

Exchange Club of Salem News THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

September, 2014

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We meet most Wednesdays for lunch [and Thursday evening 3rd week of month] at Rock-N-Rogers Restaurant on So. Commercial Rd (south of Roths IGA)

Our Common Cause: we don't like child abuse or neglect, and we are in the mood to build things out of our values. Call it Sweat Art.

There are two Exchange Clubs in Salem - ours and the Networking Exchange Club. Together we are part of **ESCAPE** – Exchange Sponsored Child Abuse Prevention Effort. This program is part of Fostering Hope and uses volunteer parent mentors who help parents learn to parent without slipping into abuse. Jess Armas from our club is in charge of this program.

We also work together on a program rewarding high school seniors who in the beginning of their tenure were failing but then turned themselves around and managed to graduate in good standing with their class. We call this our **ACE** (Accepting the Challenge of Excellence) **Award** program. Students from each of eight high schools are selected by their respective school staff. We include Chemawa and Barbara Roberts/Early College. We heap praise on these students in front of their relatives/friends at a dinner complete with a motivational speaker. But in truth their own stories also motivate everyone in the room. Next ACE Awards Banquet is in May, 2015.

Yearly also we pay tribute to a high school senior who demonstrates remarkable **scholastic achievement** and we pay tribute to one of us common folk who quietly performs community heroism. We call this our **Ernie Savage Award** named for the man who with his wife ran a shoe store for many years in Salem and who gave away about as many shoes to needy children as he sold to people in Salem. Ernie was a member of our club until he passed away. You are welcome to nominate candidates for this award. Deadline is March 31. Awards Banquet is in May, 2015.

We have an asset - photo reproductions of 33 historical American documents for the past 10 generations. We call the set the **Freedom Shrine**. When the current Salem Library was built in 1971 our club gave a set of these documents to the Library. They hang on the wall on ground floor - on the way to their Teen Library wing. We are talking to the library staff about a suitable way to display these documents that 'speak' better to today's high schoolers. We asked a group of teens to critique the Freedom

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Shrine. They wrapped our knuckles, telling us they don't need it the way it is currently framed. *Boring!* We took from their comments these ideas: a) thank goodness they don't want a digital display! b) they need help understanding the benefit of seeing all these documents together - the panoramic view of how the past 10 generations of Americans have defended and enlarged the idea of individual and political freedom. And reminding us where all our civil rights leaders find their courageous voice and that we have in our hands a multi-generational experiment in how to sustain personal and political freedom.

c) we do better for these young people by presenting temporary displays, for example around Presidents Day in February, rather than occupying a wall for the ages. d) we get even with them by asking them to help us design the display! Can we make a contest out of this? Fresh ideas are delicious to try out.

In the 3rd week of November we pack **Thanksgiving boxes** with \$50 worth of food and deliver them to (this year 10) families we know need quiet help on Thanksgiving Day and the following month.

For the past 10 years our big community project was providing a **free picnic for foster parents and kids**. It was our way to say THANKS to the foster parents for being on the front lines of how our community attacks child abuse/neglect. Support vendors brought clothes, books, entertainment suggestions, etc to help make the picnic a success. Some years we fed as many as 500 people parents, kids and teens.

This year we turned over the picnic to the Marion-Polk Foster Family Association and we now are looking for a new way to contribute to our community. Our search brought us to the merits/challenges of developing a reading mentor program at an elementary school.

We watched the Governor announce the goal of having 100% of Oregon students graduate by 2025. This is in response to the sorry situation now that finds this state graduating 67% of its high school students. And the Governor's goal is in keeping with the new "core curriculum". Achieving 100% of students passing a reading benchmark at the end of grade 3 is the first hurdle – indeed we have heard this class achievement is a close predictor of how the members of that class will fare in completing high school. One way a student feels less threatened by anxiety is reading well

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enough to pass the brand new, more difficult SBAC test. This happens with practice, practice, practice – in a relationship that encourages childhood resilience. Do elementary schools need help giving their students the ability to receive this practice? Yes - so says an elementary school principal.

In our pilot model we 'adopt' Salem Heights Elementary School. We recruit readers from our group and we collaborate with Hidden Lakes and Madrona Hills Independent Senior Centers that are close to the school. We have funds for books and chairs, etc. and we know how to organize and execute projects. Our Intro & Training Session is Wed, Sept 24, 3-4pm. We launch this project Oct 1. We work with 3rd grade teachers (along with SMART program) to help this grade achieve - why not? 100% passing the SBAC test!

How do we finance all this? Christmas wreath sales in November and we hope you and your family will join us on February 17, for an evening eating pie and being part of a Pie Contest and - oh yes – participating in a Town Hall meeting with Abraham Lincoln! Our **Evening of Pie With the Presidents** is one of our thoughtfully entertaining fundraising events. More about that later.

Please ask yourself - are you in the mood to make things out of your values? Some call it Sweat Art. Let's talk.

Ed Hallett, current prez
oregonevergreen@yahoo.com