

## **Gladstone’s early childhood center prepares little ones for school**

Are Gladstone children ready for kindergarten? The kindergarten inventory data released this month by the Oregon Department of Education provides a glimpse of how different communities are preparing children to begin school.

On kindergarten entry, Gladstone kids knew more letter names and sounds, and correctly answered more basic math problems than children in communities without extensive early childhood programs.

In a population where 53% of children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, starting school on track can help eliminate the achievement gap before it begins.

This year’s kindergarten class had the advantage of services provided by the Gladstone Center for Children and Families (GCCF). This hub of early childhood services engages parents, local preschools, educators, and child care providers in an on-going conversation about early childhood supports and ways to prepare children for modern kindergarten.

The GCCF provides a range of services, from early evaluation of learning disabilities and family counseling to new parent home visits, play groups, story hour, Head Start preschool, a relief nursery, and parenting classes.

“Oregon’s new kindergarten assessment is a call to action for communities to work with their families to prepare children for the social skills, self-control, and pre-academic skills needed for success in modern kindergarten,” said Lennie Bjornsen, Director of Student and Family Support for Gladstone Schools. “The correlation of low education achievement and traumatic lives should motivate us all.”

Libraries, churches, childcare providers, preschools, and social service agencies can all play an important role in partnering with families, he added.

“By supporting parents and meeting the most basic needs of families, we boost the odds for children to develop on track,” explained GCCF Director Don Brown. “We are working alongside agency partners and care providers to get more kids ready for kindergarten, and we are excited to see some early indications that this collaboration has paid off.”

Brown added that the new state kindergarten assessment is a catalyst for study, planning, innovation, and ultimately better preparation of children for kindergarten.

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## **Gladstone robotics team wants donations of old electronics**

The Gearheads, a competitive robotics team at Gladstone’s Kraxberger Middle School, is

seeking donations of old electronics and other electrical items students can use as they learn the basics of electrical engineering, computer programming, and fabrication.

Requested donations include small televisions, electric alarm clocks, old computers, laptops, flat screen TVs, printers, old cell phones, or old cameras. The group also needs donations of colored pencils, crayons, paper, soldering irons and supplies.

“If you’ve got an old desk lamp you don’t need, whether it works or it doesn’t, it will be useful as our students learn new technical skills,” said club mentor Shawn Price.

To make a donation, call Price at 503-723-5609 or email [shawn.price@gladstonerobotics.com](mailto:shawn.price@gladstonerobotics.com).

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### **Clothes closet opens at Gladstone High School**

The Gladstone Ministerial Association will celebrate the Grand Opening of its new community clothes closet on February 20, from 3 to 5 p.m. The site will provide free clothing to youths from birth to age 18.

Operating hours for the clothes closet are Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon. During these hours, visitors may come to select clothing or drop off donations. The center is located in a modular on the north side of the Gladstone High Campus. For easy access, visitors should come down Nelson Street and turn in at the fire lane.

Partners in the project include St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, Gladstone First Baptist Church, Gladstone Christian Church, Portland Youth for Christ, Gladstone Nazarene Church, the Gospel Fellowship Community Church, and Gladstone Schools.

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### **Gladstone Center offers free Story Hour**

The Gladstone Center for Children & Families will offer a free, story hour for children six and under. This is an opportunity for children to build literacy skills through shared reading, play, and fun language activities.

All children attending will **receive** a free book at each session, donated by the Gladstone/Oak Grove Rotary Club.

Story Hour is on Thursday, February 20 from 4:15 to 5 p.m. at the Gladstone Center, located at 18905 Portland Avenue in Gladstone. This week’s event will focus on the theme of community.