

Senator Merkley visits Heart of Oregon YouthBuild

Senator Merkley met last week with Heart of Oregon YouthBuild, witnessing firsthand the program’s work providing youth with opportunities to benefit their community while raising their own bar of expectations at the same time.

During the visit, Heart of Oregon staff and corpsmembers shared the educational, personal, and professional development components that YouthBuild offers. They discussed the integral role the program plays in preparing youth who face multiple barriers and risk factors to become more engaged, successful citizens in their communities. In April 2015 Senator Merkley invited HOC youth to ask initial questions at town halls in all three Central Oregon counties, and presented the organization with a flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol.

“When I was growing up, my dad always encouraged me to build things and work with my hands, because he knew those lessons would stay with me through my life,” Senator Merkley said. “My dad was absolutely right, and now YouthBuild is giving kids in Central Oregon an opportunity to develop practical job skills and keep them on track to get an education. There are lots of pathways to success, and I know from the young

people I’ve heard from today that YouthBuild provides one extremely valuable option. I thank YouthBuild for their efforts to support students, and I’ll continue to do everything I can to make sure the federal government is a strong partner.”

During his visit to the YouthBuild headquarters in Sisters, Senator Merkley received a youth-led tour and conducted a Q&A session with the youth. Youth in the program work toward GED/high school diplomas two days per week and serve on-site to build affordable homes two days per week, gaining work skills and construction industry certifications along the way. Youth have constructed or rehabbed 25 low-income homes in seven Central Oregon towns since 2009. In addition to the blended program that enables students to focus on educational and career goals simultaneously, youth leadership and community involvement is a hallmark of YouthBuild, exemplified in the youth-elected Youth Partnership Council. Volunteer mentors also play a critical support role for youth success.

“Leadership and service is built into the YouthBuild model, so it is extremely impactful for our young

people to meet Senator Merkley, who encourages them to advocate and create change in their communities,” said YouthBuild Program Director Kara Johnson. “Senator Merkley has been an advocate for Heart of Oregon YouthBuild for 10 years now.

His continual support of YouthBuild on the local and national levels impacts thousands of youth throughout the United States each year.”

The Heart of Oregon YouthBuild program is supported by grants from the U.S. Department of Labor,

Employment and Training Administration, a national service AmeriCorps grant, as well as from the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission and local foundations, community organizations, and Sisters School District.

Sisters Rodeo parade entry forms available

Entry forms for the 2018 Sisters Rodeo Parade are now available. The parade will be held on Saturday, June 8 at 9:30 a.m. in Sisters. Entry deadline is May 15. Parade position numbers will be sent out after that date, according to the parade committee.

“With our parade so popular, we are not able to accommodate everyone,” said Jeri Buckmann, parade co-chairman, “so it is important to enter early.” Entry forms can be printed from www.sistersrodeo.com or may be picked up at the Sisters Rodeo office, 220 W. Cascade Ave. or at Sisters Chamber of Commerce, 291 E. Main Ave. in Sisters.

“This is a wonderful Western tradition at Sisters Rodeo that entertains the whole family,” said co-chairman Vicki Yost. “Our parade has such a variety of entries, which is what makes it such a popular event.”

The entry form includes general rules for parade

participants and directions for finding accommodations and boarding facilities. Information for visiting rodeo courts is also available at the rodeo office for both the parade and grand entry preceding rodeo performances.

Judging of entries will start at 8:30 a.m. that morning with trophies and ribbons to be awarded for several categories of entry.

The Sisters PRCA Rodeo will feature five performances on June 5 (Xtreme Bulls), and rodeo June 7-9. Tickets may be purchased online or by calling 541-549-0121 or 800-827-7522.

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