

Teen typical kid ... with search & rescue training

By Neil Zawicki
Albany Democrat-Herald

ALBANY (AP) — On December 10, Savannah Sharp was in the middle of an Algebra II test at Scio High School when she got a page from the Linn County Sheriff Search and Rescue coordinator.

That call excused her from the test, because the 15-year-old Lebanon resident was needed on a search.

Just a few hours later, she would find herself at the bottom of a ravine, helping lost mushroom-picker Jason Lee Key to safety after he spent a cold, wet night in the wilderness near Scio. Sharp was one of the first to reach Key, and it was her first real-life mission where her team conducted an actual rescue. Because of the terrain, it took Sharp and her team members more than four hours to help Key to safety once they'd found him.

"It was actually pretty crazy," Sharp said. "It was a near-vertical hill and we were grabbing branches to climb out of there."

Sharp joined the 75-member search and rescue team in June, when she completed the 10-day training academy, which she described as "intense."

"It's probably the most intense physical thing I've ever done in my life," she said. "And I'm a pretty physical person."

The training program was designed by Linn County Staff Sgt. and SAR coordinator Joe Larsen. His Marine Corps background clearly influenced the academy's conditions.

"We don't want to be finding out that a team member can't handle the conditions

during an actual mission," Larsen said. "From the minute they get there, we treat them like Marine Corps or Army Infantry basic training."

Sharp described running with sandbags in her backpack, and carrying stretchers loaded with rocks across streams and up hills.

"We've had big football players quit during academy," Larsen said.

Along with the discipline and physical training, Sharp and her fellow trainees learned wilderness survival, basic first aid and defibrillator operation.

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"I don't have my knife yet," Sharp said. "I'm getting it for Christmas."

Changing lives through art

By Natalie Pate
Statesman Journal

SALEM (AP) — Spoons ... pots ... pans ... buckets ... water coolers ... a toaster oven.

These items are not what many would think of as tools of art.

Mark Powers sees them differently.

“With art, you have to learn how to use limited resources (to) solve some of life’s problems.”
— Mark Power

"I work in a different type of art," said Powers, a professional percussionist. "With art, you have to learn how to use limited resources (to) solve some of life's problems."

Powers moved across the stage, banging on and tapping the various household items, making music; making art.

Though the youth at the Hillcrest Youth Correctional Facility may have limited resources and limited space to express themselves, a new 10-month art workshop program at the facility is giving them an opportunity to make art and grow as individuals.

Powers is one of the local artists who will continue working with the youth of Hillcrest over the coming months.

The Rainforest and Concrete Art Program was celebrated at an open house at Robert Farrell High School.

The message to the community and the youth was summed up by Joe O'Leary, deputy director of Oregon

Youth Authority.

"Art is resilient," he said, addressing the youth. "You are resilient."

Of the many art projects the youth have participated in over the years, all have been in the Salem community, such as the Mosaic outside the YMCA downtown.

"All art was being placed away from the youth," said Lynn Takata, resident artist at the facility.

The facility created the newest program in response, as a way for the youth to create something they could keep with them.

"I hope it's something you can hold on to," Takata said.

Takata has worked with the all-male facility on and off since 2011, when she did her first workshop with the youth.

"It was such a meaningful experience," she said. "I felt like I had the opportunity to make a difference."

Though each student takes special interests in different types of art, ranging from music to writing as well as poetry, many participating in the new program painted a three-banner art piece.

The rainforest theme of the banners came from a popular interest of the youth in South and Central American countries.

Though such a painting would typically be made into a mural, this was made into a banner so it could be transported to future locations for the students.

A few of the students addressed the audience and shared their thoughts on the program.

To maintain the identity of the youth, only the first initial of the students' last names are included. The facility primarily has youth ages 14-18.

Reynaldo C., 18, got into art at a young age, inspired by his brother's work.

But having always expressed himself in freestyle art, such as small sketches and graffiti, he wasn't sure he would enjoy the art program.

"This was new to me ... but I love a challenge," he said.

Takata told him there was no such thing as messing up in art, but the perfectionist in him struggled with the concept at the beginning.

After a couple weeks, he said he began to understand.

"Art doesn't have a formula," he said. "Art is what you make it."

Aside from being able to express themselves through art, the youth are also learning various skills in the program, such as how to better communicate and collaborate with one another.

And for these youth, working together is the most important part.

Reynaldo and ceremony emcee Kayshawn H. are good friends.

Kayshawn said that when he gets to work on things with his friends he always has a good time.

"One of the cool things about doing it together is that something positive, something fun always comes out of it," he said.

“Art has the ability to heal and transform.”
— Lynn Takata

Takata hopes the students have a meaningful engagement with the art through the workshops.

"Art has the ability to heal and transform," she said.

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