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Adventist Health Columbia Gorge Foundation Celebrates Community Partnership with Columbia Gorge Community College for new play structure.

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The Dalles, OR - Adventist Health Columbia Gorge, formerly known as Mid-Columbia Medical Center, is proud to celebrate the 42-year anniversary of its pioneering on-site childcare, Great N Small. Founded with the vision of recruiting and retaining staff in the rural community of The Dalles, Oregon, the daycare has grown into an esteemed institution. Unlike typical childcare facilities, Great N Small was designed to prepare children for school with a structured educational environment, inspired by the government's Head Start program. This innovative approach was realized by employing certified teachers, ensuring that children received quality education from the start.

In 1986, only about 2,500 companies across the U.S. offered on-site childcare, with hospitals being the primary providers. Offering such a forward-thinking service in The Dalles was a groundbreaking move. Today, Great N Small boasts multiple generations of graduates, many of whom have returned to work for the hospital, continuing the legacy of community and care.

Recently, Robert Wells-Clark, Director of Technology & Trades, Advanced Manufacturing and Fabrication at Columbia Gorge Community College, identified an opportunity for his students while dropping off his child at Great N Small. Observing the playground in need of upgrades. He envisioned a project where CGCC students could apply their skills in a real-world setting. The students from the college's Manufacturing and Construction programs took on the task of designing, engineering, and constructing a new play structure. This included fabricating unique components and ensuring the design was modular, inclusive, and easy to modify or expand.



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To enrich the educational impact, local high school students were invited every Friday to gain hands-on experience in the building trades, exploring potential career paths. Additionally, elementary school students toured the college's facilities, learning about manufacturing and construction processes. This collaborative effort truly embodied the spirit of a community-driven project.

Financed by the Adventist Health Columbia Gorge Foundation, this year-long initiative benefits the children of Great N Small by creating a safe and inclusive play structure. Further extending its reach, additional grant funding has been secured to replicate the fabrication for a new play structure at Chenoweth Elementary, supporting their Head Start Program.

This project has touched countless lives, from engaging local college students in this hands-on design and fabrication project to providing safe play spaces for children at two locations for generations to come. It underscores the crucial role community colleges play in equipping students with the skills needed to thrive in rural communities. It also highlights the power of community partnerships in meeting shared goals.

Adventist Health and Columbia Gorge Community College are thrilled to invite members of the media to join us for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 12, 2024, at 3:30 p.m. at Great N Small, located at 1719 E 19th Street, The Dalles, Oregon. This event will showcase our new play structure, and bring together the playground designers as their young clients officially put the play structure into use. We look forward to sharing this exciting moment with you. If unable to attend, but would like to share this great story, pictures and video can be provided.

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About Adventist Health

Adventist Health is a faith-based, nonprofit, integrated health system serving more than 80 communities on the West Coast and Hawaii with over 400 sites of care. Founded on Adventist heritage and values, Adventist Health provides care in hospitals, clinics, home care, and hospice agencies in both rural and urban communities. Our compassionate and talented team of 37,000 includes employees, physicians, allied health professionals and volunteers driven in pursuit of one mission: living God's love by inspiring health, wholeness, and hope. We are committed to staying true to our heritage by providing patient-centered, quality care. Together, we are transforming the healthcare experience with an innovative and whole-person focus on physical, mental, spiritual and social healing to support community well-being.

About Columbia Gorge Community College

Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC) is the heart of higher education in the greater Columbia River Gorge. CGCC, the first Oregon community college certified as a Hispanic Service Institution (HSI), offers a flexible schedule of credit and non-credit courses taught by faculty members who have studied, taught, researched and volunteered around the globe.



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