



Gorge students meet with local civil designer, Emmanuel Flores, during a "Lunch with a STEM Professional" event in early 2020. These opportunities will be much expanded through this work. Contributed photo

# STEM Hub awarded OCF matching grant

By Lisa Bren  
For Columbia Gorge STEM Hub

THE DALLES — For years, employers across the nation have struggled to find employees with relevant skills. In the U.S., high school students receive much less work-based learning than in other countries even though there is evidence that students involved in career and technical education during high school are more likely to graduate and more likely to complete a post-secondary degree. Career connected learning is an approach to integrating career awareness and education into the high school experience.

Despite challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, local partners have come together in 2020-21 to launch Columbia Gorge Career Connect, a cross-sector, bi-state effort to increase career exposure for local youth and help bridge the gap between high school and the workforce, by giving students access to guest speakers, job shadows, and academic internships.

Emiliano Ramirez, 11th grade engineering student at Hood River Valley High School, said, "I'm interested in participating [in an internship]; it will be a great opportunity for me to see what's out there in terms of careers and connect me with industry professionals and people in my community that I would have never have spoken to without this program."

This effort is led by the Columbia Gorge STEM Hub (Oregon), Career Connect Southwest Washington, and Hood River Valley High School. Many local businesses and schools have helped inform and support the planning and launch of Columbia Gorge Career Connect, including Cardinal Glass, Port of Cascade Locks, Skyline Health, The Dalles High School, Mill A, and White Salmon Valley Schools. Insitu, Three30Three, and Overwatch Imaging are among the companies that have contributed funds to support the work.

Through a matching grant from the Oregon Community Foundation, additional resources are coming to the Gorge to support this work on an unprecedented scale. A total of up to \$142,660 will be awarded to the region

for career connected learning, but every dollar must be matched by a local investment of time or money. Thus, the Columbia Gorge STEM Hub is seeking pledge requests from the community.

After initial launch commitments from early partners, the STEM Hub is seeking to raise \$55,000 and at least 718 pledged volunteer hours.

The funds raised will support project coordination and event expenses, including some funds to carry over to subsequent years to help with sustainability. Volunteers are being sought to have their names added to a guest speaker database and support regional career expo events. Companies are being sought to host academic credit internships, provide job shadows, and eventually, lead worksite tours.

Columbia Gorge Career Connect is targeting STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields and jobs related to career and technical education programs at local high schools, including agriculture, digital media, computer science, and engineering. However, given that technology is integral to countless jobs and industries, even companies that don't identify as "STEM" could be a fit for hosting an internship or providing guest speakers.

For example, a local non-profit may benefit from a social media intern or a food processing company could provide guest speakers about how programming is used for their processing lines.

Allie Doss, 10th grader enrolled in Integrated Media at HRVHS, said, "In addition to learning to work in a professional job setting, I would like to gain more in-depth and hands-on skills in the multimedia field, such as photography, video production, and graphic design. I hope this experience can guide me in my future regarding college and career decisions."

Companies and individuals interested in supporting this effort can find out more and make a contribution pledge by visiting [www.gorgestem.org/career-connect](http://www.gorgestem.org/career-connect). While contributions will be welcome at any point for this ongoing work, there is a deadline of June 30 to count towards the matching grant from the Oregon Community Foundation.

## UNIVERSITY NOTES

### HR students named to President's List at Gonzaga University

SPOKANE — Morgan Graves and Abigail Walker, Hood River, have earned placement on the Gonzaga University President's List for spring semester 2021. Students must earn a 3.85 to 4.0 grade-point average to be listed. Gonzaga University is a humanistic, private Catholic University providing a Jesuit education to more than 7,500 students.

### Gonzaga announces Gorge graduates

SPOKANE — The following Gonzaga University students participated in graduation exercises during our Commencement Ceremony that was held on May 9. These students have either completed their undergraduate degree or are expected to complete their degree requirements this year.

**Hood River:** Morgan Graves, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Public Relations, Magna Cum Laude; Alexis Richardson, Bachelor of Arts in INST-International Relations; Abigail Walker, BS in Nursing in Nursing, Magna Cum Laude

**White Salmon:** Brianna Smith, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Sociology

### Rebecca Johnston achieves academic distinction

WALLA WALLA — Hood River native Rebecca Johnston, a graduate of Hood River Valley High School, earned academic distinction for the most recent semester at Whitman College. This recognition is given to students who have completed a minimum of 12 credits, passed all credits attempted, and have earned a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher on no fewer than nine graded credits during the semester.

### Community College of Vermont announces grad

MONTPELIER — Angie Melissa Perry, Hood River, earned associate degrees in spring 2021 from Community College of Vermont (CCV). CCV is Vermont's second-largest college, serving more than 10,000 students each year.

### Bella Dean named to Dean's List at George Fox University

NEWBERG — Bella Dean of Trout Lake was among those who earned dean's list recognition at George Fox University for the spring 2021 semester. Traditional undergraduate students must earn a 3.5 grade point average or above on 12 or more hours of graded work to earn a spot on the dean's list. Dean is a sophomore majoring in sociology. George Fox University is ranked by Forbes among the top Christian universities in the country.

## Free 'Passport to Play' thru July 30

Ready to out and explore The Dalles, have fun, and earn prizes with the passport program? Passport to Play is debuting this month for kids and families in The Dalles or surrounding area. This new, free activity program is aimed at providing structure and flexibility and getting kids moving and exploring this summer, with some fun prizes as incentives. Earn points and win prizes, including scooters, Northwest Park Pass, sports equipment and more.

Get your booklet in English or Spanish at The Dalles Library or Northern Wasco County Aquatic Center or visit [jumpintheorge.org/passport](http://jumpintheorge.org/passport) for more information. The program began June 14 and will run through July 30.

### Pasaporte para Jugar

Salga y explore The Dalles, diviértase y gane premios con el programa de pasaportes.

¿Dónde?: Alrededor de The Dalles. Obtenga su folleto en la biblioteca de The Dalles o Centro acuático del norte del condado de Wasco.

¿Quién?: Niños y familias en The Dalles y áreas alrededor.

¿Qué?: ¡Un folleto de actividades gratis! Las actividades ganan puntos y los puntos son elegibles para premios.

¿Cuándo?: 14 de junio-30 de julio.

Visite [jumpintheorge.org/passport](http://jumpintheorge.org/passport) para obtener más información.

## Birth announcement

A son, Theodore Koden Parsons, was born May 20, 2021, at Mid-Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles to Nickolas and Ashley Parsons of The Dalles. Theodore weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces. Grandparents are Mindi Golphenee and Evan Jones, and Beri and Krisa Gorsuch, and great-grandparents are Robert and Jo-Ann Golphenee, Carmela Parsons, and Charlotte Kelley.



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