NEWS & NOTES
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The Gray Family Foundation seeks to fulfill John and Betty Gray’s faith in the human spirit. The Gray family acknowledges their responsibility to give back to the systems that nurture all of us: our culture, our natural environment and our communities.

Director's Notes

All it took was stepping out of my car, hearing the primal familiarity of the creek cascading over a series of boulders, the dappled sunlight flickering across the rough and tumble dirt road, a fresh-scented breeze on my neck, the sights and sounds of the forest stirring over me ... and in 15 seconds I felt my blood pressure falling and my stress level begin to wane. Katie Ryan, the Executive Director of Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center, greeted me and introduced me to her Development Associate, Kristina Oldani, while we climbed into a well loved Ford Explorer that would take us over the 3-mile jeep road that led to the old mining town that was now the Opal Creek Camp, a place so ridiculously beautiful that it doesn't seem fair to compare it to all the other places in the world that aren't quite so lovely.

As we passed the opaline pools, I asked the question that must be asked about the obvious name of Opal Creek and was surprised to learn that it was named not for the opal-colored sparkling pools of water that would make crystal feel embarrassed for its lack of clarity, but instead for the man who named the creek claiming, "it's the most
beautiful thing in the world besides my wife 'Opal'."

My reason for visiting this site was ostensibly work-related, getting to know Oregon's camp facilities that serve outdoor school programs around the state, but I felt a little bit guilty for getting to visit this beautiful place on a perfect spring day. In the preceding 8 weeks, I had been to many wonderful camps: Namanu, Camp Collins, Twin Rocks, Magruder, Cedar Ridge, Camp Angelos, Oregon 4–H, and OMSI's Hancock Field Station. This was my last for the season.

My reaction to Opal Creek was not unique. Kristina reported that the kids from Buckman Elementary who had arrived the day before, exited the bus in a frenetic state of group ADHD. They were barely containable during their 3-mile hike to camp. Today, however, they were calm, thoughtful, seemingly transformed. One night in the woods had changed them.

As I pondered this, it didn’t really surprise me. If you were to gather the meanness and malevolence of every single camp supervisor across all of Oregon's camps, distill it and condense it into a clear liqueur, there still wouldn't be enough to make a martini for a b-rate villain in a Bond movie. The people who lead outdoor school are a joyful lot, unaffected by rain or rough sleeping conditions. They eat healthy food, spend a lot of time outside, and they teach kids what it means to connect to nature in a fundamental way. They make up songs, do silly dances, and they laugh a lot. How could the kids in their charge not be affected by that love for life as they learned about water, plants, animals, and soil?

-- Eric
Notable News

New Grant Program at OCF: K–12 Student Success
The Oregon Community Foundation will award grants ranging from $40,000 to $120,000 per year for three years to Out-of-School Time programs that promote academic success and serve low-income students, students of color and rural students.

OCF seeks proposals from Out-of-School Time programs that meet one or both of the following criteria: Utilize quality practices and wish to expand the number of youth they reach and/or wish to deepen the effectiveness of their programming by adopting and integrating evidence-based, culturally specific or culturally adapted best-practice programming. Additional information, requirements and application details can be found at: http://www.oregoncf.org/grants-scholarships/grants/k12-student-success

Deadline to apply is August 1, 2013 for a funding decision in November 2013.

Questions? Please contact Belle Cantor; bcantor@oregoncf.org; 503.227.6846.

Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan "Toolkit" Event Scheduled
Thanks to a generous contribution from the Oregon Zoo, the Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan's Professional Development Toolkit Working Group Event will take place July 31–August 1. A number of educators from across the state have confirmed participation in the meeting. These educators represent K–12 and non-formal education in addition to diverse geographic regions from around the state. The working group is charged with developing a comprehensive scope and sequence for K–12 environmental literacy in Oregon. This framework will be used to identify and compile resources, professional development opportunities and field experiences that support a continuum of environmental literacy learning experiences for all students each grade K–12 from partners across the state.

You can get involved in the Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan and the movement to leave no Oregon child inside by contacting Traci Price.

Grant Cycle Updates

The Gray Family Foundation Invites Proposals for the 2013 Outdoor School Grants.

Our online grant application is now available.
Current Grant Deadline
Monday, July 1, 2013 – Grants awarded by November

Funding Category: Overnight, Residential Outdoor School Programs for fifth or sixth grade students

GFF makes grants to schools, government agencies, and nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations. Over $350,000 will be available for grants for outdoor school programs for the 2013 calendar year. Please refer to our website for examples of recent successful projects and amounts granted.

Applications will be accepted through an online system available via a link on our website. Hint: Click on the "Start Application Here" link at the top of the website page to access the online application. Please note that you will have to attach some documentation to the application such as budget information, which should be prepared ahead of time.

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