

## ELC, local organizations working to restore darkness to night sky

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Staff Writer

Clackamas' Environmental Learning Center is working on a project to restore darkness to the night sky and save energy by converting area outdoor lighting to more efficient fixtures. In order to get this accomplished, it is working with the college administration, the Oregon City government, the Oregon City school district and PGE.

The problem is that street lights and other outdoor lighting are causing light to reflect in the atmosphere. If you've ever been in a car at night heading toward the city, you've probably noticed the sky glowing around the city. That glow is preventing the ELC's space observatory from functioning optimally.

"The observatory is not in the wrong place," said the ELC's John LeCavalier. "It is in the right place for people to have access to it. We can restore and protect the night sky so people can enjoy the dark night and the stars."

"The point is not to get rid of the

lights," said LeCavalier, "just to replace them with better ones. Many lights broadcast up. It degrades the dark sky and the opportunity to see the stars above us. There are safe [light fixture] designs that do not overbroadcast."

Representatives from the ELC will be meeting with city and school officials to make sure that codes are established regarding lighting quality. Also, the ELC will be meeting with PGE, which actually is responsible for some of the lights on campus.

This project is not unique. There are groups, such as the International Dark Skies Association, that are working to raise awareness for the disappearing night sky. The Dark Skies Association points out that at least 30 percent of the light produced by the average outdoor fixture is totally wasted. Said its website, "All this wasted light and energy is doing nothing to promote safety, or a better life at night. In fact, it does the opposite. It costs us money and energy to have a trashy nighttime environment and to wipe out our dark skies."

"I think people care about the world



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Lights along streets like these in Oregon City detract from night sky darkness, which is needed for visibility of stars and proper function of observatories such as the ELC's Haggart.

they live in," said LeCavalier. "People would like to see stars at night, planets. The pursuit of the observatory is

not so much science as connection." Send your questions to the ELC at [elc@clackamas.cc.or.us](mailto:elc@clackamas.cc.or.us). If you would

like to know more about the International Dark Skies Association, visit [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org).

## Giving Tree fills void with presents, cheer for parents

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Contributing Writer

During the Christmas season, the Giving Tree stands outside the Associated Student Government office, providing a link between students who can't afford gifts for their children and students and staff who want to help. The ASG coordinates the project, and over 60 applications for gifts have already been turned in. Michelle Waggoner, secretary for Student Activities, said they were expecting from 80 to 100 applications before the end of the season.

This is how it works:

The ASG takes applications from parents during the holiday season. (They recommend that the applications be turned in by the end of November.) Tags for each of the children are put on the tree, where perspective donors can select a tag based on the age and



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gender of the child. The donor picks up the child's wish-list at the ASG office, and the donor's name and phone number are recorded. The donor buys the gift and takes it, unwrapped, to the office, where the parent picks it before the end of the term. The giver and the receiver remain anonymous.

Anyone who is a student at Clackamas Community College is eligible to turn in an application for his or her child, and all applications for gifts are accepted. Teen mothers are eligible, and tags have even been put up for their unborn babies. Most of the children will receive gifts purchased by someone who has picked their tags off the tree, but all applicants will receive gifts.

At the end of the term, the ASG takes money that has either been donated or has been allocated from the budget and buys gifts for all of the children whose tags are still on the tree. Tags that are left on the tree are usually late applications and older children. People tend to take the tags of the younger children first.

The ASG also contacts all the perspective donors who have taken tags and don't have them back by the deadline. The tradition of having a Giving Tree for students on campus was started in 1995. Until that time, donations from the tree went to the Salvation Army. The ASG recognized the opportunity to help students here on campus and decided to make a change.

"One of the best things is that we brought it to campus," said Norm Berney, who was the coordinator of Student Government and Student Activities at the time. "People at the college

jump right in and get involved, and the parents are so thankful. We really feel like we've filled a void on campus. Hopefully it goes beyond Christmas."

Berney said every year parents come in after Christmas with gratitude, saying that there was no way they could have afforded the gift that their child received.

Students and staff have also tried to fill the void by taking up collections and donating money, buying food for the larger families, and giving sacks of toys and gifts. Gorianne Muggli, last year's vice-president of the ASG, said, "If you ever had any doubts about if there are a lot

of nice people in the world, this will restore your faith."

"Students don't get enough of a chance to do things for other people," said Muggli. The Giving Tree is just such

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Norm Berney  
Former ASG Advisor

an opportunity. "One of the best experiences young people can have is doing some-

thing for someone else. I think it's pretty neat to get a gift from a total stranger, but the giver gets more out of it than the receiver. It's a lot of fun."

The project is also a team-builder for the ASG. They all work together to decorate the tree and put the tags up, coordinate the givers and the receivers, make reminder phone calls to givers who miss the deadline, shop for the kids who didn't specifically get presents, and send thank-you cards. Waggoner said the group does it because "we know that we are helping students on campus."

The deadline for buying a gift for the Giving Tree this year is Dec. 11.

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