Our shared vision: EVERY student in Oregon attends a week of Outdoor School.

In the last few years, Friends of Outdoor School has been reflecting on our work and our place in the Outdoor School community. As part of this process, we have been educating ourselves about equity, diversity, and inclusion so that we can understand how these issues affect those who attend, work for, and interact with Outdoor School. We have also assessed our organization through this lens. A deeply personal and introspective process, our learning has moved us to articulate our commitment to all of the vibrant and varied communities around Oregon who love Outdoor School.

The systems Friends of Outdoor School works within most frequently—education, philanthropy, and advocacy—are inequitable. These systems have created barriers that have marginalized members of our communities and kept people from fully participating in Outdoor School. Friends of Outdoor School is committed to examining our role in these systems, honoring all of the dimensions of diversity that people experience, and working within our sphere of influence to promote more equitable and inclusive access to resources, programming, and fully-accessible and welcoming learning spaces. Educational programming that includes diverse perspectives and voices is a more complete experience for youth.

We are engaging in this process with intention to discover new ways in which to apply an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens to our work. For example, we actively check in with each other at least weekly to discuss what our efforts, approaches, and communication look like through this lens, including how our advocacy work can have equitable impacts on diverse communities in Oregon. We’ve been seeking opportunities to focus on relationships with others who also value equity by challenging our vendors and partners to share their equity commitments with us. We’ve also been striving internally to make our work environment more equitable for our diverse staff, including flexible schedules, customizable benefits packages, and paying a living wage.

This is the beginning for us; it is a process. Over time, as we learn and grow, we will continue to improve how we implement and articulate our commitment to equity. We will make mistakes and learn from them. We welcome your input and ideas.

Friends of Outdoor School envisions a day when EVERY Oregon student attends a week of welcoming and affirming Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School. Our goal is to create relationships to support, advocate for, and gather resources for Outdoor School.

Thank you for being a vital part of our efforts!
On the Road with Prince
Dan Prince, Associate Director

In January, Youth Mentoring Collaborative hosted its fourth “Youth Environmental Job Fair” at the Native American Youth & Family Center (NAYA). The Collaborative is a group of 50+ partner organizations that meet bimonthly to help provide clear pathways for the next generation of diverse leaders in environmental education and conservation. It strives to better serve the youth involved in partner programs so that they will be prepared to be future leaders.

This year’s job fair was planned and executed by a committee of 18 youth leaders. They created a wonderful event that was youth-centered, featuring resume-writing help, job opportunities, food, music, and break dancing. 26 employers attended, advertising more than 1,600 positions; 258 youth aged 13–25 participated, 72% of whom identified as people of color.

Following are two significant milestones that I am excited to share with you. Oregon State University-Extension recently conducted an analysis of yearly attendance at Outdoor School and learned that:

• In 2017–2018, 82 schools that had not attended ODS before (or in the recent past) provided the ODS experience to their students.
• In 2018–2019, an additional 105 schools will receive funding from the statewide program. That’s 27% more schools than the previous year!

Amazing! Please, take a few minutes to appreciate yourself as we appreciate you. You are transforming the lives of students and your support matters. Thank you!

Networking with Sparks
Wendy Sparks, Statewide Community Organizer

Join the ODS Advocacy Network!
We’re looking for advocates who are interested in building statewide support for Outdoor School! Advocates can:
• Help parents bring Outdoor School to their school for the first time.
• Coordinate letter-writing activities.
• Support stakeholder tours at ODS sites.
• Share stories describing the benefits of attending, volunteering, and working with ODS.
• Meet other supporters while learning about local and statewide efforts.

In late March, we’ll launch calls, in-person meetings, and training opportunities for individuals interested in increasing their impact as an ODS advocate.

Contact Wendy for details! wendy@friendsoutdoorschool.org

Silva’s Notes
Message from the Executive Director

While we are always mindful of the work we have left to do (hence, our focus in this issue on our strategic efforts), it’s important now and then to take a step back and appreciate our accomplishments—which are only possible because of your commitment to outdoor education!

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Friends of Outdoor School is proud to support the work of the Collaborative. Other supporters for the job fair included: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Center for Diversity and the Environment, NAYA, Metro, Oregon Zoo, Portland Parks and Recreation, and OSU Extension.

Join fellow ODS ambassadors at an upcoming Joint Committee on Ways and Means public community hearing! Hearings conclude on 3/21/19. Visit friendsofoutdoorschool.org to view the hearing schedule, or email Wendy to sign up to attend a community hearing. Special training is not required; this is simply an opportunity to be heard. Email Wendy or share your story here: outdoorstoriesproject.com

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