Dear Outdoor School Friends,

How are you holding up? This is a scary and difficult time. My wish is that each of you and your loved ones are healthy, safe, and doing as well as possible. It is heartening to be part of a community like the ODS community, one that cares so much about each other and Oregon students. If we have to face this crisis, I’m glad we are facing it together.

Because of your generous support, Friends of ODS is stable for now. Each day, we continue to put your dollars to work to preserve ODS for Oregon students. Together, we will face whatever challenge comes our way, staying strong for ODS and the kids.

During this crisis, Friends of ODS is:
• Supporting efforts to provide options for this spring’s students missing ODS in the wake of school closures.
• Advocating for programs and sites to be included in federal and state funding programs.
• Identifying and sharing emergency resources with ODS programs and sites.
• Preparing for the aftermath of the pandemic.

“I have been impressed with the help received from Friends of ODS...As always, I appreciate the way Friends of ODS cares so much for everyone in this, top to bottom. I feel such a partnership with you.” - Camp Magruder

It is no surprise that shutting down schools means shutting down ODS. ODS programs and sites have taken a devastating financial hit and will continue to have losses as the year progresses. Since ODS will not happen this spring, employees have been laid off, and other income sources such as rentals and fee-for-service programming have been eliminated.

Each of us at Friends of ODS has committed to take a portion of what we receive as part of the Federal Stimulus Package and donate to an ODS site or program provider. If you have the means, will you join us? I encourage you to make a donation directly to your favorite program or site or designate a gift through Friends of ODS. If you need help identifying a program or site, please connect with us. Our ODS friends need this support very much.

For the long term, please keep Friends of ODS in your 2020 giving plans. With a recession and the state looking to recover financial losses from this crisis, we will be forced to fight to protect ODS funding in 2021. Advocating for students and ODS is our number one priority!

While you are at home, join us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to connect with other ODS lovers, and share your ODS story. Please invite others to do the same. Your stories and a strong community are key to fighting for ODS funding.

How to help Outdoor School:
• Make a donation to your favorite ODS program or site.
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• Help us prepare now.
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• Please invite others to do the same so that they too, feel the strength and magic of the ODS community.

As we navigate this shared unknown, please know that we are putting your gifts to work fighting to save the ODS system for Oregon kids. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to ensuring that ALL Oregon kids get a week of ODS!

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In January over 175 folks in Oregon’s ODS community gathered at Camp Tadmor for a first-ever statewide conference to promote equitable, inclusive ODS programming for our diverse youth. This gathering launched the ODS Programs and Places Network, an ongoing community of practice that your support is making possible. The energy and enthusiasm of participants and presenters from across Oregon is inspiring us to continue the work of strengthening this network.

We especially would like to acknowledge and thank members of the business community who shared their expertise with ODS providers pro bono! Geoff Babb at the Onward Project shared his AdvenChair, an all-terrain wheelchair made in Oregon. Jaime English of Learning Landscapes Design led a tour to create accessible ODS wheelchairs. Jaime En shared his AdvenChair, an all-terrain wheelchair made in Oregon. Jaime English of Learning Landscapes Design led a tour to create accessible ODS wheelchairs. Jaime English of Learning Landscapes Design led a tour to create accessible ODS wheelchairs.

Will Deniston, a sophomore at Franklin High School thinks ODS is a magical place. Will, who goes by Post at Outdoor School, attended Arrah Wanna Outdoor School as a sixth-grader and now attends Namanu Outdoor School as a high school student leader teaching soil field study.

ODU School was one of the first times Will was away from home and his family for an extended period of time. During this time, he learned to appreciate the outdoors and found a sense of independence. Will couldn’t wait to volunteer as a student leader once he got to high school.

Over the 2019 holidays, Will’s grandparents encouraged him to raise money for a cause that he supports to give back to his community. Will took this opportunity to raise funds for a cause close to his heart: Outdoor School.

Will reached out to friends and family who were eager to donate to Friends of Outdoor School in his honor. Will’s grandparents generously matched his efforts and Will’s contribution to Friends of Outdoor School totaled $1,000!

At Outdoor School, we learn about a lot of big issues in the world around us and making a difference can feel like a daunting task. Will demonstrates to all of us that anyone can make a difference! Thank you Will for your commitment to Outdoor School!

If you’re interested in setting up your own fundraiser, contact kim@friendsofoutdoorschool.org.

“For me, ODS has meant a great deal to me over the years. I attended this program when I was in sixth grade and it opened my eyes to learning outside of the classroom. When we are young we are full of questions and are inquisitive on how the world works. As we grow up we learn different views and sometimes forget to ask the simple questions. I had an amazing time getting that hands-on learning experience of the different adaptations of a Ghost Shrimp or a Beaver. These were things I could see up close and ask questions about instead of just looking at a picture.

ODU has so much to offer. Not only does it get kids out of the classroom in fifth or sixth grade but it also gets high school and college students back into nature. It is incredibly important for people to make a connection with nature and get away from technology for a while. There’s something magical about the ability to play in the mud, and then learn it’s not just mud - it’s a material that many animals use to survive. ODS has the opportunity for people to find a place to belong, a place that feels like home, a place to learn in a new way, and a place for people to become connected with nature.

Now, more than ever we want to hear your Outdoor School stories. We are working hard to advocate for continued funding for Outdoor School and one of the best ways that we can communicate the impact of Outdoor School to legislators is through your stories.

These stories may be ones of the joy you’ve experienced at Outdoor School or the sadness you or your student are facing from not being able to attend Outdoor School this spring. These stories might also describe the effects that canceling Outdoor School this spring has had on your site or program.

Your story can take many different forms. It could be a written story, a video, a piece of art, whatever reflects your true voice. We also have volunteers who will write your story down if that’s what you prefer.

We appreciate your support in advocating for Outdoor School and demonstrating the importance of this life-changing program. You can submit your story at https://bit.ly/shareyourodsstory or email sophia@friendsofoutdoorschool.org.”

My ODS Story
Blueberry

We want to hear from you