Integrity Professionalism Accountability Respect

June 2010

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Community 101 class awards grants to nonprofits

Seven Willamette Valley youth-oriented nonprofits received a total of $5,000 in grants last month from students in a Hillcrest YCF class who spent a year reviewing proposals from a number of organizations.

But the youth benefited as much as the nonprofits, said Bill Conlon, principal of Hillcrest's Robert S. Farrell High School: "In selecting the grant recipients, youth gained skills in grant writing, public relations, talking with community leaders, teamwork and interviewing. They grilled some of the people with tough questions and they came up with the questions."

Hillcrest is among 57 schools statewide that awarded grants from money provided by the Oregon Community Foundation.

The grants went to the Boys and Girls Club of Albany, Emmanual Community Services in Portland, Family Building Blocks in Salem, Jubilee Transition Homes in the Portland area, Juvenile Assistance Corporation in Clackamas County, Mano-a-Mano in Salem, and Oregon Outreach in Portland.

This wasn't the first time OYA youth had supported other youth. Sue Miller of Family Building Blocks told about Hillcrest youth helping a family last Christmas and said in April she received a $50 check from a Hillcrest youth. "They always have such a heart for the children in our program," she said.

Rebecca Black of Oregon Outreach said Hillcrest youth had provided money that helped a homeless woman get an apartment, furnish it and buy kitchen utensils. The woman has since received training to become a certified nursing assistant. "She didn't have a family to give her a push," Black said, "but you guys did."

The Community 101 class was taught by Gordon Kruse, whom the youth praised and honored with a plaque. "He always stayed by our side," said one youth, "even when we were knuckleheads." Hillcrest school staff are provided by the Willamette Education Service District.

OYA Coin Award recipients

Emily Cox
Office Specialist 2
Oak Creek YCF

Ron Godwin
Religious Services Coordinator
Rogue Valley YCF

Irv Hersha
Property Specialist 2
MacLaren YCF

Amber LaCoursiere
Office Specialist 2
Oak Creek YCF

Melissa McNabb
Office Specialist 2
Oak Creek YCF

Linda Solomon
Office Specialist 2
Oak Creek YCF

Alice True
Executive Support Specialist 2
Oak Creek YCF

Managers can request a coin from Angie Minahan at angie.minahan@oya.state.or.us or 503-373-7205.

Corrections Employee Week Celebrations

Last month, OYA celebrated Corrections Employee Week across the state. Click here to view photos from these events.

Camp Florence youth support local festival

When the Florence Rhododendron Festival emcee announced that Camp Florence youth were shooting video and still photos of the event, the youth got a nice round of applause in the 457-seat Florence Events Center.

Four youth in a Camp Florence AV class participated in the May 21 scholarship pageant, working with the owner of a local production company who used their photography to make DVDs for sale.

The AV work is part of Camp Florence's new vocational initiative, which also offers transitional youth opportunities such as radio broadcasting, work at a golf course, and work experience at a veterinary clinic.

Two of the participating youth are enrolled in related online courses through Clark Community College in Vancouver and Berklee College of Music in Boston.

One of the youth said participating in the festival event also provided experience in communications, organization and interacting with people in the community. "It gives me hands-on, real-world experience that you can't get from an online class," said another.

Barnum said he wants to obtain more AV equipment including editing equipment.

Tillamook schoolhouse renovation nearly done

A new Trask River High School building in Tillamook is expected to be substantially completed by June 25 with move-in scheduled during a school break in late July.

OYA's second-largest Go Oregon stimulus-financed project, "it created 23 new jobs, kept 14 people working and did business with 16 Oregon vendors, eight subcontractors and three that qualify as minority, women or emerging small businesses," said OYA facilities manager Rex Emery.

The school will serve youth at Tillamook YCF and Camp Tillamook. The completed building will put the school in one location, enable staff to get storage out of hallways, give the clinic more space, and provide space to increase privacy for youth when talking with staff at their desks.

"Construction costs now are at 2007 levels so this is a great time to build," Emery told a Tillamook reporter who toured the project in May. Although the architect and the contractor who won the bid are based in Portland, Emery said Tillamook firms did the excavation and provided some lumber, concrete and other building materials. In addition, he said, workers did business with Tillamook hotels, restaurants, service stations and others.

The project doubled the square footage of the existing building shell, built by Tillamook YCF Facility Operations Specialist Margin Boge and OYA youth in 2006. The new construction portion of the project cost $836,000.

OYA staff honored for dedication to treatment

Above: Charlie Bruske and David Molstad

OYA staff have demonstrated time and time again their commitment to the youth we serve. Recently, the Oregon Adolescent Sex Offender Treatment Network recognized one such staff member at their annual conference.

David Molstad, treatment manager at MacLaren's Kincaid Unit, received the Outstanding Service to Youth Award for demonstrating commitment and expertise above and beyond what is normally expected.

David has worked at MacLaren for more than 30 years and has remained committed to working with sex offenders.

He was nominated by his peers. One colleague said of his work, "David is foremost a role model. He lives what he teaches. He is the most ethical person I've ever worked with – a man of integrity."

Charlie Bruske, who retired from OYA as a parole and probation officer in Washington County, was also presented with the Positive Commitment to Youth Award for his career in juvenile justice.

OYA congratulates David on receiving this honor.

OYA seeks transitional foster homes

OYA is preparing to add a new type of foster care to help older youth move successfully to independent living in the community.

Traditional foster care has long been offered for youth ages 12-18, but not for older youth transitioning back into communities. OYA is seeking to fill that gap

"We're looking for foster parents to help youth ages 18 to 24 learn basic life skills such as establishing a bank account, preparing a household budget, learning how to shop for food and prepare meals, understanding job-hunting skills, and performing related tasks essential to independent living," said Erin Fultz, OYA community resources manager.

Although the agency always is seeking high-quality foster parents, Fultz said, the need is greatest in Deschutes, Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties.

Qualifications to serve as a foster parent include being at least age 21 (or 25 for a transitional foster parent), a U.S. citizen or legal resident, financially stable, and able to pass a criminal history check. Prospective foster parents also should be emotionally mature and have an understanding of how to help youth build positive relationships and live independently. Foster parents receive a monthly maintenance reimbursement for the services they provide to youth.

People interested in learning more about OYA foster care may log on to www.oregon.gov/OYA/foster.shtml.

STAFF RECOGNITION

Hillcrest

Bevin Findley
Support Staff of the Month

Chaan Saechao
GLC of the Month

MacLaren

Larry Kremer
Employee of the Month

North Coast

Robbie Porter
Employee of the Quarter

Oak Creek

Steve Schrunk
Employee of the Year

Rogue Valley

James Buchanan
Employee of the Year

Brian Gove
Alpha Unit Employee of the Year

Karren Selthon
Bravo Unit Employee of the Year

Matt Sweeny
Volunteer of the Year

Brett Turner
Charlie Unit Employee of the Year

Lynn Tuttle
Delta Unit Employee of the Year

Tristan White
Security Staff of the Year

ANNIVERSARIES

Twenty Years

Beverly Alexander
Juvenile Parole and Probation Officer
Jackson County Office

Fifteen Years

Vince Almberg
Systems Architect
Information Systems

James Farmer
Group Life Coordinator
MacLaren YCF

Sean Hoffert
Group Life Coordinator
MacLaren YCF

Heidi Meier
Juvenile Parole and Probation Officer
Umatilla Office

Andre Riley
Food Service
MacLaren YCF

John Smith
Group Life Coordinator
Rogue Valley YCF

Shawna Smith
Program Director
Hillcrest YCF

Leonard Zuniga
Group Life Coordinator
Hillcrest YCF

Ten Years

Terry Ferebee
Group Life Coordinator
Hillcrest YCF

Carolina Marquette
Accounting Manager
Accounting

Five Years

Kenny Walker
Group Life Coordinator
Rogue Valley YCF

RiverBend youth helping upgrade local park

RiverBend transitional youth, already doing maintenance work in La Grande's Birnie and Pioneer city parks, now are helping implement the master plan for Morgan Lake park southwest of town.

City parks director Mark Touhey said he's talked with some of the youth. "They're awesome," he said. "They seem to be really enjoying it. A lot of it is really hard work, such as moving boulders, and they just dig right in."

The city has a grant from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which stocks the lake, to upgrade the primitive 205-acre park with new restrooms, campsites, fishing piers and other amenities. RiverBend youths' work includes planting native plants and grasses, building a trail around the lake, leveling campsite areas, replacing fire rings and constructing floating docks.

"They get some valuable experience," said Brian Blisard, RiverBend's interim superintendent. "They interact with city parks employees and see the value of the work ethic – being on time, listening to instructions and learning different skill sets to be able to perform the work. It also boosts their confidence to be able to interact with individuals outside the facility."

Crews of five youth who are eligible to work in the community go to the park at least once a week. They do the work as unpaid community service. In the future, Blisard said, they may assist with year-round Morgan Lake park maintenance.

Oak Creek partners with Albany in "win-win" horticulture project

It wasn't quite Birnam Wood coming to Dunsinane, but suddenly the Oak Creek YCF did have a lot more trees. And the trees arrived with promised outcomes a lot happier than those in Shakespeare's MacBeth.

The City of Albany delivered 240 trees to Oak Creek this spring as part of a budding horticulture project. "And we're not talking seedlings," said Robyn Eicks, Oak Creek volunteer and activities manager. "These are 12- to 18-foot trees in 25-gallon containers."

The city asked Oak Creek to care for the nursery-donated trees until they can be planted next autumn, saying it would provide horticultural education in exchange. It is the beginning of a partnership in which the city will provide a large, professional-style greenhouse for Oak Creek youth to nurture native plants and trees for the city. An Albany woman is donating a large, like-new tool shed.

"You never know when an opportunity will present itself, and this one is turning into a win-win situation," said Oak Creek Superintendent Lory Humbert. "We will be able to teach our youth responsibility using real-world examples and they will be able to see something they nurtured grow and thrive. The city will learn more about OYA and what

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we can do to mutually support each other while we build valuable relationships within our community."

Eicks said youth were selected to participate in the project after completing job applications and demonstrating positive behavior. Oak Creek has scheduled a forester, nursery representative and others to speak to the youth. OSU Extension and Linn-Benton Community College horticulturists will participate, and interested youth will see a variety of career paths. In addition, Oak Creek volunteers have pledged support through donations, mentoring and educational presentations.

"I'm enthusiastic it's going to be a really good partnership for the city and for Oak Creek," said city recreation supervisor Rick Barnett.

MacLaren youth make bunk beds for YWTP

Beds for the 25 youth at the Young Women's Transitional Program facility, scheduled to open later this summer adjacent to Oak Creek YCF, were handcrafted by youth in MacLaren YCF's lattice factory.

Using basic woodworking tools, MacLaren youth made 12 bunk beds and one single bed for the facility.

"This was a successful project for the youth workers and work crew supervisors Derrick Ingram and Ron Flory," said Bruce Carson, youth employment and vocational manager at MacLaren. "It offers potential to other OYA facilities that would like MacLaren youth to make furniture."

Carson said participating youth were selected based on skill level and demonstrated interest, and that they designed and built the bunk beds based on the facility's needs. An outside company will apply stain and sealer before the beds are delivered to the Albany facility.

Carson said the furniture project was suggested by Joan Palmateer, OYA assistant director for Facility Services, when she visited the lattice factory. Ingram and Flory then began planning the job with the youth workers. "Their enthusiasm and desire to improve their skills and give back to their peers was a delight to see," said Ingram. "These young men worked together as a team to problem-solve and help improve each others' skills," Flory said.

Carson said the project taught youth furniture construction and design, teamwork and problem-solving. The youths' earnings will go toward court-ordered restitution and other expenses.

MacLaren youth also make items such as jewelry boxes, bird houses, lattice panels, benches, shelves, wooden trains, and pen and pencil sets that are sold online at www.oregon.gov/OYA/facilities/youth_made_products.shtml.

NEW HIRES

Central Office

Karen Daniels

MacLaren

Gerri Hiersche
Ryan Weimer

Tillamook

Natalie Hancock

STAFF CHANGES

Retirements

Alan Burke
26 years
Paula Fontanini
31 years
Larry Kremer
32 years

Transfers

Tom Johnson
to MacLaren YCF

Departures

James Butts
MacLaren YCF
Karen Campbell
Tillamook YCF
Vincent Gutierrez
Rogue Valley YCF
Greg Lay
Central Office
Robin Leon-Guerrero
Hillcrest YCF
Julie Leroy
MacLaren YCF
Christopher Nething
MacLaren YCF
Alta Saner-Martinez
MacLaren YCF
Aaron Tuttle
Rogue Valley YCF

Meet Karen Daniels

Karen Daniels, who started June 1 as OYA assistant director for Facility Services, has more than 30 years' experience in juvenile corrections and public safety.

In her new role she will have responsibility for the agency's 11 facilities and serve as a member of the agency executive team. Facility Services accounts for 51 percent of the agency's budget, of which 87 percent is spent locally in facilities and communities.

Most recently, Daniels was responsible for Washington State Department of Corrections community corrections, which included supervising 29,000 offenders and oversight of 1,500 staff members in 150 office and 15 work-release facilities. She holds an undergraduate degree in sociology and a graduate degree in business management.

Landlord-tenant class helps MacLaren youth transitioning out

When youth offenders in close custody leave OYA facilities, most will have their first experience renting a place to live. To help them be successful, MacLaren YCF now offers a monthly landlord-tenant class to youth transitioning out.

"These guys take copious notes and they're raising their hands and asking questions," said MacLaren office specialist Debra Mitzel, who works in records and teaches the monthly class. "They know how to read a statute, they know whom to call and they know what to do."

Mitzel calls on her 25 years' property management experience to teach the 2-1/2-hour class about what renters need to know. The class covers elements such as budgeting rent, basic contract law, the eviction process, and how to read landlord-tenant statutes.

Among the tips:

- Never sign anything you don't understand.
- Your landlord is often the first source for those who want to know your credit history.
- There's a difference between fees and refundable deposits.
- Put yourself in the place of a landlord who has just painted and carpeted the unit. "Think like a landlord because someday you may be one."

"I see the lights go on. They leave here with the knowledge to be successful in housing," Mitzel said. "If they're stable in this area they can be stable in anything else that goes on in their lives."

Interstate Compact on Juveniles updated

Oregon's participation in a strengthened Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ) will add to the safety of Oregon youth and communities.

The state became a participant last year when the Legislature made Oregon the 40th state to ratify the updated interstate compact.

ICJ is an agreement among the states addressing supervision, transfer and return of delinquent and runaway youth across state lines. At any given time, Oregon is working with 250-500 youth who are either Oregon youth in other states or other states' youth placed in Oregon.

Among the issues ICJ covers are the return of runaways with no criminal record, the return of youth offenders who flee to another state, youth on parole or probation who are placed in another state, and youth who are sent to another state for residential treatment or foster care.

"The original compact offered little recourse if a state didn't follow its terms," said Phil Cox, OYA assistant director for Community Services and the compact's state commissioner. "The new compact strengthens state accountability and has built-in financial penalties if a state doesn't comply."Cox is part of the subcommittee writing rules for the new compact.

The updated compact also will support a national data base that will permit states to promote youth and community safety by having the ability to more easily and effectively monitor youth.

Former OYA director mentors youth

Above: Tyler Belfore and Rick Hill. Tyler is not an OYA youth but a Waldport High School freshman

Many OYA youth have the gift of a mentor in their lives, but only one has the mentoring of former OYA Director Rick Hill.

Hill, the state's juvenile corrections director from 1992 (when it was still at the Oregon Department of Human Services) until his 2000 retirement, said it all began with a conversation at the Lincoln County Citizen Review Board.

The board was reviewing the case of a 12-year-old boy whose OYA foster parents said he spent his afternoons playing video games. A member of the board who golfs with Hill suggested getting the boy together with the former OYA director.

A meeting of parole and probation officer Rick Hayden, the boy, his foster mom and Hill ensued. The outcome is that the boy now spends Tuesday afternoons after school at Green Bikes, an all-volunteer bicycle loan, repair, exchange and instructional program Hill runs in Waldport. "He's only 12 years old," Hill said, "but he's a bright kid and he's picking it up."

Hill says the goal is to have the youth successfully complete school and engage in constructive after-school activities while giving the foster parents a weekly respite from care.

"He knows I used to work in the system," Hill said. "He knows that I know his parole officer. That's an extra advantage to have in mentoring.

"It gives me an advantage in heading off some of the mistakes he makes, some of the comments he makes interacting with other kids," Hill said. "I can intervene and say 'don't go down that road' or 'that's not a good topic of conversation to be having."

An avid cyclist, Hill spends about 30 hours a week managing the Green Bikes program. He said he bought a bike the year before he retired, rode in Cycle Oregon and was hooked. He rode 5,000 miles last year, has cycled on five continents and will ride his bike in Japan in July.

Hill is heartened by conversations he has with other cycling enthusiasts. "Sometimes during the week we discuss what we used to do for a living," he said. "Youth corrections is invariably the most talked-about and interesting topic. They are interested in and admire the good and challenging work OYA does with kids. It's an honorable profession to be in."

Mental health gap survey a success

How serious are OYA staff about supporting high-quality services for youth? Serious enough that the agency's biennial survey of gaps in youth services drew responses for all but one of the 2,000 OYA youth being served in facilities and communities.

The mental health and substance abuse survey produces data that are analyzed to identify service trends and gaps in services that need to be filled. The survey also was administered in 2006 and 2008.

Facilities completed the survey for all youth and the field missed only one youth assessment. Point people for the facilities and field were Chris Duval and Sean Heisel.

OYA thanks all the JPPOs, treatment managers and others who helped make the 2010 Mental Health Gap Survey a success. The 100 percent Facility Services return rate and 99.99 percent Community Services return rate are the highest ever. Thank you for a wonderful, successful effort.

Inside OYA

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Director

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The deadline for each issue is the last weekday of the previous month. Send your stories for the July issue to Amanda Lowe-Davies by June 30. Articles received after that date will be held for the August newsletter.

Job well done

OYA staff in field offices and facilities are the "faces" of the agency. Their commitment is often recognized by youth, families and co-workers.

Here are some comments recently received that highlight the good work of OYA's employees:

"Mike Gregus (JPPO at the Multnomah County office) was always polite, professional, and quick to return phone calls. He was always direct in his communication – no way to misunderstand – this was very good for my son."

"Candy Green (GLC at North Coast YCF) is the personification of excellence. She deserves this recognition because of her continuous efforts at enhancing the unit and supporting the reformation of the youth in our care."

"Linn County did an excellent job."

"Dante Lewis (JPPO at the Linn County office) did an extraordinary job in handling our son."

"Our son was afforded opportunities to complete his Bachelor's degree while in OYA, and is now going on to get a law degree. We sincerely appreciate the efforts of all the OYA staff who had a part in encouraging and providing the means for him to accomplish this."

"I was so pleased with the staff. They totally changed my son's integrity and helped a lot with his ADHD and schooling. I am impressed with the program and can't say enough great things about it. Thanks so much!"

Coming soon: safety and security training

Safety and security are vital parts of the juvenile justice system. Youth offenders can do a better job of focusing on treatment and reformation when they feel safe and secure in an environment.

To help with that, OYA is establishing a review process that will use specially trained staff to promote consistent safety and security practices across all facilities. The first training sessions will take place at MacLaren YCF June 23-25 and at Hillcrest YCF July 20-22.

The training sessions are aimed at developing reviewers who are credible, knowledgeable and experienced in recognizing and sharing best practices in security operations. Employees trained as reviewers will observe practices and solicit input from staff on how risks can be minimized.

Staff and managers attending the sessions will be on the grounds of MacLaren and Hillcrest all three days observing and asking questions. Facility staff are encouraged to welcome them into work areas and show them around. Staff input will be beneficial to the process and will help bring OYA much closer to meeting our mission of protecting the public and operating a safe and secure facility for employees and youth offenders.