

## LIFESTYLES

WEEKEND, JANUARY 17-18, 2015

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Three teens from Lost & Found Youth Outreach concentrate during an evening of video game competition Friday, Jan. 9 at the Helen McCune Gymnasium in Pendleton.



Timbre Fritz uses a power washer while working with other teens to rebuild old bikes in Pendleton in 2011. Pendleton on Wheels, the local bike club, has teamed up with youth from the Lost and Found Youth Outreach program to teach youth how to rebuild bicycles that have been collected by the Pendleton Police Department.

# Lost and Found



Three teens from Lost & Found Youth Outreach shoot the breeze during a recent game night at the Helen McCune Gymnasium.



A group of teens from Lost & Found Youth Outreach listen to Danny Bane before they start an evening of games at Helen McCune Gymnasium in Pendleton.

## Youth Outreach program provides safe place for teens to grow up

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

A week in the life of a member of youth club Lost and Found Youth Outreach is packed.

The average week could bring a video game tournament, a dodgeball game or a skiing trip.

But the teens and preteens that frequent the events say they get more from the program than a place to hang out, though that's still important. Tuesday's meeting was in a community room at Hailey Place Apartments in Pendleton, which was filled with the din of teenage chatter.

Conner Laurson, 18, has been with Lost and Found for seven years, a time in which he credits the program for keeping him from going down "a dark path."

Laurson said he grew up getting bullied to such an extent that he became a bully himself. His behavior was getting so bad, he said he was on the brink of being sent to juve-

nile hall.

Laurson not only credits Lost and Found for giving him the tools to deal with his emotions, but also the wherewithal to overcome a speech impediment that rendered him virtually incomprehensible.

### A safe place

Lost and Found founder Danny Bane said supporting kids like Laurson is what his program is all about.

A former alcohol and drugs counselor with Umatilla County, Bane started Lost and Found 12 years ago to help offset rapidly diminishing mental health services in Eastern Oregon.

The premise of Lost and Found is simple — offer kids a safe place to share their feelings without fearing retribution.

After offering support to their members, Lost and Found turns around and encourages them to support their community.

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— Suzanne Moore, director of Lost & Found Youth Outreach

appear that way to them," Director Suzanne Moore said.

Lost and Found organizes cleanups at Roy Raley Park, rebuilds bikes for charity and cleans graffiti off public property.

Eighteen-year-old Kenny Steward takes pride in the bikes he's built for charitable causes in the past.

Steward knew what it was like to need a helping hand. The Pendleton High School senior left school for two weeks with the intention of never returning, before Bane found him and personally convinced him

to give school another try.

Steward is now on track to graduate and intends to apply to St. Martin's University in Lacey, Wash., where he hopes to pursue a career in nursing.

He decided to seriously look at the nursing field after job shadowing a Pendleton doctor as a part of Lost and Found's "Bridges" program.

### A bridge to a job

The 12-month program just finished graduating its first cohort with plans underway to start another in the near future.

The program is comprised of 24 classes focused on teaching older teens the skills they need to succeed in life.

Bridges not only helps connect kids with potential employers like Safeway, Newlywed Foods and the Round-Up Athletic Club, but also helps advance their career ambitions further.

Jade Patterson, 17, has been with the program for four years. In addition to attending school during the daytime, she also works 30 to

40 hours a week at Burger King on nights and weekends.

With the help of a Bridges connection, Patterson plans on enrolling in Blue Mountain Community College after she graduates from high school. From there, she plans on transferring to Western Oregon University, where she plans to major in either education or psychology.

Like many other Lost and Found members, Patterson attributes the organization with helping her come out of her shell and giving her a space to share her feelings.

"It's helped expand my circle ... I'm more tolerant," she said.

Although Lost and Found is affiliated with Cornerstone Community Church, Bane said the organization welcomes all kids and focuses primarily on kids being able to use their skills to help the community.

Lost and Found recently scaled back their limit from 800 kids to 500, focusing primarily on the students who are serious about the program.

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Danny Bane, at left, walks with a group of kids from the Lost and Found Youth Outreach program during a cleanup effort along the River Parkway in Pendleton in 2011.



Skateboarders watch as Aaron Johnson grinds on the coping of the bowl while warming up before the start of the Pendleton Skate Camp at the Rudy Rada Skatepark in Pendleton in 2009. The skateboarding was a joint venture with the Lost and Found Youth Outreach program and Pendleton Parks and Recreation.