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## University



Outdoor school coordinator Mitch Sorenson (left) and division head Simon Shadowlight have found ESCAPE outdoor schools both challenging and rewarding

# **ESCAPE** offers outdoor schools

By Jennifer Thomas **Emerald Contributor** 

It's nighttime and the moon is full. You are surrounded by 40 sixth-graders stationed around the campfire. They are finally still after a long day of hiking and learning about the woods

Are you hardy enough to keep up with sixthgraders? If so, you may be a candidate for the ES-

CAPE Outdoor School program.

We have no criteria for students participal ing in the Outdoor School. Motivated, enthusiastic students who work well with sixth grade students seem to enjoy it most." said Simon Shadowlight, ESCAPE Outdoor School program-

'It is the best thing in the entire world," said Beth Ottman, a veteran counselor for three years and now an Outdoor School coordinator. "It's an

amazing experience.

The Outdoor School run by ESCAPE, located in EMU Room 111, is a program designed to involve interested college students in camps around the Eugene area, near Portland or on the coast

Students attending five-day camps can receive a total of three upper-division credits or two upper-division credits for two or three day camps. There are a few camps in the fall, but most take place in the spring

Counselors are trained by instructors at their designated camps. After training, they are paired up and assigned to supervise eight to 10 kids,

Supervision includes getting the kids up in

the morning, taking them to meals, setting up meals, taking the kids around the camp on hikes, scheduling activities, and participating in recreation hour and evening activities songs and skits around the campfire

Mitch Sorenson, counselor and coordinator said, "I thought it was fun communicating with the kids. By going to Outdoor School, I have a better understanding of kids and got new skills. like learning to teach."

in the Outdoor School Program. The program will include 260 college students acting as counselors. Most of the camps are in May, but a few April 16 in Crestview, Ore.

As coordinators, Jason Blumer says that he Ottman and Mitch Sorenson are in charge of getting college students registered, placing them in camps, keeping files current and acting as mediators between ESCAPE Outdoor School program and the participating camps.

Ottman is amazed by the sense of family the counselors feel with the kids after such a short time. "With teaching kids, the cabin groups, and singing around the campfire, you get close. Kids will write to you and tell you how much they en-

'The kids sometimes ask for addresses and write to the counselors." Shadowlight said.

Sorenson said there is a lot to be gained from being a counselor. "The individual gain is based on what you put into it. Whatever amount you put into being a counselor, you'll get a lot more



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