

BEST ANIMAL NONPROFIT

1. **Greenhill Humane Society** 88530 Green Hill Rd. 541-689-1503. green-hill.org.
2. **Luvable Dog Rescue** P.O. Box 50367. luvabledogrescue.org.
3. **SARA's Treasures** 871 River Rd. 541-607-8892. sarasavesanimals.org.

BEST LOCAL NONPROFIT

1. **FOOD for Lane County** 770 Bailey Hill Rd. 541-343-2822. foodforlanecounty.org.
2. **St. Vincent de Paul** 555 High St. 541-344-2115; 100 E. 11th Ave. 541-868-0200. svdp.us.
3. **Greenhill Humane Society** 88530 Green Hill Rd. 541-689-1503. green-hill.org.

A shake-up in the top three! After a year away from the crown, **FOOD for Lane County** recaptures its title as Eugene's favorite nonprofit. The hunger-fighting organization served more than 80,000 meals to children around the county this summer and continues to grow its services. From youth farm roadside stands to job training at its warehouses, FOOD for Lane County shines for its commitment to helping Eugene's most vulnerable populations.

Second-place winner **St. Vincent de Paul** continues to evolve new programs to reduce waste and serve the community. This year it took on an important project revamping trailer parks to create better options for low-cost housing. SVDP's solutions-forward model has diverted thousands of mattresses from landfills through its world-renowned repurposing projects.

This year *EW* shared a heartwarming story with **Greenhill Humane Society** when Tank, the "unadoptable" pitbull featured in our July 27 Pets issue, found a home. Greenhill was third in Best Local Nonprofit and winner of Best Animal Nonprofit this year. — *Carl Segerstrom*

BEST THING ABOUT EUGENE

1. People
2. Diversity
3. Food

Let me preface this by saying I am not mad, but even more so, I'm just straight-up confused. You know, when your parents used to say, "I'm not mad; I'm just disappointed"? That's how I'm approaching this situation. As a half-black, half-Filipina person who has lived in Eugene my whole life, I just have to ask — what makes this town **diverse**? You, Best Of Eugene voters, don't mean racially diverse, right? We, the people of Eugene, are not that disillusioned, are we? Or have we just come to accept that a town that is more than 85 percent white, according to the census, in some way counts as diverse? You don't mean politically diverse, or diverse in thought, do you? Yes, we have activists and outspoken individuals on both sides of the political spectrum, but so does every other town. How about economically? No, that doesn't make much sense either, in comparison to other towns of our size and location. Style? I guess we do have diversity in what kind of socks we wear with our Birkenstocks. (Is it going to be straightforward wool today, or should I go with something patterned? Hmm. As long as it matches my Columbia raincoat, I guess!) Maybe it's the weather. It sure does rain a lot here, but *sometimes* it's sunny and *sometimes* we even get a little snow! Yeah, I'm going to give you all the benefit of the doubt; let's just go with the weather. — *Meerah Powell*

BEST TEACHER/ PROFESSOR

1. **Stella Strother-Blood** Agnes Stewart Middle School
2. **(Tie) Dan Tichenor** University of Oregon
2. **(Tie) Taunya DeBoer** Willamette Leadership Academy
3. **Leah Dunbar** Churchill High School

This was the first year that we asked you to name Eugene's best teacher or professor, and we got an overwhelming number of votes. It's important to recognize the teachers who inspire us — who stand out among the masses and make a lasting impact in our lives. This year's best of them all? **Stella Strother-Blood** from Agnes Stewart Middle School.

"The kids at Agnes Stewart are amazing, the administration is wonderful," Strother-Blood says. "I can't believe they recognized me!"

This is only Strother-Blood's second year as a full-time teacher — she was a student teacher at the school for a year before — but her passion for the job is clear. "I've always been really interested in serving others, and I was brought up to care about other people and recognize that, in life, it's not all about me," she says. "Teaching is just a really efficient and effective way to interact with others and to leave a good impression with students."

From the Eugene/Springfield area herself, Strother-Blood left town to get her undergraduate degree at Western Oregon University and came back to get her master's in teaching at the University of Oregon. She knew she wanted to teach language arts and social studies to inspire kids to learn about the world, even if they haven't had opportunities to travel.

As for teaching sixth grade, Strother-Blood loves everything from helping kids open their lockers for the first time to seeing them grow throughout the year. "It's just so unique," Strother-Blood says. "Kids are excited to be out of elementary school and move into a new territory. It's fun to be a part of that because it's such a special time."

Strother-Blood says she has never sought to be someone's favorite teacher, but she has sought to be a supportive, positive influence. "If I can leave that impression, then I'll have succeeded."

As for the future, "I want to be here, in the Eugene/Springfield area, teaching sixth grade language arts and social studies at Agnes Stewart Middle School," Strother-Blood says. "I feel like it's so rare to find exactly what you want to do forever, but I have, and I'm honored." — *Morgan Theophil*



PHOTO: TRASK BEDORTHA

BEST PARK

1. **Alton Baker Park** 200 Day Island Rd. eugene-or.gov/327/Parks-and-Natural-Areas.
2. **Hendricks Park** Summit Ave. & Skyline Blvd.
3. **Skinner Butte Park** 248 Cheshire Ave.

Alton Baker, Eugene's biggest park, tops the list again this year. The park hugs the north bank of the Willamette River and has just about every park activity you can imagine, from disc golf to dog parks and boating to BMXing. You can even find an (albeit unsanctioned) open-air market under the gazebos, if you're into that kind of stuff. — *Carl Segerstrom*



PHOTO: ATHENA DELENE