

Nine local teens successfully complete leadership program

"This was a life changing and worthwhile experience, thank you." Sounds like a quote from a white collar professional that just completed a three-day self-improvement seminar doesn't it? It's not – it's a quote from a teenager who just completed the weeklong residential youth leadership camp, known as the Survivors Youth Leadership Experience (SYLE).

Nine teens from Columbia and Clatsop Counties were able to attend and complete the award-winning program this summer. Representing Columbia and Clatsop Counties were:

Michael Good, Nick Harries, Madalyn Lippert, Kimberly Nelson, Robert Rojas, Curtis Smith, and Brittney West. These awesome teens had similar feed back.

When the youth were asked what they liked the most about the experience, comments ranged from "the challenge course", "everything", and "the open minds and acceptance of all involved" to "If it's to be, it's up to me!"

These teens join the ranks of over 150 other SYLE Alumni from across Oregon who have completed this unique program and they aren't the only ones

with good things to say. The National Association of Counties (NACo) has announced that the Survivors Youth Leadership Experience and its sponsoring organization, The Oregon Consortium and Oregon Workforce Alliance (TOC/OWA) have been selected to receive the 2003 Joe Cooney Award for Excellence – in recognition of the development of an exceptional program to serve youth. The National Association of Workforce Boards and the Workforce Excellence Network have also recognized the SYLE as a "Best Practice in Service to Teens."

Viewing youth as the single greatest asset of our rural communities, the TOC/OWA Youth Council, the SYLE's advisory body and their staff, have worked for the last three years to develop a program that would provide teens with an outstanding opportunity for per-

sonal growth and development, in order to assist them to be even greater assets to their communities, families and employers.

The SYLE is held at Oregon State University and includes more than 60 hours of curriculum targeted at developing internal strengths, leadership traits and the skills necessary to communicate and cope in home, work and school environments. Campers learn about specific themes such as integrity, loyalty, compassion, respect and the importance of setting and achieving goals.

The proof of a great program is not found only through comments from participants, it's demonstrated through the results achieved – In follow up with alumni from the first two years of camp, staff have learned that roughly 90% of Survivors stay on track with an educational plan, and many achieve

huge grade gains, with little or no recidivism into the juvenile system, and that many are working either full or part time.

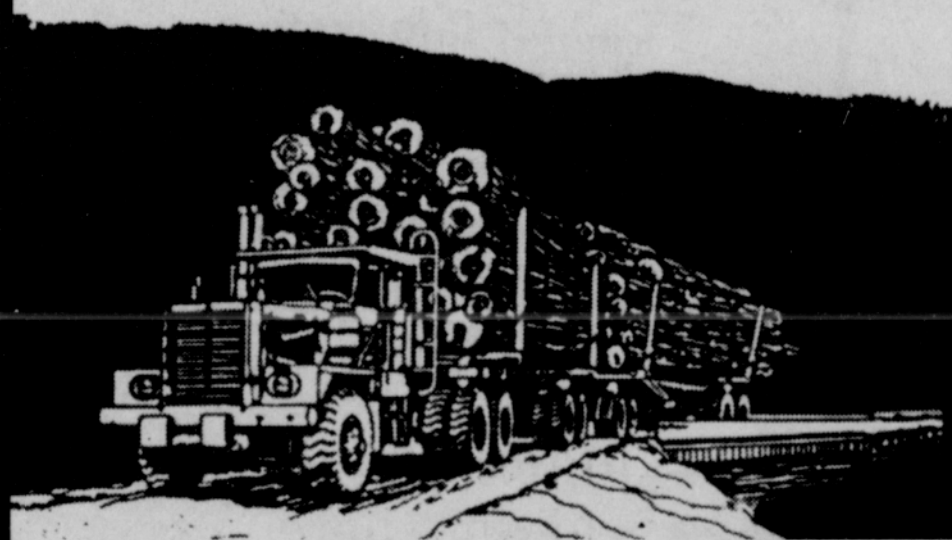
The program is made possible through a unique partnership, which is led by The Oregon Consortium and Oregon Workforce Alliance Youth Council, together with Management & Training Corporation, the Oregon National Guard, Oregon State University, OSU Extension and the Tongue Point and Wolf Creek Job Corps Centers.

For additional information on this unique opportunity for our youth, please contact Kris Latimer, Project Coordinator at 541-928-0241, ext. 219 or write to <kris@tocowa.org>. Additional information is also available via the web at <http://www.tocowa.org> or by calling Diana Riggs Nish at Management & Training Corporation at 503-397-6495 or writing to <driggs@mtctps.com>.

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Odyssey of the Mind Competition for 2004 begins

Who says learning can't be fun? With Odyssey of the Mind, creativity and productivity are joined to create an exciting and enjoyable competition for kindergarten through college students worldwide. This program teaches kids to think creatively and to work effectively and efficiently as a team in order to solve mind-bending problems.

Teams consist of 7 students from the same age group or grade level. The teams are given long-term, open-ended problems weeks or months in advance to prepare the solution. The teams then bring these solutions to the competi-

tions where they will put their skills and creativity to the test.

The problems range from very technical to very artistic. Because of the differences in these categories there is something for all students to enjoy.

For the competition in Spring 2004, one of the problems is to design and build two devices that propel balls through a circular hoop and to create a device to retrieve the balls after they have been launched.

Through Odyssey of the Mind the creative thinking process is nurtured and developed. The teams are judged by their solution to the long-term problem, the style in which it is

solved, and how the team scores in solving a 'pop-quiz' problem they are given at the competition. Through this competition students gain skills useful to them in the school and work environment, such as: team building, decision-making, problem solving and self-confidence. During the competition students are encouraged to freely express their ideas and suggestions. In order for the teams to succeed, everyone needs to offer their own skills, ideas and experience.

Competitions start at the regional level, and then go to the state/province/country level and from there are eligible to attend the annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals. This international competition will be held at the University of Maryland. To be included in these competitions you must first become a member. A member can be any school, recognized community group, or college/university. The membership fee is \$135.

All of Oregon's talented students are encouraged to go out and discover how much fun these competitions can be. The state competition for Oregon will be in Mill City in the spring of 2004. For any further information contact Chris Sherren at <mailto:chris_sherren@santi-am.k12.or.us>.

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