

The power of a letter

'Dear Stranger' pen pal program connects Oregonians

BY M.J. CODY

There once was a time long, long ago, when people used a pen or pencil to write on actual paper and then enclosed said paper into an envelope, addressed it, put a stamp on it and deposited it in the mail.

Participate in 'Dear Stranger'

Sign up at oregonhumanities.org/programs/other-projects/dear-stranger/.

Letters must be mailed by Feb. 28, 2022.

Return letters will be mailed in early March 2022.

Send questions to: programs@oregonhumanities.org

I'm not making this up. Very few these days still entertain this curious method of communication, but the nonprofit organization, Oregon Humanities, is bringing the practice back to life with their "Dear Stranger" project.

The premise is simple: write a letter, get a letter and make a new connection.

Oregon Humanities is dedicated to encouraging people to talk, listen and learn from one another. The aim of the project is to create a shared understanding among Oregonians with varied backgrounds, experiences and beliefs.

The project began in 2014 and continues with writing prompts — generally in three-month intervals — asking writers to address a different question or theme.



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Since 2014, more than 1,000 people have exchanged letters through the 'Dear Stranger' project.

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