

OYCC helps fund Kennedy High's move

By Matt Hall
For The Sentinel

Oregon Youth conservation Corps [OYCC] provided \$12,000 to fund Al Kennedy High School's summer crew.

Every summer Al Kennedy High School runs a six to eight week summer crew program, where crew members are paid minimum wage and work on conservation projects. The Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) was created by the 1987 Oregon Legislature to emulate the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's. OYCC's purpose is to build on strong connections between positive experiences, work skills, personal responsibility, commitment to education, and future employment for Oregon's youth. Matt Hall, Kennedy Conservation Corps crew leader, said "We really hoped we would get this summer crew funding as it would enable us to pay our student crew to move the contents of the school from Kennedy's old location on South 8th street in Cottage Grove to its new location at Delight Valley School in Saginaw".

A requirement of the grant is that early in the summer the crew leader has to attend a 3 day OYCC Crew Leader Training session, this year's was held in Bend. "I've attended a number of these trainings in the past" said Matt Hall "I always learn something new and come away better prepared to provide a positive work experience for my youth crew"

Beginning on June 12th for almost a full week, the eight youth members of the conservation corps, with lots of assistance from the school district's grounds and maintenance staff, loaded and unloaded trucks, trailers and a U-Haul van. During that time the entire contents of six classrooms, the library, the music room, the principal's office, the secretary's office, the cafeteria, the crew leader's office, the crew room, tools and the outdoor education equipment were transferred to the new classrooms or temporary storage at the Delight Valley School location. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act office was moved to its new location at 19 North sixth street through the assistance of the student crew. The move was complicated as some classrooms at the Delight Valley location were available to move into and some were still occupied temporarily by Head Start of Lane County who will be sharing the campus with Kennedy for the 2017-18 school year. When asked to provide feedback on the student's job performance Trevor Smith, Maintenance Supervisor for South Lane School District, said, "We thoroughly enjoyed working with the Kennedy crew during our transition to the Delight Valley site. We were all impressed by their team work, their work ethic, and their character. We would be more than happy to work with them in the future and are excited to welcome them to their new school."

After the move was completed the crew spent 3 days finishing



PHOTO BY MATT HALL

Kennedy High School moved to Delight Valley with some elbow grease and help from OYCC.

building the new garden area, the native plant nursery beds for the Army Corps of Engineers and Lane County waste management and rebuilt the pollinator garden, a project undertaken in collaboration with The Cottage Grove Ranger District. All the remaining nursery stock and garden plants that had been salvaged from the nursery and garden at Kennedy's old site were planted in the new beds. The rest of the summer program was spent either working on the Row River Trail "bike path" for the BLM or digging up blackberries and scotch broom in the Brice Creek drainage for the Forest Service. The summer crew program ended on August 17th. Student crew members earned an hourly wage for all their summer work. OYCC is funded primarily through Oregon's Amusement Device Tax, via the Oregon Lottery to be able to support school conservation corps.

LORANE NEWS

This Friday, September 15, Lorane Grange is resuming their bingo nights with a Dessert and Bingo evening. Desserts are \$3. Bingo begins at 6:30 p.m. The famous 50/50 returns and the progressive blackout has really grown. Remember, the bingo nights will be on Fridays until January. There will be a potato bar with all the trimmings at the October evening. School is in full swing including football at home, Crow High, this Friday at 7 p.m. against Elkton. The CH/MS Booster is hosting a fundraiser on October 14, raising funds to help our students. The Annual Halloween Carnival is set for October 28 and is FREE. Lorane Grange is collecting new socks for children to go to our Lane Pomona Grange. Anyone interested in donating may contact a Granger or bring to the Grange this Friday evening or the Grange meeting in October. The Alesong Brewery and Tasting is open Friday through Sunday from noon to 8 p.m. It is the driveway south of King Estate gates.

Each diner is given a brown-bagged lunch for the following day. Usually a peanut butter sandwich with a snack or two.

It's just after 6 p.m. and Jean, with her troupe of five volunteers start to clean up.

Ann Marie Herron and her husband Pete have been lending a hand for more than three years. Pete--who does the dishes--was only supposed to accompany his wife on the first night.

"When the weather is nice," Herron said, "We don't get as many people but when it gets cold, the whole world is in here."

The group uses 50 as their base for everything. 50 chairs arranged around clothed tables. 50 plates served by volunteers like in a restaurant and not lined up for diners to take like in a shelter. 50 brown-bagged lunches given out by a volunteer with a smile and a "Have a nice night."

As Jean flutters around the

tables of those who are left eating and volunteers begin to clean up, Ron Jean continues to strum his guitar and rasp out "Brown Eyed Girl." Music, said his playing partner Jim Schaper, better known as Farmer Jimmy.

"Some people come in here stressed," he said. "And if there's just the sound of flatware clinking it's aggravating! This way they know somebody's there and somebody cares."

Jean won't think about what's for dinner next week until sometimes Monday afternoon. It will depend on what she has in storage--a refrigerator and freezer in the community center and another set of storage containers at her home.

"I just feed people," she said. "Some are homeless, some aren't. But they sit very well together. Food is the great equalizer and it brings people together."

Sunday dinner

Continued from A3

all who needed it without the hoopla of checking IDs, monitoring incomes and reporting to a governing agency, the community was skeptical. But Jean is used to it.

She's counceled boards in Hawaii and worked on political campaigns in Alaska. She understands people and with decades of experience under her belt she still has just one mission.

"I just want to feed people," she said.

So, she took her cause to the city. Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers, she said, had his doubts on top of concerns about an unmonitored dinner that boasted free food.

"But, they have just as much right to be in that building as anyone else," Meyers told The Sentinel.

"I did think it was nuts!" he said. "I asked here where are you getting the volunteers and where are you getting all the

food?"

Jean had a plan. Food for Lane County, a food pantry that serves outlets catering to low-income and homeless individuals, requires certain criteria be met. But Jean didn't want to ask people their income level or document who was coming in and when. Instead, she relies on donations to feed her diners and occasionally she receives food from Community Sharing, the local food pantry.

Meals are made up of what she gets. Tonight, it's roasted vegetables and oven-baked tomatoes with cheese bread. Apple pie and brownies for desert.

The meal is planned for 5 p.m. and set to close at 6 but they never turn anyone away.

"If it's 10 after six and someone comes in, we have frozen mac and cheese or frozen chili. They don't leave hungry," Jean said.

That includes those who showed up on time.

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