-designed database to accurately track youth property.

"Because we are the intake facility and move so many youth and their property around the state, a system to smoothly process and track property was needed," said Hillcrest Security Manager Brian VorderLandwehr. "And they stepped up to the plate." VorderLandwehr noted that 500 of 755 transfers among close custody facilities last year involved Hillcrest.

Ray said the searchable database, on which youth now do data entry, records the date when a youth's property is received in the warehouse, and when the youth's property left the warehouse and was taken to HYCF intake for transport to a receiving unit within or outside of OYA. Property is identified three ways: It is kept in 180 bins in Hillcrest's property room where names are on a roster, on the bin, and inside the plastic bag containing the property. Ray said any other facility that wants the uncomplicated Excel program need only ask for it.

The warehouse certificate, meanwhile, is issued to youth who show competency on 40-plus skills in six areas such as ordering, receiving, customer service, and Excel. Ray works with Robert S. Farrell High School Transition Specialist Rhiannon Henry on the certificates, which are signed by him, Superintendent Troy Gregg, and Principal Bill Conlon, and which carry the Willamette ESD stamp.

"The certificates give youth a little step up when they go out on the job market," Ray said. "They're ready to become an entry-level apprentice program participant when they get the certificate." ■

INSIDE OYA

Colette S. Peters
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Send your stories for the August issue by July 31. Articles received after that date will be held for the September newsletter.



August class will certify evidence-based trainer

When OYA staff members receive training in evidence-based “Pathways to Self-Discovery and Change” next month, they will be hearing from the ATOD curriculum’s No. 1 source – its creator.

Harvey Milkman, Ph.D., will lead the Aug. 2-5 training at the Oregon Juvenile Justice Training Academy in Woodburn, assisted by OYA Treatment Services Coordinator Dominique Sotelo. At the conclusion of the four-day training, Sotelo will be certified to train OYA staff, community resource providers, and OYA’s private contractors.

“What the curriculum does well is link criminogenic risk factors such as anti-social attitudes and negative peer association to substance abuse and/or dependency,” said Lee Lederer, OYA’s Treatment Services Coordinator. The August training will emphasize treatment for youth with co-occurring disorders.

Milkman, Professor of Psychology at Metropolitan State College of Denver, said the cognitive behavioral curriculum “helps youth gain freedom and strength by learning how to control the most important parts of their mind: their own thoughts.” It targets internal and external triggers for alcohol use and uses a behavioral approach – modeling, rehearsing, role-playing, and rewarding – to target anti-social thoughts and skill deficits. Pathways was researched and developed specifically for juvenile offenders, Lederer said. ■