

COLUMBIA COUNTY



OREGON

For Immediate Release
May 27, 2009

For additional information contact: Jan Spika Kenna, Director, Commission on Children & Families 503-397-7211

St. Helens Community School Impacts Youth and Families in the Region

The St. Helens Community School (SHCS) helps young people thrive, supports families, maximizes community resources and strengthens community ties. Entering its sixth month of successful operation, SHCS now serves nearly 250 students on a weekly basis. Since January 2009, the SHCS has been offering “after-school” programs for sixth through eighth-grade students, as well as evening professional and personal development classes for adults and families.

St. Helens Community School is funded by a grant from the Oregon Commission on Children and Families and is administered by the Columbia County Commission on Children and Families. The project is a collaboration of students, parents, teachers, partner organizations, and community members. Community Schools are focused on school success and are required to show an improvement in academic scores of the students participating in activities at the end of this school year. SHCS has already shown positive results.

Earl Fisher, County Commissioner and Chair of the Columbia Commission on Children and Families says, “Community Schools build character and protect the community. They’re an asset and an important tool in our toolbox that helps us enrich the lives of our children and community”.

SHCS provides supervised extended-day activities such as Cooking, Fitness, Tae Kwon Do, Volleyball, Chess, Stock Market and Anime clubs. Kids can also participate in academic

clubs such as, Homework Club, Math Club, and Science Club. Students also have an option to participate in summer camp programs during the month of June.

“Youth need positive after school activities to fill their time and SHCS serves that need,” stated Scott Patterson, SHCS Site Director. “Additionally, we are able to provide educational resources to adults at low cost or free.”

According to Jan Spika Kenna, Director of the Columbia County Commission on Children and Families, “St. Helens Middle School staff have done an outstanding job implementing the program, and we are proud to be their partner.”. Community Schools act as a hub where public and private resources meet to address barriers to learning. Leadership and accountability are shared so that students learn and communities thrive.

According to Fight Crime Invest In Kids, “America’s law enforcement leaders know from experience and research, that the hours from 2 to 6 PM on school days are the prime times for juvenile crime. Quality, constructive and highly supervised programs can cut crime immediately and convert after school hours into safe learning time.”

For more information about the St. Helens Community School, call 503.366.7316 or email communityschool@sthelens.k12.or.us. For information about the Commission on Children and Families, please call, Jan Spika Kenna at 503.397.7225.