

# Life *in the* Valley

sanews@salem.gannett.com



PHOTOS BY LAUREN HERNANDEZ / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Otto Matthews, left, and Kingston Matthews take a rest after hiking under the South Falls of the Silver Falls State Park on May 27.

## Passport

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The organization coordinated with the elementary school's SHINE program, which provides enrichment opportunities for its students and partners with community organizations to provide educational experiences outside of the classroom environment.

As the children ducked underneath the caves beneath the South Falls of the recreation site, Stephanie Smith, a volunteer cohort leader with Passport Oregon, taught the children how rock formations are created and how the earth's terrain changes over tens of thousands of years.

Kids craned their heads as Smith presented pieces of rock plucked from the caves, but others were overcome with the rushing water of the South Falls that showered down on visitors.

"Look mom, it's a rainbow!" said Otto Matthews, 9, to his mom Angela Matthews, who volunteered for the trip. "I like the view of the waterfall down here."

While Passport Oregon volunteers led the kids on a hike through the South Falls Day-Use Area, the kids often ran ahead and created their own path.

"This is just to create a pathway for students to let them go see places that some of us are only blessed to see," Kanable said.

Kanable said the Silver Falls hike was the group's seventh trip together. They have also visited the Columbia River Gorge, Eugene and the Tryon Creek State Natural Area.

The group later went on to visit the Oregon State University Extension Services Demonstration Garden to strengthen their green thumbs by learning about garden work, bug identification and weather from master gardeners.

"Some of these students have never been here before, so this is really a chance for them to get outside and for some of the parent volunteers to get away from work and spend time with their children as well," Kanable said.

In July, Passport Oregon will provide its program to 20 students from the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, or IRCO, on a similar set of excursions in the outdoors.

For more information on Passport Oregon, visit <http://passportoregon.org/>



Stephanie Smith, volunteer cohort leader with Passport Oregon, teaches Kingston Matthews, left, and Otto Matthews about rock formations at the Silver Falls State Park on May 27.



Leila Walker, 10, explores the South Falls of the Silver Falls State Park on May 27.



Students from Beaver Acres Elementary School are led by Stephanie Smith, from Passport Oregon, through the Silver Falls State Park.