

Learning outside school walls this summer

CANYON VIEWS ALLISON GALVIN

Even though school is under way, there are a countless number of ways your children can keep learning outside school walls. Whether your students walk through a neighborhood park full of birds and squirrels or go camping, Oregon has many wonderful learning opportunities to offer beyond the classroom.

As the head of Oregon's leading online public charter school, I can tell you that just like other public schools we recognize the importance of field trips. We provide over 200 each year to our students in grades K-12 across the state. This summer hundreds of our families are taking their own field trips to help their students experience the world beyond our virtual school walls.

Teaching children with a high quality curriculum using textbooks and other tools is important, but some of the most meaningful lessons that will leave a lasting impact on students occur during hands-on, real life experiences. Taking students outside the classroom allows them to explore and grasp concepts in a more realistic context, whether it's math, science or other subjects.

The list of suggestions for learning outside school walls is long, so I'll focus on one of my favorites; taking educational trips around Oregon and narrow it to just a few ideas.

Destinations by location

Oregon Coast — Our family recently took a field trip to the North Coast. We visited Fort Stevens which was built during the Civil War but didn't see any com-

bat action until World War II when it was bombed by a Japanese submarine and became the only United States Fort to be fired upon since the war of 1812. We also walked out in the surf to see the shipwreck of the Peter Iredale, a Mexican cargo ship which got stuck on a sandbar during a nasty storm in 1906. Kids love to get close to the vessel's remains and ask questions about what happened. This area is rich in lessons about history, weather, marine life and much more.

Northern Oregon — The panoramic beauty of the Columbia River Gorge is a result of gigantic lava mudflows and floods from Cascade mountain volcanoes 40 million years ago. The Gorge is 80 miles long and up to 4,000 feet deep. Students can learn about the diverse plant life, atmospheric pressure, historic and prehistoric settlements along with geologic formations. There are several interpretive sites, trails, waterfalls and other ways for students to learn more about this natural wonder.

Central Oregon — Your students might feel they're on planet Mars if they visit the colorful rock formations known as the Painted Hills in the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The hills get their name from the unique bands of red, orange, yellow, tan and black which formed millions of years ago during volcanic eruptions and continued to change over time with the forces of nature. The hills and the rest of the monument were once home to exotic prehistoric animals like elephants, camels and saber tooth tigers; some of their fossils remain today.

Eastern Oregon — Rising into the clouds in the southeast corner of Oregon is the majestic Steens Mountain with literally breathtaking views, not only due to the natural beauty but also the 9,700 foot elevation. The mountain offers various overlooks where students can see

Canyon Views

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Contact Justin Much at 503-769-6338 or jmuch@salem.gannett.com.

glaciers and deserts below. If they bring binoculars they might see a bighorn sheep, antelope, mountain lion, or a herd of wild horses.

Southern Oregon — One of the crown jewels of Oregon's learning landscape is Crater Lake, the deepest lake in the nation with a maximum depth of 1,949 feet. Native American Indians watched the lake form after the Mount Mazama volcano erupted and collapsed. The National Park Service encourages education and research activities. Students can learn about the science behind snowmelt or try their hand at creative artwork at the lake. Take one of the boat tours to the volcanic cinder cone called Wizard Island, a phantom ship and few other surprises.

Theme trips

Ghost Towns — For that student who wants to go off the beaten path, map out a few of Oregon's ghost towns. According to one retired school teacher and author, there are more than 250 ghost towns in Oregon, more than any other state. Not only can students discover interesting pioneer stories behind these towns, but enhance a sense of community. Here's a website with a handy ghost town map: <http://www.ghosttowns.com/states/or/>

or.html.

State Symbols — Challenge your students while you're on a road trip, or any time your family is in the great outdoors, to see how many state symbols they can identify. Make a game out of it using the Oregon Blue Book, which includes everything from the official state animal, insect and mushroom, to the gemstone, shell and soil. The book has many learning activities for families traveling the state and this link lists the symbols <http://bluebook.state.or.us/kids/symbols/symbols.htm>.

Other links

TravelOregon.com is a great resource for all things travel run by the state Tourism Commission.

OregonHistoryWayfinder.org, provided by the Oregon Historical Society, is an interactive map which pinpoints important places, people and events in our state's history.

Perhaps your family isn't planning an education vacation like the ones I've described. Plenty of learning opportunities exist in everyday life for students, perhaps you like to garden in the backyard, bake with the kids in the kitchen or visit grandparents and talk about their history.

If you do get a chance to explore Oregon this summer, I'm guessing you'll encounter some type of educational opportunity. Whether your students are history buffs, into environmental science, develop new math skills reading a map, or draw something at a scenic site, it's all part of learning outside school walls.

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Relay for Life shows off cancer survivor's joyful spirit

CHRISTENA BROOKS
SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

MARQUAM - Jan Boardwell didn't walk the track at the Silverton/Mt. Angel Relay for Life at Butte Creek Elementary School on Saturday, but she was there in spirit and on Skype.

A chipper 70-year-old who's beaten the odds many times since being diagnosed with cancer in 1984, Boardwell coordinated survivor activities at Silverton's first two relays in 2014 and 2015. This year, she wasn't well enough to attend but logged in via video call.

She had a message for all those fighting cancer: "We have a model, and it's scatter joy. I want them to know they can do that. They can live with cancer, or they can be lucky enough to beat it. But they can scatter joy every day."

Boardwell has passed her duties and enthusiasm on to others. Her team, the Thrivers, was Silverton's top money-maker this year. Sixteen teams and individual donors raised nearly \$20,000, with the Thrivers' earnings accounting for \$7,000 of that total.

The team's secret weapon is Boardwell's former neighbor, Carolyn Cooley, whose crocheted butterflies generated



COURTESY OF PORTRAITMASTERS
Survivor Jan Boardwell has inspired many at the Silverton/Mt. Angel Relay for Life, including Stacy Palmer and Rick Heuchert.

more than \$5,000 in donations from passersby in downtown Silverton this year. Cooley and her colorful crafts — designed after one made by her mother, who died of pancreatic cancer — have become a Water Street fixture.

"It needs to be done. I'd say one-third of the people who stop and talk to me are survivors, and they know what we're fighting," she said.

Cooley credits Boardwell with kick-

starting her crafting campaign. After moving into her neighborhood several years ago, Boardwell invited her to Woodburn's Relay for Life. Then, when Silverton/Mt. Angel debuted its own event, the pair got involved right away.

She's the one who got me inspired in the first place," Cooley said. "We were sitting at relay, and she said, 'I wish we had something to offer the people as they go by so we could raise more money.' I ran home and got some paper beads; we made \$78 that night. After that, I saw the butterfly on my fridge that my mom had made, and I had an epiphany."

Over the last three years, Cooley's crafting fundraiser took off as Boardwell's cancer battle intensified. This month, Boardwell moved to live with her nephew and niece, Dennis and Eileen Sherwood. Cooley said she's staying in touch with her friend and will continue her efforts to fund a cancer cure.

"I will do this as long as my fingers can continue to crochet," she said.

Meanwhile, Tricia Dubay assumed Boardwell's job of honoring cancer survivors at Saturday's Relay for Life, held noon to midnight this year. The relay also honored caretakers and was filled with activities created by Brenda Zadjel

ranging from hula dancing to a water balloon toss.

Iconic moments included the emotional Luminaria, a time of candlelit reflection overseen by Lynette Cortez, and the firefighters' challenge, coordinated by Rick Heuchert, where firefighters completed laps wearing turnout and breathing apparatus. Silverton Kiwanis provided food, and a DJ played music all day.

About 125 people participated in Silverton's relay this year, said head coordinator Stacy Palmer.

Next year's local relay will be July 14-15, back at the high school track and overnight as usual.

Palmer missed Boardwell at the track on Saturday. Over the years, she's watched the older woman surprise doctors and herself. At Silverton's first relay in 2014, Boardwell told her she wasn't sure she'd make the next one. But she did, and went on to celebrate her 70th birthday in January, fulfill her dream of hearing cellist Yo-Yo Ma play live, and, now, root on third-year relay participants.

"She has one of the most positive, move-forward attitudes I've ever seen," Palmer said. "She inspires all of us."

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