



WOODCOOKIE

a newsletter from Friends of Outdoor School



Reflecting on the Past and Hiking Toward a Brighter Future

A Note from Kim Silva, Executive Director

Let's take a moment together for a deep breath. You deserve it. Maybe use this moment to remember one of your favorite moments at ODS, perhaps a peaceful place on a hike, near a body of water, or around a campfire. As our communities and families navigate the worst public health crisis in many of our lifetimes; as we as a society engage in important reckoning around social justice and racism in our nation; and as we all look into uncertainty for the new school year, the respite of nature or a fond memory of time there can be especially powerful. Join me there.



Gil surrounded by the self-dubbed "Outdoor School Old Timers"

While most of the spring ODS session was canceled, we are not losing hope. We know that when it is again safe for students to be together at ODS, the experience has the promise to help them reconnect to one another, make new friends, and build their own connection to the land and memories of time in nature.

As we navigate this shared unknown, please know that we are putting your gifts to good use working to ensure that ALL Oregon kids may attend a week of ODS. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to Oregon kids! It truly is making a difference.



Will Waterbury

I miss ODS right now, and I suspect you do too. While I'm grieving the loss of the spring ODS session, I'm also grieving the loss of our dear friends, Warren "Gil" Gilfillan and Will Waterbury. Gil was a charming, kind, and energetic man. He founded MESD ODS in 1966 and was an articulate and passionate advocate during the Measure 99 campaign. Will was a passionate and inspiring educator for decades at ODS. He was gifted at connecting with high school students and modeling a deep connection to nature, especially birds. Gil's and Will's work for ODS and with students will live on for generations to come. What incredible legacies!

ODS has been active throughout the pandemic: mobilizing to create distance learning materials, connecting to share ideas and resources, working with the State to develop health and safety guidelines for summer camp operations, supporting each other through very stressful changes and challenges, and generally stepping up, in true ODS fashion.



We all know ODS is a positive experience for Oregon students. Go to the link below to read OSU Extension Service Outdoor School's Outdoor School for All! Diverse Programming and Outcomes in Oregon 2019 Evaluation Report.

<https://bit.ly/31KXaG9>

Donate While You Shop

Shopping at Fred Meyer, Target, New Seasons, or on Amazon? They will donate to Friends of ODS while you shop! All you have to do is select Friends of ODS as your nonprofit partner and shop away!

- Go to www.fredmeyer.com/topic/community-rewards-4 and click "link your rewards card now" then choose Friends of ODS!
- Go to smile.amazon.com and sign in to choose Friends of ODS!
- Go to target.com/circle and sign up or login then put your phone number in at checkout to earn votes. Cast your votes in the app or in your Target Circle account by the end of September!
- Bring your reusable bag to the following New Seasons location and they'll donate to Friends of ODS: Raleigh Hills, Sellwood, Seven Corners, Happy Valley, Williams, Nyberg Rivers, and University Park.

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On Zoom with Dan Prince Dan Prince, Associate Director

We are all navigating unprecedented times. We recognize that responding to the effects of COVID-19 on both our work and personal lives has been at times overwhelming. The renewed focus on racial justice in our communities has focused our commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as we see and participate in difficult and important dialogue and actions. We also know that coming together in community is likely the only way through. For the ODS community, coming together has been a source of support and inspiration.

Friends of ODS has been working with our key partners OSU Extension Service Outdoor School and Gray Family Foundation to convene twelve virtual meetings, both statewide and regional, to share challenges and solutions with one another. The promise of ODS is to be a safe, positive, welcoming, affirming, and transformative learning experience for each and every student in Oregon. The work of ODS providers across Oregon continues to aspire to that promise.

Some outcomes of those meetings and network activities include:

- Sharing how ODS programs are engaging in the important work of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, including developing culturally-relevant programming, examining practices and policy, and building partnerships in the community.
- Connecting ODS programs and sites to emergency resources. With spring ODS cancellations and no overnight summer camps allowed, ODS sites are taking a devastating financial hit. We have been helping sites share their perspectives with the State and advocating for their access to financial support. Access our resource page here: <https://bit.ly/FODS-COVID-19>
- Exploring ways ODS programs can support student learning outdoors given the continuing uncertainty around school reopening.
- Developing recommendations for the Governor's office for centering student well-being and safety in the unique setting of ODS for when it is deemed safe to reopen.



Congrats Student Leaders!

Each year high school students from across the Portland-Metro area apply for MESD ODS Student Leader Scholarships. We love partnering with MESD ODS to help award these scholarships named for incredible folks from within the ODS community. This year, six scholarships were awarded to incredibly thoughtful and talented student leaders to use towards continuing education. Congratulations to these fantastic student leaders! Thank you for your commitment to the ODS community.

Elliot "Kaleidoscope" was awarded the Dan "Teal" Prince Scholarship for demonstrating his "heart of gold."

Izadora "Mizuna" was awarded the Staff Scholarship for pushing herself to teach all four field studies.

Deja "Nemo" was awarded the Friends of ODS Scholarship for her spirit of service.

Tucker "Krustacean" was awarded the Margret "Lorax" Eng Scholarship for his love and passion for science.



Student Leaders cont.

Dore "Hippo" was awarded the Suzie "Daisy" Sendelbach Scholarship for demonstrating her thoughtfulness toward others.

Chloe "Snoopy" was awarded the Heather "Woodstock" Schoeck Scholarship for demonstrating her free spirit.

If your ODS program or site would like to host a scholarship program, please connect with us. We'd love to help you!



Learn all about the benefits of ODS for Oregon high school students in this new report from OSU Extension Service Outdoor School.

<https://bit.ly/2PtSmOq>



We're Still Advocating for ODS for All

Since May we have been meeting with Oregon legislators individually for briefings on ODS. Although legislators are understandably going to need to prioritize community health and well-being in their deliberations, they have expressed gratitude for the work ODS is doing in support of outdoor learning experiences for children, and have shared thoughtful questions and advice. We appreciate your support in helping us advocate for equitable access to inclusive ODS programs for all Oregon students. Some key points:

- The Oregon Lottery funds ODS and many other important initiatives. Lottery proceeds are down due to the pandemic.
- Expenses to implement ODS last spring were lower due to school closures.
- OSU Extension has created multiple contingencies so that no student is denied access to ODS because of funding reductions.

On August 10th, the Oregon Legislature convened a Second Special Session to make \$362 million in cuts to state agency budgets and release hundreds of millions of

reserve dollars to address the growing revenue gap in the state budget. Among the budget changes were Lottery Fund adjustments that included a \$2,265,292 reduction to the ODS Education Fund, which was originally set at \$46.8 million. Our government relations team provided a thorough summary of the entire Second Special Session, including links to legislative summaries and bills: <https://bit.ly/315SZEw>

How you can help ODS now:

- Attend Friends of ODS upcoming Advocacy 101 training.
- Your stories demonstrate strong community support for ODS. If you would like to share your story in writing or if you would like to have it recorded by our fantastic volunteer McKee, connect with Sophia. Sophia@friendsofoutdoorschool.org
- Keep FODS in your 2020 giving plans.
- Join us on social media to connect with other ODS lovers.
- Make a gift to your favorite ODS program and site.
- Please invite others to do the same so that they too, feel the strength and magic of ODS.