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Rebecca Sprengeler, a recent Warrenton High School graduate who works on marketing and social media for the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District



Clatsop Works intern Rebecca Sprengeler.

MORE THAN JUST A SUMMER JOB

Clatsop Works connects students to workforce

By Edward Stratton
The Daily Astorian

Rebecca Sprengeler felt bad not being able to take on shifts at her usual summer job at Pelican Brewing Co. in Cannon Beach, despite the need for help during the busy tourist season.

But the recent Warrenton High School graduate received a job offer managing social media and helping to market the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District in Seaside, more in line with her goal of becoming a graphic designer.

“I could just be working during the summer, working at a restaurant down in Cannon Beach, but this is helping me get to where I want to be in the future,” Sprengeler said.

Sprengeler is one of 16 students in Clatsop Works, a new summer internship program to give local students an introduction to the workforce.

Interns from Astoria, Warrenton and Knappa high schools, along with Clatsop Community College, have taken up a wide variety of full-time jobs around the county with Sunset Empire, Bergerson Construction Inc., Englund Marine & Industrial Supply Co., Columbia Memorial Hospital, Providence Seaside Hospital, Hampton



EDWARD STRATTON PHOTOS

Mike Ward, a sawmill, logyard and truck shop manager at Hampton Lumber's Warrenton mill, shows Clatsop Works interns the area where fresh-cut lumber is stacked before being kiln-dried.

Lumber, Ocean Crest Chevrolet Buick GMC, Lum's Auto Center, the Haystack Rock Awareness Program, Martin North Hospitality and Rickenbach Construction Inc.

Students spend each Wednesday in professional development workshops learning customer service, safety, communication and other skills.

Local school districts and the college provided funding for the internship program's coordinator, Anna Stamper, who led students through the process of applying and interviewing for jobs.

“It's very real-world,” Stamper said. “The students

negotiate their pay rate.”

One early entrant was Hampton Lumber, which last year took on two local high schoolers as part of a pilot program. Cliff Tuttle, who oversees special projects for Hampton Lumber, said he'd spoken with Craig Hoppes, superintendent of Astoria schools, about how to get kids more engaged in school and ready for the workforce. Hampton Lumber has also helped expand career-technical courses at Astoria High School.

“Everywhere, Hampton tries to take on interns,” he said. “It was a natural fit. We were surprised by the num-

ber of kids who did not know about the opportunities” locally.

Hampton employs more than 140 people, with an average wage of above \$22 an hour. The mill interviewed several candidates and settled on Will Berezay, a senior at Astoria High School who started late last month working 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. shifts on the mill's cleanup crew, where most employees get their start.

“I knew I would be shoveling sawdust,” Berezay said. “I wasn't expecting much. I was just ready to get my hands dirty.”

Mentoring Berezay is Jama

Evans, who after decades in day care took a job on the mill's cleanup and planing crews. Evans teaches Berezay proper work and safety habits at the mill, a maze of wood, metal, concrete and heavy machinery. The two make visits to Hampton Lumber's export docks, corporate offices and tree farms, learning all aspects of the business from trees to lumber.

Skyler Archibald, executive director of Sunset Empire, said the agency created a marketing position just for Sprengeler, who has experience in graphic design and photography, and to bolster the recreation district's public presence. Sprengeler receives relative autonomy to cover the district's programs and create a newsletter, and will also help design a new website.

“She's a member of our management team,” Archibald said. “She sits in when we're discussing policies. It's just holding her to a standard we hold all our employees to, about punctuality and responsibility and those sorts of things.”

Employers agree that the internship program isn't about finding a pool of new employees so much as exposing the area's youth to local opportunities and how to be a good employee.

A native of Seaside, Archibald said he hadn't desired coming back to the area because low wages, a high cost of living and the seasonal nature of business made living

locally a challenge. But the region has developed new career opportunities with education, health care and local government he wanted to share with young people.

Stamper had about five weeks to arrange the work sites for students. With more time next year, she hopes to expand the pool of government, education, fisheries, manufacturing and other major local industries taking part.

“Some of the businesses could afford it, but they couldn't dedicate a mentor,” Stamper said. “They need to have the ability to do the training and put them into a position they can learn and grow from.”

She is also looking for more funding sources to help low-income students take part.

Kevin Leahy, the director of Clatsop Economic Development Resources, who oversees Stamper, said the goal is to expand the internship program next summer to 24 students. Similar internship programs in Washington County have more than 100 participants.

The Northwest Regional Education Service District, which oversees a hub focused on expanding career-technical learning opportunities, is also looking to export Clatsop Works' model to Columbia and Tillamook counties in the next couple of years, Stamper said.

“To have this momentum in our first year is really promising,” Leahy said.

OBITUARIES

Wilma Jane Fague Nelson Emerald Isle, North Carolina Dec. 8, 1938 — Aug. 2, 2018

Wilma Jane Fague Nelson, 79, of Emerald Isle, died Aug. 2, 2018, at Carteret Memorial Hospital in Morehead City, North Carolina, surrounded by her loving family.

Wilma was born Dec. 8, 1938, to the late William James and Dorothy Ann Dow Fague in Portland, Oregon. She graduated from Seaside High in 1956, where she met her husband, Donald Albert Nelson. They were married and moved to North Carolina, first landing in Enfield, and eventually making their home by the sea in Emerald Isle.

Wilma was feisty and fully in charge. After her husband died, she held court from her home on the Point in Emerald Isle, where she kept everyone in line, including the Army Corps of Engineers, Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), the U.S. Coast Guard and the Emerald Isle Police Department. She was a mother figure, as well, to various kayakers, boaters, kiteboarders, paddleboarders and hordes of adoring friends, neighbors and children.

She was an excellent hostess, cook, artist and shell collector. She was funny, kind and generous, but possessed a wicked wit. For all these gifts, and for many others, she will be sorely missed but never forgotten.

Wilma was preceded in death by her parents, husband, and brother, Richard Allen Fague. She is survived by three daughters, Denice Nelson Keeter of Raleigh, Deborah Jane Nelson of Emerald Isle and Katie Nelson Locke of Enfield; one son, Ralph William Nelson of Raleigh; two granddaughters, Addie Dow Keeter and Katherine Harrison Keeter, both of Raleigh; two grandsons, John Richard Locke Jr. and his wife, Pamela, of Enfield and William Nelson Locke of Red Oak; one adored great-grandson, Landyn Nelson Locke; and one sister, Patricia Ann Fague Robison of Rogers, Arkansas.

A reception and celebration of life were held Aug. 7 at the Historic Episcopal Church of the Advent in Enfield. Burial took place at Elmwood Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made directly to the Historic Episcopal Church of the Advent, in care of Dr. Elton Newbern, treasurer, 4894 Thirteen Bridges Road, Enfield, NC 27823 or online at bit.ly/WFNelson.

Letchworth-Sykes Funeral Service is handling the arrangements for the Nelson family. Online condolences may be directed to the family at www.garrettsykesfs.com.



Wilma Nelson

Newly hatched pipefish at Seaside Aquarium



SEASIDE AQUARIUM

Pipefish at the Seaside Aquarium.

Seaside Signal

The Seaside Aquarium's pipefish are having babies. This relative of the seahorse passes eggs from the female to the male, who carries them in a specialized pouch until they hatch, reported Tiffany Boothe of the aquarium.

They are very small only about 1/2 in length and only as thick as a single strand of hair. The pipefish have found a home at the aquarium for a little more than a year and a half, Boothe said. They are a local fish that lives in the region's estuaries, found most places where eel grass is plentiful.

Each pipefish had about 30 babies, she said. “All in total we are attempting to raise 61 newly hatched pipefish.”

The biggest hurdle when raising these small fish is a good food source, she added. “We will do plankton tows daily and supplement with a special type of brine shrimp.”

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