



# Branch Road Farm believes education is key

BY JON STINNETT  
*The Cottage Grove Sentinel*

In a well appointed commercial kitchen about five miles outside of Cottage Grove, a group of youngsters gathers around a table in rapt attention at what's on display there.

There is no screen to transfix these kids, however. These youths have gathered to learn various cooking techniques, which guest chef Alex Ihnat of Backstage Bakery is all too happy to teach.

Ihnat goes over some of the basics of baking, and the kids split into groups to get started. Some specialize in dough, while others chop peppers and meat. In the end, though, the empanadas that emerge piping hot from the oven are shared by all.

It's become a common scene at Branch Road Farm west of Cottage Grove, where Andhi Reyna runs a fully functional farm operation that aims to be more. Reyna said the farm was bought five years ago by a local philanthropist with herself and like-minded farmers in mind.

"I had been farming here for almost 20 years," said Reyna, who's been growing and cooking her own food since she was 14. "But I knew I wanted to go in a different direction, and education was always an important part."

These days, adults gather at Branch Road Farm to learn to make their own cheese and soaps and learn to care for animals and ferment foods. The farm comprises 73 acres and is used to rotate herds of sheep and goats in addition to growing vegetables, though it has increasingly hosted such classes of late.

"It's great because cooking and the culinary world are so up-and-coming right now," said Reyna. "Kids are seeing that, and they're able to show off and present their own work. The younger generation is seeing this, and



Local chef Alex Ihnat teaches a group of students about baking during a kids' cooking class at Branch Road Farm.

having cooking classes here has only helped foster that in local kids."

Reyna said the farm is currently gathering produce to host upcoming kids' cooking classes, including a series scheduled to run on Wednesdays from 10-12 p.m. from July 27 to Aug. 17. A kids' demonstration and family farm dinner is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 20. The classes are designed for kids ages 5-9 and cost \$125 per child.

## LORANE COUNTRY NEWS

BY LIL THOMPSON  
*For the Sentinel*

The Lane County Fair opens today with Grange Day. Visitors can see all the booths and vote for their favorite booth while enjoying free cookies with coffee, tea or punch. Young kids get in free with dressed-up veggies or fruits. See you at the Fair!

There are some new faces at Crow High School, or some familiar faces in new positions. First, a warm welcome to the new high school principal, Marci Haro, from North Bend. Then, welcome Kevin Stevens as the new football coach and Troy Jentsch as assistant football coach. Both are former Crow grads. Welcome to all.

The ladies of the Lorane Christian Church held a craft session yesterday (Tuesday). Those who are interested in joining them can call Jeri Porter at 541-942-2448. They would like to continue this once a month if there is enough interest.

It's hard to believe, but it won't be too long before the Lorane Community Potluck and the Lorane Volunteer Fire department Ice Cream Social! Both take place with a potluck at lunch and social from 1-5 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 14.

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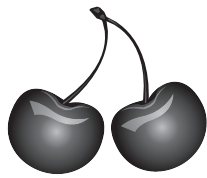


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