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New walking trail opens in Clatskanie

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Posted: Wednesday, September 14, 2011 11:34 am

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CLATSKANIE -- On Sept 9, the Clatskanie Elementary School Parents Supporting Education Association (PSEA) celebrated the opening of a new walking trail for students and their families. The asphalt fitness trail loops the bottom field at Clatskanie Elementary school and was created in part by a Nike grant of \$20,000.

The trail - which is open to the community - represents one answer to a growing health threat in the community.

In Columbia County, 64 percent of children in eighth grade and 71 percent of 11th graders are not getting the recommended physical activity each day, according to the 2007-08 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey.

According to Ashley Swanson, spokesperson for Public Health Foundation of Columbia County, physical activity, with proper nutrition, is the best way to combat obesity, but the students at Clatskanie Elementary simply did not have enough space to be physically active. PSEA prioritized creating the walking trail and partnered with the Columbia Health Coalition to help obtain a grant from the Nike Community Fund.

"The school has a beautiful lower field that could only be used a couple times a year because the rain turns it into a mud pit. We knew we needed to make it more usable and a great place for our students and our families to get out and move," said Gretchen Moore member of the PSEA.

PSEA received local in-kind support from businesses to get started on the project.

"We were thrilled to help Clatskanie Elementary turn a muddy field into a great community resource," said Swanson. "Our community is facing a twin epidemic of physical inactivity and poor nutrition and that is leading to health challenges for our children. We saw this community project as a great way of addressing both - of finding a positive solution that will benefit everyone."

The Clatskanie Walking Trail is one of several projects the Columbia Health Coalition has been involved with, including Restore, Re-explore, Rediscover Columbia County - Passport to Health - the Vernonia Wellness Team's work to create and implement the school district wellness policy administrative rules, and helping the Christ Episcopal Church create a community garden.

All of the produce from the garden is donated to community meals and the food bank. This is the second year of harvests from the garden.

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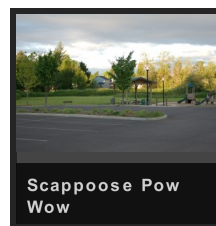
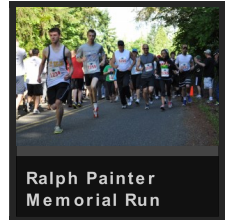
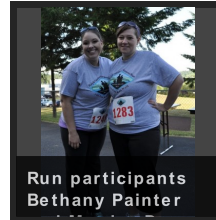
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