

# ASUO encourages community involvement

■ Student volunteers are in high demand at several local programs

By Emily Gust  
Oregon Daily Emerald

The ASUO is shifting its focus to a new outreach effort that includes four volunteer programs to get students involved in the community.

ASUO Outreach Associate Gabe Sitowski said that in order to help students discover the available opportunities, the ASUO held a meeting last week to introduce four existing programs to interested students: Start Making A Reader Today (SMART), Pathfinders, Bolder Options and Lunch Buddies.

SMART sends volunteers to selected schools for one hour a week, where they read with two at-risk children in kindergarten through third grade, said Liz Degner, South Valley area manager for SMART.

One of the most apparent effects of the program, Degner said, is that

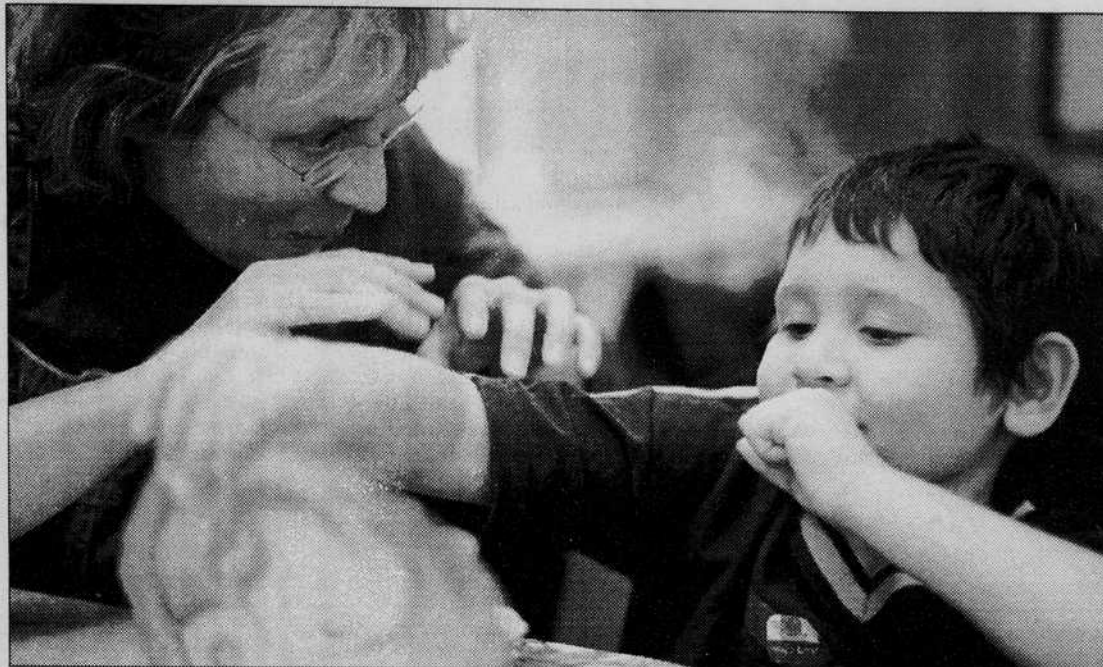
participation often changes students' attitudes.

Some students will have bad attitudes in the classroom before connecting with a SMART volunteer, she said. But, "After they work with volunteers, their self-esteem increases and they start displaying a better attitude about being at school."

The goal is for every child to work with two volunteers per week. But with more than 950 children in the program and about 900 volunteers — many of whom work more than the one hour required — some children aren't receiving their two visits.

Degner said the program needs about 300 more volunteers to make sure every child is fully served.

Options extend beyond third grade, and a few programs offer guidance to older youths. Committed Partners for Youth directs two of these — Pathfinders, which is set up for middle school children, and



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Hadley Brown, SMART reading program coordinator for Westmoreland Elementary, reads to 5-year-old Antonio Garcia.

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# Kwanzaa observance celebrates history, looks to future



Laura Smit Emerald

Abolade Majekobaje waters plants and seeds in honor of the past and the elders during the pre-celebration of the African American holiday Kwanzaa.

■ University students will celebrate Kwanzaa a bit early, but the holiday's lessons are as powerful as ever

By Serena Markstrom  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, Ujamaa, Nia, Kuumba and Imani.

They are seven principles, representing seven days and they are not in November, but the celebration of them often is.

Each year Kwanzaa, the winter holiday celebrating African American culture, begins the day after Christmas, but because of the school-based schedule, many of the celebrations fall in November.

Dominique Beaumonte, director of the University Black Student Union, said the early observation of Kwanzaa ensures proper acknowledgment of an important holiday.

"I think it would be horrible if we overlooked it as a program on campus," said Beaumonte, a sophomore pre-journalism major.

The BSU held its Kwanzaa pro-

gram Wednesday in the EMU Ballroom. About 150 people came to hear the music, see the skits and learn a bit about the background of the young holiday.

Olivia Callier, a freshman, opened with the Black National Anthem, followed by a performance by the University Gospel Choir.

“The goal is to provide cultural awareness by working together and enjoying each other's presence.”

Dominique Beaumonte  
director  
Black Student Union

"Keep your head up, don't give in," Sara Chiles, a soloist, sang, "Everything will be all right."

This singing set the stage for an entertaining and informational program.

"The goal is to provide cultural awareness by working together and

enjoying each other's presence," Beaumonte said.

The event was put on entirely by student volunteers.

Students acted out the first day, Umoja, or unity, with a simulated classroom skit outlining the purpose of Kwanzaa.

In 1966, Dr. Maulana Karenga, an activist and black studies scholar, founded the holiday. Today, Americans celebrate it in a number of ways, most of which involve a spiritual reconnection to the African American community and to one's goals.

The professor asked his class if anyone knew who Karenga is. A ditzzy student, portrayed by Abolade Majekobaje, eagerly raised her hand and said he is, like, the best football player.

Beaumonte, playing a smart student, corrected her and ultimately moved his chair away from the ignorant student, evoking laughter and applause from the audience.

Majekobaje, whose father is Nigerian, said she also learned about Kwanzaa in real-life school.

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