

SEASIDE Sports

A10
FRIDAY
December 3, 2021
SeasideSignal.com



Katherine Lacaze

From left, Pacific Ridge Elementary School students Josh Wright, Wesley Madman, Fischer Stevenson and Liam Goodwin run the track at the Seaside school campus during the annual Turkey Trot.

Turkey Trot: ‘Beneficial to the students both academically and physically’

Continued from Page A1

“That way it’s fun and rewarding for everyone,” Fisher added.

Introducing JAWS

The Turkey Trot has also become an extension of the school’s recently established Jogging and Walking Students program, run by Fisher and fellow PE teacher Brynn Ripley.

Fisher, who started at Pacific Ridge this school year, brought the program with her from school districts in southern Nevada and Eugene where she has previously worked and seen it have great success. She got a grant through Amped Up for a phone application that keeps track of the participants and logs their individual cumulative miles throughout the year through the use of the application.

The teachers developed a track by the elementary school. Between 7:45 and 8 a.m. each morning, after students are dropped off by the bus and between classes starting, they can walk or jog at the track for 15 minutes as music plays in the background.

Every time a student finishes a lap, they can scan their QR code and the system will tell them how far they’ve run. At 5-mile increments (and then 15 miles, 25 miles and so on), the teachers print off the student’s code in a different color to indicate them “leveling up,” Fisher said. At 10-mile increments, the children receive charms in the shape of feet to pin on their lanyards. They can collect the charms and level up throughout the school year, and Fisher is planning out a prize for the top performers — or all the students who reach a certain mile goal.

At the end of the week, the system also calculates the results and shares data on which classroom has collected the most miles. This adds a lighthearted competitive aspect to the program, with classrooms trying to catch up to or outpace others.

Self-motivation

Students racked up about 1,000 miles after only participating the program a week and a half. That’s also before the Turkey Trot miles were added, which Fisher expects “will really up our miles” as a school.

A handful of children have already clocked in 10 miles — or 50 laps — and received their first feet charm.

Currently, JAWS is only open to third through fifth graders because of social-distancing regulations and a desire to keep kids properly spaced out, but Fisher would like to expand it in the future.

“We’d like to get it to where everyone



Katherine Lacaze

Kids having fun at the Pacific Ridge Turkey Trot.

can participate,” she said, adding at other school districts, they’ve even invited the students’ family members to walk or jog with them during that 15-minute period.

Fisher estimates they have QR codes for about 300 students, and 100 or so will come out to run on a given day. Some days, they might jog or walk a full mile. Other days, it might be only a few laps. Sometimes, they’ll opt to stay inside and read. The goal is to provide children with the opportunity and let them choose when to participate.

“It’s wonderful to see kids be self-motivated,” Fisher said.

She knows running or walking a mile in the morning provides both physical and mental benefits for students, both throughout the day and over the long term.

“Post-COVID, we have a lot of health backlash,” Fisher said, adding many kids participated in “less movement” during the lockdown and distance learning period.

She also wants “kids to love running,” and to see that, “when you do it regularly, it’s a good thing.”

“It’s really important to try to make it fun and a positive, rewarding thing,” she added. “The idea is to just enjoy movement.”

Additionally, data supports that when kids move before school, it tends to help them in the classroom. They are better able to absorb information.

At the schools where she’s implemented the program, their academic performance has seen improvement. While Fisher reckons that’s not solely because of physical education and the extra fitness opportunity, those certainly have “something to do with it.”

“It’s beneficial to the students both academically and physically,” she said.



Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District photos
Turkey Trot participants ready at the start.

Park district Turkey Trot draws a crowd to Quatat Park

Seaside Signal

The Turkey Trot, held Thanksgiving morning, brought more than 200 participants to Quatat Park for the 5K run.

Prizes went to Elliott Allen, fastest male, 17:17; Kasha Tippet, fastest female, at 27:00; James Roehr, fastest youth, at 17:34; and Steve Brown, winner of best costume as Tyrannosaurus Rex.



LEFT: Elliott Allen, fastest runner overall. RIGHT: Kasha Tippet, fastest female at the Turkey Trot 5K.



LEFT: Steve Brown won the award for best costume at the Turkey Trot. RIGHT: James Roehr, the fastest youth runner in the Turkey Trot.

Runners at the start.



Local state parks land funding for improvements

Money for Fort Stevens, Nehalem Bay

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

State parks on the North Coast are getting an upgrade.

The Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission has approved an initial list of capital improvement projects that could funnel as much as \$19 million to projects at Fort Stevens State Park and Nehalem Bay State Park.

The money comes after the state Legislature this year approved \$50 million in general obligation bonds to fund state park facil-

ity improvements.

Funds will not be released until next year and some plans could be subject to change or adjustment, cautioned Justin Parker, the parks department’s North Coast district manager. But the money could arrive at an important time as visitation to the coast continues to soar and the tourist season is no longer confined to just the summer months.

“In a lot of cases, there are parts of the parks that are overdue for maintenance,” Parker said, adding, “We’re trying to prepare the parks for the next 100 years.”

Park managers at Fort Stevens could expect to see up to \$3 million to rehabilitate a rare historic military guardhouse and as much as \$8 million to address aging utilities.

Staff plan to relocate a restroom and shower facility at the Peter Iredale shipwreck

day-use area that dates from the 1950s. The restroom, which sits on top of a dune, is near the end of its useable life, difficult to maintain and actively sinking into the sand, Parker said. A new restroom will be built farther east and off of the dune.

The park also plans to upgrade four campground loops with improvements to electrical, water and wastewater utilities.

Money could flow to Nehalem Bay State Park beginning in 2023, though that funding is not certain.

Park managers hope to make parkwide upgrades and potentially add a new cabin loop and tent sites, among other improvements. More pressing from an operational side is a proposal to add housing for seasonal staff.

This year was one of the most challenging when it came to recruiting and retaining sea-

sonal staff, Parker said.

Across the North Coast district, which includes Fort Stevens, Nehalem Bay and Cape Lookout, the parks were able to hire only around 30% to 40% of the necessary seasonal staff on average.

People wanted the jobs but struggled to find housing, a familiar woe echoed across multiple industries and by numerous employers on the coast.

The state has focused on recruiting locally, trying to attract people who are already established in the area. In some cases, parks have been able to offer people a longer season to work.

“We’ve realized we’re not immune to the housing shortages and the challenges all the other employers in the area are encountering,” Parker said.