

Oregon K-12 Service-Learning 2010-2011

- ◆ *Engaging students*
 - ◆ *Increasing academic achievement*
 - ◆ *Empowering student leadership*
 - ◆ *Developing real-world skills*
 - ◆ *Preparing for college and careers*



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Oregon's Service-Learning Program



Service-Learning in Oregon is aligned with Common Core Standards and Oregon's new graduation requirements. Participating Service-Learning program educators receive training and support in Oregon's new K-12 Learn & Serve Standards for Quality guidelines. Integrating these standards in training and practice significantly improves outcomes for students.

Oregon's Service-Learning program also provides support to the state's unique Legacy Project, which brings together K-12 pre-service teachers-in-training with real, working teachers who serve as mentor-leaders. Through Legacy, teachers train teachers-to-be how to use Service-Learning and place-based programs to engage students and help them make essential connections between classroom lessons and real-world experiences.

All of Oregon's Service-Learning projects incorporate local partnerships with business and community organizations to ground them in reality. Every grant must be matched by community partners. Not only do students who participate in Oregon's Service-Learning projects develop real world skills, their communities also connect with the students and establish ongoing ties to their schools.

The Power of Service-Learning

Service-Learning is a dynamic instructional tool that can be used in any academic subject area and with students of every ability and grade level. Participating in Service-Learning projects opens options for students by allowing them to:

- ◆ Become actively engaged in their own learning while identifying issues and solving problems;
- ◆ Work alongside adults on issues relevant to both adults and youths;
- ◆ Use skills that adults take seriously and that youths need to master to be successful;

- ◆ Learn first-hand the importance of intellectual discipline for career success;
- ◆ Become excited about learning and retain what they learn in the classroom while applying it in the field.
- ◆ Explore possible careers.

In follow-up surveys, 81% of dropouts say opportunities for real-world learning, such as service-learning and work-based internships, would have made their classroom experience more relevant and would have kept them in school.

Oregon Service-Learning 2010-11 Highlights

- ◆ In the 2010-11 program year, 10 Oregon Service-Learning grants totaling \$181,750 were awarded.
- ◆ 3,000 students participated in and completed approved Learn & Serve educational activities.
- ◆ Oregon provided \$28,500 in Service-Learning funds to support the Legacy teacher mentoring program.

Grantees

- ◆ Canby School District
- ◆ Corvallis School District
- ◆ Lane ESD
- ◆ McMinnville School District
- ◆ Oregon City Service Learning Academy
- ◆ Oregon Forest Resource Institute
- ◆ Rimrock Expeditionary Alternative Learning Middle School (REALMS)
- ◆ Redmond School District
- ◆ St Helens School District
- ◆ Tillamook School District

Participating Legacy Institutions

- ◆ George Fox University
- ◆ Pacific University
- ◆ Portland State University
- ◆ University of Oregon
- ◆ University of Portland
- ◆ Oregon State University

Oregon Service-Learning

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Corporation for National & Community Service: www.LearnAndServe.gov

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Learn and Serve America provides grants to schools, colleges and nonprofit groups to support efforts to engage 1.5 million students each year in community service linked to educational goals. This type of learning, called service-learning, improves communities while helping young people develop their academic and civic skills.



What Students Say About Service-Learning

I have grown from my experiences here. I have learned about taking high quality data and using it to make inferences about the health of the stream, but more importantly, I have learned patience and more about myself, how I handle being in challenging situations, and how I look at nature.



When I was collecting data, I felt important because the data I collected will be looked at in the future. Thinking about this made me realize what a cool experience this is.



I have learned a lot more here than in the classroom in terms of sampling soil and finding the percentage of soil moisture. It makes me feel important to collect this data, to provide service here is really cool and to help out is special. It makes me feel that my answers will not just be graded, but will hopefully be used to guide future use ... I feel more confident now in my ability to get the right answers and to really feel like I am volunteering and contributing ... doing the work of a forest ecologist



St. Helens School District

Service-Learning has been a win-win-win proposition for Alison Charbonneau's seventh-grade Life Science students at St. Helens Middle School.



to eliminate invasive plant species such as blackberries, scotch broom and English ivy from the site. The following year, they concentrated on introducing more appropriate plants such as vine maple, red flowering current, red osier dogwood, ocean spray and others. The third year of the grant program is devoted to maintaining a half-mile nature trail.

"Some of the students didn't know how to use the tools and now they're proficient in simple landscaping and using GPS units."

The physical work helped them, as well.

"Many of my ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) students had a chance to move and show their strength in the outdoor world where they are most at ease," Charbonneau said. "They're kinetic kids who need to move around and do things with their hands. They didn't shut down. It was something familiar that they could relate to."

She said the project also helped students relate to the local environment and empowered them to do something to help the local environment they walk by every day.

"Most of them wanted to come back to the wetland during the summer to make sure that their newly planted native plants are not going to be covered by more invasive plants." She said working on the project also increased student confidence.

"Because of their success as leaders in this project, they were given a different social status than they would otherwise have had in the classroom," she said.

After working on the project, Charbonneau said, students scored higher on their ecology unit tests than on any other.

"They all took pride in their work because it was real and very visible. They could measure their progress every time they walked to school."

Charbonneau said student attendance increased dramatically on wetlands days, a fact that particularly helped marginal students.

"It allowed many of the least academic students to shine."

Charbonneau teaches about 120 "at risk" students and she says they were anxious to spend time outdoors working on the project to restore a one-acre wetlands area on school property. She said that, as a result of the program, student attendance is better on the days they get to do that and their related test scores are improving.

The school is located in an area that once was 85 percent wetlands, Charbonneau said. But development has reduced that until now just 5 percent is in wetlands, and even that is threatened. Restoring the wetlands habitat on school property not only helps the environment, she explained, it helps students connect with nature.

"The students would begin every week asking if they could go out to the wetlands that week," the teacher said.

Students started the project in 2009-2010 using donated landscaping tools

REALMS: A Learning Experience

Service-Learning is a way of life at Rimrock Expeditionary Alternative Learning Middle School (REALMS) in Bend.

Officials at the school say they aim to “instill in students a drive to be active citizens with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for their local community” by identifying and addressing authentic community needs.

Service-Learning projects for the school’s 135 students range from efforts to improve environmental quality at two locations in the Upper Deschutes Watershed to exercising animals at a Humane Society of Central Oregon facility and taking part in an art project with disabled citizens.

In 2010, the school received a three-year \$30,000 Learn and Serve grant from the Oregon Department of Education to continue its work in the community.

REALMS Director Roger White said seventh graders have been collecting ecological baseline data around Ryan Ranch Meadow, a 70-acre former cattle ranch along the Deschutes River, as part of an effort to turn it back into its original wetland state.

“We thought it would be a great project for the seventh graders,” White said. “They’re gathering data about ground cover and soils as well as live and down trees, particularly in the area where it transitions from meadow to forest. They bring that data back to their classes, analyze it and organize it into various tables and graphs. They present the results of their work once a year at a Watershed Summit in Bend.”

As the watershed council reintroduces water into the area, the students can watch and measure the transition, he added.

In another area, for the past six years eighth graders have been collecting

water quality data for a restoration project along Tumalo Creek, a tributary of the Deschutes River suffering from after-effects of a 1979 fire.

“They began collecting data on vegetation along the creek, tagging plants and noting things such as height and where they were growing,” science teacher Eric Beck said. “In the third year, they were using electronic devices with probes to measure water quality – temperature, pH, oxygen content, turbidity and conductivity. And they were monitoring the health of the creek, collecting macro-invertebrates that are intolerant to pollution and lots of pollution intolerant bugs.”

The projects have had a huge effect on the students, Beck said.

Eighth grader Max Groshong wrote this about his Service-Learning experience:

“When I first came to Tumalo Creek I just saw it as a cold river that had no meaning to me. Now I know that it is much more – Tumalo is a home away from home for me. It is a place I can go and feel free from the greedy and shallow world, a place where I feel safe and calm and happy. I have learned so much from collecting our data.”



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– REALMS Director Roger White

Redmond School District

At Brown Education Center in Redmond, Service-Learning students have turned a vacant lot into a garden that now helps feed hungry families. And as they did, they not only learned how to put classroom curriculum to use, they also learned how to work together for others.

The Brown Education Center in central Oregon, operates behavior and academic intervention programs for at-risk elementary, middle and high school students in the Redmond School District. The center serves 110 enrolled students for various time spans in its programs before rotating them back to regular district schools.

Their service-learning project was designed to teach students teamwork and mentor them by allowing them to partner with children in other age groups while helping to reinforce their academic efforts in math, science and language arts as part of their work providing service to the community.

At the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, a 12,000-square foot section of ground just south of the center was a vacant and unproductive lot. Through their Service-Learning grant, they turned that lot into a garden, complete with wheelchair accessible raised beds and pathways. It produces tomatoes, beans, peas, potatoes, broccoli, carrots, beets, spinach, lettuce, kale and several varieties of squash.

"We had a big potato harvest in 2011," said Brown Center Administrator Debbie Newport, "and there are about 40 tomato plants producing out there."

The first year of the project was spent planning, clearing and preparing the land and building support structures with the help of Heart of Oregon program students who alternate between working in construction and attending related classes. Planting and harvesting by service-learning students began in the second year.

Officials say the project has not only helped students acquire work experience that they can apply to their everyday lives, it also has helped bring the nearby community together.

"Some of the situations students encounter working in the project they would never experience at home," said

high school teacher Susan Bruggeman.

"They get experience planting, caring for and harvesting the crops. They're also canning some of their produce and selling it to raise money to support more planting in the spring."

Bags of produce from the Brown Center project also have been donated to a local crisis center that aids needy homeless and working poor families, Newport noted, and more was given to area residents who volunteered to help tend the garden in the summer.

"The Brown Education Center is our only resource for fresh vegetables in central Oregon," said Rebecca Taylor, founder of the privately funded nonprofit Full Circle Outreach Center Inc. in Redmond. "They gave us enough produce to feed 50 families."

The students sponsored a harvest day festival featuring soup made from the vegetables they grew

"Another thing the kids did," said Newport, "was plant some perennial flowers along the southeast and southwest corners of the garden to help beautify it so the neighbors aren't having to look at just a farm."

Bruggeman said the students hope to start growing herbs next and they want to sell baskets of flowers to raise money to sustain the garden beyond the term of the grant.

"We want to keep on going," she said.

"Some of the situations students encounter working in the project they would never experience at home."

*— Susan Bruggeman
High School Teacher*



A bountiful garden grows (above) where once there was nothing but an empty lot (below).





Baking Up Life Skills

Can cookies help change a life? They can at Happy Friends Baking Company. Developmentally disabled youngsters in the Lane County Educational Services District are learning important life skills and helping to fund their own cookie baking business, with support from the Oregon Service-Learning program.

Happy Friends Baking Co. was created in 2005 to help special needs students gain vocational training by operating the cookie-making business. It is funded in part through Oregon Service-Learning grants and cookie sale revenue.

The Happy Friends Baking Company – now in the third year of its most recent Oregon Service-Learning grant – cranks out cookies and breakfast bars at Lane Community College in Eugene and at Siuslaw High School in Florence, according to Brian Brands, manager of the Life Skills Education program for the district.

Brands said Happy Friends production is roughly 400 breakfast bars a month – which, due to district budget cuts, is about 80 percent of what they used to make. But the program still involves about 35 special education students ages 16 to 21 from nine different schools who bake, package, distribute and sell cookies and breakfast bars at the community college and Siuslaw High as well as North Eugene High School. In the past, students also have given breakfast bars and cookies to Food for Lane County.

It's a lot of good for just a little "dough."



Pre-Apprenticeship Program

In 2010-11, Oregon Service-Learning grants helped 131 high school students in the Corvallis area by providing professional-level pre-apprenticeship training programs that exposed them to high-wage, high-demand occupations.

The program came together through a collaboration of educators, private companies and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry.

Its goals were to:

- ◆ develop a skilled, educated, homegrown and diverse 21st Century workforce;
- ◆ give teachers a better understanding of the job-specific skills and knowledge students need to get hired in various industries;
- ◆ make education more relevant to students
- ◆ provide opportunities for students to explore possible careers and learn skills while they're still in school.

Students were introduced to such skills as computer drafting, engineering, framing, masonry, welding, metal fabrication, plumbing and electrical work.

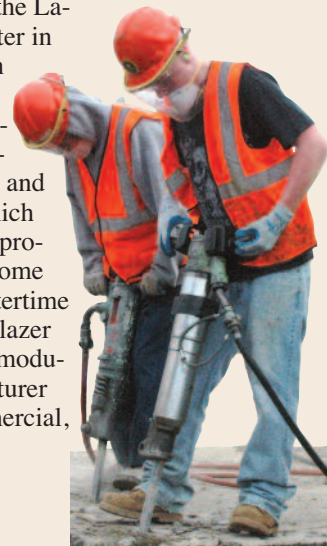
"The program helped us develop some great partnerships that helped us realign our thinking about academic course work, especially in applied mathematics and science," said Donna Keim, a career education specialist at Corvallis High School.

ist at Corvallis High School.

"Teachers got a chance to see the kinds of things the students need to learn and kids in the program totally turned around their thinking about getting good grades and work."

In addition to training, students got practical experience building planting beds, garden benches and book shelves for the training facilities, bat racks for new dugouts at Corvallis High School and helping to weatherize homes for low income families.

Taking part were the Laborer's Training Center in Adair; the Electrician Training Center in Tangent; the Community Services Consortium of Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties (which has a weatherization program to help low-income residents reduce wintertime heating costs); and Blazer Industries, a custom modular building manufacturer specializing in commercial, specialty and residential buildings located in Aumsville.



McMinnville School District

Miller Woods, a 130-acre tract of land in a stunning setting near McMinnville, Ore., is a natural wonderland containing streams, springs, small ponds and several types of habitat, including hardwood stands, grassland, conifers and oak woodlands.

It is being developed as a place to learn about soils, water, wildlife, climate and forestry.

And elementary and high school students from McMinnville schools are helping to do it through a Service-Learning program.

According to Jill Long, grant writer for the McMinnville School District, the \$12,500 Service-Learning grant

tion studies of native species, eradicated invasive plant species and performed habit restoration and other activities.

"For many of our high poverty students, in particular, this place-based learning was their only opportunity to interact with and gain appreciation of the natural world while also performing a valuable service for the community. Students felt a real sense of purpose in protecting Miller Woods and they now recognize what a resource it is to the community and to the plants and animals that live there."

The project also had a positive effect on the high school students involved, she added.

"Most of the natural resource students who participated intend to pursue post-secondary education and careers in natural resource systems management. Prior to their Service-Learning experiences, many of these students did not see themselves as 'college material.'"

Jared Larson, who teaches Natural Resources courses at McMinnville, agreed. Some students have gone into forestry, he noted, while others have decided on careers in early childhood education.

Larson said his students are also helping to clear up a water quality problem in Corzine Creek, which runs through McMinnville. E-coli bacteria has been found in the creek during flood periods and students hope their data may help identify the source of the contamination.

the district received allowed 20 eleventh- and twelfth-graders in the Natural Resources curriculum at McMinnville High School to use the woods to teach 500 third-graders about the environment and scientific methods.

The third-graders, Long reported, "performed water quality monitoring, did popula-