

# THESE KIDS ARE AMAZING



Katherine Lacaze/Seaside Signal

Seaside High School Associated Student Body officers Whitney Westerholm and Taylor Barnes present the "Don't Catch This Wave" program at a December 2015 City Council meeting.



R.J. Marx

Westin Carter, Gracie Rhodes, Caitlin Hillman, Mayor Jay Barber, Andrea Castro, Briana Boyd and Josh Brown at a ceremony to present \$5,000 to the city for tsunami wayfinding signs.

For those of us living here in late 2016 during the campaign for a new school outside of the tsunami inundation zone, no voice in the debate was more strongly felt than those of the students.

A \$128 million bond in 2013 had failed at the polls decisively.

Three years later, with a reduced price tag, added state funds; and Weyerhaeuser's donation of a campus site in the Southeast Hills, the outcome looked favorable — but voters still had to contend with a bond measure seeking almost \$100 million.

In 2016, the bond passed decisively, thanks in no small measure to the efforts of Seaside High School students themselves.

The ASB student council is a group of 11 representatives that focuses on improving campus life and helping students have a positive effect outside their school.

Leadership introduced the "Don't Catch This Wave" campaign to raise awareness about the threat of a tsunami and its potential to devastate three of the school district's buildings, Broadway Middle School, Seaside High School and Gearhart Elementary School. (Cannon Beach Elementary School closed in 2013 after similar concerns.)

Student outreach extended from City Hall to Salem and beyond.

The bond passed convincingly and work is well underway. Completion and opening of the new schools are expected in September 2020.

## New generation

While those original ASB members have since graduated and will never attend the new school, today a new generation of students remain focused on tsunami safety and awareness.

On June 15, members of the Seaside High School Associated Student Body presented Community Development Assistant and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Anne McBride and Mayor Jay Barber with a gift of \$5,000 to be used toward the wayfinding project coordinated through the planning and public works departments.



## SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



The blue ground markers could guide the way for on-foot evacuation to the designated tsunami evacuation routes and ultimately to safe assembly areas outside of the inundation zone.

The goal is to raise daily awareness by providing wayfinding cues to allow people to plan their own evacuation route with or without the aid of a map and get to safety as efficiently as possible — reinforcing "muscle memory" for escape routes prior to an actual event.

Total cost of the project is about \$19,000, with between \$12,000 and \$13,000 coming from the state through Oregon Emergency Management and the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries.

## A matter of curriculum

Tsunami safety classes began for these students in sixth grade and continues through high school.

Students watched videos of the tsunami in Japan while they were still in middle school.

Students recognize that preparedness — and resiliency in the aftermath of a quake — begins locally.

"I think we all know on the Coast we're not a priority. We're a tiny coastal community," said Westin Carter, whose older brother Colton was a founding member of "Don't Catch This Wave" campaign. "We've got to at least protect our children while they're in school."

"As you go to high school, you become more and more aware," student Caitlin Hillman said. "The main thing we learned was how to deal with any sort of emergency, including tsunamis, earthquakes, tornados — overall, be aware of disasters."

Students would like more attention — and dollars — put to Seaside's endangered bridges, unlikely to remain standing in a Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

"It's scary to think that my mom is at home alone, if there aren't bridges to connect her, what's going to happen?" Carter said.

ASB students at the City Hall check donation ceremony — Carter, Hillman, Briana Boyd, Josh Brown and Andrea Castro — gave special thanks to their advisors, Anne Lynes and Jim Poetsch.

"You really helped us," Boyd said.

The students are already looking ahead to next year with outreach to other communities along the coast. "We're not planning to take our foot off the gas," Carter said. "We're going to finish this. We're going to get there. We're going to start looking at other ways to do it."

"To me, that is remarkable," Barber said to students. "You're the people who raised the issue. You demonstrated what had to happen and that helped voters to step up. A \$100 million bond issue in a small community is unheard of, and it passed with a strong majority. And you're responsible for that. You helped people's eyes to be opened."

With about \$2,000 in funds from the "Don't Catch This Wave" remaining, campaigns will be more informational, Carter said. "It's allocated to tsunami funds. It's not going to a garage sale."

# When did grocery carts become a method of transport for transients?

The first ones I saw were in the late spring, higher up on the alphabet streets, in particular Avenue U and Beach Drive, but also just on the Prom at Avenue T. The carts were always empty and looked forlorn. It bothered me when they hung around for more than a day.

It's always discouraging to see a shopping cart where a shopping cart shouldn't be. I lived in New York City in the 1970s when the city was teeming with homeless. My apartment was in Greenwich Village, but my work was way uptown.

It wasn't unusual at the end of a workday to climb the steep stairs leading up from the underground subway to street level. The subway at the time was a subterranean hell that, in addition to being a fast and cheap method of transportation, was also home to an entire underground city of transients.

I'd emerge on to grimy Seventh

## VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



Avenue to weave and dodge my way past sepulchral human forms. Most nights I had to step over one, if not two, prostrate bodies crowded into the vestibule of my building where dirt-encrusted men and women huddled in filthy blankets. Many homeless used shopping carts to store their meager belongings, or haul their bottle and can collections gleaned from dumpsters and bins to redemption centers to collect on the deposits. It was a way of life for them; a discouraging, distressing way of life.

And not one I'm happy to see repeating itself 42 years later in Seaside.



Google the words "homeless and shopping carts" and you can see quite a bit has been written.

AskReddit published an article titled, "How do homeless people get to keep shopping carts?"

A site called homelessadvice.com published "Five reasons why the homeless have shopping carts." Smithsonian Magazine published an article how an exquisitely designed cart for homeless people inspired a wave of artist activism.

The five reasons, if you're curious, as to why the homeless need

shopping carts are to transport possessions; collect cans; to use as walkers (you may have noticed some of the homeless have serious knee and hip problems); to protect themselves (you can flip them on their side and cover with a tarp and crawl into them, making a little cave); and carry old and smaller pets. I have noticed many of the transients in Seaside this summer are on the road with pets.

Stolen shopping carts are a big problem for grocery stores.

In March 2018, The Suburban Times, an online publication, published a story called "Grocery Cart Theft: Someone Has to Pay." According to the article, The Food Marketing Institute reported that nearly 2 million shopping carts are stolen nationwide every year, translating into a per-store loss of \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually. Those costs, of course, are passed along to consumers. So, in the end, we pay.

Many shopping carts end up miles from where they were stolen. Retrieving them is the job for the grocery chain where it's sometimes deemed less expensive and time consuming to just leave carts where they've been abandoned.

A few weeks ago an abandoned shopping cart appeared outside this newspaper office. It just turned up one day. It had a few empty plastic bags in it, the kind the city recently banned. Months ago, my husband and I jotted down information from a sign posted outside Safeway on Roosevelt Drive with the number to call to report an abandoned cart. He called it. Days passed, and eventually the cart disappeared.

It's impossible to know if someone from Safeway came and picked the cart up, or if another transient came along to claim it.

Either way, it's gone. But I know it won't be long before I see another.



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