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PENINSULA famielstoday

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Peninsula Families Today is always looking for story ideas, news tips and more

Peninsula Families Today is a family-focused publication and is inserted into the *Peninsula Daily News* and *Sequim Gazette*.

Please let us know what you'd like to see in the next issue of *Peninsula Families Today*.

This publication welcomes input and new contributors. Educators, parents and professionals in their fields are invited to contribute informative and educational articles or columns for consideration.

We cannot guarantee publication due to space and content considerations. If your submission is accepted, we reserve the right to edit it. Please contact special sections editor Alyssa Brown if you are interested in contributing, alyssa.brown@soundpublishing.com

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Animekat: Creating a fun reading and game playing environment

By Alyssa Brown

AnimeKat is the largest anime store on the Olympic Peninsula, carrying a wider selection of products than most Puget Sound stores of its kind.

The store offers manga and anime from a variety of genres, games of all types, collectables and snacks.

Japanese animation has exploded in popularity in the U.S. within recent years. With the pandemic keeping many at home streaming services widened their selection, adding thousands of anime TV shows and movies. This sparked many viewers' interest in anime and reading the books that inspired their favorites, says AnimeKat owner Drew Schwab.

Anime takes inspiration from Japanese culture and folklore. The storylines follow different rules than Western storytelling, making the experience more exciting as plot twists are unpredictable.

The store provides references and suggestions based on customers' interests and experience reading manga. They also offer information and advice for parents to help them understand the genre and find mangas appropriate for their kids.

"For young kids who don't like to read or older kids who are a little behind on reading,

being able to pair something that they're really into with pictures and words can really help get them into reading and enjoy reading more," says Schwab.

Mangas have self-given ratings stating the intended audience for the material, so there's variation in what is deemed as appropriate for different age groups.

"We encourage parents to flip through things," Schwab says, "because if you're just going fast, looking on the shelves there's things that look super cute, adorable and perfectly good for everything, and then there's ones where people are exploding.

"Sometimes the art style looks the same on the outside cover, so we usually try to help parents. That way they have a better idea of what it is and what the different titles are."

AnimeKat also offers a variety of games including: board, card, dice, resource management, dexterity, co-op and more. Playing games is an enjoyable experience of enhancing math and reading skills, cooperation, creativity, critical thinking and interpersonal skills, according to Schwab.

AnimeKat is a great outlet for generational connection, with the retro games section featuring products that date back to the 1950s

and 1960s. This section encourages parents to share their excitement for the games they grew up playing with their children.

The store offers rentals of games and movies to try out before making a commitment. "Board game rentals, especially if you're playing in the store, are phenomenally priced," says Schwab.

"They are typically a percentage of whatever the game costs, and what that means is we've got games that you can rent and hang out here in the store for like three bucks or less. You can sit here and play with your family for three or four hours."

Events are ongoing at AnimeKat, with card game tournaments occurring weekly. Schwab is hoping to increase the events offered in 2023, returning to pre pandemic levels of engagement.

The store is completing its 10 year renovation process with the final addition of three new glass counters. Be sure to check out how AnimeKat has expanded in-store and online.

For more information, visit AnimeKat at 114 W 1st St., Port Angeles or visit animekat.com.

Wanted: Child Care Providers

By Clallam County Prevention Works Child Care Task Force



Finding quality, affordable child care has always been a challenge for families in our remote area. COVID has brought this issue to the forefront and has made finding child care an even more difficult process. This rewarding job is in demand on the Olympic Peninsula. In fact, the need far outweighs the availability of licensed, quality care.

In April 2021, the Clallam County Economic Development Council showed a 25 percent vacancy rate for children due to staff shortages. In a recent survey of our county's workforce employees, the EDC reported approximately 370 preschool-age children needing child care. This reinforces the Washington Department of Commerce definition of a child care desert for our region.

Prevention Works, a 24-year-old nonprofit agency, promotes positive childhoods for all children in Clallam County. In 2018, Prevention Works made addressing the lack of child care one of its strategic goals. The Child Care Task






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Force, consisting of business leaders, big employers, volunteers, and service agencies, has made a recruitment video, a billboard on Highway 101, attended four job fairs, and presented information to high school students, government groups, and interested citizens. United Way of Clallam County has provided a grant to fund job requirements for future child care providers (Email Anna King at aking@pencol.edu for more information).

Child care workers are needed in both centers and as family child care home providers in Clallam County.

Prevention Works encourages anyone interested in making a difference in the lives of children to consider a career in child care.

“I am reminded every day that these young children are just as much my teacher as I am theirs. Working with young children during their most important developmental years is truly rewarding. As a teacher, I am there to support them socially and emotionally as they learn about the world and others around them. It is really an amazing career.” Kylee Lotzgesell, Child Care Specialist

“I enjoyed seeing children’s faces light

up when they learned a new skill. I loved all the hugs from children, their excitement and innocence, holding the babies and working as my wife’s assistant for 26 years.” Karl Skogman, retired, Family home child care provider

“Every day there is something new to learn and discover with children. I get to celebrate with a child when they climb to the top of the climbing tower for the first time or pick up a worm from the sidewalk after a heavy rain and giggle as it wiggles in their hands. I see new skills blossom, hear new words spoken and watch as they make and appreciate the day-to-day wonders through a child’s eyes.” Kelsey Hamilton, Child Care Specialist

Interested in offering child care?

The following requirements apply for all child care providers:

- TB test
- First aid and CPR
- Background check
- Food handler card
- Bloodborne pathogen training
- MMR vaccination

Resources to help on the way:

Current job listings: PW4kids.org
(Subscribe to our PW! Update!)

Workshop and financial assistance for meeting job requirements:

Contact Anna King, AKing@pencol.edu

Licensing questions and information:

Contact Brittany Grgich at grgich@dcyf.wa.gov
www.dcyf.wa.gov/news/child-care-and-early-learning-licensing-guidebook

Imagine Institute for In-home Child

Care Training and Support: Imagine U is a mentorship program designed to increase the number of licensed, family in-home child care providers in Washington. Imagine U pairs experienced, licensed in-home child care providers with those interested in becoming licensed, and offers mentorship and support. For information, contact imaginewa.org or Nikki Tomason at ntomason@gmail.com

ADVENTURE WORD SEARCH



A	S	R	U	A	B	N	V	A	O	H	N	G	H	B	M	T	F	F	Z
L	G	D	S	G	J	A	T	O	A	D	N	C	A	A	S	W	H	E	S
P	P	D	E	I	U	R	B	Z	Z	I	Z	M	D	U	A	I	W	F	U
I	R	M	G	N	I	E	A	Z	K	T	J	Z	L	A	A	L	P	B	M
N	R	H	P	A	I	R	N	L	W	P	I	R	H	V	J	D	S	K	M
E	S	U	L	C	D	M	A	J	B	R	E	A	E	K	M	E	S	S	I
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C	R	O	O	I	B	I	D	A	J	K	B	I	I	M	I	W	K	H	F
U	M	I	D	A	B	E	K	G	N	I	L	E	V	A	R	T	R	G	V

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

ADVENTURE
ALPINE
BOUNDARIES
BUSHWALKING
DESTINATION
DETERMINED
DOWNHILL
ENJOYMENT
FORTUNE
HAZARD
OUTDOORS
RACING
RISK
SCALE
SPEED
SUMMIT
TEST
THRILL
TRAVELING
TREK
TRIAL
VOYAGES
WANDERLUST
WILDERNESS



art by
Alyssa Brown



Quinton Thompson gets some morning laps in at the Port Angeles Pump Track on Friday, January 6, 2023. Photo by Alyssa Brown

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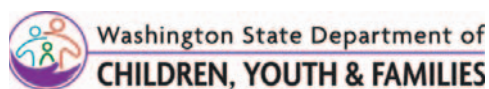


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An Enjoyable Ride For Everyone

By Alyssa Brown

The Port Angeles pump track, a 14,442-square-foot facility at Erickson Playfields that opened in July, provides a fun and refreshing activity for families to enjoy together.

A pump track is a series of looping paths that offer a way for children and adults to build bicycling skills in a contained environment away from traffic and is designed primarily for bicycles and other wheeled vehicles.

With a playground, skate park and pump track right next to each other, there's something for every family member to enjoy.

"It's a great way to exercise in a safe environment away from busy streets for kids and their families," says Victoria Jones, Director of the Marathon Association and advocate for the Port Angeles Pump Track.

The facility actually features two tracks, and was designed with inclusivity in mind. During construction, the drop-in ramps were widened to account for the width of wheelchairs, so everyone can ride safely. The adaptive track is the first of its kind in the U.S., offering less intense turns and hills for accessibility and training.

"[The idea] came from two places," says Catharine Copass, Ecological Consultant and advocate for the Port Angeles Pump Track. "One is our local hometown hero, Ian Mackay, with Ian's Ride. Just knowing Ian and seeing him out on the trails really brought forward in my mind the challenges with public spaces for people in wheelchairs.

"Also, my dad is a stroke survivor and is also a chair user, not that my dad would be out riding a pump track, but thinking that these spaces bar entry for all kinds of people to have fun if there's not something that's accessible."

"We have a growing list of things to offer families who are looking for mixed accessibility recreational spaces and I would love to see Port Angeles become a destination for those families," Copass says.

The pump track is receiving improvements this spring, around the first week of May. The sod around the track will be cut back and replaced with rubber strips on the insides and

outsides of the paved path to help riders who fall or divert off to the sides. The project will take an estimated week-and-a-half, with one track being closed at a time, so that riders can continue practicing during construction.

"One nice thing about the pump track is we have an adaptive track for kids to learn how to move on wheels. Then they can move up to the main track when they gain confidence in their abilities," says Jones.

"I've seen it already benefit BMX riders; they're practice translates into them being better racers on the BMX track," says Sean Coleman, Project Manager for Brook & Brook, Tractor Operator for the BMX track and an advocate for the Port Angeles Pump Track.

With many biking features in the area, Port Angeles is becoming a cyclist destination. You can take a warm-up ride on the Olympic Discovery trail, stop by the pump track for skill training, head to the Dry Hill and Colville trails for mountain biking and race on the BMX track.

"The pump track compliments all other bike activities in the peninsula. It gives people one more reason to come to Port Angeles," says Coleman.

For more information, visit the Port Angeles Pump Track Facebook page at facebook.com/PAPumptrack.



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Adventure Awaits in the Great Outdoors

Photos & Article by NatureBridge

Picture this: You're halfway through sixth grade when you board a bus with your teachers and classmates and find yourself along the shores of Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park. Your bus follows the shoreline until you reach a cozy inn with a big sign that says "Welcome to NatureBridge". Wood cabins surround a green field and a dock that would be perfect for playing games in the cool afternoon air.

Your classmates around you start wildly chattering about the potential for adventure and you don't know what to expect. So, you

let the awe of the enormous trees and the sweeping landscape put your mind at ease.

Your days are filled with activities and time seems to magically speed up. Curiosity about the world around you is cultivated. Bonds with classmates are rebuilt. A love of nature is sparked and nurtured.

By your final day at NatureBridge, you have conquered a mountain, collected and sent data that will be studied by scientists around the world and made memories with new friends and old that will last a lifetime!

NatureBridge's

Olympic campus (previously called the Olympic Park Institute and OPI) has operated in the Pacific Northwest out of Olympic National Park since 1987. We host close to 30,000 young people annually at our campuses in Olympic, Golden Gate, Prince William Forest and Yosemite National Park, with over 1.5 million students served since our inception in 1971.

Our mission—providing young people access to nature, deepening their understanding of science and the environment, and showing how we are connected to the

natural world and each other—is at the heart of the work we do on the Olympic Peninsula and around the country.

Our Environmental Science Educators and campus staff collaborate with school educators to use hands-on instruction and engage students in new ways. Multi-day experiences at our Olympic campus include challenging team-building activities, breathtaking hikes in the majestic Olympic National Park, water testing on the Elwha River and even canoeing on Lake Crescent.

Students stay in group cabins and dine in the historic Rosemary Inn. Each day, students have time to reflect on their experiences both as a group and individually, where we often see incredible transformations in their attitudes towards nature, their place within it and the people around them, which profoundly impact their lives when they return home.

At NatureBridge, we also know providing access to nature directly supports social and emotional development. NatureBridge's partnership with the Doerr School of Sustainability at Stanford University demonstrates that access to the outdoors can play a critical role in the development of young people, both as an avenue to engage students in unique ways and as a means to address increasingly prevalent mental health challenges.

The lessons learned during NatureBridge programs not only increase interest in science and the environment academically, but also nurtures students' capacity for empathy, resilience, adaptability and community-building.


As a nonprofit and the National Park Service's largest residential environmental education partner, NatureBridge is committed to serving as many students as we can in


order to have a lasting impact on our world. We offer nearly \$1.25 million in scholarships annually so we can provide equitable access to our campuses to students from all lived experiences.

If you are interested in supporting our Olympic campus and our mission, please visit our website at naturebridge.org where you can read more about our programs, donate to our scholarship funds and stay connected with us.



Students learn cooperation and communication by canoe rowing on Lake Crescent through the NatureBridge Olympic program.





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