

# Kennedy students’ skills continue ‘growing’ through summer

By Caitlyn May  
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School is out for the summer but there are still students hard at work at Kennedy High School.

On June 18, a small group of students gathered in the field beside the school where gardens have been growing all year. They stripped beans from stalks and moved soil across the rows of plants as the sun worked hard as well, heating the day to a summer-like 80 degrees.

“We’re transitioning from spring to summer,” said Matt Hall who leads the crew throughout the school year and who will guide it through several projects this summer.

With the help of several grants, including \$13,000 from Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC), the students at Kennedy will work with the Bureau of Lane Management and the forestry service to weed out invasive species and improve the Row River bike trail undergoing construction later this summer.

But two weeks ago, they were cleaning house first, making sure the grounds at Kennedy were ready for the summer sea-

son. They tossed fava beans into bins, holding conversations between the rows of garlic, potatoes and onions they’d grown all year. The garden helps to feed the students at Kennedy but it also makes its way out into the community.

The crew donates some of its harvest to Soup’s On, a weekly dinner hosted at the community center for anyone who may need a meal. The program was started by resident Sharon Jean and was just recently handed off to her band of volunteers after she retired to Hawaii. The food from Kennedy’s garden helps Soup’s On provide home cooked meals with fresh produce rather than frozen and canned foods that are often all charitable food pantries can afford.

Once the Kennedy gardens are squared away the crew members, who earn \$10.75 an hour throughout the summer, will work with state and federal agencies on a variety of projects.

“It depends on what they want us to do,” Hall said. “We’ll remove noxious weeds, we might do some trail work, the BLM might have us work on the bike path,” he said.



CAITLYN MAY/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Students at Kennedy High School tend to the garden, which contributes to the Soup’s On community dinner program.

The BLM is just one of the agencies that works with OYCC, which was founded in 1987 through legislative action.

It works to build connections between positive experiences, work skills and personal responsibility for Oregon students.

Several students at Kennedy have taken part in the program over the years, according to Hall, and a recent graduate

was offered a position with the forestry service as a result of his time in OYCC and crew programs.

## FIRE from A1

on Hwy. 99 for approximately one year but have plans to stay in the city.

“It’s just been so much love,” she said. “Even the cashier at Bi-Mart when we went to get some toiletries, came and

hugged us.” She also noted that she was grateful for the firefighters who responded to the call and credited them, and their neighbors, with saving her roommate’s life.

“She had just laid down to go to sleep. I am so grateful because sometimes the boys are back deeper in the house and

recognizing that it’s a loss but it could have been catastrophic loss because we didn’t lose our lives.”

No cause for the fire has been released. The family’s go-fundme page can be viewed at <https://www.gofundme.com/h2y4j-smith-family-house-burnt-down>.

## BMX from A1

funding, equipment, the dirt. We’re hoping to find companies to donate.”

According to Meyers, the former BMX track fell into disrepair when the BMX program left town.

“City crews cleaned the property and removed the structures to mitigate hazards,” Meyers wrote in his weekly update on the state of city projects and events. Before the track was flattened, it drew crowds and hosted events including the 30th annual Governor’s Cup.

“Right now, we’re in the early, early stages,” Britz said of the project. The committee, made up of parents interested in seeing a BMX track return to Cottage Grove, are in the middle of establishing a non-profit status for the group so it can begin taking donations.

“We don’t want to do a go-fundme,” Britz said. “It takes some of the donations as a fee and so we’re just looking at other ways we can do it.”

While the group is in the early stages, it has already made contact with BMX officials and will begin working on plans, with Britz noting

that it plans to redesign the track.

Interested individuals who would like to join the committee or take part in the re-

building of the track can visit the Cottage Grove BMX Rebuild Project page on Facebook.



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