

Cultivating a Partnership

The Standard's relationship with Portland's Open Meadow Alternative Schools takes root and begins to grow

Ideas sometimes sprout in unusual places. Take, for example, the budding relationship between The Standard and Portland's Open Meadow Alternative Schools, which was born over a bin of potatoes at the Oregon Food Bank.

It was while bagging spuds as volunteers last December that Mike Winslow, vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary, and Carole Smith, Open Meadow's executive director, happened to meet. They struck up a conversation, and the talk turned to the subject of the School Partnership Program of the Portland Public Schools.

The Standard was interested in "adopting" a school, Mike said. Carole invited him to come out and visit Open Meadow.

Mike's visit impressed him. "The principal, faculty and staff were all enthusiastic about what was happening at the school," he said. "Everyone

was fully engaged in the learning process."

Mike discussed adopting the school with Chief Executive Officer Ron Timpe, who agreed that the company should enter this partnership because it provided a winning situation for everyone involved.

"The school is thankful for any support it receives, the students are enriched with an improved educational experience and the participating employees have the satisfaction of providing meaningful help to grateful students and teachers," Ron said.

Following their discussion, Mike formed a committee of employees and the committee began sowing the seeds of the relationship. Now, nine months later, Open Meadow is beginning the harvest.

A team from the IT Division is updating the schools' technology infrastructure. Gregg Harrod, assistant vice president of Investment Administration and chairman of The Standard's Open Meadow committee, recently accepted an offer to join the school's board of directors. A group of students assisted the company's Sand in the City team in July, and a group of Open Meadow teachers and administrators attended FISH! Camp at The Standard in August. Plans also are being developed to address the school's other needs through assistance with fundraising and capital improvements.

"It's infectious, if you're willing to take the chance and get involved," said Gregg, an unabashed cheerleader for the partnership. "This particular organization offers the opportunity to literally get hooked on their mission."

Founded in 1971, Open Meadow is one of Portland's oldest alternative schools. Its mission involves educating youths in small, relationship-based programs that emphasize personal responsibility, academics and service to the community. Last year, Open Meadow served 184 students in its middle school, high school and CRUE (Corps Restoring the Urban Environment) program.

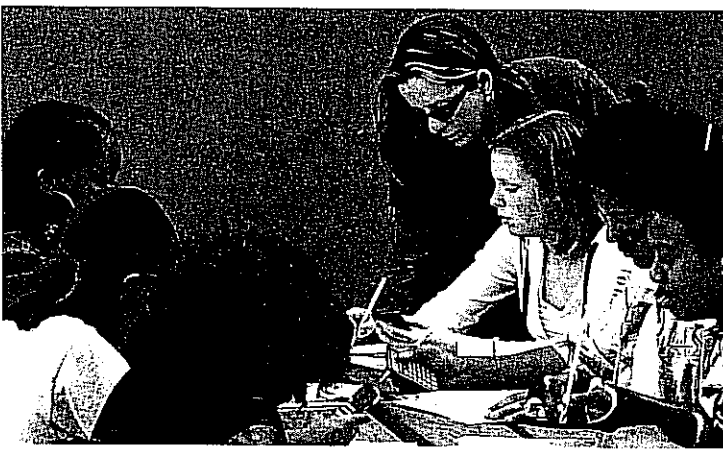
Open Meadow requires its students to become more engaged in their education, address barriers that previously interfered with their success and improve their academic skills. While the academic elements of the school day help students earn credit toward their high school diplomas, "advocate" groups — consisting of a teacher and 10 students — assist students on a more personal level. Each student meets daily with his or her group, and the groups help the teens learn to develop mutually respectful relationships with their peers and adults, take responsibility for their own behavior and actions and boost their feelings of competency and self-esteem.

Given Open Meadow's mission, Gregg said, Mike and Carole's meeting was all the more fortuitous.

"This is a golden opportunity to participate in education by supporting a school where the mission is to give kids a second chance," he said. "That aligns well with The Standard's tradition of lending a helping hand where it is really needed."



Open Meadow High School resides in a historic home built by Simon Benson on the Willamette River bank in North Portland. Founded in 1971, Open Meadow also includes a middle school and is among the oldest alternative schools in the Portland area.



Open Meadow Middle School instructor Elizabeth Jones takes advantage of a warm spring day to teach a math class outside at a picnic table. The middle school is one of three Open Meadow programs that together served 184 students last year.

The school has many needs, and the technology upgrade is at the top of the list, he said. Pat McConnell, assistant vice president of Application Services, has assembled a team to evaluate the school's network, Web capabilities and workstations and configure everything effectively. In addition to offering our technology expertise, The Standard may donate some computers and other equipment following the Windows XP rollout this fall, Gregg said.

The IT team has completed its systems audit, Carole said, and is determining how to proceed with developing a Web site, unifying several databases and upgrading computers in classrooms and the administration building.

"Organizationally, this is going to have a huge, far-reaching impact," she said of the technological enhancements. "We're totally excited about how it's going so far."

Carole also said she was overjoyed when Julie Grandstaff, assistant vice president of Securities and Open Meadow committee member, and Purchasing Agent Laverne Moulton, dropped by to deliver a shipment of hundreds of three-ring binders, desk organizers, extension cords and other supplies.

"We found some great used items that would have been donated elsewhere or thrown away which will really benefit Open Meadow," Julie said.

Gregg said the school listed fundraising support, educational opportunities — such as

student leadership, job shadowing and possibly internships for students, and FISH! Camp for staff members — and public relations assistance as other areas of need.

Carole said Mike is helping with the school's capital and sustainability campaign, which has raised \$1 million of the \$1.5 million needed to renovate a facility for the CRUE program. CRUE currently operates out of Open Meadow High School, a 1910 Victorian home built, appropriately, by Simon Benson, the well-known Portland businessman, philanthropist and

education supporter. Once the new building is complete, she said, both facilities will have the ability to serve more kids.

This partnership fits into The Standard's long history of providing funding and resources to education and to children, Mike said.

"Our assistance will help enhance these students' lives because quality of life is tied to education,"

Mike said. "And businesses will benefit in the long run because well-educated students are America's future generation of employees."

As the 2002 – 2003 school year progresses, additional opportunities for The Standard's employees to interact with Open Meadow students will arise, Gregg said.

"It's an opportunity to allow employees to make contributions of their time and knowledge, as opposed to just writing a check," he said. "I'll use the phrase 'pay it forward' — anyone who's seen that movie knows what it means. This is really an opportunity to do just that. It inspires me ... and I think there are others here who can identify with that as well." ■

— Mark Goldstein

Open Meadow Committee Members

Gregg Harrod
Julie Grandstaff
Kelly Hayes
Kira Higgs
Sally Manafi
Pat McConnell
Jan Spradlin



Open Meadow Schools still need a variety of supplies and other assistance. For details on how you can help, contact Julie Grandstaff at ext. 8836, or e-mail jgrandst.



Open Meadow High School senior Rina Birnbaum (second from right) smiles from ear to ear during graduation June 9. This year's graduating class also included Chelsea Pieretti (far left), Laura Holstein-Colonia (left) and Michael Murdock (right).