

# YACHATS YOUTH & FAMILY ACTIVITIES PROGRAM



NEWSLETTER

January 2010

## **Preschool Openings in Yachats**

by: Allison Bethel, YYFAP Team Leader

The Yachats Youth and Family Activities Program in conjunction with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant of Lincoln County School District is proud to offer free preschool to children ages 3-5 in South County. South County Preschool is offering class from 9:30am-12:00pm Mondays and Wednesdays in Yachats at the Yachats Commons and from 9:30am-12:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Waldport at the Waldport Community Learning Center. The goal of this preschool is to teach vital social and developmentally appropriate lessons in preparation for kindergarten. We currently serve eighteen students in all. We have openings for six students in Yachats and are taking names for a Waldport waiting list. If you have a toilet-trained three, four or five year old at home who could benefit from social interactions with peers, learning through play, and transitioning to a structured learning environment give Allison at YYFAP a call at 541.547.4599 or 541.270.0832. Enrolling your child in Preschool could greatly benefit your child and help make their transition into kindergarten smoother. Come learn and play with us at the South County Preschool.

## **New! Teen Tuesday**

by: Bee Bui, YYFAP Team Leader

Teen Tuesday is our FREE once a month teen program open to 6th graders and up. It occurs the third Tuesday of every month from 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM and is supervised by a trained staff member. In the month of January we started with ice breakers, made dinner together, did blind pudding tasting and lastly played games on Wii. Each session we will be providing dinner and activities tailored for teens such as guest-speakers, mind boggling movies, interactive presentations, and much more. No registration is required and donations are welcomed. If you would like to volunteer or have questions please contact Bee at [BeeBui@peak.org](mailto:BeeBui@peak.org) or 541.547.4599.

## **Help for Parents**

Are you feeling helpless, frustrated, and ineffective when it comes to parenting? Help is on its way! We have two parenting classes coming to South County.

The Yachats Youth & Family Activities Program, Crestview Heights School, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afterschool Program are teaming up to offer a 6-week series of **Parenting with Love and Logic** classes. These classes are about raising responsible children using a win/win philosophy. Classes will be led by Jacquie Blakely, and held at the Waldport Community Learning Center on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 – 8:00 pm starting on February 23. A light meal will be provided. Childcare is available upon request. To register, call 547-4599 or 563-3237.

Also coming up is a series called **Parenting from the Heart, Mind, and Spirit**, led by Kelly Everfree. This 6-week series will be held in Yachats. Its focus is compassion and non-violent communication. Watch the paper and our website for more information on time and place.



## **Magic Show!**

\$3 for children and their adults

\$5 for unaccompanied adults

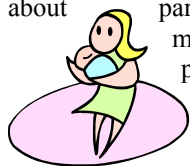
## Waldport High School Relocation

Discussions are underway about the potential relocation of Waldport High School to higher ground out of the Waldport Tsunami Zone. A range of options has been identified, including putting portable classrooms near Crestview Heights School, adding 10 permanent classrooms to Crestview Heights, building separate high school classrooms next to Crestview Heights, and building a full high school away from Crestview Heights. The Lincoln County School District is looking for input, recommendations, and support from the citizens of South County. A volunteer steering committee has been formed to guide this discussion. For more information, contact Herman Welch, steering committee member, at 541-563-2354.

## Yachats Indoor Park Adds Activities

by: Allison Bethel

Indoor Park is a playgroup for parents of children ages 0-6. It happens every Wednesday from 1:30-3:00 at the Yachats Commons Preschool Room (#4). This group is currently made up of eight parents and children ages 10 months to 3 years old. We spend this hour and a half chatting about our weeks, what new and fun things the kiddos are up to and swapping ideas about parenting all while the children enjoy the



many fun and exciting toys the preschool room has to offer. We also have added an extension activity twice a month (second and fourth Wednesday of the month). Special activities from 3:00 until 3:30 are designed for parents and when necessary YYFAP will provide child care for this extra half hour so parents can focus on the activity. We want to focus on topics such as nutrition, exercise, wellness, meditation, child development, etc. We also would like to use a few extensions as swap days where you bring in items you do not use or need anymore that other parents may need. Indoor Park is a great way for you to network with parents with children of similar ages in the community and allow the kids to play together and learn vital social skills. Come check out Indoor Park at the Yachats Commons on Wednesday afternoons.

### Regular YYFAP Activities

**Rec PLUS** every weekday after school  
3:30 – 6:00.

**Indoor Park** Wednesdays 1:30 – 3:00.

**Helping Hands** Tuesdays

**Preschool** Monday-Thursday.

**Teen Nights** Third Tuesdays

Call 547-4599 for more info.  
Or, go to [www.yachatsyouth.org](http://www.yachatsyouth.org).  
Or, follow us on Facebook!

## Capital Campaign Update



Our dream of expanded facilities for youth and adults is actually moving forward in spite of the dismal economy. In fact, as of 1/20/10, we have now **raised a total of \$221,453** in our campaign effort. Many, many thanks to those donors who helped us reach this milestone.

When we started fundraising, the Capital Campaign Team set itself a goal of raising 20% of the total needed before kicking off a wider fundraising effort. We are now just a few thousand dollars short of that benchmark, a benchmark that will help us communicate that this is a project which already enjoys widespread support. This will allow us to gear up for more fundraising, and apply for more grants.

There is still a lot of work to be done, but we are making good progress, with your help. If you have time or expertise to offer in support of this effort, please let us know. Thank you again for your support, and spread the word!

## Recreation P.L.U.S (Passages to Learning, Understanding and Success)

by: Bee Bui

Rec. PLUS is our drop-in afterschool program. Children ages 6 and up are welcome to join the fun every day at the Yachats Commons from 3:30 until 6:00 PM. About 20 children of a range of ages attend daily. Children are supervised by at least one staff member and a trained volunteer. Our volunteers come from diverse backgrounds and bring strong skills to Recreation P.L.U.S such as art, beading, ribbon dancing, and of course devotion to serving our youth. There is lots of free play, plus opportunities to participate in small group activities: sports, crafts and brain teasers. This month children can look forward to celebrating the Chinese New Year! It is the year of the Tiger and lands on February 14. We will be learning about the Chinese New Year, making tiger masks, and of course eating authentic Chinese food! Additionally, we have new upcoming projects and challenges like our Olympic Challenge during the third week of February. Children may take the school bus to the Yachats Commons after school and must be picked up before 6:00 PM. There is a suggested \$25 fee per family per quarter. For more information or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Bee at [Beebui@peak.org](mailto:Beebui@peak.org) or 541.547.4599.



# **Brain Development**

## What We Know About How Children Learn

Brain cells are “raw” materials – much like lumber is a raw material in building a house. Heredity may determine the basic number of “neurons” (brain nerve cells) children are born with, and their initial arrangement, but this is just a framework. A child’s environment has enormous impact on how these cells get connected or “wired” to each other. Many parents and caregivers have understood intuitively that **loving, everyday interactions – cuddling infants closely or singing to toddlers- help children learn.**

A brain is not a computer. The brain begins working long before it is finished. And the same processes that wire the brain before birth also drive the very rapid growth of learning that occurs immediately after birth. At birth, a baby’s brain contains 100 billion neurons, roughly as many nerve cells as there are stars in the Milky Way. Before birth, the brain produces trillions more neurons and “synapses” (connections between the brain cells) than needed. During the first years of life, the brain undergoes a series of extraordinary changes. Then, through a process that resembles Darwinian competition, the brain eliminates connections that are seldom or never used.

“Windows of opportunity” are critical periods in children’s lives when specific types of learning take place. For instance, scientists have determined that the neurons for vision begin sending messages back and forth rapidly at 2 to 4 months of age, peaking in intensity at 8 months. It is no coincidence that babies begin to take notice of the world during this period.

Scientists believe that language is acquired most easily during the first ten years of life. During these years, the circuits in children’s brains become wired for how their own language sounds. An infant’s repeated exposure to words clearly helps her brain build the neural connections that will enable her to learn more words later on. For infants, individual attention and responsive, sensitive caregiving are critical for later language and intellectual development.

Research does not suggest drilling children in alphabet songs from different languages or using flash cards to promote rote memorization of letters and numbers. Children learn any language best in the context of meaningful, day-to-day interactions with adults or other children who speak the language.

**Early stimulation sets the stage for how children will learn and interact with others throughout life.** A child’s experiences, good or bad, influence the wiring of his brain and the connection in his nervous system. Loving interactions with caring adults strongly stimulate a child’s brain, causing synapses to grow and existing connections to get stronger. Connections that are used become permanent. If a child receives little stimulation early on, the synapses will not develop, and the brain will make fewer connections.

Recent research on one of the body’s “stress-sensitive” systems shows how very stressful experiences also shape a child’s developing brain. When children are faced with physical or emotional stress or trauma, one of these systems “turns on” by releasing the hormone cortisol. High levels of cortisol can cause brain cells to die and reduces the connections between the cells in certain areas of the brain.

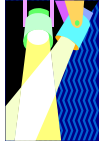
Babies with strong, positive emotional bonds to their caregivers show consistently lower levels of cortisol in their brains. While positive experiences can help brighten a child’s future, negative experiences can do the opposite. Too much cortisol in the brain can make it hard for children to learn and to think. And they may have trouble acting appropriately in stressful situations.

**Healthy relationships during the early years help children have healthy relationships throughout life. Deprived of a positive, stimulating environment, a child’s brain suffers. Rich experiences, in other words, really do produce rich brains.**

*Reproduced with permission from "What We Know About How Children Learn," Brain Development, bulletin #4356 (Orono: University of Maine Cooperative Extension).*

## Calling All Talent

The fourteenth annual Yachats Family Talent Show is scheduled for **Sunday, April 11** at 2:00 pm at the Yachats Commons. It's time to polish up those dancing shoes, practice your scales, and prepare to



dazzle the crowd! Past crowd-pleasing acts have included magic tricks, skits, tap, juggling, ballet, and music of all kinds. Family acts are especially encouraged. To secure your spot in the show, or for more information, call 547-4599.



Friday, February 5  
6-8 pm, Yachats Commons

Games of all kinds for all ages / Door Prizes

FREE

A light supper provided courtesy of Cheese and Crackers.

Thank you to the Children's Trust Fund of Oregon for funding this newsletter, YYFAP parent/family support programs, and part of our Early Childhood Education program.

Yachats Youth & Family Activities Program

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