

Beat: Local students are getting crash course in health care field

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funding from the federal Carl Perkins Grant. The grant is administered by the college and supports career technical education programs for high-schoolers across Clatsop County.

Intro to health care

“Students come with a limited view of what type of health care jobs are available,” Fromwiller said. She tries to keep the class broad, spending the school year introducing students to between 15 and 20 health care positions inside and outside the hospital. Staffers from every department of the hospital, as well as Life Flight pilots, acupuncturists and paramedics from Medix, visit to explain their jobs and demonstrate a Health Care 101 menagerie of techniques and principles, from donning protective equipment and ethical decision-making to taking vitals and performing first aid. Students sign an oath to follow patient privacy laws. They disperse around the hospital as volunteers and spend several hours shadowing employees. Fromwiller said students seem genuinely engaged.

While keeping students in an observing role for medical procedures, Fromwiller said she tries to expose them to the more queasy parts of hospital work, such as blood and bodily fluids, to see if they are up to it. One student, she said, came into class talking about how she got to put her first aid skills to the test recently, helping stem the bleeding of a crash victim using napkins on U.S. Highway 30 on her way back to Knappa.

“I gave a newborn baby a bath,” said Astoria senior Taylor Mickle, who shadowed a nurse and helped her wash a half-day-old newborn. Mickle said such hands-on experiences were part of why she joined the class. She came into Health Occupations interested in the dental field, but has since warmed to becoming a nurse. She isn’t the first convert from the program.

From student to nurse

“I always wanted to be a teacher,” said Kelly Roman, who enrolled in the Health



High-schoolers in Columbia Memorial Hospital’s Health Occupations course learn how to create a barrier between themselves and germs as part of keeping the work environment sterile.



Nurse Kelly Roman took the Health Occupations course when she was in high school. She now works at Columbia Memorial Hospital.

Occupations course as a junior at Astoria in the mid-2000s. Roman said she initially thought the only crossover between teaching and health care would be as a masseuse,

a position she job-shadowed at the hospital. But Roman shadowed a nurse and said she quickly became enamored with the variety and teamwork the position provided. She eventually graduated

from the college’s nursing program, starting at the hospital as a bedside nurse within two weeks of passing her licensing exam. She now supervises the hospital’s medical and surgical unit, which she once shadowed in, and hosts other students.

Feeder course

Staffers like Rankin and Roman said the course helps students find a direction before leaving high school, while the experience can help give them a leg up when applying to health care programs. Gohl, who still works for the hospital as an infections preventionist and teaches students about protective equipment, said the Health Occupations course has long been a strategy to grow the number of health care providers, especially in rural communities. Over her 18 years in charge of the program, Gohl said, she taught more than 500 students, more than half of whom she estimates have gone into health-related careers. Gohl said many of her former students work or have worked at Columbia Memorial. “Others were employed here at one time and have since moved on to other cities. I have other doctors, nurses, rehab and even a specialty neurology assistant on the West Coast.”



Submitted Photo During the art of ethnobotany class, the students spent a lot of time outside observing, identifying and drawing plants. The class combined art, botany and ethnobotany, which is the relationship between humans and plants.

Class: Studies the link between humans, botany

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experience in botany and biology and Haber-Lehigh, an artist, has taught multiple botanical drawing classes and workshops in the community. The two instructors were looking for a new teaching opportunity and the chance to offer something different for students. They decided to collaborate on the art of ethnobotany. “It’s something fun that combines our interests,” said Greene, a special education teacher.

Art or science credit

Students could choose to earn either art or science credit for completing the course. Throughout the class, students were taught the basics of botany, how to identify both native and non-native plants, discern if they were edible or poisonous and collect written observations. They learned how the plants historically were used by humans of many cultures for various things: food, medicine, clothing, shelter, arts and crafts, construction material and more. The primary focus, Greene said, was on how indigenous people used the plants. Additionally, students learned how various plants are used — or sometimes not used — today.

“It’s not just learning botany,” Haber-Lehigh said. “Ethnobotany is the relationship between plants and people. And we threw in the art component, because it’s fun to learn about plants and nature through drawing and sketching.” Haber-Lehigh, who teaches English as a second language, said she’s always been interested in indigenous cultures. In her native Poland, she said, there is an

emphasis on using native plants medicinally and foraging for edible plants, such as huckleberries and mushrooms. She hopes to instill similar values and interests in the students through the class, so they will be conscientious of their natural surroundings, and protect the environment from over-development. “I think all humans have an innate love of nature, and you just kind of need to rekindle it,” she said.

Hands-on learning

The teachers stressed hands-on and experiential learning, rather than relying heavily on textbooks and classroom lectures. At least one day per week, the students were outside in the field. They foraged for edible plants and made tea from yarrow, rose hips, Western red cedar, Douglas fir branches and clover flowers. The teachers gave them worksheets to help them pay attention to details. The students took three field trips, funded by money raised through the Tillamook Head Gathering fundraiser earlier this year. At Fort Clatsop, Gearhart Ridge Trail, the Mill Ponds and the Necanicum Estuary, the students identified and sketched plants and made field observations. As a service project, they pulled invasive ivy from Sitka spruce trees on the south side of the school campus. Drawing real plants gives people a unique relationship to the plants, Haber-Lehigh said. “The art gives students a deeper appreciation and depth of knowledge about the plants,” she said. “It forces them to look closely and see all the patterns and details and intricacies.”

Rain: ‘This year, we’ve already had three or four floods already’

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Dennis Elleson told The Oregonian his wife, Roberta “Bobbi” Elleson, had moved to a different bedroom to sleep a few hours before. “I ran in the bedroom and she was moaning,” Dennis Elleson told the newspaper. “I went to her side and told her, ‘Hang on. Hang on.’” He said he couldn’t move the tree and tried to find a place for her to get air, but it was too late.

In western Washington, seven people were swept into the Puyallup River from a riverbank homeless camp Wednesday morning. Someone called 911 around 6:30 a.m. Wednesday to report that people were in the river up to their waists and chests beneath the State Route 512 overpass. All were pulled out of the river by authorities by 8 a.m. Nearby, a small RV park was evacuated Wednesday morning as floodwaters stranded several vehicles. Firefighters went vehicle-to-vehicle to check on occupants and some people were evacuated by boat. The camp was a temporary home for several dozen RVs and camper-trailers. Residents throughout western Washington and Oregon were assessing damage Wednesday from the heavy rains and strong winds. People who live along the



A worker assesses damage from a large fir tree that fell on a house overnight and killed an elderly woman in Portland, Wednesday.

Snoqualmie River in Washington state are used to waters cresting the banks but the storms that slammed the Pacific Northwest this week were more intense and destructive than the locals have seen in some time. “This year, we’ve already had three or four floods already,” Eric West said in Fall City, 25 miles east of Seattle. “This one is the worst.” Washington Gov. Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency, directing the Washington Military Department to coordinate state response activities. Washington transportation officials closed all lanes of northbound Interstate 5, the state’s busiest highway, in an area about 30 miles north

of Portland Wednesday afternoon due to a slide that brought rocks and mud onto the road. Cleanup will begin once officials have determined it is safe. At Sea-Tac Airport, where the official weather for Seattle is recorded, the weather service says 2.13 inches of rain fell Tuesday. That beats the previous Dec. 8 record of 1.61 inches. The National Weather Service in Seattle said in a tweet Wednesday night that the 5.96 inches of rain recorded at Sea-Tac this month makes it the wettest first nine days in December on record. Forecasters say more rain is on the way Thursday and through the weekend. The storm led to power outages affecting about

100,000 in Washington and Oregon customers at its peak and closed schools. The Oregon Department of Transportation said landslides and high water closed parts of many state highways. High water was a problem along the Oregon Coast, where pooling caused road closures, stranded cars and flooded neighborhoods. Heavy damage from flooding led officials in Tillamook County to declare an emergency to free up funds for repairs, County Commission Chair Tim Josi said. “It’s more than our county budget can handle,” Josi said, estimating that damage will top \$1 million. An RV community, a long-term facility and households were evacuated.

Clock: Measure would end ritual of daylight saving

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Changing clocks back and forth is disruptive to internal body clocks, sleep patterns and can even be dangerous, he said. A 2014 study by University of Colorado at Boulder found that fatal traffic accidents spike by 17 percent on the Monday after clocks spring forward. Daylight saving began in the United States in 1918 to conserve electricity during the final days of World War I. It became a permanent ritual in 1966 with passage of the Uniform Time Act. The federal legislation was designed to end a confusing patchwork of different time zones in the country but allowed individual states to opt out. Arizona, Hawaii and some U.S. territories have chosen to stay on standard time. Nowadays, the time change fails to accomplish the goal of saving energy, Miles said. A University of California Berkeley study found that a two-month extension of Nowadays time in Australia during the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 failed to curtail electricity demand. Earlier this year, there were proposals in several states to end time changes by either remaining on daylight saving or adhering to standard time year-round, according to the Washington Post. State Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, introduced a bill in January that would have

let voters to decide whether to abolish daylight saving in 2021. Dozens of Oregonians testified in favor of the proposal. Joanne DeWitt, one of those who submitted testimony, said daylight saving causes hazards while serving no purpose. “I would like to see it go the way of other old dinosaurs,” DeWitt said. The legislation stalled in the Senate Rules Committee. Some lawmakers were concerned about being out of sync with Washington and California, according to Thatcher’s office. “I think once one state does it, the others will follow, and honestly, it isn’t that big of a deal,” Miles said. “I have never heard people in Arizona say, ‘I hate being off time with Utah.’ They always laugh at the rest of the country at daylight saving time.” Albany resident Carrie Davis, one of the volunteer petitioners, said she has always hated daylight saving time. Her opposition compounded when she had children. “Now that I have kids, it is apparent to me when we try to change our daily schedule even by an hour, it is so impactful to our whole success through the day,” Davis said. “Trying to get a toddler to go to sleep an hour later or an hour earlier is just challenging, for a superficial social agreement we don’t need.”