

NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

Partnerships help Ruch School soar



RVHPA President and Applegate Open Organizer Terri Stewart, right, presents a check to Ruch Outdoor School Principal Julie Barry while Ruch fourth-grade student Lucy Murray shows off a T-shirt celebrating Woodrat Mountain, the open's launch site. Photo: Dan Wells.

BY JULIE BARRY

I am asked over and over again what sets Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS) apart from many other public K-8 schools. As leader of this small, outdoor community school for the past 11 years, I have developed an “elevator speech” answer packed with evidence. The piece of evidence most significant and imperative to ROCS and its success is our partnerships with local entities. These coalitions create the collaborative leadership, the practice, and the relationships necessary to improve student learning and well-being. Our partnership with the Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (RVHPA) is a good example.

In 1977, a small group of local pilots formed the Rogue Valley Hang Gliding Association and put on the first Star Thistle Fly-in that spring. The club, now composed predominantly of paraglider pilots and renamed Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association, remains a close-knit and important organization for free-flying in southern Oregon and northern California. Its mission, culture, and spirit are similar to those of Ruch Outdoor Community School.

This summer, on June 19-26, hundreds of colorful flyers dotted the skies for the annual Applegate Open Paragliding Competition. Travelers pulled to the roadside to watch the beautiful “wings” as they flew overhead from Woodrat Mountain. Residents and visitors alike enjoyed once more the flying figures

A pilot launches at Woodrat Mountain during the Applegate Open. Photo: Patrick Penoya.



that make our valley so special. My husband and I spent many hours sitting in an open pasture counting the flyers and watching them navigate the beautiful summer skies.

The partnership between RVHPA and Ruch Outdoor Community School is beneficial for both organizations. ROCS has provided a space for flyers to train and gather, while RVHPA has facilitated a simulation activity to give students, staff, and community members a chance to strap themselves in and get a sense of what it feels like to fly. ROCS has advertised RVHPA events, and I have served up many a pancake to the flyers at their morning breakfast during the Star Thistle Fly-in. We have enjoyed and treasured the engagement with RVHPA and look forward to future opportunities.

RVHPA's commitment and dedication to the children of this valley was evident during the Applegate Open this year. Thanks to fundraising responses from the organization, spectators, and the pilots competing in the Applegate Open, RVHPA was able to present ROCS with a check for \$5,000. This generous donation furthers the school's efforts to provide the very best education possible in place-based pedagogy with hands-on, relevant, inspirational, and experiential learning. I speak for the entire staff when I say we are truly humbled and grateful for RVHPA's continued support.

As we get ready to invite students back for the 2021-2022 school year, I am hopeful and excited for the return of our partnerships and the active engagement that comes with them. The Applegate Valley has always supported this small school and the thousands of students that have walked its breezeways. We want to thank you all for your continued support and want to say a special thank-you to the RVHPA, all the pilots, and especially all the residents who extend their fields and pastures so that the flyers can land safely. Without your kindness and support, sitting in our pastures looking to the skies would be less colorful and less entertaining.

Julie Barry
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Mustangs, meet Timothy



Hidden Valley High School counselor Amy Cablayan with Canine Angel Service Dog Timothy. Photo: Jim Ingraham.

BY LISA BALDWIN

Hidden Valley High School (HVHS) counselor Amy Cablayan has a new colleague in the counseling center, her Canine Angels service dog, Timothy, a two-year-old golden retriever-lab mix. After spending 18 months in basic training with a puppy handler in Montana, Timothy came back to the Canine Angels organization on North Applegate Road in Grants Pass and was fully trained by Sheila Kolby and Sandy Mays to serve as a facility dog.

Ms. Cablayan, a life-long animal lover, set a goal last year to work with a therapy dog. Her research and a referral from Grants Pass High School counselor Bill Sarver led her to Canine Angels. In January she began the extensive application process to be matched with a canine partner and trained. Cablayan finished training in late July.

Ms. Cablayan and Timothy will work together as a “facility dog team,” in the counseling center and other settings at HVHS. Facility dogs live with their handlers and are only allowed public access to the specific facility at which their handler is employed.

Ms. Cablayan spoke very earnestly about the therapeutic benefits of having a well-trained service dog, like Timothy, in the school. “He can provide emotional and nonjudgmental support in counseling when words are just not enough,” she said. “He can calm a student in distress and help to settle a tense situation.”

Ms. Cablayan wants to acknowledge and thank Evergreen Federal Bank for sponsoring Timothy by picking up his (and his handler's) training expenses. She plans to have many good years of working with Timothy at HVHS until the two of them retire. (If you are interested in learning more about Canine Angels go to canine-angels.org.)

In other HVHS news, the new school year started August 30 for freshman, who had the building to themselves for their first day of high school. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors started August 31. The first assembly of the year will be on September 7. HVHS has partnered with the GoBeGreat Foundation in Dallas, Texas, and the guest speaker at the kick-off assembly will introduce and promote the GoBeGreat positive behavior motto and curriculum.

Homecoming festivities close out the month of September with the Noise Parade on September 30. Then October charges in with the homecoming football game against Phoenix on Friday, October 1, and the homecoming dance on Saturday, October 2.

First quarter parent-teacher conferences will take place on November 3 and 4 (evening conferences) and November 5 (morning conferences).

All veterans and their families are invited to attend the Veterans Assembly on November 10.

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