

TEENS from page 1A

“I’ve helped with Soroptimists and Backpack for Kids. I’ve helped with the leadership class, where we plan a lot of things,” Audrey said. “And I go pet cats sometimes at the Oregon Coast Humane Society. I’m not technically a volunteer, but I’ve done that three or four times and they kind of know me by now.”

The group laughed, as Sam said that she was an actual volunteer for the humane society.

“I had never been there before, and I wanted to walk a dog, and they said, ‘Okay, but you have to sign this paper,’” Sam said.

“They never have dogs when I go there,” Audrey said. “Really?” Sam asked, surprised.

“Yeah, it’s so frustrating!” Audrey said to laughter from the group.

Sam talked about her volunteer experience.

“I have been in Interact all four years of high school. This year I’m president so I’ve been arranging volunteer activities and being a part of them. I’ve also helped with Soroptimist.”

The main group Nic works with is the Key Club, which he is the president of.

“It’s kind of like Interact, but Interact is sponsored by Rotary, and Key Club is sponsored by Kiwanis,” he said. “Audrey’s also a part of Key Club.”

“And Interact, I just didn’t say it,” Audrey added.

“She’s actually running what’s called the Thirst Project, which is funding money for Africa to build wells, which is pretty cool,” Nic said. “We also occasionally clean the highway, down close to Westlake. We try to do it fall, winter and spring before all the tourists are here. And I’m the president of that right now, did it four years. And I was also the president of Builders Club.”

The Kiwanis Builders Club was in middle school.

“That was cool because we got to skip school to help out with Food Share and Head Start,” he said. “Food Share was fun, we got free food out of that.”

“Head Start was very chaotic,” Audrey added.

“Yeah, it’s chaotic,” Nic said. “It’s just a bunch of little kids. You get to chill with them. Just sit with them in a circle and read ‘If You Give a Mouse a Cookie’ and sing ‘Itsy Bitsy Spider’ with them. It’s great.”

Allison, the youngest of the group, smiled when Nic brought up Key Club.

“I remember going there,” she said. “I was part of the Builders Club for sixth and seventh grade. It was really cool. And I wish I did it eighth grade, but I just didn’t, and I don’t know why.”

Allison started volunteering because she was enrolled in the Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County.

“When I was in elementary school, I would go there every day after school,” she said. “It really helped me because I built friendships there. I really like little kids, so I started volunteering, and it was really fun. We would help them with their homework, and you got to see the stuff click when they finally got it, which was really cool.”

When she came to high school, she began focusing on peer-to-peer tutoring.

“I really like helping people with homework,” she said. “When they get it, it’s really cool to see them go from ‘I can’t do this’ and have a negative attitude, to ‘Wow, I can do this now.’ And it clicks, and they feel smart and it makes me happy.”

For Audrey, she started volunteering in middle school with the Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) group.

“I was a part of WEB and I really liked making posters, planning events and being in the know,” she said. “So, I kept going with it. I really like being busy and I really like helping people. I just kept going. Whenever I had free time, I

thought, ‘Oh, I’ll just pick up this new activity.’”

Nic first started volunteering in middle school.

“For me, I had a high schooler talk to me,” he said. “They came to me and said, ‘Hey, come join Builders Club.’ And I’m like, ‘Okay, cool. Let’s see what it’s like.’ And then I ended up really enjoying it and it made me want to volunteer more. It’s like that weird thing when you hear the word ‘volunteer’ and it’s like, ‘He who should not be named.’ Stay away from that! That sounds like too much effort. But when you actually start doing it, you notice everyone is really laid back and they have fun with it. And you just get drawn more and more into it as you do it more.”

Volunteering doesn’t seem like volunteering.

“I guess for me, I see something that I want to change, and I just go after it and reach that goal,” Sam said. “And then I enjoy every moment of doing that and giving back to the community. And I think it betters us as individuals. It helps us grow — just like every experience.”

She gave the example of Cyber Night, a program run through Interact, where younger community members teach residents of Shorewood Senior Living how to use technology.

“They don’t really care about the technology part,” Sam said. “They just care about having company and telling their life story. They really like the company there and it’s just really nice to see them smiling and having a good time.”

“That’s a great thing to do,” Nic said. “Me, Audrey and a couple other people, we made a little band. I can’t remember what we called ourselves, like the ‘Seasonal Six.’ Later on, changed it to something like ‘Trouble.’”

“It was a pun with ‘trouble’ in it,” Audrey added.

“Yeah. We basically went to a bunch of senior houses and



(From left) Siuslaw High School sophomore Allison Huff and seniors Audrey Lowder, Samantha Scheer and Nic Wilkinson volunteer in the community in a variety of ways.

residential, and just played Christmas music. It’s really cool to see people who have lost so much of their memory, and are so spaced out by everything, just out of nowhere get really into it, singing along, tapping their leg. It’s a cool experience.”

For Nic, volunteering is a natural extension of living in a small retirement community.

“There’s so few things to do in this town for kids growing up, this kind of gives us something to do,” he said.

“It fills everything in”

“I was talking to my friend the other day,” said Allison. “I basically drive from school, to home, to Fred Meyer to get gas, and that’s it.”

Options for things to do in the community are limited, the teens felt.

“The only thing we really have going on that could really cater to something to do is we’ve got a couple of stores, we’ve got River Roasters and we have the bowling alley,” Nic said. “There’s Miller Park, but Miller Park’s full.”

“Miller Park is where the sketchy people hang out,” Audrey added.

“And there’s a bunch of other tiny parks, but there’s usually kids there,” Nic said. “I feel weird hanging out with my teenage friends when there’s a bunch of four-year-olds swinging.”

The group laughed as Audrey said, “It would be kind of creepy.”

She pointed out that there was a movie theater in town,

but it costs money.

“That I don’t have. Ever,” Nic said.

“We’re trying to save for college,” Sam said. “When you’re bored, you drive around.”

“But then you run out of money for gas,” Audrey said.

“So, then you get a job,” Nic concluded.

And finding work can be difficult.

Allison is currently looking for work. Sam is a manager at River Roasters, Nic works at Fred Meyer and Rise, an in-home care family program, and Audrey works cleaning houses and at Mo’s Restaurant during the summer, along with Nic.

“That’s when they make the most money the whole year,” Allison said. “During Rhody Days, everybody comes for the parade and the carnival, and they don’t leave until fall.”

“I like it,” said Sam. “It makes work fun.”

“It’s crazy, my back hurts so much,” Audrey said, referring to being a busser at Mo’s.

“But it makes your shifts go by so much quicker,” Sam said.

“And that’s good and bad,” Audrey replied. “When you’re

making a lot more money, and you’re seeing new faces and you’re hearing their stories, it’s great. But then when you’re not working and trying to go to the beach or something like that, it’s just crazy crowded. And you just get irritated. They’re taking all of summer.”

The beaches are full, the roads are jammed. It’s too crowded to do much of anything, except work.

“During the summer time we have the money because

we’re actually getting the hours behind it,” Nic said. “But once tourist season is over, everyone is cut.”

“And the town just dies,” Audrey said. “And then you have to buy gas.”

The cycle repeats.

“It’s like hibernation,” Nic said. “You plan to never make money again. ... Anytime we have something remotely catered to something else, it shuts down. We had a few used game shops and a few other things, but they all end up getting shut down because they can’t make enough money. Nothing like that can survive here.”

However, there wasn’t a big sentiment in the group to change that.

“This town, I don’t really think I’d add or take anything away from it,” Nic said. “For what it is, it’s really good. It’s just a place where a lot of people are ready to settle down and already live their life can just chill, you know?”

“There are a lot of retired people,” Allison pointed out.

“A LOT of retired people,” Nic agreed. “But that’s not a problem.”

In fact, the group did not want any major changes for the

town. They only suggestion they could think of for more activities was perhaps some meet-up groups that could explore the natural beauty of the area.

“Scheduled days where everyone who wanted to could get together and go on a hike or something like that,” Audrey said. “We have so much nature around here and it’s so easy to enjoy it. It would be way more fun if we had a club or something where everyone could go and take a hike or something.”

Allison smiled, saying, “I love to go to Sweet Creek Falls, just places like that.”

“This town is really pretty,” said Nic. “We have the beach, we have a lot of things that make it just a nice, small, nature, pretty town. I don’t want to take away from that.”

They just want to make what already exists better. To do that, they volunteer.

“It’s just kind of fills everything in, you know?” said Nic.

Audrey pointed out, “There’s so many volunteering organizations here.”

“We’ve got Food Share, Habitat for Humanity and SOS that are all about volunteering,” Nic said.

“There’s so many places looking for volunteers,” Sam added. “They’re always asking.”

“And they’re always helping people in need,” Nic said. “Because people have struggles living here, because the cost of living is so much versus what we make. Having those volunteers helps significantly.”

In the second installment of this two-part series, out Saturday in the Siuslaw News, the students discuss time management and volunteering, why it could be a good thing more teens don’t volunteer, prejudices against teen volunteers and if they will continue to volunteer once they move away.

DENTURE SERVICES INC.

LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED
Open 4 days a week!

Here to serve your denture needs:
Dentures
Partial Dentures
Immediate Dentures
Implant Dentures
Relines & Repairs Same Day

Monday-Thursday
10am - 2 pm

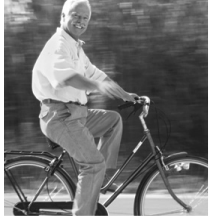
524 Laurel St.
541-997-6054



William Foster LD
Sherry, Office Manager

“As a denture wearer myself, I can answer your questions and address your denture concerns.”
~ William Foster, LD

Financing: Citi Health Card
12 Month no Interest



Senior Services

It’s easy to relax, knowing these community businesses are here to help with all of your service needs.

Call the Siuslaw News to Join Our Senior Directory
541-997-3441

Shorewood Senior Living
1451 Spruce St.
541-997-8202

Spruce Point
an assisted living and memory care community

375 9th St, Florence, OR 97439 • (541) 997-6111

JOHNSTON MOTOR CO.

In 2019 we will be celebrating the 80th anniversary of our business in Florence. It is time to express the appreciation and gratitude we feel, and have always felt, for the friendship, trust and loyalty of those who live in this community. It is your confidence in us and your continued patronage that has made these 80 years such a pleasurable experience. Thank you.

Johnston Motor Company
Since 1939

2150 Hwy. 101 • Florence
(541) 997-3475 • 1-800-348-3475

Siuslaw News Introduces...

GUARANTEED GARAGE SALES

We know how much work you put into preparing for a garage sale. Then it rains! We want to help you with our new...

Garage Sales Insurance Package!

If bad weather affects your Garage Sale call us within 7 days and we will re-run your ad in our paper 2x and online 5x more

Guaranteed Garage Sale Package Includes:

- ✓ 20 Words in 9 ads
- ✓ 2 in paper and 7 online
- ✓ 4 Signs & Tip Sheet
- ✓ Only \$30

Normal price is \$26 with 2 signs, insurance is only \$4 for a complete additional 9 ad run!

SN Classified MARKETPLACE

“Your 1 stop place to buy & sell merchandise in the region”

In Print & Online
Call Today
541.997.3441
thesiuslawnews.com