

# How sports lessons learned can carry through life

Sports, especially baseball, have provided great metaphors in life for me. The very humbling game played with a 9-inch, 5-ounce ball, a glove and a bat taught me a lot about failure and success, and that neither will guide what may happen next.

Most recently, I've been lucky enough to get to coach a group of 11- and 12-year-old boys, and a regular phrase I've been using with them is to turn the page. It's something I know I was told growing up while playing the game myself. A strikeout, an error, even a success on the diamond doesn't mean things are finished. There's nearly always another opportunity waiting in the next at bat, another chance coming when a ball is put in play. I was taught and like to talk about turning the page and to be prepared for what comes next.

**SIDE RAIL**  
JON RAHL



As I sit down to write what will be my final column from my office at the Seaside Visitors Bureau, I'm reminding myself that I need to practice what I've been talking about, and now turn the page on this chapter of my work life. In two weeks I'll move across the street to City Hall to take a new position and I could not be more excited for the new challenge and great opportunity.

Eight years ago, almost to the day, I was packing up a moving van and a white jeep to move with my family from Salt Lake City to a town I was still very much getting to know. I had a lot less gray hair,

my kids were still toddlers and quite frankly, I had a lot to learn. I was being given an opportunity by my boss, Russell Vandenberg, to oversee the tourism marketing and advertising for the city of Seaside. I've thought a lot about that time since I accepted a new position with the city two months ago.

I've thought about Laurie Mespelt, then Seaside Downtown Development Association director, who took me around downtown to meet business owners and welcome me to the area. Gretchen Darnell, my colleague and sales director at the Convention Center, drove me around the city and the county to show me some of her favorite spots and special places. Joyce Stewart, Patricia Smiles and Sandy McDowall, were my original information specialists. They encouraged me and were such incredible supports

to me in those first days, weeks and months.

There are countless people I probably should recognize as taking me under their wing and assisting me in some great capacity over the years. I hope you know who you are and that I've thanked you personally. The Seaside Signal has allowed me to talk about my job and pen this column since 2011. And I had amazing community support when I lost my dad and mom in 2015 and 2016.

I'm extremely proud of the work we've done since 2010 and especially over the past three years as we worked to completely overhaul our community branding and marketing materials. To cap all of that off by placing new welcome signs on both ends of town that match the branding work has been a lot of fun. I love the connections I've made, that we created a marketing coalition with

Astoria, Warrenton and Cannon Beach and that people trusted our efforts. This community has given me a lot to be thankful for.

The final week of June I'll be working with my successor in Joshua Heineman. He too will be moving with a young family to the coast. I'm excited for the sense of community and collaboration that he'll bring to Seaside and I wish him the same great support I received. Thank you, Seaside, for trusting me and supporting the work we've done for the past eight years. This page I now turn is one that's bittersweet but one I can't wait to make.

*Jon Rahl has served as the director of tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau and assistant general manager of the Seaside Civic and Convention Center since June 2010 and will transition to assistant city manager on July 2.*

## Mission Control launches in Seaside

By Susan Cody  
For Seaside Signal

Schools are tasked with teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, but it's hard for kids to get the lessons when they are upset and misbehaving.

That's why Seaside School District launched an innovative approach to behavioral health in the 2017-18 school year. Mission Control is a calming room where kids can focus on self-regulating their emotions and behavior.

The payoff is better-behaved, happier kids, principals say.

Prior to this year, "There was a real lack of social-emotional education that kids need to know in order to function," says Rachel Whisler, a behavior support specialist at Seaside Heights Elementary School.

"Behavior is a way of communicating that affects friendships, learning and success in a lot of ways" she says. Kids may wonder: "Why am I out of control?" "Why do I say things like that to my friends?" "Why am I so impulsive?"

Beginning in kindergarten students are taught about brain function and how to identify and control their emotions and behavior, using the Zones of regulation."

After learning how their brain works, they are better equipped to regulate themselves through calm breathing or holding something in their hand or saying they need some space and taking a walk.

"Those are opportunities kids never had before entering on this journey as a school district," Whisler says.

### Building a calming space

Seaside principals and other educators visited Butternut Creek Elementary School's Wellness Room in the Hillsboro School District and were sold on the idea of creating a similar room at Gearhart Elementary and Seaside Heights. Then the work began.

Finding space required relocating computer and performance spaces, ordering supplies and setting up Mis-



SUSAN CODY

**Gearhart Elementary School Principal Juli Wozniak speaks to members of the State Advisory Council for Special Education about Mission Control.**

sion Control. Rooms at each school feature strings of mini-lights, calming stations with sand, theraputty, manipulative items, larger motor challenges and enclosed spaces like a tepee.

In addition to the Mission Control room, regular classrooms have new flexible seating, including yoga balls, standing tables and cushions, so students can learn where they were most comfortable.

"Children do well when they have the skills," says Gearhart Principal Juli Wozniak. "We all want to do well." The goal is to provide kids with skills they need.

Identifying emotions begins with looking at facial expressions. Kindergartners and Head Start teachers use the Pocket Full of Feelings curriculum to teach kids about feelings.

"When we first started, if you asked a 7-year-old what they were feeling, they would say: 'sad' 'mad' or nothing," says Whisler. "Now they can say, 'I'm disappointed,' 'jealous,' 'betrayed.'"

She says kids learn that all feelings are OK. What matters is what they do with them and how they act. They can identify their feelings and not let emotions run the show.

### Trauma-informed approach

For two years Seaside educators have studied trauma-informed practices that take into account adverse childhood experiences. It in-

volves treating people with compassion and understanding around traumas they may have experienced.

"We are building a web of support throughout the school that can help students when they are not able to cope by themselves," says Whisler.

All staff members and students are trained and familiarized with Mission Control. It is open to everyone and is not used for punishment or reward. It is a place where students can self-regulate their behavior.

For the first couple months of the school year, children stayed in their regular classrooms.

Most classrooms have a peace corner that students can access to self-regulate, says Seaside Heights Principal John McAndrews. It is part of the classroom but is a place where the student can use sensory items or cushions to feel more comfortable.

"This allows students to not feel so isolated," McAndrews says. "They are free to rejoin whenever they want to come back to class."

Teachers and counselors recommend children for Mission Control. Kids may also request a travel agent or navigator to take them to Mission Control.

Now, the goal is to extend the zones of regulation to parents, pediatricians and families.

"We want to improve on creating a common language between school and home," McAndrews says.

## Even strong, silent types need an annual wellness visit

By Patti Atkins  
For Seaside Signal

Many men would rather talk about news, sports or jobs — maybe even feelings — than talk about their health.

And deep down, many would admit they go to the doctor mostly to make their partner happy. Or when they can't do what they used to do. And sometimes they wait too long.

Women have reasons all their lives to go to the doctor when they're not sick, from birth control to cancer screenings. Men don't always have similar reasons. So let's pick one: June is Men's Health Month. If you haven't seen your primary care provider by June, call this month to set up your annual wellness visit and if you are a Columbia Pacific CCO member, the visit is free.

Think of your annual wellness visit like changing the oil in a car. You do it because the manufacturer's speci-

cations say it's good for your car. You might push it a bit. But you wouldn't go years without changing the oil.

As it turns out, there are specifications for you, too.

"I usually show my patients the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendations," says Dominique Greco, M.D. and medical director for Providence Seaside Hospital. That's a research-based list of what people need to do for their health.

"At regular checkups, your doctor can talk to you about blood pressure, weight, diet, exercise, drug and alcohol use," Dr. Greco says. And smoking.

"The greatest cause of death is heart disease," she says. "And one of the primary factors for heart disease is smoking."



Denise Greco, M.D.

Maybe you don't want to hear what the doctor says, but it's like when your car makes a troubling noise. Experience tells you it's better to fix a problem sooner rather than later.

If you're worried about "that" test, rest easy.

"It's not recommended that every man be screened for testicular or prostate cancer," says Dr. Greco. "Depending on your family history or other risk factors, your doctor may suggest it."

One important bit of maintenance for people older than 50 is colon cancer screening. Now you can do this in the comfort of your own home. Your doctor will give or mail you a FIT kit. You collect the sample and mail it in. This kind of screening must be done every year. Another way is to get a colonoscopy every 10 years.

Finally, a very good reason to get regular checkups is to connect with your provider.

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