

Winthrop schoolyard garden is a model for change

“Almost all the children learned to milk cows at a tender age, because that was part of the income was dairying. By today’s standards it was very small scale, maybe 12 to 20 head of cows was all. I know in our family particularly, well, we separated the milk, sold the cream, fed skim milk to the pigs.”

— Jay Stokes (1918-2005), Beaver Creek, Twisp

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Student harvests cabbage for school cafeteria.

(Photos courtesy of Classroom in Bloom)



Students harvest carrots for school cafeteria.



Students help serve lettuce grown at Classroom in Bloom in school cafeteria.

BY LEXI KOCH

Executive Director, Classroom in Bloom

Classroom in Bloom is a one-half acre garden on the shared campus of Liberty Bell Jr/Sr High School and Methow Valley Elementary School in Winthrop. The program is a separate non-profit that has earned the trust and respect of the school district and community. District administrators and teachers clearly see the benefits of this program on their campus. As the largest institution in our region serving food on a daily basis, our school has welcomed the opportunity to stimulate the local economy while providing colorful, fresh nutrition for students and staff

For seven growing seasons, the head chef of our school has gracefully integrated all of the fresh offerings from the garden. Every year 300 students contribute their work to an abundant harvest. In the garden, students get to see, taste, and touch a large variety of produce.

In 2009, students helped plant, tend and harvest 1,632 pounds of food for use in their own school lunches. Classroom in Bloom then spearheaded a committee to encourage the use of even more fresh, local food in the cafeteria thus supporting the local economy of the farmers along with the health of the students. This groundwork encouraged parents and school staff to take the next steps.

The school district applied for and received a grant to purchase infrastructure for a daily salad bar option in each school. The grant also includes money to educate students as to why they might want to eat fresh foods from a salad bar. An anonymous donation

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Parent volunteer and head chef receive a delivery of fresh, local apples.

allowed purchase of local beef, potatoes, grains, apples and pears. In addition, the superintendent has allotted money to be used for the purchase of crops from the valley's farmers.

Though this change is exciting on many levels, it does not come without challenges. The school district is strapped for money. Local, organic food is more expensive, though may cost less in the long run. The hard-working crew in the under-staffed cafeteria must be creative with the budget they are given to make fresh food options each day.

Valuing the lunch room as a place for learning nutrition, peaceful digestion and connecting the school more to our local economy, is a great success for our community at large. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. We want to grow students who have learned healthy habits at a young age, know what is in season, value the natural cycles of the place they live, and eat accordingly. By exposing students to fresh, local food, they learn it is magical, delicious and nutritious. Not only that, but in this rural valley, opportunities for commercial farmers are quite sparse. Buying local helps keep dollars circulating in our own community and keeps people employed. Our school is proud to be a model for change, building school pride that we can happily share with our rural neighbors. The success of this project has only just begun!

www.classroominbloom.org

A banner year for the North Central Regional Library

BY DAN HOWARD

Director of Public Services, NCRL

The North Central Regional Library (NCRL) has a lot to be proud of in 2010. NCRL is the biggest library district in Washington State. It provides public library service in Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Grant, and Okanogan Counties, a 15,000 square mile area that covers about ¼ of Washington State's land surface area.

Established as a rural library district in 1960, NCRL celebrated its 50th birthday this year. In April, over 200 people sang "Happy Birthday" to the library district at its "Columbia River Reads" program featuring Seattle author Garth Stein and his book "The Art of Racing in the Rain." Earlier in the year, over 2,000 people attended the library's "Columbia River Reads" programs featuring Newbery Award winning author Lois Lowry and her book "The Giver" at Wenatchee, Omak, Republic, and Moses Lake locations.

The phrase, "Don't make a federal case out of it" has a new, more literal meaning within the library district. In May, NCRL made national news when it was exonerated by a decision of the Washington State Supreme Court in an ongoing lawsuit, Bradburn et al v. North Central Regional Library District. This precedent-setting ruling vindicated the library district's approach to providing internet access at its libraries.

The Washington State Supreme Court ruled that NCRL's internet filtering policy did not violate Article I, Section 5 of the Washington State Constitution. The Court said, "It appears to us that NCRL's filtering policy is reasonable and accords with

its mission and these policies and is viewpoint neutral."

NCRL's Executive Director Dean Marney was not surprised by the decision and said, "Common sense and taxpayers are the winners in this case. The courts have affirmed that public libraries have the right to be libraries and not be forced to use public funds to become adult theaters or illegal casinos." The story was reported in news services throughout the country and as far away as Australia.

NCRL also had its best Summer Reading Program ever in 2010. More than 20,000 people attended library events in June, July, and August, including a Pacific Science Center program that traveled to all 28 libraries in the district. Children within the library district read 4,527,120 minutes over the summer, a new record and up 18% over 2009.

NCRL looks forward to another year of innovative programs and traditional services. Demand for our downloadable audio books and eBooks, used with MP3 players, iPods, smart phones, and devices such as Amazon's Kindle, is way up. More traditional services, such as our Mail Order Library, are more popular than ever. First introduced in 1968, The Mail Order Library was the first of its kind in the nation and is one of the few mail order systems remaining. One of our elderly patrons said, "It is a wonderful service. It saves so much time. It is especially appreciated in the winter, when it is hard to get to the library. I let my 80-year-old friends know that this is all they have to do. It has been a blessing to me."

www.ncrl.org




Lois Lowry at the Performing Arts Center in Wenatchee.

(Photo courtesy of NCRL)

"My mother packed fruit like every other mother in Wenatchee. And so our fruit was the occasional peach or little handkerchief filled with cherries that she would bring home. And that was fruit that I always cherished and looked forward too."
 – Darold Wax, Wenatchee

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Aerial photo shows new channel designed to attract fish (undulating channel in center of light gray area).

(Photo courtesy of Chelan County PUD)

PUD collaborates to protect Lake Chelan, restore river

BY STEVE LACHOWICZ

*Communications Director,
Chelan County PUD*

When it came time to begin the extensive federal process of relicensing the Lake Chelan Hydro Project in 1998, it became clear that a mandate from the state Department of Ecology and state and federal fishery agencies would be to restore year-round flows to the Chelan River and to look for a way to make the spawning habitat near the mouth of the river more usable for Chinook and steelhead. Chelan County PUD made it a goal to develop a way to meet the needs of the river, the needs of fish, the needs of recreation around the lake and the needs of power generation while keeping the project economically feasible for the PUD and the region.

Over eight years (1998-2006), interested parties collaborated on plans that eventually led to license approval and development of the \$16 million Chelan River Habitat Enhancement Project.

The challenge was finding a way to balance competing needs that had evolved over 70-plus years of previous hydro operations, meet new requirements for river flows, temperature, aesthetics and endangered species and maintain the economic benefit of operating the hydro project. If too much water was run through the river year-round, inflows into the lake in late summer and early fall might not be adequate to keep the surface level high enough for recreation. If water levels in the river channel were set too low, the high summer temperatures of arid Eastern Washington might warm

the water above the range suitable for cutthroat salmon and steelhead.

A method was devised that would allow proper water levels in the upper river for cutthroat, proper water levels in the lower river for steelhead and salmon spawning and that would protect against high spill flows through the river channel in the event of unusual spring runoff or other extreme weather. By taking the innovative approach of designing and creating a new channel (with adequate cold water) the PUD met its environmental stewardship responsibilities while continuing production of clean, renewable hydropower for the Pacific Northwest.

The successful project now provides year-round water flow of at least 80 cubic feet per second (cfs) from the dam to restore the natural character of the river. It has also added nearly four acres of fish

“It’s different now than it was then. Because then the river would come up, and it would wash all the sand away, or the grass that might have grown. It flooded every year.”

*– Jack Feil,
Baker’s
Flat, East
Wenatchee*

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habitat in the lower river and tailrace (water coming from the powerhouse), including the newly constructed channel designed to attract adult fish for spawning and juvenile rearing, and new habitat in the tailrace for spawning. The project also includes a pump station to provide cold water from the powerhouse tailrace to supplement the flow in the channel when required.

The first salmon spawned in the new channel and tailrace habitat in fall 2009. In addition, lake levels are being managed in accordance with a new protocol established in the relicensing order that takes into account the needs of recreation, flood control, erosion protection, fish habitat and power generation.

www.chelanpud.org



Family Health Centers – building trust, nurturing wellness, and strengthening the agricultural workforce

BY HEATHER FINDLAY

*Chief Operations Officer,
Family Health Centers*

Family Health Centers (FHC) is a community and migrant health center with medical and dental clinics in Okanogan County that serves the predominantly Spanish-speaking migrant and seasonal farmworker (MSFW) workforce in this rural area. FHC has implemented a successful outreach program to bring needed health education and services to these workers and their families. In 2006, FHC was awarded a 3-year federal Rural Health Care Outreach Grant. FHC developed a multi-pronged program that included a *promotor(a)*, or lay health worker, program, Spanish-language radio health education segments and childbirth education classes, and cultural competency training.

The program's success stems from the strong relationships FHC maintains within the farmworker community. This allows FHC to be very responsive to community needs, and to better determine and prioritize health services. Word of mouth is the predominant form of communication within the farmworker community. By continuing to meet regularly with farmworkers, orchardists and other members of the

community, FHC's outreach program has become firmly embedded as a trusted and visible presence in the community. FHC developed, recorded and aired several hundred 3-minute Spanish-language radio health education spots. These can be shared with other outreach programs providing health education to MSFW populations.

Mid-Valley Hospital and Okanogan County Public Health partnered with FHC in planning and implementing this outreach program. FHC also formed the Latino Health and Wellness Coalition, a consortium of all local Okanogan County health and social agencies serving farmworkers. Fuerza Latina, the local Latino grassroots collective is included as a focus group. FHC and these partner agencies meet regularly to evaluate community need and the effectiveness of outreach activities, making adjustments and changes as needs arise. FHC collaborates closely with orchardists and other local agricultural businesses to schedule health education sessions with least impact to worker schedules and agricultural operations.

Lack of transportation, language and cultural barriers, and immigration status are major challenges in providing healthcare to Latino farmworkers. The FHC outreach coalition developed



Participants in the Family Health Center's outreach program.

(Photos courtesy of FHC)

strategies to overcome these barriers. FHC now has vans to transport farmworkers to the clinics. Because migrant workers may perceive a threat of job loss or deportation they may avoid leaving the orchard, making it difficult to access needed care. FHC hires bilingual *promotores* who are already trusted members of the local Latino community, thereby ensuring linguistically- and culturally-appropriate services and sharing of accurate information. This program has also provided cultural competency training to health workers.

FHC's outreach program has been remarkably successful. Relationships and communication are the main keys to success. Farmworkers now are more willing to access FHC to receive needed care. FHC has developed *confianza*, a very important concept of trust and respect by the Latino community. Not only has FHC been able to provide better services and increased access to care for farmworkers and their families, there has been overall improvement in the delivery of effective health and social services to farmworkers in Okanogan County. In turn, this provides a healthier stable workforce to support agriculture and the economy in Okanogan County.

myfamilyhealth.org/

“We used to pick in apple boxes. Made the apple boxes on the ranch. We had a box-making bench, and we'd make the boxes before harvest.”
– Jack Feil,
Baker's Flat, East Wenatchee

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