

Teenager branches into landscaping

By GRIFFIN REILLY
The Astorian

Westin Carter speaks with fervor as he illustrates how he hopes his business can expand local market share. His goals are precise. He's certain he can continue his company's success.

He's also only 18. A recent graduate of Seaside High School, Carter received a \$2,000 scholarship from the Clatsop County Master Gardener Association. The award recognized his "significant horticultural skills and entrepreneurial acumen" in leading his landscaping business, Local Lawnboy LLC.

Carter describes the scholarship as incredibly generous, and appreciates how it gave him the opportunity to talk about his passions for plants and business.

"As an 18-year-old it's sometimes hard to relate to my friends when I talk about whether or not to plant a hydrangea," he said. "This scholarship really let me



Westin Carter received a \$2,000 scholarship from the Clatsop County Master Gardener Association.

show what I've learned over the years."

Carter credits Janet Wiloughby, a former client and a member of the master gardener association, with pushing him to apply for the scholarship as a senior.

"I don't think he approaches anything half-

way," she said. "I thought I was a workhorse, but I pale in comparison to Westin."

Carter's business venture began six years ago with a bit of inspiration from his grandfather, Brent Wilson, who ascended the ranks in the banking industry in his career.

"I said in my graduation speech that he's my hero, and I really meant that," Carter said. He fondly recalls riding around on his grandfather's drivable lawn mower as a child. The business, he said, is a combination of his interest in horticulture and his admiration

for his grandfather's work ethic.

As a sixth grader, Carter carried his three-blade push mower around the neighborhood to clear up weed patches for neighbors.

When he suffered a hip injury, however, Carter became frustrated with how his brother was finding success mowing lawns in his absence. The small sibling rivalry quickly became the launching point for Carter's side hustle to turn into a full-fledged business.

"One lawn became two, two became three," he said. "Then at the start of last year I had about 10 to 15 regular clients."

The mark of Local Lawnboy's work, Carter said, is a dedication to getting every job perfect. He insists that if it's not what his clients like, they need not pay him. "I want to get it right. My go-to line is, 'My parents feed me either way.'"

Carter — who was a standout soccer player for the Gulls — works seven days a week and manages

five full-time employees. Daniel Sturgell, the owner of Warrenton-based 3D Landscape, helped Carter's business by lending him trucks for mulch distribution and other tasks.

"He's really driven for someone his age," Sturgell said. "What he's doing, starting with just a hand-mower and working his way up, is really great to see."

Carter will attend the University of Oregon in the fall, where he plans to study business and finance. He knows it'll be tricky to maintain the business from afar and embark on his education at the same time. But he said he's spent months training his workers so that they'll be able to steer the ship once he's left for Eugene.

Carter also acknowledges how many of his mentors and clients advise him to take some time off and enjoy his college experience.

"Making sure I have fun along the way is something I keep in mind," he said, chuckling. "But it'll be a balancing act for sure."



LEFT: Summer camper Anna Liebert works on an art project at summer camp.



MIDDLE: Alexis Velazquez plays basketball during Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District's summer camp, which runs through late August.



RIGHT: Ezra Komba works on an art project during Dinosaurs and Dragons week.

Camp: 'Giving them a healthy, positive place to be'

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up a position with the Boys & Girls Club of the Long Beach Peninsula and then transitioning to her most recent job running the Astoria Parks and Recreation Department's Lil' Sprouts Academy. When the youth programs coordinator position opened, she saw an opportunity to work closer to home, as her family lives in Seaside.

"I really want to be a part of the community where my kids will be growing up," she said. "It was a good fit in that respect."

Her new job involves running the summer camp, preschool and after-school programs, which is similar to what she's done in the past and the type of labor she finds rewarding.

"Regardless of the age group you're working with, you're doing important work," she said.

While child care is a critical piece, she strives to take

her responsibility — and that of the staff — a step further. More than simply offering a safe place for youth, she's also focused on building relationships and enriching lives, whether the children are 3 or 12 years old.

"We're molding them for what our society is going to look like in the future, and who they're going to be as citizens," she said. "Giving them a healthy, positive place to be and a healthy start is really important."

This summer, the recreation district is operating the Summer Explorers camp for children in preschool and kindergarten and the Summer Adventure camp for children in first-through-fifth grade. Because families sign up on a per week basis to accommodate work schedules and vacations, the number of campers can vary between 45 to 55 any given week, Reding said.

Each week has a different theme, such as Dinosaurs and Dragons, Under the Sea, Bubbles! and Olympics,

that guides the activities and daily routines. Campers also get to use the pool weekly, and lunch and snacks are provided.

"With summer camp, it's fun to make it a little bit different than the normal after-school program or the normal preschool program, and I think our themes help with that," Reding said.

Even though summer camp is more focused on fun, however, doesn't mean there's not an underlying educational component, as well.

"When things are done right, kids are having fun but they're actually learning quite a bit at the same time," Reding said. "It just doesn't feel like school."

As COVID-19 restrictions ease, the park district has additional ability to provide a more laid-back environment. According to Reding, they are still contact tracing and doing daily health screenings. Parents and guardians are dropping off at the door, rather

than entering the building. Mask-wearing has become optional.

"It's exciting and scary at the same time, when you think about restrictions being lifted," Reding said. "We just hope we don't have to go through another shutdown kind of thing."

The park district's youth programming only serves children up to about 12. According to Reding, they may explore activities for middle school-aged students in the future, but it will likely be wrapped into a larger discussion of how the district decides to utilize the new recreation center. The building itself gives the district physical space to access a wide variety of possibilities, and so far, it's been helpful for the youth programs.

"Everything is set up for what we're doing, for the most part," Reding said. "It just makes life that much easier."

One of the park district's long-term goals is increasing child care offerings, but

she doesn't know specifically what that will look like. Part of it depends on the outcome of the district's strategic planning process for the Sunset Recreation Center, which will involve consul-

tants, key stakeholders, community business leaders and families.

"It's exciting because we have a big opportunity to help because there is such a need," Reding said.

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CASA holds benefit raffle

Tickets for the Clatsop County Court Appointed Special Advocates Benefit Raffle are on sale until 5 p.m. Aug. 29. A total of 500 tickets will be sold for \$20 each. Tickets will be entered into a drawing to win one of seven raffle baskets valued between \$800 and \$1,000 each. The fundraising goal is \$10,000.

The baskets feature products, services and gift cards from several Clatsop County businesses. The prizes include a dinner for four at Bridgewater Bistro; a one night stay at the Cannery Pier Hotel & Spa; a couple's massage from Allure Spa; a vehicle leveling kit from OCD Performance & Offroad; a captain's membership package from the

Columbia River Maritime Museum; and more.

Winners will be contacted by email. To purchase a raffle ticket, go to bit.ly/CASAraffle

Foundation awards \$50K for youth programs

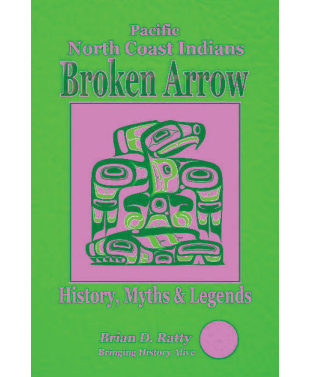
An Oregon Community Foundation Grant of \$50,000 has been awarded to the Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District for K-12 summer programming, providing funding for staffing, summer camp and field trips. The park district serves Clatsop County, which is considered a child care desert. This year the need for child care in the community has been even more critical as families are impacted by the COVID-19

pandemic and with the closing of a child care facility in Cannon Beach.

The park district's summer program in the Sunset Recreation Center serves 45 children in part-day and full-day programs over the course of nine weeks.

'Broken Arrow' from author Brian Ratty

Where did the Pacific North Coast Indians come from and where did they go? Local author Brian Ratty's new book "Broken Arrow: History, Myths & Legends of the Pacific North Coast Indians" is both a historical narrative and a vivid glance back to the heroic times of long ago when many Indian tribes called the shores of the lower Columbia River



their home.

"Broken Arrow" is an overview of the many voices about the life and times of the Chinook, Clatsop, Nehalem and Tillamook Indians.

"Broken Arrow" is available at museums, bookstores, libraries, gift shops and on-line. For more information, contact Sunset Lake Publishing, Warrenton, 503-717-1125. books@sunset-lakepublishing.com.

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