We are so grateful.

Friends of Outdoor School is so very thankful this holiday season for our devoted supporters; for our incredible organizational and business partners; and for the tireless efforts of parents, student leaders, teachers, ODS staff and all other volunteers working in so many ways to provide our children with the very best educational experiences imaginable.

Thank you!

"To watch a child who feels lost, shy, and unimportant slowly transform into an outgoing, energetic, social butterfly is truly heartwarming.

The knowledge that I had somehow positively impacted an impressionable sixth grader was enough to stimulate my personal growth... I often wonder if the campers teach me more than I teach them."

-- Student Leader “Mango”

Fall ODS session ends with a (chilly) blast

Our region’s sixth graders enjoyed beautiful, sunny weather the first half of the fall 2014 season — then good ol’ “Oregon” weather the second half. Staff wisely shuttered all three camps the final week due to high winds, power outages and ice warnings; these schools will be rescheduled into springtime slots. Altogether, about 3,500 lucky kids from 120 classrooms had a natural-science blast.

“It was a busy but excellent fall,” said ODS Director Dan “Teal” Prince. “We had some really dynamite additions to our staff that I’m very excited about.”

Recruitment of student leaders is going strong; more than 600 high schoolers attended the fall Workshop training. Recruitment will begin again in January for the spring session, along with additional staff.

Deliver adventure this holiday!

Adventure WILD summer day camp gift certificates

Buy online at adventurewild.org
Registration opens Feb. 16
Outdoor School for All

As you may know, the Oregon Outdoor Education Coalition (OOEC) formed this year — hurray! It’s a bipartisan group of diverse and dedicated partners supporting outdoor school programs and place-based, hands-on education across Oregon. The long-term vision is to ensure that every Oregon student has the knowledge and perspectives to make responsible choices about Oregon’s nature and natural resources.

To help launch the effort, Friends of Outdoor School is providing leadership, expertise and support. Over the next year, OOEC will evolve to act as the hub for statewide advocacy and support of outdoor education in Oregon, while continuing to work closely with Friends of Outdoor School in the Portland Metro region.

Statewide Public Engagement Gatherings
With support from Oregon Forest Resources Institute, this winter OOEC is holding six regional discussions to hear what Oregonians think about outdoor education and how it can better serve the needs of their communities. These regional gatherings are an opportunity to help shape education in Oregon by telling us what you think Outdoor School should look like.

For more info: www.OregonOutdoorEd.org

Outdoor School for All
OOEC’s first initiative is the Outdoor School for All campaign for lasting public funding to provide every Oregon fifth or sixth grade student a full week of Outdoor School or similar programming.

Outdoor School for All is currently conducting research, building supporters and reaching out to key stakeholders. The campaign officially launches in the latter half of January 2015.

Join us here: www.OutdoorSchoolForAll.org

Regional gatherings:
All events take place Saturdays (except PDX) 1-3 pm

Dec 6: La Grande (Cook Memorial Library)
Dec 13: Bend (East Bend Library)
Jan 10: Medford (Jackson Cty. Comm. Justice)
Jan 17: Newport (City of Newport Library)
Jan 21: Portland (Metro Council Chamber & Annex, 6-8pm)
( Statewide teleconferencing available )
Jan 24: Eugene (HEDCO Educ. Bldg, Rm. 176)

You’re invited...
Drinks for Dollars
A benefit for Outdoor School

Friday, Jan. 9th, 5-8PM
@ Iconic Lounge
2226 NE Broadway
iconiclounge.com
21+
Full menu - Happy Hour until 6PM
NWRESD ODS attendance grows to 10,000 students

This school year marks the first fall session in 14 years that the NW Regional Educational Service District (NWRESD) had four Outdoor School sites running full sessions, said John Jackson, Outdoor School supervisor.

The West Linn-Wilsonville School District chose to send their sixth graders to the NWRESD program this year. Jackson credits NWRESD’s ability to keep camp costs down and the desirability of their two coastal camps as factors in the move.

North Clackamas School District also made a change, switching from attending three days/two nights to four days/three nights.

These two decisions had the biggest impact on Outdoor School attendance, increasing the total number of scheduled campers by about 1,000.

Still, Jackson says, without funding for every district school, equity remains an issue. “Until these schools have the fiscal ability to send all their sixth graders to Outdoor School, it’s the disadvantaged kids that are going to miss out the most.”

Do you ODS?

Order today:

cafepress.com/FriendsofODS
cafepress.com/IHeartWoodcookie.com

One for you, two for me... ODS gifts for the holidays!

Counting the Rings

Order your own copy of Outdoor School’s book of stories!
Contact brina@friendsofoutdoorschool.org or 503-257-1640

$15!
ODS “Old Timers” swap stories, laughs at luncheon reunion

A group of former Outdoor School staff joined Friends of ODS executive director Kim “Sierra” Silva and ODS director Dan “Teal” Prince at Camp Howard for an afternoon of reminiscing and laughs.

The self-proclaimed Old Timers regaled the kids and staff with stories from the “good ol’ days.” During lunch, students gave a standing ovation to Warren “Mr. Gil” Gilfillan, who in 1966 became the first director of Outdoor School.

“Experiencing the enthusiasm of the sixth graders cannot be phonied-up,” said Mr. Gil. “It is real and the core of what Outdoor School embodies. It proves that the social aspect of Outdoor School easily equals the environmental learning. It is “complete” education, a worthy goal.

“I’m sure all the old guys felt the same emotions as I did: nostalgia, satisfaction that Outdoor School is still alive, and the warmth of familiarity after so many years — over 30 for me!

“Outdoor School with five sites in operation was incredibly complex: 10,500 meals were served every week of the six weeks of operation. It took a ton of (GI surplus) bread flour per session to feed those hungry 12-year-olds.

“But then, it was all worth it as one observed the final outcome on the Friday departure of students. A Niagara of tears were running down the faces of 100 sixth graders and the prolonged hugs and the promises of eternal friendship were declared. This was especially the case for staff members and high-school-age, cabin-group-counselors. Will they ever forget?”
Outdoor School in the news

Outdoor School and its supporters have been featured twice in the news recently!

Old Timers’ reunion

In October, Portland Tribune Sustainability reporter Jennifer Anderson accompanied Friends of ODS executive director Kim “Sierra” Silva, Warren “Mr. Gil” Gilfillan and a group of other Old Timers on a reunion visit to Camp Howard (see story, opposite page).

Her Nov. 13 story, “Oldtimers return to Outdoor School,” recounted how Mr. Gill, Wally “Wapiti” Cole, Marty “Spike” Kuns, Jim “Duster” Gorter, and Bob “Name Tag” Mann “chuckled at stories from the good old days, and marveled at how most things at camp appeared unchanged from their time.”

Anderson continued: “Three generations of Oregonians have now experienced the rite of passage that is Outdoor School, created as a weeklong environmental learning experience in the field. For many Oregon youth, it has been a formative experience, the first time they get up close with nature.

“Yet more than half of the students who participate nowadays do so for a condensed version of three days, rather than a full week, because of their school districts’ unstable funding.

“It’s primarily the private schools — such as Holy Cross and Portland Jewish Academy — and small districts like Riverdale that send their students for a full week. Those schools, or their parents, can afford to buy a full week for their youth.” Read the full story: tinyurl.com/pcp5n5r

Guest opinion

On Oct. 25, The Oregonian published a guest opinion piece by longtime ODS supporter Ted Wolf entitled, “Oregon schoolkids need more than three days of Outdoor School.” An excerpt:

“For the 48th autumn in a row, thousands of sixth graders across Oregon will pull on boots, pack bedrolls and gather nervously outside their schools, waiting for buses that will take them to Outdoor School, the state’s award-winning experiment in hands-on science education.

“Joined with kids from other schools and districts, accompanied by their classroom teachers and a team of high school student leaders, they will learn about plants, animals, soil and water — in the midst of plants, animals, soil and water. None will forget Outdoor School.

“The program is a great equalizer, bringing kids from every walk of life together in the intimacy of rustic cabins and Oregon forests for field study, campfires and home-style meals. For some kids, it is their first time away from home. For others, it is their first visit to a forest. Every kid brings back a story.

“Oregonians love Outdoor School, with that offhand love we reserve for things we take for granted. But Outdoor School has seen hard times in recent years, as the Recession ravaged the state’s general fund and school districts struggled to make ends meet. Discretionary programs, including Outdoor School, were cut to the bone.

“A robust six-day experience became, for most public school districts, a three-day program. One metro-area district dropped out entirely. Parent and student fundraising efforts sustained others in a desperate attempt to keep learning essentials on life support during a "take-away" decade that none wish to repeat.

Now, many districts are hiring new teachers. Programs are being restored. More Oregon schoolchildren will encounter the Douglas firs, the salmon rivers, the salal and sword ferns that are their birthright. Or will they? Read the full story: tinyurl.com/qam3q9q
Thank you, EMSWCD!

We are grateful to East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District for another year of support for MESD Outdoor School!

Up to $215,000 makes a world of difference to our kids as we work toward permanent funding solutions.

Event Calendar

“Drinks for Dollars” Night Jan. 9, 5:30-8pm at Iconic Lounge

Shamrock Run March 17. Join our Super Team and raise $5 per runner for ODS http://tinyurl.com/nfxsknp

Rogue Ale Big Give Party Dec. 18, 5:30-8:30pm at Green Dragon Bistro & Pub (free)

Give!Guide ends Dec. 31 at midnight

Photo of the Year — submissions close Feb. 1

Photo of the Year Award Gala Feb. 21, 3:30-6:30pm at Base Camp Brewing

Plus! POTY Afterparty 6:30-close — Iconic Lounge

For more information, contact Kim Silva at Kim@FriendsOfOutdoorSchool.org or 503-257-1774.

www.FriendsOfOutdoorSchool.org

GiveGuide.org/#friendsofoutdoorschool

Case of spirits from Rogue Distillery

Donate to GiveGuide on Dec. 18th for a chance to win:

LAST GiveGuide Big Give day

GiveGuide.org/#friendsofoutdoorschool

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