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Learning Zones open at children's center in Gladstone

Gladstone's state-of-the-art early childhood center just got better. While classroom teachers redouble their efforts to build early literacy and math skills for kindergarten students, Volunteer Coordinator Susan Trone is making sure the Gladstone Center for Children and Families (GCCF) offers enrichment opportunities, too.

Tucked away in the wide hallways and corners of the building, new Learning Zones offer the chance for a group of five or six students to work closely with an adult mentor. The trained volunteer leads children through guided enrichment activities focused on science, dramatic play, music, and community awareness.

"This builds on our whole-child approach, which already includes music, technology, physical education, and art as part of full-day kindergarten," explains GCCF Director Don Brown. "This effort is one way we are learning some Reggio Emilia education approaches that align with the new preschool opening here this spring."

Curriculum in the Science Learning Zone is founded on the Full Options Science System developed by U.C. Berkeley and the Lawrence Hall of Science. For each topic, there are four to 10 different 25-minute lessons.

This week, five students begin their lesson about leaves by learning new vocabulary: serrated, lobed, curved, oblong. Next, they examine samples of different leaves using a magnifying glass, asking questions and making observations about veins and edges – and the magnifying glass itself. After a matching exercise, they head to the light table to make some pencil rubbings.

Later, in a dramatic play session, the volunteer reads a Jan Brett story, then a group of girls and boys don costumes and re-enact it from memory.

"Learning Zones are about literacy and self expression," says mentor Toni Cline. "But more important than academics and artistry is that adults make a personal connection with the child."

Tone agrees. "While these five students are getting enrichment activities and more one-on-one attention, the classroom teacher also has the chance to work with a smaller group."

The project currently serves kindergarten children, but this spring, preschoolers from the Head Start program will have the opportunity to explore music lessons designed for four-year-olds. In time, Trone looks forward to involving children from all of GCCF's partner agencies in Learning Zone use, from the Family Stepping Stones relief nursery to the ESD's preschool classes for special needs students.

For information Open Enrollment in Gladstone's full-day kindergarten, call Sandi Frohnert at 503-496-3935. Applications are due April 1.

PHOTO CAPTION: A kindergarten student uses a magnifying glass to examine a rhododendron leaf in the Science Learning Zone at the Gladstone Center for Children and Families.

PHOTO CAPTION: Students gather around a light table to make leaf rubbings.

PHOTO CAPTION: Students match outlines to shapes, while discussing the characteristics of different leaves using new vocabulary.

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Gladstone High students take math, spelling, graphic design honors

Sixty-three students from Gladstone High School competed in the February 27 Skills Competition at Clackamas Community College. The small high school offers 35 career-technical courses and 30 college credit and AP courses.

In Graphic Design, **Justice North** took first place **Emily Doll** took second place and **Kaylee McCracken** won an Honorable Mention.

Gladstone's Math 1 team finished in first place. Team members included **Carli Brown, Madalynn Fowler** and **Matthew Prom**.

The school's Math Level 1 Warmup winners included **Payton Becker, Brian Stewart,** and **Abigail Bender**.

Kristi Kunz took 2nd Place in the Spelling Bee.

First place winners each received a 12-credit CCC scholarship, and 2nd Place winners each received an 8-credit scholarship. Warm-up winners won t-shirts.

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Kraxberger Middle School offers class on parenting teens

Is your teenager a mystery? Is your pre-teen suddenly speaking a language you don't understand? Parents will find help navigating these challenging years through a Gladstone class called *Raising Teenagers without Losing Your Mind*.

The free class is scheduled for Thursday nights in April, from 6 to 8 p.m. on April 3, 10, 17, and 24. A \$10 optional book, *Active Parenting of Teens*, will be available. Free childcare will be provided.

The research-based program teaches adults how to parent teens by using encouragement, building their self-esteem, and creating a relationship based on

active listening, honest communication, and problem solving. Participants will focus on turning the challenges of the teen years into opportunities for their growth.

To register, visit www.lastingrelationships.org or call 503-278-3572.