

Sonshine Christian School begins fourth year

"There seems to be some confusion in the public about Sonshine Christian School and Sonshine Kids Preschool and Childcare," says Andy Wittenburg, pastor at the Florence Seventh-day Adventist Church where both programs have operated.

Sonshine Christian School is a grade school for grades one through eight. It is open and part of a robust international school system.

"The preschool, however, was operated locally as a community service. Due to a number of factors, the church decided to close the preschool's doors Sept. 4, after four years of operation," says Wittenburg. "We are pleased that Karen Nelson will be continuing at the helm of Florence's only private elementary school."

Nelson has a master's degree in education with endorsements in teaching reading, kindergarten and music.

Her 11 years of teaching experience has been in multi-grade elementary school classrooms. She has lived internationally, and uses her life experiences to enhance the classroom educational environment.

"I encourage the students to learn all they can about our world, its people, and cultures; and develop skills to serve others," she says. "I hold high expectations for my students. Parents can expect a stimulating academic environment with a Christ-centered focus for their children and to be partners in developing the positive attitudes, nurturing friendships, and healthy lifestyles that we emphasize."

"Last year we saw tremendous advancement with several of the students," says Nelson. "I'm excited about



COURTESY PHOTO

Students and faculty repaint part of the playground at Sonshine Christian School.

what we can accomplish this year.

"We have some scholarship funds available on a needs-basis for the 2015-16 school year to help parents and their students with the \$305 per month tuition."

One fund is available for first grade students in particular, and can cover a significant portion of the year's cost.

"When you think about it, the tuition is truly a bargain for the quality of education and experiences our students receive," says board president Nathan Large, himself a graduate of the school in the mid-1980s. "That's only about \$2.50 per hour for each school day."

With a small school and a small student-to-teacher ratio, Large says the school is flexible, adaptable and can

customize a learning plan that advances students who are ready for more challenges — or can address student needs to bring them up to the level where they need to be.

In addition to regular classroom instruction, the students have enjoyed field trips to the Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport, the cheese factory and West Coast Game Park in Bandon, cultural events at the Florence Events Center, and a snow day to Mt. Bachelor.

Students also had swim lessons at Coastal Fitness and Aquatics, participated in the annual Community Health Fair in April, and have visited residents at The Shorewood.

"With crowded classrooms and shrinking budgets in public schools across this country, parents increasingly look to private schools to offer their children the tools they

need to succeed in this life and for eternity," says Large. "Sonshine Christian School may be the alternative people are looking for."

Students, staff, and board members have already been to Singing Pines Park for their monthly adopt-a-park clean-up project. In June, they repainted the park's play structure.

Three years ago Sonshine Christian partnered with the City of Florence to pick up trash, maintain the grounds, and report vandalism.

The city recently recognized the partnership with a new sign at the park.

For more information about Sonshine Christian School, call 541-997-5909.

The school is at 4445 Highway 101 in Florence, inside the Florence Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Poetry Contest at FRAA Oct. 9

On Friday, Oct. 9, the FRAA sponsored quarterly Spoken Word Poetry Contest takes place at the FRAA Art Center, 120 Maple St., with poet registration is 5 p.m. The performance starts at 6 p.m.

Anyone can register to read or perform their original poem within the three-minute time limit.

Fee to register is \$10 with all registration money going to the winner. In the past, winners have received up to \$250, but it depends on how many poets register. This event has provided the largest prize of any poetry event in Oregon.

The poetry committee feels this is an important part of this event.

"After all," said chairwoman Bettie Egerton, "if you can pay hundreds of dollars for

a painting, isn't a poem worth the same?"

Sponsors are helping with this event and are still needed for future Quarterly Spoken Word Poetry contests. Past winners of the poetry contest include Eric Sprado with "Wait 'till You Become a Man," and Peter Coyne with "Good Woman Jazz Blue Pianist."

Audience members pay \$5 to listen to poems that elicit laughter, as well as tears, inspiration and thoughtful reflection.


Sponsors for the Quarterly Spoken Word Poetry Contest include: Organic Pest Control, Bettie Egerton, and Northwest Inspection Services.

For more information, visit FRAAOregon.org, or call Egerton at 503-910-3625.

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