Butte Creek Mill has been a mainstay of the economy in Eagle Point and its surroundings since it first opened its doors in 1872. Its customers then were farmers, who came with wagons filled with grain, townspeople, who gathered to socialize at the mill’s general store and traders, who came bearing leather goods and berries.

More recently, the mill — still in commercial operation — was a popular destination for tourists, who came by the busload to tour the mill, visit the gift shop and walk over the Little Butte Creek covered bridge into town. People from throughout Oregon came to buy Butte Creek Mill’s specialty pancake and muffin mixes, which were also marketed nationally.

But all of that changed on Christmas Day 2015, when Eagle Point residents awoke to learn that the 143-year-old mill had burned down, a victim of antique wiring. “I just assumed since it was there for a hundred years, it would be there forever,” recalls resident Sue Kupillas. “The mill was the heart of Eagle Point.”

“Everyone was so upset when it burned,” says Leon Sherman, former police chief and mayor of the town. “It’s not just a part of history, it was a part of our community and an important community attraction that went up in smoke.”

Community rallies

The community quickly rallied behind mill owner Bob Russell, forming lines to clean up the daunting mess. Although the mill was insured, it was not covered for its contents. But the local community stepped up to help the millman. About 100 people showed up to help rebuild. Community rallies continued the following year with the help of a community fund and donations from all over Oregon. The mill eventually reopened in 2017.

Butte Creek Mill before the fire in 2015 that destroyed it.

PHOTO: JOHN TRAX
Mental health youth programs expand to serve rural Oregon

Young people struggling with mental illness, and their families, face a double whammy in rural areas of Oregon — lack of awareness and acceptance coupled with a shortage of services. And that's a problem. Research in the last decade has demonstrated that about 50% of all people with mental health disorders first develop symptoms before the age of 14, and 25% between the ages of 14 and 25.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a grassroots, volunteer-based organization that provides education and support to people living with mental conditions, along with their families. In Oregon, NAMI is working to expand educational opportunities in rural areas of the state, offering local training and expanding its volunteer base in order to reach more families.

Two of NAMI’s programs are specifically aimed at youth:

NAMI Basic, a shortened version of NAMI’s signature 12-week course, is a six-week class designed for parents and caregivers with school-age children in their households who have a mental health issue.
Ending the Silence is an awareness program aimed at high school and middle school students. The 50-minute presentation is delivered in middle and high schools by a pair of trainers — a family member professional (she works as a nurse for Douglas Education Service District) but volunteers as a NAMI instructor in her role as a family member. She has helped share Ending the Silence about 18 times.

“When we bring the program to assemblies and classrooms, I share my son’s story,” she says. “I look these kids in the eye and I say, I know some of you kids are dealing with these issues and I want you to get help.

“When he was 24, our son finally got into a treatment program that lasted a year. Now he’s a straight-A student at Columbia University. I’m excited to tell them that.”

Personal stories

Family members like Hofford who can share their personal stories are the backbone of the program. All of the content in both courses is based on lived experiences.

“We can speak to the recovery process and how important it is to reach out, how normal it really is,” Hofford says. “These are very commonplace disorders. It’s very normal. It’s out there all around us.”

The trainings are offered by local NAMI chapters, of which there are 15 in Oregon — 11 of them entirely staffed by volunteers. If the training isn’t available in a particular area, the state office will find a way to deliver it. NAMI also operates a helpline at (800) 950-NAMI (6264).

“It’s important to emphasize that when you come to NAMI, you are among your peers,” Bounnef says. “You don’t have to apologize or explain anything. We know because we live it; we know what you are going through. We create safe places so people can understand what’s going on in their lives and learn what they need so they can continue their journey of recovery.”

School age is a critical age, according to Bounnef. “If we intervene effectively at this time, we can save people struggles in the rest of their life. It is essential that organizations like ours focus on this age range, especially with the shortage of services in rural areas.”

How you can help

NAMI is looking for people who have lived with a child with a mental health condition to be trained as instructors. Young people who have experienced living with mental health conditions are also being sought for the Ending the Silence program.

Volunteers don’t have to be familiar with NAMI; experience with mental illness and the desire to help others are the main requirements.

People interested in volunteering and organizations interested in bringing the trainings to their communities can contact NAMI at namioregon@namior.org or (800) 343-6264.
A volunteer-run radio station

Radio Tierra in Hood River gives a voice to Hispanic community

Behind the door to a small room in a nonprofit building in Hood River comes the mighty sound of many voices. Community radio station Radio Tierra operates from a 10x20-foot room in The Next Door building, filled with a computer monitor, miscellaneous sound equipment, a bookshelf filled with CDs, and a colorful mural spread across an entire wall.

“It’s a super modest little space, but you would not guess that if you were listening to our broadcasts,” says Anna Osborn, who works 10 hours a week as the station’s only paid employee.

Radio Tierra began in 1999 as a desire by Darlo Salas, Aaron Glasgow and Norberto Maahs to give the greater Hispanic community a voice and a way to share information. The dream was realized in January 2004, when the station began operations out of Salas’ garage. Fifteen years later, the nonprofit broadcasts 24 hours a day in Spanish and English to four counties in the Columbia Gorge area. The station went worldwide this year when it realized a years-long goal to stream programming online, making Radio Tierra accessible via computer or smartphone.

“It’s a labor of love,” says Juan Reyes, president of the seven-member board. “Volunteers spend a lot of hours running the station, DJs are volunteers, and all the board members volunteer time.”

“The station is a catalyst for community-building efforts with the Latino community,” says Roque Barros, director of the Ford Institute for Community Building.

About 20 DJs — all of them volunteers — provide the local programming. Programs in both Spanish and English run the gamut from live music to informational programs to English lessons.

Area resident Humberto Calderon hosts a music-and-interview show three days a week. Columbia Riverkeeper community organizer Ubaldo Hernández produces “Conoce tu Columbia” (Know Your Columbia). It airs every other week. Live DJs offer high-energy programs like “The Grok Show.” The weekly bilingual program, “Habla HRV,” provides information about Hood River Valley High School. Local attorneys host shows on legal issues.

“Our volunteers want to make sure their community is well informed, well educated and well entertained, too,” Osborn says.

Reyes gave up his music show when he took on the leadership position, but his family is well represented in the DJ lineup. His two young daughters host shows: Stephanie with a storytelling segment and Alexa with English lessons. Station volunteers also go out into the community to record local events, such as the Cherry Festival Parade, for rebroadcast.

Next steps

With the launch of the streaming service, the station is planning its next big step — a
Radio Tierra can be heard on
95.1 FM in Hood River
95.9 FM in Stevenson
96.7 FM in Carson
107.1 FM in Parkdale
107.7 FM in The Dalles
Programs also stream on the Internet at www.radiotierra.org

yearlong community outreach plan. With the help of a grant from The Ford Family Foundation, Radio Tierra is conducting a series of focus groups in English and Spanish to engage residents in deciding how the radio station can support them around community building efforts.

“We will identify a leadership team from those focus groups,” Osborn explains, “and from there create an action plan around community building and community ownership for Radio Tierra. We expect to be finished in June 2020.”

“We hope this listening phase will increase Radio Tierra’s role as a community connector and facilitator between the cultural differences that exist in the area,” Barros says.

The new edition of Oregon by the Numbers is now available. This comprehensive publication, updated for 2019, puts a collection of community measures in one place and displays them in an easy-to-digest format that includes charts and infographics.

Oregon by the Numbers was first printed in 2018 and quickly proved popular with a wide audience, including business and educational leaders, local and state government officials, nonprofit professionals, and engaged citizens.

The publication features compact county portraits for all 36 Oregon counties as well as corresponding measure profiles, with rankings whenever possible. Oregon by the Numbers is a collaboration between The Ford Family Foundation and Oregon State University Extension Service.

It is an outgrowth of the Foundation’s long-term investment in the Rural Communities Explorer, an online tool that helps leaders explore data and statistics about their own communities.

The 2019 edition of Oregon by the Numbers is available as a free PDF. Each county receives a close-up look. Download the publication at www.tfff.org/OBTN.
Bridging divides with story

Oregon-based organization produces projects worldwide

In a time of increased polarization, an urgent need exists to bridge divides and bring people together. How to do that? By telling stories to each other, according to Mark Yaconelli, the founder and executive director of The Hearth Community.

“The power of storytelling goes beyond the normal debates we have. It takes us into a place of connection,” says Yaconelli. “What most of us long for is a good question and a listening ear.”

The Hearth, a nonprofit organization based in Oregon, helps cities and organizations produce personal storytelling projects. It has produced events in Oregon, North Carolina, Texas, California, Indiana, New Mexico, Minnesota, Washington, Florida, New York and the United Kingdom.

Several communities in Oregon are holding regular Hearth events, and the launch of a recent certificate program (see sidebar) promises to expand the program into more towns.

In Grants Pass, where Hearth events are held at Bethany Presbyterian Church every quarter, more than 200 people gathered in July to hear stories on the theme of “Going Wild.” Admission was free, but participants were encouraged to make a donation benefiting featured nonprofit Wildlife Image, which made a quick presentation. New York musician Lipbone Redding entertained the audience before the storytelling began. Six local residents presented their 10-minute stories, interspersed with more music.

“It’s really the power of building community. People get together, and they are so honest in telling a story,” says Grants Pass co-organizer Steve Roe. “And it keeps going — I almost feel sorry trying to get people back from intermission. The audience is out there sharing their own stories — it’s like a Hearth within a Hearth.

“The next morning on Facebook, we post pictures of people who gave Hearth presentations, and the conversations take off from there.”

Noche de Cuentos

Each community structures its Hearth events in its own way. In Phoenix, Oregon, Noche de Cuentos (Night of Stories) is held entirely in Spanish and begins with food. After music and an art show, community members share their stories around a common theme, such as Day of the Dead or Mother’s Day.

Noche de Cuentos started out as a way to bring together the Hispanic community in Southern Oregon. “There aren’t many spaces bringing together the Latino community,” says organizer Erica Ledesma. “We started talking about how we can carve more spaces and more opportunities for the community to come together and share. With all that is going on nationally, it’s a way to control the narrative in our own community.”

When she was growing up, Ledesma explains, her parents taught her values through stories.
Three events have been held in the Medford-Phoenix area so far. Childcare is provided and sponsors provide food, such as the tamales and agua fresca donated by Southern Oregon Education Service District’s Migrant Education program.

The last event drew about 250 people. “People just didn’t want to leave,” Ledesma says. “The project has been very well received. People are excited that we are empowering them to step into their voice.”

The project has been very well received. People are excited that we are empowering them to step into their voice.
— Erica Ledesma
Phoenix

Building community

Hearth events have developed a loyal fan base in Grants Pass, says Roe. Many people come to support friends who are telling their stories, but Roe also sees regulars who attend every event. “There’s no bad that comes out of the Hearth. Maybe someone gets up there and stumbles, but there’s no ridicule, only love at the Hearth.”

“The Hearth relies on storytelling as a way of building community and deepening relationships,” Yaconelli says. “It’s a way for sharing the diversity of human experiences with a town or among people so we can feel empathy and address issues we have.

“Every time we gather and someone is vulnerable and willing to tell, we each come home to our humanity. We are blowing on the coals of the fire, coals that are the hearts that are gathered in that room.”

Certificate in storytelling

The Hearth recently launched an intensive certificate program in community storytelling. The program offers a variety of experiential exercises, individual skill-building, practical teaching, online discussion groups, and written and online resources.

Almost 60 people from around the country are in the current class, which will end in October with a four-day workshop. Participants include community leaders, a chaplain who is working with nursing staff to use storytelling in hospice, and a board member of a group of scientists studying climate change.

“It’s sort of a Hearth within a Hearth,” says Steve Roe, who is in the class. “We have some really spirited discussions.”

In 2020, The Hearth is offering the program as a weeklong intensive workshop, April 19-24, with additional coaching as graduates test their skills and models in real-world settings. For more information, check out https://thehearth-community.com/
Lifting all boats in northwest Oregon

A seafood value chain has potential to improve the Garibaldi economy

Nested on Tillamook Bay along Oregon’s North Coast lies the small city of Garibaldi, population 815. At the center of town is the Port of Garibaldi, the physical and cultural heart of the community, where around 60 small commercial fishing vessels are docked when they aren’t out on the ocean in search of seven types of seafood, including Dungeness crab, albacore tuna and Chinook salmon. These boats represent local, independently owned small businesses, often employing deckhands and supporting an array of interconnected local businesses.

This small-scale fleet primarily uses low-impact fishing gear and catches small volumes of fish on day trips allowing for delivery of high-quality, individually handled seafood.

The Port of Garibaldi, which dates to the early twentieth century, is the nearest seaport to Portland, Oregon, located about 85 miles west of the city along Highway 101. It is part of the Tillamook County port area, which is considered the second largest of the state’s smaller ports by revenue generation.

Like many other small fishing fleets across the country, the Garibaldi fleet is facing a variety of challenges caused by both internal and external forces. The workforce in the fishing industry is aging (the median age is 51.5 years) and there are barriers to succession planning as well as in attracting younger workers to the field. The impacts of industry consolidation can pose threats to small boat operators like those in Garibaldi, resulting in fewer options to sell their product and having to settle for lower prices because of a lack of competition. Other challenges include those caused by a changing climate and its impact on sea life, the high cost of fishing permits, and the general operations of running a fishing vessel.

The value chain

The concept of the value chain is an essential part of any discussion of Oregon’s small-scale seafood market. A value chain is the full range of activities that businesses go through to bring a final product or service to their customers. When more of those steps happen locally, the value added to the processing of a raw material is retained in the community and builds community wealth.

A stronger small-scale seafood value chain for Garibaldi and wider Tillamook County has the potential to improve the economy in a place where the unemployment rate is over 6% and median income is 77% of the median for the rest of the state. By expanding economic opportunities for selling their product and providing stability for North Coast fishermen, a well-functioning value chain can improve the livelihoods of boat owners, crew, processors, retailers and others living in the area, all while keeping the community’s strong maritime identity alive.

Efforts to develop value opportunities for small-scale seafood businesses in Garibaldi and Tillamook County date back to 2013. That’s when Rural Development Initiatives (RDI), an Oregon-based nonprofit that supports economic development in rural communities, launched a pilot program to encourage rural regions...
Lifting all boats in northwest Oregon

The Port of Garibaldi is home to about 60 small commercial fishing vessels that harvest seafood, including Dungeness crab.

photos: carlinrv.com, travel oregon

Through the state to explore the principles of WealthWorks. These principles include building value chains and identifying assets and different forms of wealth. A diverse group of partners serving the area came together to drive this initiative and explore the possibilities for the North Coast.

In addition to RDI, the organizations included the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District (Col-Pac), a private, nonprofit organization focused on encouraging economic diversification and resilience throughout Northwest Oregon; the Port of Garibaldi, which promotes local economic development and manages the waterfront and supports vessels; the Economic Development Council of Tillamook County, the county-wide economic development organization; Visit Tillamook Coast, the local tourism entity; and the Tillamook Bay Community College Small Business Development Center. The strength of this coalition is its breadth of expertise and the mix of resources each organization brings to the initiative.

In January 2017, Col-Pac contracted with two staff members from Ecotrust (with over 20 years’ experience serving fishing communities) to serve as value chain coordinators. Ecotrust, located in Portland, is a nonprofit focused on advancing social equity, economic opportunity and environmental stewardship.

“Fishing communities across the country are grappling with the interrelated challenges of maintaining or reviving their economic, social, cultural and ecological well-being in the face of change,” says Kelly Harrell, one of the value chain coordinators with Ecotrust. “WealthWorks offers a different model of economic and community development that addresses root causes that are at the core of thriving fishing communities.”

The partners took a deep dive into analyzing and understanding the intricacies of the local seafood industry. This included conducting research, organizing partner meetings, carrying out interviews and surveys with fishermen and regional partners, participating in local events, and mapping out the value chain.

Through this effort, key priorities emerged for growing the value chain: improving seafood industry infrastructure; monitoring and enhancing local fisheries access and ownership; and supporting fishermen and seafood businesses in business development and connections to markets.

Editor’s Note: This article is adapted from a case study appearing on the WealthWorks website. For the rest of the story about this work in progress, visit www.wealthworks.org > Success Stories.
Scholar finds fulfillment through art

Ford Opportunity Scholar Margaret Hartsook earns Bruce Award

By Holly Scholz
Ford Scholar Class of 1998

When Margaret Hartsook was a young student, she didn’t learn in the same way as other kids. Recognizing her unique learning style, teachers often encouraged her to incorporate art into her lessons.

“Art has always been a place where I process things and sort things out,” Hartsook says. “It helped me make sense of the world as a young person.” When she received the Ford Opportunity Scholarship in 2001, she knew exactly what she wanted to study — art therapy. Today, Hartsook shares her love of art while working as a clinical art therapist for Legacy Good Samaritan Cancer Healing Center in Portland and as an art program consultant for Memories in the Making, an Alzheimer’s Association program.

Hartsook recently received the Gerald E. Bruce Award, established to recognize Ford Family scholarship alumni who have unselfishly worked to better their communities. “The combination of Margaret’s direct volunteer service and her ability to build off that service to create programs that were replicated in other regions of the state impressed the selection committee,” says Bonnie Williams, manager of scholar and alumni engagement at The Ford Family Foundation.

Although she’s always loved all art forms, Hartsook took an indirect route to being an art therapist. Fresh out of high school in 1974, she enrolled in California College of Art, but left school to raise a family. In her mid-40s, she won a Ford Opportunity scholarship for single parents after deciding she wanted more out of life than working in retail.

“I had already thought about doing art therapy — I am creative and I had this art background — but I hadn’t done it for quite a number of years,” Hartsook says. “Then, I got the scholarship, and I knew exactly what I wanted to do.”

She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2003 from the University of Oregon and a master’s degree in 2006 from Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, in transpersonal counseling, psychology and art therapy.

Hartsook worked as a hospice bereavement counselor and co-created a hospice art therapy program. She was also an adjunct faculty member for Naropa in addition to volunteering in an art therapy studio and at a therapeutic horse riding center. She also volunteered with Memories in the Making, an art-based program for people with dementia.

In her mid-40s, she won a Ford Opportunity scholarship for single parents after deciding she wanted more out of life ...

“While my work at hospice was rewarding, after six years, I made the difficult decision to leave as I was being called to return to my family in Oregon,” Hartsook says.

In 2011, she settled in Portland near her two grown children, who had started families of their own.

She began a volunteer Memories in Making pilot program with the Alzheimer’s Association in Portland. After a few months, the association hired her to grow the program statewide, and it is now in more than 150 Alzheimer’s care facilities in Oregon.

During this work, she also worked with people dealing with grief and serious illnesses. She had talked with the Legacy Health system about doing art therapy with their cancer patients, which led to a full-time position in 2012.

Hartsook has chosen Forward Stride, a therapeutic horse riding center in Hillsboro, to receive the $5,000 grant that accompanies the Gerald E. Bruce Award. She volunteers with Forward Stride, which enhances the quality of life for people with special needs through horse-centered activities and therapies.

“What I value most in my work is the ability to make a difference in the lives of people who are struggling by using creativity and art,” Hartsook says. “I am continually grateful for the opportunity to work in the field I am passionate about and to witness the depth and power of art therapy.”
Resources offer insights

Get the tools you need to help make a difference in your community with Select Books from The Ford Family Foundation. We provide these resources at no charge to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, California.

Keep them, share them. The only requirement is providing us with your feedback on the publication ordered.

Here are three books on the Select List:


Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey into the Heart of America, by James Fallows, Deborah Fallows: On a five-year journey across the United States in a small plane, the husband-wife team visits dozens of towns to explore the challenges facing small communities — from economic hardships to the scourge of drugs. They also document the common characteristics that underwrite success in those towns — energy, generosity, determination, compassion and determination. 417 pages. © 2018.

The Local Economy Solution: How Innovative, Self-Financing “Pollinators” Can Grow Jobs and Prosperity, by Michael Shuman. Growing evidence has proven that the traditional approach to economic development — incentives to attract large businesses — is a dead end for most communities. This book suggests an alternative approach: nurture a new generation of enterprises that help local businesses launch and create jobs in self-financing ways. 248 pages. © 2015. See the complete list of Select Books: www.tfff.org/select-books/

Formats for Select Books

We make it easier than ever to access the resources on the Select Books list. Traditionally, we’ve offered readers our list of approximately 70 titles in print format. We also offer versions in Kindle e-book and audio CD, and provide Spanish translations when available.

To access the book list, go to the Select Books web page (www.tfff.org/select-books), click on “Browse Books” and choose your preferred method of delivery. We will add more titles in all categories when they become available. All titles are free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, California, in return for your book review.

Two ways to read

Printed copies of Community Vitality are available on request. Send an email to: communityvitality@tfff.org

Community Vitality is online. www.tfff.org/cv
Receive email notifications when a new online issue is available. Sign up at: www.tfff.org/cvsubscribe
most of the insurance proceeds were used to mitigate the fire damage. Recognizing the importance of the mill to the community’s economic vitality, a group of residents formed the Butte Creek Mill Foundation and came to an agreement with Russell to buy the mill.

**National Historic Register**

Enough of the mill survived to maintain its status on the National Historic Register, which recognizes it as the last water-powered grist mill still commercially operating west of the Mississippi. The millstones, brought by ship from France and then carried over the mountain by wagon, were unharmed, and the basement was largely intact.

The foundation’s goal is to rebuild the mill with careful attention to historical accuracy, and operate it as a commercially viable, tourist-friendly enterprise. So far, $2.1 million of the $2.5 million goal has been raised, much of it through private donations. Eagle Point resident and entertainer Jim Belushi has hosted two benefit concerts.

“We had people from all over the U.S. sending checks,” says Kupillas, president of the Butte Creek Mill Foundation board of directors. “We did quite a bit of fund raising without even asking for money. It was totally amazing.”

Mill construction has proceeded as money allows. “We had a unique situation because of the urgency to get the building closed in to avoid damage by water and weather,” Kupillas says. “Most projects, you raise money and then you do it, but we had to raise money and build at the same time. It was pretty hand to mouth for a while.”

The mill is being reconstructed just as it was originally built in 1872, with contributions from craftsmen from all over Oregon. The two-foot-square pillars are hand-hewn with a broad ax from local wood. The frames for the mill walls were put together on the ground with wooden pegs and raised up to create the walls and roof trusses.

**Tourism country**

The mill sits between two of the state’s largest tourist attractions — Crater Lake and Ashland’s Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The nearby covered bridge is a popular destination for people touring Oregon’s covered bridges. “Between the mill and the covered bridge, literally thousands of people came through every year,” Kupillas says.

The foundation received a grant from Travel Oregon for ADA modifications, which include access to the lower level, where people can watch the mill stones grind the wheat. The Butte Creek General Store will reopen, and an exhibit room will showcase local culture, Native American history and milling history. The room itself will be an exhibit as its vaulted ceiling showcases the mill’s timber frame construction.

A few more chores remain — hiring a miller, installing the electrical system, HVAC and plumbing — but organizers hope to open the mill doors late this year. “Eagle Point is a nice town and everybody is going to be thrilled when that mill is finally done,” Sherman says.
Hallie Ford Fellows for 2019

Five Oregon visual artists recognized

Five artists from throughout Oregon were recognized in June for their talent and potential when they were named 2019 Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts. A jury of five arts professionals selected Niraja Lorenz of Eugene, James Lavadour of Pendleton, and Corey Arnold, Jess Perlitz and Sharita Towne of Portland from an exceptionally diverse pool of nearly 190 applicants.

They each received a $25,000 unrestricted award and joined 35 of their peers selected over the last nine years as Hallie Ford Fellows.

“Their talent cuts across the spectrum of disciplines,” said Anne Kubisch, president of the Foundation. “They represent contemporary forms of expressions that convey ideas and stories that encourage viewers to think about our world in a different way.”

The selection of the 2019 Fellows followed extensive individual review and joint discussions.

Jurists came from New York, Cleveland, Portland and Los Angeles. They determined that the awarded artists are at a pivotal moment in their careers and an infusion of resources now may help to catalyze their practice in transformative ways.

These fellowships honor the late Hallie Ford, co-founder of The Ford Family Foundation, who left a legacy based on a lifelong interest in and support of the visual arts. She believed strongly that others should have the opportunity to realize their talents.
Artist-run exhibition space

Ditch Projects gains national attention, provides museum-quality space for Oregon artists

About 10 years ago, Eugene artist Mike Bray and a group of fellow MFA students from the University of Oregon began looking for a venue to show contemporary art from around the country. Display space is rare, and they had nearly given up when Bray (a 2013 Hallie Ford Fellow in the Visual Arts) stumbled on a warehouse section near downtown Springfield. Nondescript from the outside, the warehouse, part of an old lumber mill, opened up to a massive space with rustic charm.

The group quickly set to work transforming the environment, painting half the walls gallery white and leaving half in their original state. And soon, Ditch Projects (named for a dried-up creek in the complex) was born.

In the intervening years, Ditch has built a national reputation as an artist-run exhibition and performance venue with a unique exhibition space. “In the artists’ scene, you always hear about what’s happening at Ditch,” says Amy Bernstein, a Portland artist who showed her work in February 2018. The gallery’s spacious walls allowed Bernstein to show a 28-foot painting she had just completed on commission to a fashion house. “The space is phenomenal — it’s the size of an airplane hangar — and there’s nothing like it anywhere else in Oregon.”

Collaboration, camaraderie

Ditch Projects is run more like a co-op than a traditional gallery, a feature that adds to its allure among art circles. Members pay dues and hold twice yearly pitch meetings, where they decide which artists should be invited to show. None of the works are for sale; artists come to have a show in a museum-quality space, to work with fellow creatives and to try out new work without fear of failure.

Setting up the shows is a collaborative affair, with exhibiting artists and Ditch members working together. It’s come a long way from the scramble of early shows and a nearly nonexistent budget. “We had a lot of hiccups in the beginning,” Bray says. “It was hard to engage the community. We didn’t have any money, so we would have an artist coming from L.A. and sleeping on a couch. And sometimes we would be installing on Friday and opening on Saturday.

“Word of mouth gave us the time to grow and develop naturally, and I’d say we were better known in L.A. and Chicago than we were in Eugene or Springfield,” Bray says.

But one thing hasn’t changed

The Nurture Effect: A review

Continued from page 16

cigarette in the Kennedy Center lobby, we can create a society where it is unthinkable that a child suffers abuse, fails in school, becomes delinquent, or faces teasing and bullying.

The book is evenly split between the science behind Biglan’s strategy and case studies that spotlight success. He provides a variety of examples of successful prevention programs and practices. All of them have one common characteristic — they make people’s homes or schools or workplaces more nurturing.

Families learn how to avoid conflict. Schools encourage students to contribute. People are guided in ways to follow their dreams while avoiding negative self-talk.

Prosocial behavior

In schools, for example, researchers have identified the problem of how to help teachers move from escalating punishment to using positive reinforcement. That approach nurtures what Biglan calls “prosocial” behavior, or behavior that is positive, helpful and intended to promote social acceptance and friendship. Significant progress toward positive reinforcement strategies has occurred, including school programs such as Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support.

Teenage mothers could benefit from programs such as parenting education and home visiting, which matches teens with nurses from pregnancy through birth and beyond. Teens get the support they need to succeed with their baby, which helps them in every aspect of their lives. In Washington state, a cost-benefit analysis concluded that for every dollar spent on the program, $3.23 was saved, a 223% return on investment.

“I am confident that, if we marshal the evidence for nurturing environments and use the advocacy techniques that worked so well for the tobacco control movement, we can truly transform society,” Biglan concludes. “Not only will we have smoke-free gatherings, we will have communities that see to the well-being of every member. We will have less crime, mental illness, drug abuse, divorce, academic failure and poverty.”

Residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, California, can get this book for free from The Ford Family Foundation Select Books Program. See page 11.

The space is phenomenal — it’s the size of an airplane hangar — and there’s nothing like it anywhere else in Oregon.

— Amy Bernstein
Artist
Nurture our well-being

Author argues that to make society more successful, we need to use human behavior to create change.

Behavioral scientist Anthony Biglan’s premise is simple: Nearly all problems of human behavior are due to a failure to ensure that people live in environments that nurture their well-being. Abuse, drug problems, violence, mental health problems and dysfunction in families — these are the conditions that plague society.

In order to make society more successful, we need to use the science of human behavior to create change. Cultivating a positive environment in the home, the classroom or other social contexts will help young adults develop the background they need for productive and happy lives. It’s a do-able proposition, and The Nurture Effect offers a road map and plenty of examples to get started down that road.

Public health achievement

Biglan points to the tobacco control movement, one of modern history’s most important public health achievements, as a model for how to achieve massive societal changes. In 1965, over 50% of men and 34% of women smoked. By 2010, only 23.5% of men and 17.9% of women were smoking. When public health officials, epidemiologists and victims of the cigarette industry united to mobilize opposition to the marketing of a product that was killing almost half a million each year, Biglan says, “they moved a mountain.”

‘Just as we have created a society in which it would be unthinkable to light up a cigarette, we can create a society in which it will be unthinkable to smoke one. That’s what I’m after with The Nurture Effect.”

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