

Step-by-Step program gets new name, new look

Program will be called Learning Ladder Preschool

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — Just as circle time was coming to a close during class May 6, Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District Preschool Coordinator Shelly Saunders revealed her newest addition for the preschool classroom: a mesh cylinder container with baby caterpillars, called a "Live Butterfly Garden."

The small habitat, she said, would be kept in the science corner of the preschool classroom at the Seaside Youth Center, so her 3- to 5-year-old students could observe the creatures as they phase into butterflies.

The students are part of the district's Step-By-Step program, which has been renamed the Learning Ladder Preschool for fall. The caterpillars are the latest addition in a series of efforts by Saunders to give her students a safe, fun environment to prepare for kindergarten.

'Needed' a facelift

When Saunders took over the district's early childhood development program in No-

vember after the resignation of former Preschool Coordinator Madge Mossberg, the preschool space at the Youth Center, and the program's format, received makeovers.

"She did exactly what the program needed," said Dawn Jacobs, who started as the assistant teacher in September.

They reconfigured the room to make it more open and accessible and covered the brown walls with yellow paint. They obtained more materials and supplies for students. The curriculum, which Saunders has developed for 15 years, is focused on academically preparing students for kindergarten "in a very fun, learning-to-love way," said Jacobs, who plans to resign from her position in June.

Saunders is a transplant from California, where she oversaw a similar program for a parks and recreation department. When she moved to Seaside, she planned to be a real estate agent, but the preschool coordinator position was posted online the day she began looking for jobs, and she took that as a sign, she said.

Her philosophy is that "chil-

dren develop and learn best through play. Our goal is to provide an environment rich in learning opportunities to help your child grow academically, socially as well as physically." She wants to "help them have a really positive, fun first school experience."

Some features of her classes include attending a weekly story time at Seaside Public Library; a weekly yoga class; and morning snacks. The students are taught art, math, science and language arts, in addition to fine motor skills and socially acceptable behaviors such as sharing, paying attention and respecting the teachers and one another. Because several of the students are Hispanic, they practice numbers, colors and days of the week in Spanish and English.

"We really are touching on everything," Saunders said.

The program is coming to a close for this school year, but registration is open for fall classes.

The class for 3- to 4-year-olds will be from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays. Children must be 3 by Sept. 7 to enroll in the class. The cost



KATHERINE LACAZE — EO Media Group

Maple, 4, a student in the Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District's preschool program, shows off a heart made from homemade playdough during the free play portion of class May 6.

is \$130 per month for in-district residents and \$145 for others.

The class for older preschoolers will be from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Students must be 4 by Sept. 7 to ensure they are the correct age to enter kindergarten in fall 2016. The regular cost is \$215 per month and \$195 for district residents.

Because of Oregon Department of Education licensing restrictions, space currently is limited to 15 participants per class. "At this age, I think it's so important to have that one-on-one connection with them," Saunders said.

She has 21 students between both classes this year. She sees the potential for growth, but it would require maintaining a second teacher — as the correct teacher-to-student ratio is 1-to-10 — and finding a larger classroom space.

Summer fun

The district also is preparing for this year's Kindercamp, which starts the week of June 22 and ends Aug. 27. The Summer Kindercamp is a 10-week program where preschoolers ages 3 to 5 can participate in arts and crafts, music, stories and other activities from 9 a.m. to noon

Mondays through Thursdays.

Saunders also has several area field trips planned. The Kindercamp is structured slightly differently from the preschool, she said, because she believes summer should incorporate more fun activities, like craft projects and field trips. This year's weekly themes are: Ocean, America the Beautiful, Let's Camp, Pee Wee Chefs, Pirates, How Things Grow, Robots and Legos, Mini Picassos, Science Fun and Bugs. Children can go to individual weeklong camps or attend all 10 weeks.

The cost for Kindercamp is \$65 per each weeklong session, and district residents get a \$15 discount.

"These programs are so critical for our little people," said interim Executive Director Mary Blake, who formerly served as general manager for 28 years. "Kids need to test and practice and play what's around them."

That kind of education, she believes, "will pay dividends."

Scholarships and financial assistance are available for district and out-of-district residents. For more information, visit www.sunsetempire.com or call 503-738-3311.

Salon Boheme honored for school service

The Astoria School Board recognized owner Kallie Linder and employees from Salon Boheme at its May board meeting for their support of the Astoria School District over the last 10 years.

"Kallie Linder and her team have been instrumental in providing valuable resources to support students and families in the Astoria School District community," a release from the district read.

"We just think it's important to support the community that supports us," Linder said at the meeting.

Each year, Salon Boheme hosts a number of events that directly benefit students and families:

- In the fall, the salon hosts a school supply drive supporting the countywide

Backpack program.

- During the holidays, clients are asked to donate food and toys. Donations are given to Clatsop Community Action's regional food bank and Wishing Tree programs, as well as Toys for Tots.

- Staff at the salon have adopted individual families to provide dinners to for Thanksgiving.

- Each winter, the salon hosts a coat-drive for local students and families.

- The salon and its clients donate to the Pantene Beautiful Lengths program, which partners with the American Cancer Society to provide real hair wigs to cancer patients.

- In cooperation with Columbia Memorial Hospital, the salon established its own wig closet, providing wigs

and styling for local cancer patients.

- Each year, the salon donates vouchers for free haircuts, while donating their services during local events through a partnership with Clatsop Community Action.

- Astoria High School Principal Lynn Jackson added that the salon has helped students prepare for homecoming.

"The Astoria School District appreciates the efforts of Kallie Linder and the staff of Salon Boheme to support students and families in need in our school community," the district's release said. "On behalf of the whole Astoria School District, we thank Salon Boheme their generous donation and commitment to kids in our community."



EDWARD STRATTON — The Daily Astorian

From left, Astoria School Board Chairman Martin Dursse honored Salon Boheme owner Kallie Linder and employees Tesa Harrington, Candy Bliss, Michelle Green, Joni Jenson and Carol Hansen.

Deviney: Could face more charges

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When Deviney was asked his name, he simply said, "I'm the guy you're looking for."

Deviney allegedly kidnapped the girl Saturday in Sanger, Calif. He left the

girl and his 2004 Nissan Pickup at McDonald's in Astoria Monday evening.

The girl was later reunited with her family, who drove up from their home in Sanger. Police said she is in good health.

Deviney allegedly sex-

ually assaulted the girl at a rest area, where a sign read "History of Oregon," according to court documents.

He has no local ties to Clatsop County and there is no indication Astoria was his intended destination, according to Astoria Police. The charges against Deviney claim the alleged crimes occurred in Clatsop County. The kidnapping charge claims he took the victim "from one place to another, with the purpose of furthering the commission and/or attempted commission of rape in the first degree."

Marquis said other jurisdictions could also charge Deviney.

"He could be prosecuted in several places," Marquis said. "At the moment, we are operating off the allegations that this happened in Clatsop County."



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Russell Deviney appears via video link for an arraignment at the Clatsop County Courthouse Friday.

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