

Beaverton's Village Home Education center is growing

Posted by [wuno](#) May 14, 2009 09:11AM

Home-schooled kids from some 300 families pick their classes and mingle with others



Jenn Director Knudsen/Special to The Oregonian
Teal Hughes of Sherwood knits while listening to teacher Gayle Shanley teach an Algebra 2 lesson on the Beaverton campus of Village Home Education Resource Center. This is Hughes' first year as a Village Home learner.

BEAVERTON -- Village Home Education Resource Center is a home-away-from-home for nearly 300 families who have selected an educational world without grades or tests. And interest in its approach is growing.

The nonprofit center provides more than 100 classes Tuesdays through Thursdays, plus opportunities for socializing, for home-schooled students. Since opening its Beaverton center in 2003, it has recently added a Northeast Portland site. Preschool through high school students, from across the metro area, attend both locations.

Amid school districts' projected budget cuts, parents of children in public school are inquiring in greater numbers about Village Home, said Lori Walker, the center's founder and executive director.

"It's causing them to evaluate the whole approach" to their kids' education, Walker said. "They're looking at options."

Although Walker acknowledges that Village Home is not for every family, she says, "We're different because kids choose what they want to study. If you keep learning alive for kids, the bases get covered."

Statewide, more than 15,200 students were home-schooled in the 2006-07 academic year, the most recent year data are available, according to Karyn Chambers, Oregon Department of Education's education program specialist. No numbers exist, however, for learning communities like Village Home, she said.

Nor does Village Home produce statistics on how its students fare academically compared with their peers in more traditional schools, Walker said.

Yet she insists Village Home students -- like children nationwide educated at home -- receive stellar educations.

Walker cites a 2007 study by the Fraser Institute, an independent research organization based in Canada, that studied more than 20,700 home-schooled students from all 50 states and found "the median scores (on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills) for home-school students are well above their public/private school counterparts." Scores were between the 82nd and 92nd percentile in reading and up to the 85th percentile in math.

She points to recent successes: Connor Aberle, 13, recently won the Scripps Howard Regional Spelling Bee. Sisters Tesca Fitzgerald and Taytlyn Fitzgerald, ages 12 and 15, earned second place in the Intel Northwest Science Expo.

And in April, 14 Village Home students won a state-level FIRST LEGO League Robotics competition.

On a recent Tuesday at the Beaverton center, mothers and fathers were hanging out, chatting, knitting and snacking with their kids and teachers. One student knitted her way through a math class. Another sat next to his mom while he completed a worksheet.

Teddy Duchow-Pressley, 14, took a quick break from Algebra 2.

"I hadn't had as much interaction with other kids," said Teddy, who, before enrolling at Village Home five years ago, was taught at his family's Southwest Portland home.

"It's good for him to be around kids his own age," said his mother, Sandy Duchow-Pressley, 44.

The average teacher-to-student ratio is 1:9. And instruction in Latin, sewing, tae kwon do, LEGO Robotics, veterinary science and myriad other courses and field trips crowd the class schedule.

Village Home student representative Caroline Smith, 16, of Beaverton had been home-schooled from a young age and recently attended Valley Catholic School. "It wasn't for me," she said. Nor was having Mom as teacher, especially in math.

Village Home feels comfortable, and she gives particular credit to algebra instructor Gayle Shanley.

Now, Smith said triumphantly, "I got it. And now I'm breezing through Algebra 2."

Village Home Education Resource Center
Where: 5150 S.W. Watson Ave., Beaverton

Information: 503-597-9100; info@villagehome.org; www.villagehome.org/index.php

Open houses: To learn more about Village Home, attend an open house Monday or May 27. Both are from 6:30 to 8 p.m. and held at the center.

Categories: [Family](#), [Washington County Weekly](#)

Comments

zonotrichia says...

Woohoo! Go Village Home! Learning without grades or tests? YES WE CAN!

Posted on 05/14/09 at 10:03AM

vhlearner says...

We're happy to be out-of-the-box at Village Home!

Learn more at TWO Open Houses (misprinted):

May 18 and May 27

Posted on 05/14/09 at 11:32AM

think2 says...

Village is such a supportive, enriching and progressive group.

There is more to be had in education than the public school format, where you're essentially required to "work (fundraise)" or "pay(cut a big check)" to play -- in addition to property taxes.

Public school is no longer a "free" education.

This is a great, family centered alternative without all the other stuff! Just pure education and opportunities for growth.

Posted on 05/19/09 at 7:20PM

Footer