

Students in Laurie Frost's fourth-grade class at Independence Elementary School explore a shark discovery table on Jan. 26, courtesy of the Oregon Coast Aquarium's educational outreach. Kids learned about the characteristics of sharks, including their teeth and skin, and what makes them a unique ocean species.



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

## Students lured in by sharks

Youths learn facts about one of ocean's most intriguing residents

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — You are more likely to be injured by a toilet seat than get bitten by a shark.

When a room full of young students at Independence Elementary School heard this news from Wendy Spaulding, education coordinator at the Oregon Coast Aquarium, giggles erupted.

At 1-in-11.5 million, the odds are pretty low to get bitten by a shark, Spaulding said.

It was just one tidbit of information students learned about sharks during a sort of reverse field trip, a visit from the aquarium to the school, on Jan. 26.

Spaulding clarified myths about sharks, explained how different sharks' senses were compared to humans and tested students' knowledge about the ocean fish.

"These animals live out in the ocean, and have special things to live out there," she said. "Sharks have adaptations to survive."

Sharks can smell one drop of blood in a million drops of water, Spaulding said.

"Can you imagine smelling under water?" she asked the kids. "Water would go up our nose!"



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Jasmine Richert gets up close to a jar containing shark eyes after learning more about the fish.

kids responded.

Spaulding said sharks have skeletons made of cartilage so they can bend around their environment.

Students really perked up when they heard about sharks' teeth. "We have to floss and brush and

go to the dentist, because we only get two sets of teeth," Spaulding said. "If we don't take care of them and lose them, we have to wear dentures."

But sharks are different. They have one row of teeth sticking out, ready for action, and endless rows of additional teeth just waiting to be used.

"Sharks have a never-ending supply of teeth," Spaulding said. "There's no dentist for sharks."

Many of the students were able to identify various sharks, from the small cookie cutter shark to the giant Megalodon, a long-extinct species of shark thought to be the largest ever on the Earth.

"A scientist has never seen a Megalodon in real life," Spaulding said. "We've only ever seen his tooth."

Students took turns exploring discovery tables after the presentation, where they could get a close-up view of shark bones, eyes and teeth.

Jasmine Richert, a fourth-grader, got down close to study a jar with shark eyes inside.

"I thought it was awesome," she said about the shark program.

For more information about the Oregon Coast Aquarium, including education outreach: [www.aquarium.org](http://www.aquarium.org).

## WOU students develop ideas to market area

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Students at Western Oregon University have designed new logos for the Monmouth-Independence-WOU area, including creating some catchy mottos.

"Combined efforts, shared triumphs," was one student's idea of what the three communities could use to market themselves as one unit.

"Heart of the Willamette Valley," was another.

About 20 different students in Jen Bracy's graphic design class have created various logos for the cities independently and combined.

Monmouth City Manager Scott McClure said the joint branding is particularly interesting.

"That would be a fresh look at something," he said, noting that the only other way Monmouth, Independence and WOU have in the way of joint branding is through the Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce.

Though neither city, nor the university, is actively seeking to re-brand itself, the project helps students get to know the community better, Bracy said.

It also helps students see how design can positively impact their community, she said.

"It sends the message to folks living and working in these commu-

nities that WOU wants to be more involved and inclusive," Bracy said.

When the communities surrounding WOU benefit and grow, it helps the university attract more students, Bracy said.

"This is largely a hypothetical campaign at this time," Bracy said.

"However, leaders in Monmouth and Independence are very interested in what takes shape and will be visiting our classes at the end of the term to attend a final presentation of the works by each student."

Students drew on their surroundings, taking photos of landmarks in the three communities. Color choices were based on the red brick of historic buildings or the greens and browns of trees.

Mountains, valleys, hops and sunsets inspired students' designs, also, in addition to the attitude of the people who live in the communities: warmth, friendliness and family values.

The logo project is an example of "place branding," Bracy explained.

"It refers to all the activities that are undergone with the purpose of turning a city from a location into a destination," she said.

Independence City Manager David Clyne said he could see value in a tool to market the three communities. By attracting business and tourism to one part of the area, it helps the others.



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Kimberly Apilado critiques the logo she designed for Monmouth and Independence during her graphic arts class on Thursday.

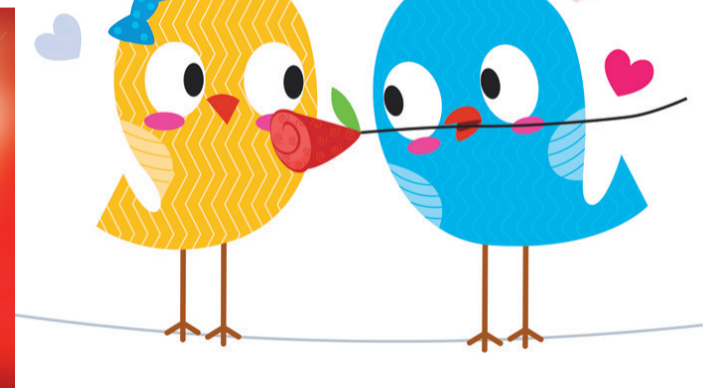
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