

July 3, 2011

It is with great pleasure that I write today in support of the Education Program at Sanctuary One. Every employee and volunteer at this amazing care farm is well informed, passionate and engaging. My students and families from Ashland Middle School had a fun and life changing experience through learning and experiencing the Ethics of Permaculture: Earth Care, People Care, and Fairshare.

I first met with Della Merrill, People Care Manager, in January to brainstorm a field experience for my 7th/8th grade science students from Ashland Middle School. It was important to me that the students experience be aligned to the Oregon State Science Standards, be hands-on and provide an opportunity for them to make changes in their lives today. We had to manage a calendar event that would include six core classes of 30 students over a six-day period.

In March I toured the farm and met with all three Care Managers to further explore the logistics, curriculum and activities that my students would have by visiting Sanctuary One. I was more than impressed by their attention to detail, flexibility and hands-on activities that they planned for our visit. I was provided with an Earth Care Vocabulary Sheet and YouTube footage to engage my classes before our visit. This prepared my students to be familiar with the content, expectations and experiences they would have at the care farm. Everyone was open to providing the best, age appropriate and engaging day.

Our April visits exceeded every expectation the students, families and I had for this field experience day. All Care Managers and volunteers were ready, excited and engaging for all six days we toured the farm. The Service Learning projects were fun and accomplished by all middle school students in attendance. It became clear that Stewardship was possible for a teenager, that they could make choices in their life to be careful and responsible for the management of natural resources.

I was very touched when observing their interactions with the animals at the farm. Many children do not have face-to-face experiences with animals in their present lives. They walked away with an appreciation for the care and responsibility it takes to have a pet, the realization that meat in their meals are from a living being and that animals need tender loving care just like they do. Empathy was developed as they experienced seeing the world through another's point of view.

An additional unplanned experience occurred daily, the ultimate display of People Care. Every person involved in the Sanctuary One day was respectful, responsible and safe. These three actions are the guiding force of our schools Positive Behavior System. The kindness, attentiveness and joy expressed in their faces was a reflection of the success of Sanctuary One at Double Oaks Farm

being a top rate care farm. They not only provided my 168 middle school students with an experience where people, animals and earth can work together for mutual healing but can step away into their lives with a regained hope and commitment to their future.

I applaud Sanctuary One for providing this educational experience. It is these real-life lessons learned during trips to facilities like Sanctuary One that help students understand the relevance of the scientific information learned in the classroom. It keeps them connected to their world. This is the full-circle learning I wanted my students to experience and Sanctuary One delivered!

Our donation from Ashland Middle School was given with great appreciation. I encourage others to donate and support this very important care farm. Please contact me if you would like more information about the value of supporting Sanctuary One.

With appreciation,

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Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning.

Albert Einstein