

## What's INSIDE

- Krina's Column **2**
- Scholarship Winners **2**
- Game on **3**
- New Board of Directors  
Members and Officers **3**
- Volunteer Spotlight **4**

## Our Mission

The Salem Keizer Education Foundation is a catalyst for the enhancement of the education and development of all Salem-Keizer youth by providing resources for creative and innovative programs and materials, educating and mobilizing the community, and sustaining collaborative partnerships that support its goals.

A Foundation  
of Opportunity

Every Child  
Every Day

## Summer Learning

For 565 Salem-Keizer kids, the summer break from school meant time to head back to the classroom for summertime learning. Delving into free books, building toys, growing a vegetable garden, exploring astronomy, or learning to be a newspaper reporter: these are some of the dozens of sports, science, art and other summer learning opportunities SKEF offered this year at Grant Community School.

Classes like toy-making and LegoRobotics are lots of fun, but summer learning fills a serious need as well, feeding bellies and minds while keeping kids' thinking caps on and geared up for the coming school year. The National Afterschool Alliance says the long summer break can cause backslide in academic and social skills that kids gained during the previous school year. Most students lose at least a couple months' worth of reading skills over the summer – skills they have to work to regain again in September. But students who stay engaged in summer learning will tend to do better come September when class is back in session.

SKEF is a recognized leader in after-school and summertime learning, and summer finds us in high gear, offering everything from fort-building to basketball for kindergarten through fifth grade, and high-end science programming like the Game On computer animation class for high school students. Summer camps were at capacity, drawing students from across the district and drawing dignitaries who celebrated the success of our extended learning programs.

As a partner in the SL3 initiative, SKEF supported summer learning, summer lunches, and summer libraries by helping to keep 15 school libraries open on Wednesdays so families had access to summer learning and free books. Thirteen of the sites also served lunch. Senator Ron Wyden donned an apron and helped serve

*continued on page 2*

## Game On!

A whimsical 3D green pear navigates a treacherously-curved track, a military-style aircraft unleashes flaming orange artillery spray, and a hovercraft-car hybrid whips around sharp corners and springs from ledges to land on new track below. The vehicles and their other-worldly racetracks are the creations of high school students who took the week-long 3D animation class called Game On!

*continued on page 2*

## Free Dental Screening and Sealants

Capitol Dental Care is providing free child dental screening and sealants at three summer learning sites. They visited Waldo and Auburn schools in July. The third and final screening site for the summer will be at Kennedy Elementary School, August 4-15, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Every year, August is the time when we've just gotten into the full swing of summer and it's time to gear up for the new school year. This month is still bursting with summer learning camps, summer library hours and summer lunches at 13 schools. We know we still have some long sunny days ahead, but while we squeeze out those last drops of summer, the staff and volunteers at SKEF are working to make sure Salem-Keizer students will have everything they need when the first school bells ring in September.

As always, we're able to invest in Salem-Keizer's awesome kids because of you. This year, we at SKEF are focusing on reminding you – our community – what happens for local kids because you care.

Because of you, 565 local children had summer learning, lunches, safety, and adventures.

Because of you, XXXX kids at 22 schools took part in our after-school Enrichment Academy during the 2013-14 school year. They all stayed safely at school where they received warm supper, academic programs, and homework support.

Because of you, 60,000 children got free, age-appropriate books through our Bazillion Books for Kids initiative that aims to end book poverty by making sure all kids have their own books to read at home.

At-risk students got real-life work experience, innovative teachers received grants to support excellence in their classrooms, high school seniors received college scholarships, and XXXX kids ran in the country's largest all-youth timed run right here in Salem: The Awesome 3,000. We did this and much, much more. And we did it because of you.

In the coming month, we have two important ways for you to help launch the coming school year:

Every year, we help the families who struggle to gather up the backpacks, notebooks, crayons and other supplies for school. Because of you, our School Supply Drive sends XXX kids off to school with the tools for success. Watch for our wish list on our website and Facebook, and head to the local businesses where you can drop off your donations any time in August.

Join us on September 9 when we host our Back To School Luncheon to celebrate everything that happens because you care. We'll highlight the successes of the past year, preview the coming year, and showcase some of Salem-Keizer's awesome kids who get leading-edge educational opportunities because of you. We hope you can be there. Lunch is on us. ★

lunch at Grant Community School on July 2, alongside Oregon Deputy Education Superintendent Rob Saxton.

In our district, where roughly 60% of students rely on free and reduced school meals to meet their nutritional needs, summer learning nurtures our students in multiple ways, avoiding what otherwise might be long summer months of nutrition gaps and summer learning slides. With kids safely on campus in the summer, growing vegetables and building Lego robots, eating lunch, and taking home free books, we make sure we're continuing our ongoing investment in awesome kids, not just during the school year, but always.

Of course, just to be sure we're sneaking in plenty of learning opportunities that also feel like summer fun, we also hosted a Build It booth at the Marion County Fair. Kids used foam shapes to build and create while also learning basic design and engineering principles. Not to be outdone, our School Gardens team brought home several first- and second-place ribbons for their vegetables and flowers. ★

## Scholarship Winners

**\$1,000 Guido Caldarazzo Scholarship:** This year's Guido Caldarazzo Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a graduating McKay student, **Christina Caballero**.

The scholarship honors the memory of Guido Caldarazzo, a long-time teacher, coach, administrator, and community advocate. The scholarship is intended to support a student who has overcome personal or family adversity and who contributes to a positive culture in their school or community. Christina, who started volunteering when she was 13 with Estella's Foundation for Foster Children, will use her scholarship while attending Western Oregon University to complete her pre-nursing degree. Ultimately, she hopes to be a Nurse

Practitioner. She is inspired by her father, a mechanic and single dad to Christina and her two siblings.

**John Moe Outstanding Student Award:** This scholarship of \$XXX honors local students for exemplary personal and academic achievement. This year's Top Scholar Award was given to **Joshua Fields**, a 2011 Salem-Keizer graduate who went directly into the Independent Living Program and enthusiastically pursued volunteer and work opportunities ranging from walking dogs at Marion County Dog Services, detailing school buses for the school district, and sorting bulk foods at Marion-Polk FoodShare. Work experience

in food services at Willamette University has turned into full-time employment for Joshua, who hopes someday to become a trained forest firefighter.

Congratulations also to the rest of the John Moe Outstanding Student Award honorees:

First runner-up: **Landon Oliverson**  
Honorable Mention: **Jaylee Wayne**  
Second runner-up: **Lyle Romans**  
Honorable Mention: **Jamie Gordon**  
Second runner-up: **Katelyn Landis**

## Game On continued...

Graham Toms, a former Disney animator turned educator, traveled from Texas-based NewTek to teach local students how to use LightWave 3D animation software to design their own games. Over the five-day class, students began with a paper drawing of their game concept, and within a couple of days they were elbow deep into the technology that created Avatar, the Geico Gecko, and StarTrek.

Toms says this workshop was a first for him, but he knew he could bring students from concept to animated game in a few days. None had done any 3D animation before, but he was confident that they'd all produce a functional animated game. "The confidence comes from knowing if you can trigger their enthusiasm they can exceed their own expectations. They surprise me with their capacity to take what little bits I give them and then run with that."

The popularity of games helps engage teens, but the process helps them master concepts that can carry into fields as diverse as clothing design and medicine. "They're learning physics and science and design. Starting with the drawing seems retro, but the initial pencil design is something that frames the concept of everything. It's not purely about the digital age these days. If they can master the classics of science and math and English, technology will always expand but the core skills will give them the ability to adapt to new technology."



Two Salem-Keizer students worked alongside Toms for the week, honing skills they can take to the classroom in the coming school year. The possible applications are endless – spanning subjects from art to math. "Gaming brings them in, but they end up learning far more than that," says Toms. "And I'm still a student. I'm teaching them, but then these kids show me something, some little trick or shortcut, and I say, 'Oh, that's cool!'" Asked if he plans to return to Salem-Keizer again, Toms didn't hesitate. "Absolutely," he said.

Game On! Students who missed this year's opportunity can watch for its return next summer. ★

## New Board of Directors, Members & Officers

Join us in welcoming SKEF's 2014-15 Board of Directors, which includes a slate of new officers, four new members, and 17 continuing members.

- New member **Jodi Hack** brings previous board experience with Oregon Community Foundation, Chemeketa Community College Foundation, and YMCA.
- **Samuel Pino** brings previous board experience as well as a background in volunteering in Salem-Keizer schools and working as a Spanish instructor.
- **Amy Geerhart** practices business law at Saalfeld Griggs PC and has volunteered for youth-related organizations including the AC Gilbert House.
- **Monty Miller**, who comes from a family of teachers and owns a local business, shares SKEF's belief that education is the foundation for a better community.

These incoming board members join our dedicated board in the ongoing and important work of overseeing SKEF mission, policy, and long-range planning. Our new slate of board officers include:

**Brent Neilsen** – President

**Jeff Aeschliman**, VP Finance & Governance

**Chuck Swank**, Treasurer

**Diane Childs**, Secretary

**Lisa Harnisch**, Awesome 3000 Co-Chair

**Tyler Massey**, Awesome 3000 Co-Chair

**Bruce Anderson**

**Chris Brantley**, School Board Liaison

**Mary Paulson**, School District Liaison

**Spencer Rockwell**

**Mary Jean Sandall**, VP Mission & Quality Assurance

**Jordan Willey**

**Patrice Altenhofen**

**Joe Egli**

**Lisa Norris**

**Jackie Franke**

**Avigain Hernandez**

**Thank you, board members!**

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

# Austin Gwinup



For a quiet, unassuming guy, Austin Gwinup inspires big, boisterous praise:

**“Phenomenal work ethic.”**

**“Really fabulous.”**

**“Super conscientious.”**

And those are just the first few comments people make when talking about the 18-year-old volunteer who runs SKEF’s Bazillion Books For Kids bookstore a couple of afternoons a week. The self-taught artist and video game enthusiast is racking up retail experience that he hopes will help him land a job while he saves money for school. His long-range goal is to attend the Art Institute of Portland.

Austin first came to SKEF while finishing his GED at Downtown Learning Center and talking with Tricia Ratliff at HOME Youth and Resource Center about his career aspirations. HOME serves about 800 at-risk and homeless youth each year with help ranging from meals and showers to work experience. It’s easy to hear Tricia’s enthusiasm when she talks about Austin’s success. “We’re really excited about the success that’s come

about for Austin through our program - things you obviously hope for but that you can’t necessarily plan for. He’s really doing a fantastic job.”

He started in the back room of the bookstore, quietly sorting the massive pallets of books that come into the program to be distributed to local children in need. He surprised even himself when he quickly gained the confidence to move to the front of the store, helping customers and cataloging books in the computer-based inventory system. “He grew from somebody who happily and quietly did what was asked of him, to someone who takes initiative and anticipates what needs to be done, and now he’s teaching new volunteers and taking them under his wing,” says Tyke Hagedorn, the manager of SKEF’s retail programs.

“I just try to help things flow, I guess,” Austin says about his keen sense of what needs to be done next. He’s fit so well into the Bazillion Books store that when SKEF asked HOME and Downtown Learning Center if Austin’s work experience period could be extended, everyone gladly agreed. In fact, the alternative high school is now sending a second volunteer who’s learning from Austin’s experience while gaining work experience.

Austin had previous retail work experience under his belt, but says his time at Bazillion Books for Kids has given him a chance to learn more advanced skills. He hopes those skills will help him land a job to support himself through a couple of years at Chemeketa Community College and ultimately through a degree program in graphic or digital design. An aspiring artist who already has one downtown gallery showing to his credit, Austin says, “Not only do I want to make and program the games, but I want to do the visual artwork.”

Proving that success comes from a combination of hard work and being in the right place at the right time, Austin seized an opportunity to study digital game design alongside former Disney animator Graham Toms at SKEF’s Game On summer workshop. The workshop focused on exactly the kind of work Austin hopes to do professionally. He grasped the concepts at lightning speed, quickly taking his paper drawing to a 3D animated game while rubbing elbows with a leading-edge educator in digital design. “Things have just popped up for Austin from the connections he’s made in the program, and he’s doing a fantastic job,” says HOME’s Tricia Ratliff, “Austin is really fabulous.”