

Girls join in on Scout Troop, Cub Scout Pack outings

BY ERIK JOHNSEN

Greetings, fellow Applegaters! When I last submitted an update on Scouting, the first COVID-19 vaccines were rolling out and we were offering a new Scouting opportunity for girls. I'm here to report that things are still moving in the right direction, and we're delivering on our promises!

In February, Scout Troop 17 in Jacksonville opened its door to girls. We quickly grew from two to six members, with additional girls coming to our meetings to check us out on a frequent basis. Additionally, about 30 percent of our Cub Scout Pack is comprised of girls, so we have a healthy group of young women coming up through the program.

Having friends and group activities is always fun, but the COVID-19 precautions have made us even more aware of how important social and emotional interactions are for our children. When school and other youth programs removed those opportunities this past year, I became even more thankful that Scouting continued to provide outlets and creative ways for our kids to get these interactions in a safe way. Scouting became the one constant in our family routine.

One of the more common inquiries I hear is whether Scouting provides outdoor activities and wilderness survival



Scout Troop members gather for a group photo at Camp Meriwether. Photo: Erik Johnsen.

skills. On that front, I can report that we've been delivering!

In June, some of our newer Troop 17 members took a float down the pristine waters of the Wood River, while our older and more experienced Scouts took a week-long trek in the Sierra Nevada, with over 24 miles hiked and 5,000 feet gained in elevation. Then we all convened for a week at Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Camp Meriwether (on the northern Oregon coast), which included swimming, rifle shooting, axe throwing, canoeing, BMX biking, land sailing, merit badges, and, yes, a few Scouts even sleeping in their own crude wilderness shelters.

Since folks in the Applegate are already more outdoorsy than most, we sometimes hear that Scouting isn't needed here. Well, did your family do all this, in one summer? And with friends? Scouting delivers maximum adventure and fun, with a program, built around character and skills development, that just can't be replicated anywhere else.

We would also like to recognize our newest Eagle Scout, Lucas Ivey, who received his award in July. Congratulations, Lucas!

At the time of this submission, our Cub Scout Pack 17 is about to head up to its own summer camp at BSA Camp McLoughlin (which, by the way, is a private lakefront property on Lake of the Woods, available for rent). We'll engage in swimming, BB guns, archery, nature exploration, crafts, skills, skits, and songs.

We have planned our entire calendar through next summer with more fun and exciting activities, which we have every intention of being able to do, as long as COVID-19 continues to disappear in the rearview mirror.

We hope you all come check us out this year!

Erik Johnsen
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In June, some newer Troop 17 members took a float down the pristine waters of the Wood River. Photo: Erik Johnsen.



Activities during a troop trip to Camp Meriwether on the northern Oregon coast included swimming, rifle shooting, axe throwing, canoeing, BMX biking (seen here), and land sailing. Photo: Erik Johnsen.



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NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

An enthusiastic, yet cautious, return to Applegate School

BY JEAN HALL

All the Applegate School staff eagerly welcomed back the students on August 30. We all look forward to a great school year, keeping safe with social distancing and frequent handwashing. Masks will be required on all buses, and the use of masks at school will follow the state guidelines. All cleaning, sanitizing, and contact-tracing protocols will stay in place from last year.

Some changes have occurred in the staffing at Applegate School. Middle school teacher Michelle Daw will teach music this year at Applegate and Williams schools. Renee Gourley, who led the special education program last year, has taken Mrs. Daw's place in middle school. A new special education teacher and a PE instructor will join the staff.

Staff members worked in some special programs over the summer. Mrs. Hirschmugl and Mrs. Gourley attended a week-long training in a method called Ortan-Gillingham. Both teachers are working toward being certified in this method of teaching, which, as Mrs. Hirschmugl describes it, "is a systematic multisensory way of teaching kids with dyslexia, but is also good for all kids."

Mrs. Halsted taught in the two-week summer program called "Camp Learn-A-Lot" for Applegate and Williams school students entering second through fifth grades. She said about the program, "The focus was on *fun* while learning about the engineering design process and community." Students explored states of matter while enjoying root beer floats. They worked together to build water

slide models and sandcastles. Students also learned about different kinds of communities and did some mapping activities. On hot days they enjoyed water-balloon dodgeball with sprinklers. Mrs. Hirschmugl helped Mrs. Halsted the second week of the summer program.

Kinder Critter camp took place August 16-19. Each day focused on kids' social-emotional well-being. Mrs. Hirschmugl explained that the purpose of the camp was to acclimate new Kinders to a school setting. She said that each day students listened to an Erick Carle book, made a craft, and took home a free book.

During the Critter Camp week, Mrs. Gourley taught a summer school for first graders.

Mrs. Hirschmugl and Mrs. Halsted were pleased with the partnership with White Oaks Farm last school year. Students not only learned about pollination, plant life cycles, and farm-to-table opportunities, but were also able to practice gardening skills. The teachers are hoping to include all grades (kindergarten through eighth) in the program this new school year.

All staff members are thoroughly enjoying the return of the students to begin the new school year. Mrs. Janie Burstein looks forward to welcoming students to the library, and Mrs. Linda Kappen is anticipating teaching art and doing greenhouse activities, along with her duties as a classroom aide.

We wish all staff members and students a happy year of learning.

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Excited for a new school year

BY RICH HALSTED

One of the main reasons I ran again for the school board was because I became very concerned that we could lose the positive momentum Three Rivers School District built in the three years prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. This momentum led to unprecedented improvement in graduation rates, stabilization of the budget leading to fully funded school years, and a build-up of the talent level throughout the district to better serve our students. I believe we are going to recapture this momentum—and more—based on the exceptional teachers, staff, and administrators we have in our buildings.

With graduation rates on a significant upslope, we are turning more attention towards ensuring students are as prepared as possible for day one after high school. This includes, but isn't limited to, high standards of academics, better skills for trades, and wider career explorations and life skills. It is strategically important for our collective future that we produce the best-prepared students possible. Internships, evaluations of employability, and significant investments in technical



Members of the Hidden Valley High School Class of 2021 fling their mortar boards into the sky. Photo: Newcomb Photography.

education courses are some of the ways we are moving forward with these initiatives.

Another major focus of mine is family engagement. It doesn't

take much research to know that engaged parents are the most important indicator of student success. A loving adult connected with a student's teacher is an educational multiplier. We need to ensure that parents understand how much they impact their children's educational growth. Simply reading, playing games, and reviewing homework regularly with children will make a marked impact in how they grow as students throughout their years in school.

Finally, I couldn't be more appreciative of how our school district employees, parents, loved ones, community volunteers and organizations, and, most importantly, students adapted to this last dynamic school year. In some ways I think we are better for it, but I will be really happy to have consistency again.

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