

Want a school in Cannon Beach? Start speaking Spanish

The writing is on the wall. With the closing of the Cannon Beach Preschool after 38 years and the rejection of the Cannon Beach Academy before its first semester, it's not a good time for families of young children — unless they're on vacation.

The children's center couldn't sustain enrollment or meet costs. The academy, which was ready to open in September with kindergarten and first-grade classes, also failed to meet enrollment and funding goals.

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



Shortfalls, low enrollment

In 2013, community residents sought to bring a charter school to Cannon Beach, designed for kindergartners through fifth-graders.

The school planned to open in fall at a temporary location at the former Cannon Beach Athletic Club on Sunset Boulevard.

The academy was ready to offer kindergarten and first-grade classes but missed the promised 44 kindergarten and first-grade students required by the district.

And they failed to approach the fundraising goal academy board members told the district they could meet — \$450,000. As of March, they'd only raised \$145,000, more than \$300,000 short of their total.

Sarah Holmes enrolled her son in Cannon Beach Academy.

"I was thrilled that they were going to reopen the school," the downtown Cannon Beach resident told the Gazette's Lyra Fontaine.

Holmes was "very disappointed" to learn the academy would not open this fall.

Her 5-year-old will likely attend kindergarten in Seaside this fall if the district does not reconsider its decision.

"They have buses so that won't be a problem, but I was really excited about the prospect of there being a school here, close to home and part of our own little community," Holmes said. "We just moved here a year ago and I was really looking forward to meeting and connecting with other families."

A school might attract more families to the area, she added.

'Blindsided'

Meanwhile, Christy Bisping, director of the Cannon Beach Preschool and Children's Center, said last week she was "blindsided" by the center's sudden March closing.

From bright beginnings in 1988 when the city donated land, and the community pooled its money and resources to build the center, it had been a long, slow decline.

In 2012, former Gazette editor Nancy McCarthy noted the center was "drifting toward closure," as board members alerted parents and supporters of the center's "financial crisis."

Public and private funding put the center on life support, but this spring it came to an end.

"Myself and the board were not aware that the financial situation that it was so dire," Bisping said. "We did know enrollment was dropping fairly quickly and that scared me. There were no plans to put back until it was too late to fix."

Habla español?

According to the U.S. Census, in 2014, 170 of Cannon Beach's 1,542 residents were Hispanic. That population is more than double what it was a decade ago.

The children's center suffered because of its inability to serve that population.

"We would get a lot of calls from Hispanic families," Bisping said. "We don't speak Spanish."

Bisping said she consulted with the Hispanic Council in an effort to draw Hispanic families, "but that didn't work out."

In seeking approval, the Cannon Beach Academy developed an English as a Second Language program.

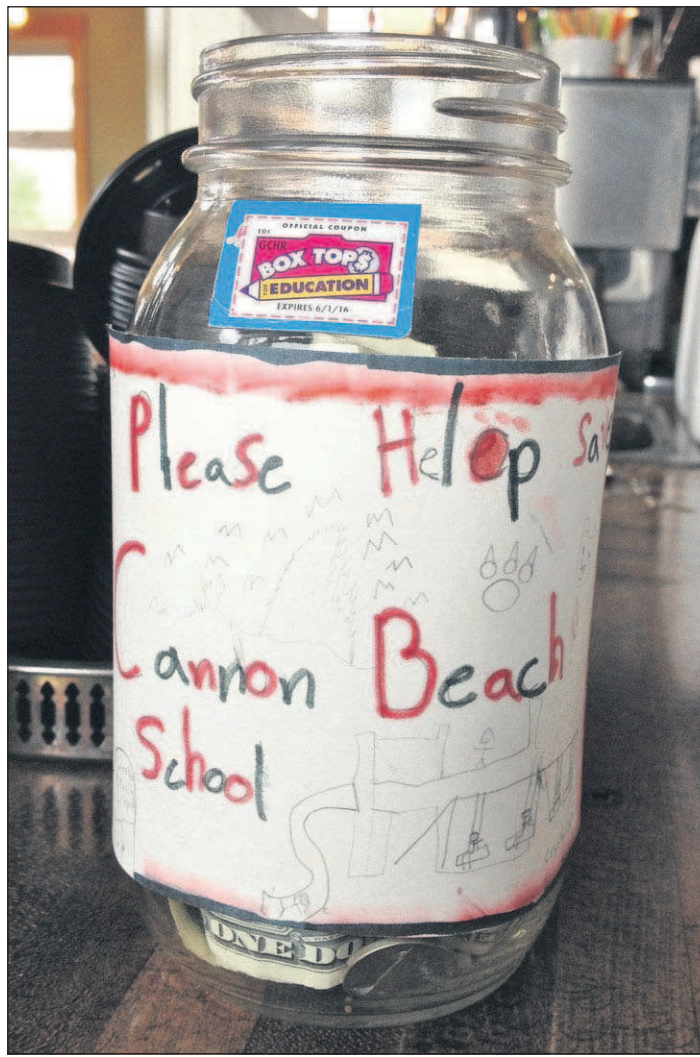
But that program has yet to successfully receive state certification and served as a reason for the denial by the district.

Academy board members rebut the charge. They say the academy had developed a program using information from the Oregon Department of Education that they "reasonably believed" to be state-approved that is "immaterial" and "easily corrected."

Future vision

In 2010, Providence Seaside Hospital conducted a community survey to determine how many of its employees and others in the South County needed child care.

Asked about what parents go through when they can't find child care, the respondents gave a variety of replies.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Fundraising for the Cannon Beach Academy charter school done on the grassroots level.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

The infant room at the Cannon Beach Preschool & Children's Center celebrates Valentine's Day.



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Christy Bisping, former director of the Cannon Beach Preschool and Children's Center, is moving up to Gearhart to open a new center there.

"I almost lost my job," said one parent. "If I don't have a job, my kids don't have a roof over their heads."

"I am the only employed adult in my household of four," said another. "If I don't work, I am unable to provide benefits for our family or pay the bills."

These concerns affect every parent, and the need is only more critical today.

A survey mailed to homeowners asks for a future vision in Cannon Beach.

Do we want a community of retirees, transients, part-time owners, people coming for wine, beer and sand-castle? A workforce bussed in from afar, or a fully functioning community of all ages? Services that are volunteer now will have to be paid without an energetic, involved community — because visitors will be living in Lake Oswego, Gresham or Portland and just buying wine and sharing getaway weekends in Cannon Beach. Volunteerism is a luxury of the wealthy and the retired. Someone working three jobs to barely cover their rent isn't going to volunteer.

A school is more than a symbol of a vibrant community, it is the heartbeat of one.

For now, the faces least represented and least served are our youngest ones.

Taking your tasting skills up a notch

It's been over a year since I successfully passed my Sommelier Level 1 exam.

In that time, I've patiently waited for the organization I began my studies with, the Court of Masters Sommeliers, to offer their Level 2 exam somewhere in the Pacific Northwest at a time that fits into my schedule. I'm willing to travel to Portland,

Seattle or Vancouver BC to sit for the exam. I've held off from crashing the books and the wine tastings. Frustration was setting in. Then, I read about another Sommelier certification program based in London called WSET (Wine & Spirits Education Trust) and was glad to learn they have regularly scheduled courses in Portland, Newberg and Seattle. After looking at the program's syllabus, WSET seems to be a better fit for me as I won't have to demonstrate a wine decanting, wine service or champagne service as part of my examination. While those skills are definitely required for a sommelier working in a restaurant, they aren't something I ever do or expect to do at The Wine Shack. Time to get my somms studies going again, WSET here I come!

I've registered for an upcoming course in Seattle and am really looking forward to the class time. The discussion on wine will be intense, with a focus on major wine regions, their main varietals and styles of production. The course also digs into the winemaking process. We'll study winemaking and learn how the final flavor and style of the wine is impacted by each of the winemaker's decisions. This will be a re-fresher for me as I've already taken two years of enology (winemaking) classes. Spirits are also on the course agenda and so I expect they are fair game for the Level 2 exam as well. One of the topics I am most interested in learning more about is wine-food pairing. Every day, customers ask me to recommend a wine that will pair well with their meal. I have the classic pairings down cold ... pinot noir goes with salmon, cab sauv goes with a steak, chianti goes with a Bolognese sauce and chardonnay goes with chicken. But, I'd really like to take my wine-food pairing recommendations to the next level and offer some suggestions that are more experimental, but equally excellent.

Because we carry a variety of cheeses in Provisions 124, I am eager to share more about complex wine-cheese recommendations to customers. I am also looking forward to the wine tasting and evaluation component of the two-day class. We can expect to taste and analyze approximately 40 iconic wines from around the world. We will learn to properly evaluate a wine and make a determination of what grape it is, its vintage and what region of the world the wine is from. If you've seen the movie "Somm," then you have an idea of what the process looks like. But in the movie those candidates are preparing for a master's level examination which is way beyond the scope of this level. WSET doesn't include a "blind" wine evaluation as part of their level 2 wine certification, so this part of the program is to get your ready for level 3.

But I always enjoy the wine evaluation classes. After the two-day course in Seattle, I'll have a couple of weeks to further study and prepare for the level 2 examination which will be administered in Portland. I expect to pass the WSET level 2 exam with flying colors and then begin my WSET level 3 studies immediately. That's when it gets serious.

I may need some help with the wine evaluation, who's in?

UNCORKED RAMBLINGS

STEVE SINKLER



Library volunteers make a difference all year round

Happy springtime, library friends — and it's finally beginning to look and feel like spring! April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month, and we would sincerely like to thank all of you who have volunteered to make the Cannon Beach Library a warm and active hub of the community. We couldn't do it without you!

We can't leave March behind, however, without mentioning the wonderful magic show put on by Brett Willyard the afternoon of March 26. Thankfully we decided to have him perform in the main library room rather than the children's room — but even so, the event was packed to the rafters with enthusiastic "children of all ages!" Thanks again, Brett, and we're already looking forward to your return!

Our Northwest Author Series will resume at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 9 when we are joined by well-

AT THE LIBRARY

CARLA O'REILLY



known author Stephanie Kallos, whose latest book "Language Arts" will be introduced. Also the author of "Broken for You," Kallos spent 20 years in the theater as an actor and teacher. "Language Arts" is a novel exploring words and expression, parenting and letting go, a story of ex-spouses and their young-adult autistic son and how pasts and presents inform their cooperative futures.

On April 12 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the library, Austin Tomlinson will give a lecture as part of the Twelve Days of Earth Day celebration. The title of his talk will be "Soil and Water Quality of the North Coast."

The final World of Haystack Rock Lecture for the season will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13 with the very popular Neal Maine. Please note that the lecture for this month will be held at the Community Hall of the Chamber of Commerce rather than at the library. Maine is a biologist, educator, and wildlife photographer. His presentation is "It's Not Just a Beach: Rethinking the Beaches."

On April 20, Cannon Beach Reads will meet from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the library. This month's book is "A New Life," by Bernard Malamud. Discussion leader will be Phyllis Bernt. New members are always welcome.

Finally, we are excited to announce yet another speaker for this month — Diana Abu-Jaber, who will be speaking at the library at 4 p.m. on April 30. Her latest novel, "Life Without a Recipe," will be re-

leased later this month. In 2012 her novel, "Birds of Paradise," won the 2012 Arab-American National Book Award. It was also named one of the top books for that year by National Public Radio, the Washington Post, and the Oregonian. Abu-Jaber teaches writing and literature at Portland State University. Her talk is sponsored by the Cannon Beach Book Company and the library.

Just a reminder that this is the time of year we renew our library memberships. Dues are \$10 for the year. We will be collecting dues at our next membership meeting in May. We also will have the 2016-17 hostess sign-up sheet available. Hostesses for the meetings decorate the library and bring lots of delicious refreshments for us to share.

Thanks again to all our wonderful volunteers! Anyone interested in putting hours in at the library should call 503-436-1391.



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