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Northwest Youth Corps helps change students

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There is an organization in the Northwest that is helping teenagers prepare themselves for society.

The Northwest Youth Corps, a program with the philosophy to build pride, broaden horizons, promote personal growth and give the sense of purpose in society, was founded in 1984 according to www.northwestyouthcorps.org.

This seems to be true for Danielle Patterson, a high school senior from Sacramento, Calif. "Other students get work skills and expand social skills," Patterson said. "It's so much fun."

Patterson said this was her first year with the NYC and she had also become best friends with a girl from another crew, Maggie Blount from Moscow, Idaho. Blount, a sophomore in high school, said the program helps in learning about you.

These philosophical goals are developed through three different programs in this organization founded by Art Pope. Pope, the director of the Northwest Youth Corps, noted that he founded the organization in a garage back when he was attending Lane Community College. The first group to attend the organization consisted of 52 teens with the help of donors from the Northwest.

Pope said the idea for the program came about because he had worked similar jobs in the woods, worked with some peers and liked it. He feels it is important to get students engaged through the process of getting them outside. The work program, called the YouthCorps, allows students to work on various projects outside.

"Our crew will take on virtually any kind of project that can be done with hand tools," Pope said. Pope noted projects the group does include habitat restoration, invasive species and recreation work.

Natalie Whitson, development officer of Northwest Youth Corps, said the work program will last an average of five weeks with programs in the spring, fall and summer. After those five weeks are over, the crews will come back and another crew will take their place.

"A graduation takes place to congratulate them," Whitson said.