

High-schoolers find 'roots' with senior projects

A way for students to 'reach higher,' leave comfort zone

By Lyra Fontaine
Cannon Beach Gazette

For their Pacifica projects, Seaside High School seniors devoted 50 to 100 hours to a range of activities. They organized events like Cinco de Mayo, plays and the school's centennial celebration. They tutored, coached sports, worked with Foster Club and food banks, spearheaded emergency preparedness efforts and more.

Students presented their work to the community June 1, articulating how they balanced their time and found creative solutions to obstacles.

Pacifica Projects are "a place for students to excel, to reach higher, to get out of their comfort zones," Pacifica adviser and social studies instructor Mike Hawes said in his opening remarks.

Microplastics removal

Dana Ottem, Jesse Trott and Annuka Brown spent days filtering sand to remove microplastics — formed from larger plastic debris in the ocean breaking down over time — from local beaches. Mentor Marc Ward, founder of Sea Turtles Forever/Blue Wave, guided them.

"Marine animals often ingest mi-

croplastics mistaking them as food and cannot digest them properly," Brown said. Toxins from the plastics are passed down the food chain.

The presentation included a photo of a sea turtle with plastic stuck in its nose, and a bird necropsy that contained microplastics.

For their Pacifica Project, the students used a static-charge screen for plastic filtration patented by Sea Turtles Forever, which helps conserve marine turtles and preserve their nesting and foraging habitats. The organization has sent screens to areas around the world.

Community garden

From their experiences community gardening and revitalizing the school's garden, seniors Esteban Becerra, Joanna Ramos, Marilu Peon and Xitlali Bello hope to convey that growing your own food can be a fun, rewarding way to learn about plant biology, spend time outdoors and enjoy organic produce.

The students learned about balancing work and school, benefits of organic food and taking proper care of fruits and vegetables they planted, with help from mentor Dorota Haber-Lehigh, English language learning and ethnobotany teacher.

"We learned how to use different materials to enrich the soil and help the plants grow better," Becerra said.

Each student had roots in gardening or farming.

They began working in commu-



LYRA FONTAINE/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Seniors Paige Ideue, Alexander Barker and Abel Ryon helped Providence Seaside Hospital with the fundraising event Festival of Trees.

nity gardens like Green Angels Farm and Sunny Pool Gardens last spring, helping with weeding, watering, readying garden plots, planting flowers to attract bees, planting and harvesting vegetables, composting and more. The students fondly looked back on seeing their hard work blossom into fruits and vegetables they could pick, eat and share with others in the community.

Restoration station

Brittany West, Danté Still and Jack Whittle worked with North Coast Land Conservancy, a nonprofit that preserves and manages land and wildlife, to restore a trail.

They worked with mentor Katie Voelke, North Coast Land Conser-

vancy executive director, as well as land steward Eric Owen.

"We wanted to give community members and visitors a place to experience the unique beauty of the northern Oregon Coast," West said.

North Coast Land Conservancy restored Seaside's Circle Creek and made the land available for the public to enjoy through hiking, fishing and bird watching. The area is beautiful, the students said, and home to bird species, elk herds and salmon running in Necanicum River.

However, the overgrown Legacy Trail was not clearly marked, leading to confusion.

"The first time we went to the trail, we had a hard time finding it," Whittle said.

The students cleaned the trail, created 10 trail markers using recycled wood boards, then placed the trail markers in the ground through both digging holes and using a mechanical auger.

Festival of Trees

Seniors Paige Ideue, Alexander Barker and Abel Ryon volunteered with Providence Seaside Hospital to help organize a major event: the 18th annual Festival of Trees gala, a December fundraising event and holiday tradition. The gala helped raise money for surgical equipment that allows the hospital to perform more complex surgeries.

With help from their mentor, Providence Seaside volunteer coordinator Raven Brown, the students first advertised the event, attended the hospital's board meeting and called business donating trees and other auction items.

For the event, they helped create the popular "Santa's corner," decorated cookies and trees, ushered guests, helped guard each tree and assisted during the tree auction.

"To create a wonderful winter wonderland and have the public enjoy it made us feel accomplished," Ryon said. "Our hard work and flexibility paid off."

The event raised \$116,000. Ideue volunteered additional hours at the Jason Goodding memorial, handing out remembrance bracelets and asking guests to sign a book.

Residents voice objections to affordable housing options

Housing from Page 1A

Potential new sites, ideas

City staff is considering the Tolovana Park site of the now-shuttered children's center for a third possible workforce housing location, Barnes said.

The building became city property after the children's center closed in April. A concept design showed about nine units with parking.

The 6 acres behind Sea Ranch Resort could be another potential affordable housing location, task force member Ken McQuhae said.

Incentivizing affordable housing development for property owners of vacant lots throughout town is another option, Barnes said.

Former city planner Rainmar Bartl and former mayor Mike Morgan suggested "park model homes" — factory-built homes under 400 square feet — as an alternative concept for affordable housing at the city's RV Park.

The homes, which include architectural details, could meet the needs of individual or two-person households and would be affordable for hospitality industry employees, Bartl said.

"It's scalable. You can start with a set number and see how that works," Bartl said, adding that the homes would be about \$90 per square foot and would "pay for themselves."

Silvis said park model homes could be a "potential tool in the toolbox."

"City Council is looking for an array of possible solutions from the task force," Barnes said.

'When it comes to affordable housing, nothing is easy. ... If you're committed to something, you have to give something else up.'

Former city planner Rainmar Bartl

Community response

Residents responded with both ideas and opposition to the concept designs introduced in May.

Plans for affordable housing will eat up downtown parking, and homes should be placed outside the tsunami zone, resident Douglas Wood told the Cannon Beach City Council Tuesday.

"We would be able to recover as a community more effectively if we had a group of homes and residences up out of the inundation zone on stable high ground," Wood said. "I see an opportunity to encourage workforce housing in a less expensive, lower market-value area ... resulting in no change in character for the town."

A task force meeting Wednesday did not allow for public comment, unlike previous meetings. The group agreed to permit public comment at the next meeting in August.

"I don't want to stifle public comment," task force member Brandon Ogilvie said, "but I hope people understand this is a work session and we are tasked with coming up with a solution."

"There was lots of lively public comment over the last few meetings," Silvis said. "All of that is good information to gather."

Resident Ed Johnson said he objected to the denial of public comment at the task force meeting and he disagreed with the affordable

housing concept being introduced "without public input."

"I think if you're going to be on a committee, you have the obligation to find out what the impact might be on those people who live adjacent to a new proposed project," Johnson said. "It seems like, if you want to build the city, you get the people on your side before you start out."

Johnson did not oppose affordable housing at other sites that would be "less impacting."

Resident Phil Massebeau said he objected to new affordable housing units in general.

"We are property owners. We've lived here all our lives," he said. "Why do we have to build affordable housing? These businesses get their employees how they get their employees. It's not up to us to build housing for them."

Johnson presented the task force with a signed list of almost 30 people, collected by Massebeau, who object to the RV Park affordable housing idea. The petition from "people of Cannon Beach, Elk Land Drive, Haskell Lane and neighboring areas to the RV Park" cited revenue generated by the RV Park, tree removal and an influx of people chang-

ing the neighborhood as reasons for opposing the concept. More housing in the already populated neighborhood "would create more stress on infrastructure, water, sewer and a high increase of traffic, not to mention it would destroy the aesthetics of this neighborhood," the petition stated.

If units were built on the RV Park, the city could lose revenue from the RV spaces.

"When it comes to affordable housing, nothing is easy," Bartl said during his presentation. "People have to make hard choices. If you're committed to something, you have to give something else up."

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