

SCIENCE: Sisters is ahead of the curve in education

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strong. In statewide science tests in 2017, the district was first in science scores in Central Oregon, and the 5th-grade students placed first in the state. However, compared to other states, science and math scores in Oregon are average, 21st to 31st of 46 states. Over the past eight years the Sisters community has helped enhance science in the schools through donation of funds and volunteering hours, as at the annual Science Fair. Some local businesses participate in the fair — Mohr Solutions, Innovator, the Forest Service, and Fish and Game. Istar Stratospheric Ballooning offers class experiments. Energyneering Solutions and the Seed to Table program offer internships and training for students — long-term STEM connections between school and community.

The science teachers, bolstered with community support, have done well these past several years despite being buffeted hither and thither by state and national initiatives. Now, science education in Sisters is poised to grow even stronger. The new principal at the elementary school (Joan Warburg) and at the middle school (Alison Baglien) bring a depth of experience and strong leadership toward integrating NGSS and other curricula K-12. Parents in the elementary school are asking for afterschool science experiences for their kids. Parents in the middle school form clubs focused on robotics, math, butterflies and computer coding. Students in the high school search out educational experiences found nowhere else in Oregon: exploring science in nature's wilderness; in the air with balloons, drones, telescopes and airplanes; in cancer research labs at Seattle's Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center; and in exploring the miraculous growth of a seed into a vegetable.

Science Club sets out for frontier this fall

The Sisters Science Club will present lectures on watershed restoration, human genetics and climate change to launch the 2108-19 Frontiers in Science series at The Belfry this fall.

On Tuesday, September 25, Brad Chalfant, founder and CEO of the Deschutes Land Trust, will describe the internationally acclaimed work that is under way to restore Whychus Creek.

On Tuesday, October 23, Barbara Handelin, Ph.D., founder and CEO of NovoKen in Malvern, PA, will speak on the

challenges of human genetics research.

On Tuesday, November 27, Steve Grossnickle, Ph.D., will address the topic of "Global Climate Change: A Tree's Perspective."

Social hour for The Belfry lectures begins at 6 p.m. with light fare, beer, and wine available. Lectures begin at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5; annual donors, teachers and students are admitted free. The Belfry is located at 302 E. Main Ave., Sisters.

For more information: www.sistersscienceclub.org.

Seed to Table to raise \$15,000

An anonymous donor has stepped forward to assist Seed to Table in raising funds to augment its programing by adding an education coordinator. The donor has offered to provide \$15,000 each year over the next three years if Seed to Table can match the donation.

The addition of an education coordinator would be a "huge boost" for the organization, according to Executive Director Audrey Tehan. Since its inception in 2013, Seed to Table has grown to educate nearly 1,300 students throughout Central Oregon each year. In addition, S2T feeds an average of 150 families each week through food banks, schools, and the local community. However, Tehan reports that the organization is constantly receiving requests from adults and students for increased education and fresh foods. "We would love to be able to support our community's growing desire for fresh foods and hands-on education," said Tehan.

In addition to expanding current programming, an education coordinator would step in to replace an important nutrition and science program that had been provided at Sisters Elementary School through Seed to Table's partnership with Food Corps, an AmeriCorps[JT1] program.

Because the two-year program has ended, S2T's education coordinator would step in



PHOTO PROVIDED

Seed to Table provides both food and education in Sisters.

to the fill that gap, according to Tehan.

“Seed to Table programming is a critical factor in having the top science scores in the state.”
— Superintendent Curt Scholl

“This really important program is now up and running, and I would hate for that all just to end,” said Tehan.

According to School Superintendent Curt Scholl, “Seed to Table programming is a critical factor in our schools having the top science scores in the state.”

Seed to Table has until October 1 to raise the matching funds and is hoping to celebrate meeting the challenge goal at its Fall Harvest Dinner coming up on September 15. Donations can be mailed to Seed to Table Oregon, P.O. Box 1812, Sisters, OR 97759. For more information on the dinner and contributing to the meet the challenge grant, visit www.seedtotableoregon.org.

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