

CAMP CEDAR RIDGE DISPATCH: DISCOVER THE GOOD

A Message from Our Executive Director

Camp Cedar Ridge just marked its third completed year in business, and we are now moving into our fourth year/summer season. In business school, we read case studies about small businesses becoming "overnight successes," after being discovered by customers during their fourth year. It is the point at which policies, culture, and infrastructure begin to get sorted out, and the sprint for survival settles into a steady trot.

As I reflect on how far we have come, I am so thankful to everyone who is on this journey with us - including clients, donors, volunteers, vendors, employees, and board members. We have truly "Come a long way, Baby." Everywhere I look, I see projects that we have completed, while THE LIST of things that we'd like to do is even longer, and there are countless projects yet to be imagined that will someday come into being.

There have been so many people who have contributed time, talent, and treasure to this endeavor, and we are so grateful to them all. Whether you have come here as a guest or volunteer for a day, a weekend, or a week, or have worked here for a season of your life, or have never been here but have been a donor or supporter, we celebrate your contribution - we would not be here without you! Our 2025 theme is, "Together We Thrive," and that is the perfect message for this time in our journey.

We are planning a big weekend celebration for our fifth anniversary May 21-24, 2027! Mark your calendars now and plan to join us. What a milestone that will be!



Dr. Kasey Wilson
Executive Director

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Help Camp Cedar Ridge Cross the \$100K Finish Line!

We are thrilled to announce that the Cedar Sustainer fundraising campaign has made tremendous progress. We are now in the final stretch of this initiative, and we need your help to cross the \$100K finish line. With just a little over \$20,000 left to raise, every contribution counts. Have you been watching, wondering, or waiting for the right moment?

The time is now to become a Cedar Sustainer!
Go to <https://CampCedarRidgeOR.org/sustainer/>

Make a conscious choice to be a part of CCR's 2025 ***Together We Thrive!*** movement—a bold and beautiful commitment to what's possible when we show up for each other and for the future we envision.

Here are just a few of the enhancement projects underway that you can help us fulfill:

- **Parking Lot Expansion** for Guests and Employees: \$6,000 investment
- **Fiber Optic Internet Upgrade** - \$6,000 investment
- **Loggin' Laundry Washing Machine Upgrades** (\$1,500 per single load washer x 4 = \$6000 investment)

Go to <https://CampCedarRidgeOR.org/sustainer/> to join us today!

Cedar Sustainers, we would love to have a photo of you with your Cedar Sustainer sticker. Please email a photo (.jpg preferred) to staff@CampCedarRidgeOR.org.

We give thanks to our newest Cedar Sustainers

Doris Shockley
West Sacramento, CA

Sandra Rogers
Vernonia, OR

Suni Gayle
Riverside, CA

Choose now to become a Cedar Sustainer:
<https://CampCedarRidgeOR.org/sustainer>

Vernonia Village Adventures

A Standing Ovation for Performing Arts Field Trip!

On Friday, April 11th, our Vernonia Village students were treated to seeing our beloved former creative arts instructor, ZZ Zielinski, shine on stage in a professional theater performance of *Pirates and Mermaids* at Liberty Theater in Astoria, OR!

Students took their seats with great anticipation. The show began promptly at 6:00 pm and for the next hour, they were captivated by the artistry, talent, and heartfelt storytelling on stage.

Seeing our beloved ZZ perform with such passion and poise reminded all of us of what's possible when creativity and dedication come together. When the curtains closed at 7:00 pm, the applause was loud, the smiles were wide, and the inspiration was real.

We are so grateful for this opportunity to support our former instructor and expose students to the transformative power of the performing arts. Bravo to everyone who made this field trip possible—and encore, please!

Vernonia Village Credit Recovery & Homework Help Program is a Success!

Over the past few months, Vernonia Village staff offered extra support with **Credit Recovery** for high school students and **Homework Help** for grades 6–8. This afterschool activity was launched to help students who had fallen behind get back on track.

Together, the staff:

- Helped students recover missed assignments
- Provided guidance on tough subjects
- Supported efforts to earn extra credit
- Encouraged strategies to stay current with schoolwork
- Made learning fun through interactive games and activities!

Dee Barklow, Director of Vernonia Village, adds this exuberant statement about the expansion of the afterschool program:

"This is very exciting! Our program is in its infancy, but I see us getting to where we want to be. Ultimately, we should be able to get students current in their academic requirements without sacrificing their passions and opportunities to participate in athletics and clubs.

We have laid the foundation for our 2025-2026 academic year. We are rethinking the ways we can design our 6-12 program to best meet the community needs. Our decision to add middle school to this recovery program was an easy one. The research shows that early intervention allows us to foster a growth mindset and teach strategies for time management.

School staff is doing an incredible job reaching beyond the classroom. Our initial steps are making a plan, getting organized, and building confidence. We want our students to come out of this with comprehension of the material and real skills to apply all the way through graduation and beyond."

Thank you to everyone who helps make this program a success!



Vernonia Village with ZZ (back row with sword) after the performance



VERNONIA VILLAGE

NOW OFFERING

CREDIT RECOVERY

MONDAY-THURSDAY
3:00-4:30

Staff will assist students in the completion of missing assignments, available extra credit, the comprehension of subject material and how to manage current curriculum workloads.

FULL DETAILS ON OUR SITE

<https://campcedarridgeor.org/credit-recovery/>

 **FOLLOW THIS LINK** OR **MEET IN VHS COMMONS**

SCAN ME! 

GRADES 6, 7, 8 & 9-12

Vernonia Village Adventures

Employee Spotlight: Chelsea Taylor, a heart that builds trust



Chelsea Taylor

There is a quiet warmth that fills a room when she walks in—a grounded presence that instantly puts kids at ease and reminds us all of the deep power of love expressed through service. Meet Chelsea Taylor, a native Oregonian whose path into our community was paved with love.

A graduate of Vernonia High School, Chelsea earned her hairstylist license in the state of Oregon. She has had a remarkable 16-year career specializing in children's haircuts, specifically, serving children with special needs. She remembers those early days with tender clarity: "They'd come in scared, crying, unsure. Yet, over time, they'd settle in and sit in my chair by themselves, knowing they were safe."

Chelsea is a devoted mother of three. This year, her eldest daughter is graduating from high school, her son is entering his junior year, and her youngest daughter is starting middle school and will be homeschooled by her loving mama.

Chelsea brings her nurturing spirit to Vernonia Village where her natural "mama bear" energy has made her a beloved anchor for the children. Her steady presence, calm support, and genuine care make kids feel safe, heard, and valued. Her presence sends a "You belong here!" message.

This summer, Chelsea is joining the **Camp Cedar Ridge Special Events Team**. Her attention to detail and heart-centered approach will help transform moments into lifelong memories. She is also a mentor to CCR's growing team of talented teens serving in *Special Events*. With Chelsea's gentle guidance and high standards, they are learning to be confident, competent, and compassionate young adults.

Thank you, Chelsea, for your unwavering love, your steady presence, and your nurturing spirit. Our community is brighter, warmer, and more deeply connected because of you.


Save the Date! Vernonia Village End-of-Year Celebration

On Tuesday, June 11th, Vernonia Village afterschool program students will join us at Camp Cedar Ridge for an unforgettable afternoon of fun, designed just for them.

The celebration kicks off with snacks, a swim party, slip 'n slide, bounce houses, and sunny afternoon activities. Then at 5:00 PM, family members are invited to join us for a big BBQ bash! We'll fire up the grill, serve up delicious eats, and celebrate together as a community. It's the perfect way to close out the school year and launch into summer—with connection, joy, and loads of fun.

 **Date:** Wednesday, June 11, 2025

 **Students Arrive:** 12:45 PM by bus

 **Student-Only Activities:** Snacks, Swim party, Slip 'n Slide, Bounce Houses, Yard Games

 **Family BBQ:** 5:00 PM – Family invited!

Mark your calendars—we can't wait to celebrate with you!

A colorful promotional graphic for the Vernonia Village End of Year Family Engagement Night. It features a collage of photos of children and adults. A speech bubble says "Parents please join us for dinner and bingo @ 5:15 pm". The text "June 11th VERNONIA VILLAGE End Of Year Family Engagement Night!" is prominently displayed. There is a QR code with the text "SCAN ME!". A list of activities includes Bounce Houses, Face-Painting, Slip & Slide, Swimming, and Volleyball. The location is Camp Cedar Ridge, 18062 Heasey Rd, Vernonia, OR 97064. A registration link is provided: https://campcedarridgeor.org/field-trip/. A signpost graphic says "Where Sign Up!". At the bottom, it says "This is a half day, Students ride the bus directly to camp".

News from Camp Cedar Ridge

CCR Purchases Vernonia Laundromat; *Loggin' Laundry Celebrates* Grand Opening

CCR has been steadily increasing business over the past three years, and our massive amounts of laundry often exceed our laundry machine capacity on site - especially during the busy summer months. We have often had to rely on the laundromat in town to supplement our on-site laundry capacity. To ensure that we can meet our guests' needs, Camp Cedar Ridge purchased the existing coin-operated laundromat in the town of Vernonia in April 2025. As a small rural town (estimated population of 2,500), many of our fellow residents depend on access to reliable laundry facilities as well. This new venture will both serve the Vernonia community and allow us to meet our own business needs.

Loggin' Laundry is designed to be a community hub on the main street that runs through town. The newly-refurbished site offers clean, reliable laundry machines as well as a community piano, book nook, children's play area and free high-speed wi-fi. The name is both a nod to Vernonia's history as a logging town and a wink to the free internet we offer. We will continue to expand services and upgrade machines as resources become available. We envision the site evolving to include a kiosk with information available about the town as well as local businesses and resources. In the spirit of creating a world that works for all, we will be partnering with the non-profit Laundry Love to provide free laundry service to no-income and low-income residents of Vernonia. (See story on page 10).

Camp Cedar Ridge hosted the **Loggin' Laundry Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting Celebration** on Sunday, April 27th. Community members of all ages were welcomed for an afternoon filled with joy, connection, and creativity.

The celebration began with a sacred Blessing the Space ceremony, inviting all present to pause and honor the purpose and potential of this new beginning. Led by Centers for Spiritual Living dignitaries, including Rev. Dr. Linda Reppond, Rev. Dr. Bob Deen, Rev. Michelle Arellano, and Rev. Christopher Elisha, the four-tiered blessing encompassed Camp Cedar Ridge as business owner; Loggin' Laundry as the new business venture; Vernonia and surrounding community, and the world at large. Rooted in gratitude and intention, the blessing envisioned the space as one where all who enter feel seen, supported, and inspired to thrive.

The festivities continued with a lively Ribbon Cutting Ceremony coordinated by South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Mary Laitala, and attended by local dignitaries, including The Honorable Rick Hobart, Mayor of Vernonia. A definite crowd pleaser was the uplifting bluegrass performance by local favorites, The Rusty Buckets.



Our Camp Team Receives the Keys!



Vernonia Village attendees
at the Grand Opening



CCR Food Service delights attendees with
cupcakes sporting frosting swirls in Loggin'
Laundry color palette

News from Camp Cedar Ridge



The space was blessed by several Centers for Spiritual Living Ministers who were at a retreat at Camp Cedar Ridge during the weekend of the Grand Opening.

From the moment guests arrived, the atmosphere was festive and welcoming. Children delighted in popcorn, cotton candy, face painting, a bubble machine, sidewalk chalk art, and custom-designed coloring sheets inspired by the Loggin' Laundry theme. The Curiosity Treasure Chest was a hit among our Vernonia Village attendees, filled with surprises and treats to spark imagination and joy.

Guests enjoyed an abundant spread of refreshments provided by the renowned Camp Cedar Ridge Food Service Department, led by Director Carol Sohler. The offerings included fresh pressed lemonade, iced tea, coffee, and water alongside an array of sweet bites such as carrot cake truffles, thumbprint and cheesecake cookies, and a fresh veggie platter with dip. A special delight was the cupcakes—topped with swirls of frosting in the festive hues of Loggin' Laundry color palette—adding both a cheerful pop of color and a touch of sweetness to the celebration.

The Grand Opening marked more than just a new beginning—it reflected the vibrant and supportive community we're proud to be a part of. Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate this special moment with us!

Click here to view FB event video:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1UiodY9igS/>



Grand Opening activities included face painting



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

News from Camp Cedar Ridge

Stewarding Beauty, Safety and Function: Property Enhancements Ready for Summer 2025

In the spirit of continuous improvement and faithful stewardship, three exciting property enhancement projects have been completed. These upgrades reflect our deep commitment to preserving the natural beauty of our surroundings; ensuring the safety, comfort, and enjoyment of all who visit; and creating welcoming spaces where people of all ages can feel a sense of belonging, connection, and joy.

The Deck at the Fireside Room Entry: Previously weathered by years of use, this area has been completely replaced with a thoughtfully designed cedar structure. The new deck offers a warm and beautiful first impression and greatly improves safety and accessibility for all. A special shoutout to Joey Brasure, deck design and construction; assisted by construction team members Vance Landry and Luke Simmons.

Upgrade to our outdoor swimming pool pump system: This state-of-the-art upgrade significantly enhances our ability to monitor water safety—ensuring precise control over pool chemicals and improving water circulation. The result is a cleaner, safer, and more efficiently maintained pool environment.

The pool is now ready to welcome families, neighbors, and young swimmers for this season's **Community Swimming Lessons**. We can't wait to see swimmers of all ages enjoying this cherished tradition in a space that is both beautiful and well maintained.

A tiered garden bed frames the camp's entrance sign: Diego Reyes, CCR's groundskeeper, designed this garden to be an inviting, natural focal point. This isn't a perfectly manicured garden but rather a natural, organic addition that complements the wild, untamed beauty of the land. The garden bed is anchored with cedar stumps from the property itself, adding a raw, earthy element that ties the space back to its roots.

These improvements represent more than just maintenance—they reflect our ongoing dedication to excellence, radical hospitality, and the thoughtful care of this sacred place we all share. Thank you to our Maintenance Director, Jim Bryson, for overseeing these important improvements.

As we move forward, we invite you to be part of this unfolding story. We are nearing the completion of our inaugural Cedar Sustainer Program, with its \$100,000 fundraising goal to sustain and expand projects like these—and every contribution helps.

To donate, volunteer, or learn more about how you can support this sacred and joyful place, Go to <https://CampCedarRidgeOR.org/sustainer/>

Together, we're building community. Together, we thrive!



Joey Brasure, deck design and construction, and Vance Landry, deck construction, on completed deck. Not pictured Luke Simmons, construction.



Pool Pump Upgrade



Pool is Ready for the Season!



Diego Reyes, CCR Groundskeeper, creating planter at CCR Entrance

News from Camp Cedar Ridge



Carol Sohler, Food Service Director



Special Events Team Teens

Front Row, from left to right: Jada

Russell, Olivia Apodaca, Kadynce Eide

Back Row, from left to right: René

Sears, Lawson Eide, Elam Cieloha, Ben

Richey

Staff Spotlight: Carol Sohler, Food Service Director

At the heart of every meal at Camp Cedar Ridge is a quiet presence of care, consistency, and culinary excellence. This month, we're honored to shine the spotlight on **Carol Sohler, our beloved Food Service Director**.

Her long-standing service and steady leadership have nourished this community—body and soul—for many years. We are deeply grateful for the way she brings people together through expertly planned meals, thoughtful hospitality, and a commitment to exceptional service at every turn.

Carol and her team create experiences of welcome and belonging. She goes to extraordinary lengths to ensure that every guest has dietary options to meet their needs. From gluten-free and vegan options to severe allergy accommodations, Carol is known for her compassionate attention to detail and her determination to serve everyone safely, deliciously, and with dignity.

Here's what she shares about her role at Camp Cedar Ridge: *"Being at the heart of Food Service is about so much more than preparing food—it's about creating an experience. I love planning and coordinating meals that not only nourish the body, but also foster a sense of connection and care. Every menu, every detail is an opportunity to express creativity and make people feel seen, welcomed, and valued. And, I don't do it alone. I'm grateful to serve with a team that shares this commitment to caring. Together, we create meaningful experiences for the community we serve."*

We send profound gratitude to you, Carol, for the loving legacy you continue to create with every meal.

Food Service Highlights: Hospitality That Shines

While Carol and her team might be too humble to take the spotlight, their behind-the-scenes magic helped make two recent events truly unforgettable.

Our **Wedding Menu Tasting** and the **"Hats, Hearts, and Blooms" Mother's Day Tea Extravaganza** were glowing examples of what makes Camp Cedar Ridge—and its people—so special.

Thank you to our newly formed **Special Events Team**—talented high school students and employees gaining hands-on experience in hospitality and event hosting.

News from Camp Cedar Ridge

Wedding Menu Tasting

Our May *Wedding Menu Tasting* for engaged couples and their loved ones featured selections of expertly curated recipes, including a prime rib carving station, salmon, a variety of chicken entrées, and thoughtful options to accommodate a range of dietary needs. Our next Tasting Event will be October 19, 2025.

"Hats, Hearts, and Blooms": a Tea Party to Remember!

With laughter in the air and teacups in hand, guests of all ages came together to honor the maternal figures who nurture, uplift, and inspire across generations.

Activities included:

- Designing fanciful fascinators
- Tasting unique tea blends
- Planting living tokens of love, and
- Adorning the Tree of Life

With heartfelt gratitude, each activity was a celebration of connection, creativity, and shared memories.



Whimsy in full bloom! Creative flair took center stage as participants of all ages showcased their handmade fascinators in a joyful Fascinator Fashion Show.



A tree full of thanks.

The Tree of Life blossomed with gratitude as families shared heartfelt messages and treasured photos.



A story in every sip. Guests explored hand-blended teas served in charming, vintage teacups—each one steeped in its own tale. Thank you, Kelly Peirce, for loaning us your collection of heirloom tea cups.

Planting joy. Little hands and big hearts come together to pot seeds of love.



Expanding Community Partnerships

Loggin' Laundry Partners with Laundry Love

We are excited to announce that **Loggin' Laundry**, our community laundromat, is partnering with **Laundry Love**, <https://LaundryLove.org/>, a nationwide initiative to offer free laundry services for individuals and families with low or no income.

As the designated local host site, Loggin' Laundry will provide a welcoming space where clothes and bedding can be washed at no cost on the following dates:

Summer Event Dates and Times:

- Wednesday, June 11th | 6:00–8:00 PM
- Wednesday, June 25th | 10:00 AM–12:00 Noon
- Wednesday, July 9th | 6:00–8:00 PM
- Wednesday, July 23rd | 10:00 AM–12:00 Noon
- Wednesday, August 13th | 6:00–8:00 PM
- Wednesday, August 27th | 10:00 AM–12:00 Noon

These events are made possible through the support of local volunteers, community-based funding, and coordinated by Camp Cedar Ridge staff member, Rev. Marilyn Sprague. This effort is part of a broader national movement aimed at brightening lives across the country through love, dignity, and detergent.

Combining national reach with local heart, the program brings clean laundry - and a renewed sense of hope - to families and individuals in need.

Camp Cedar Ridge Joins South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce

We're excited to announce that we have officially joined the South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce! <https://scccchamber.org/>

This partnership marks an exciting new chapter as we work to strengthen our presence within the community and continue our commitment to being a reliable local partner.

We look forward to forging deeper connections with fellow businesses and community leaders, sharing resources, and collaborating on initiatives that benefit all.

We are optimistic about the opportunities this membership will bring and are eager to work together to support our local economy and enrich the lives of community members.

A special thank you to Mary Laitala, Executive Director of South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, for a stellar job in coordinating the **Loggin' Laundry Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Celebration** which Camp Cedar Ridge hosted in April. We are grateful for the wonderful support provided by the Chamber.

We look forward to growing together and continuing to contribute to the vibrant spirit of our area!



Expanding Community Partnerships



"Lake Cedar Ridge" before excavation



Ben Peltzer: A true act of neighbor-helping-neighbor generosity

Community Partner Spotlight: Thank you, Ben Peltzer!

Recently, a large body of water (we affectionately called it "Lake Cedar Ridge") blocked access to the lower field. Without hesitation, local business owner, **Ben Peltzer**, brought his excavator and worked with our Grounds and Maintenance team to quickly and efficiently drain the water. His generous donation of equipment, time, and expertise helped ensure that the field could be accessed in time for one of our most popular events, the annual **Adults Only Easter Egg Hunt**, hosted by **Intercultural Society of Vernonia**.

Ben's generosity truly embodies the spirit of our community and is a perfect example of what we can accomplish when we work together. It's acts of kindness like this that enable us to fulfill our commitment to the community—creating safe, accessible spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Thank you, Ben, and to all those who lend a hand to help us grow and thrive together!



"Lake Cedar Ridge" has been drained!

Event Snapshot: What's Ahead



Great Awake Lake Turkey Trot: A Thanksgiving Day Tradition!

Kick off Thanksgiving day with our first annual **Great Awake Lake Turkey Trot**, a fun-filled 5K run/walk around Vernonia Lake. It's a perfect activity for the whole family! This fundraiser is co-hosted by **Intercultural Society of Vernonia** and benefits both the **Vernonia Village Afterschool Program** and the **Vernonia High School Track Team**.

This Turkey Trot is more than just a race! It's a chance to come together with loved ones of all ages and begin a Thanksgiving tradition. After crossing the finish line, join us for the free community Thanksgiving meal, hosted by renowned Camp Cedar Ridge Food Service Department. Everyone is welcome to enjoy delicious food, relaxation, and connection before the busy holiday season.

We look forward to seeing you and your loved ones at this heartwarming event—it's the perfect way to launch your Thanksgiving celebration! Stay tuned for more details and registration information.

Celebrate in Style: Book Your Holiday Events & Banquets at Our Chic Camp Venue!

Picture this: a cozy, rustic chic setting filled with festive cheer, delicious food, and your closest friends or colleagues gathered together to celebrate.

That's exactly what we offer when you book your holiday events or banquets at Camp Cedar Ridge!

Our specially curated holiday menus are crafted to delight, with options that highlight the flavors of the season. Renowned for our exceptional cuisine and attention to all dietary needs, we ensure every guest feels valued and satisfied. From savory holiday classics to creative seasonal dishes, every bite is made to impress.

But we don't stop at just a meal—we believe in creating a complete holiday experience! Customize your celebration with exciting add-ons like karaoke, a DJ-hosted white elephant gift exchange, holiday bingo, or even photos with Santa, the Grinch, or Frosty the Snowman!

Looking for something more relaxing? Host a festive luncheon followed by an afternoon of craft making with family or colleagues—fun for all ages.

Make this holiday season unforgettable by hosting your event at Camp Cedar Ridge. Book today and let us help you create an extraordinary celebration, complete with all the festive extras, in a warm, cozy chic, and inviting atmosphere!

Secure your spot now and let the holiday magic unfold with us!

Contact us at: <http://CampCedarRidgeOR.org/holiday>.

